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WEEKLY SURVEY
28 JANUARY 1949

Korea

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KOREA: THE NORTH IS FLOURISHING, THE SOUTH DETERIORATING (CONT'D)

The Moscow and Pyongyang radios are again preoccupied with the imminent "total collapse" of South Korea's economy and with the reportedly glorious state of economic affairs north of the 38th parallel. This same disparity is claimed with regard to social and political conditions. Moscow and its Pyongyang satellite report southern Koreans to be overwhelmingly burdened by the imperialistic policies of the Americans and the ineptitudes of Syngman Rhee. In contrast, northern Korea is said to be moving steadily ahead under momentum gained from the Soviet Union.

Radio Moscow continues to ignore the U.N. Commission on Korea and U.N. recognition of the Syngman Rhee Government, although it does take critical notice of American recognition of that Government. Commentaries praising the Soviet Union and denouncing the United States are supplemented by reports of progress made in North Korea and of plans for 1949. These reports appear somewhat more detailed than has been Moscow's custom in the past. Radio Pyongyang's reportage far exceeds Moscow's, however, both in volume and in verbosity. This is true not only in reports of economic and social progress in the North, but in announcements of "rebellions" in the South; Moscow only summarizes Pyongyang's voluble accounts.

a. "Collapse" of South Korea: Occupied South Korea is heading for total collapse, says Danilov in a 15 January commentary broadcast in Korean. He contrasts this dire state of affairs with that of the north where the living standard has been raised and illiteracy reduced. Other broadcasts claim that southern Koreans suffer censorship, terror, and starvation at the hands of the corrupt, unpopular Rhee Government, and document the claim by reference to Radio Pyongyang's accounts of conditions in the south.

b. Prosperity in the North: IZVESTIA's claim that the economy of North Korea "is on the road to progress" (in Japanese, 19 January 1949) is echoed in various commentaries and in reports, credited to Radio Pyongyang, of the accomplishments of 1948 and the plans for 1949. And, while Radio Moscow in general contents itself with outlining the various reform measures introduced by the Soviet Union, Radio Pyongyang gives exhaustive attention to reporting details of the accomplishments, no matter how small they may appear.

The USSR's "truly democratic" policies are credited with much of North Korea's successes not only in achieving economic progress but in instituting such social reforms as a health program. (Khabarovsk, in Korean, 18 January 1949) Lenin is also credited with those successes in a 22 January commentary commemorating the 25th anniversary of his death. The broadcast asserts that "Leninism" paved the way for the liberation and democratization of all oppressed peoples, Koreans included, and will not be stopped even by the "police state" system now in force in South Korea.

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Although its reports still lack some of the ebullience which characterizes announcements of economic plans in the European satellite nations, Moscow takes note of the opening of North Korea's Two-Year Plan of economic development in a 15 January Japanese-language broadcast. The report summarizes North Korea's economic achievements in 1948 and outlines the aims of the Two-Year Plan.

c. The U.N. Commission: Radio Pyongyang launches an attack on the U.N. Commission in a 22 January broadcast which utilizes familiar arguments. It insists that the U.N. had no business considering the Korean issue when no proper Korean delegation was present, claims that the report submitted by the Temporary Commission was mendacious, and ridicules the sending of a Commission to supervise withdrawal of troops when "Soviet troops completed their withdrawal last December." The broadcast describes Commission members as "American dollar-controlled reactionaries" and singles out Lio Yu-wan, the representative of Nationalist China, for particular ridicule: "What a laugh it is that the Nationalist Government of China, which fled to Formosa, is helping Korean recovery."

Liu is further ridiculed in a 22 January Pyongyang broadcast which claims he, "the worst servant of the American imperialists, ... crawled into South Korea at the head of the Commission." Pyongyang's commentator insists that Liu came to Seoul to escape the dangers of Nanking, and that "Koreans as well as the world are laughing at him."

In a passing reference to the subject of U.N. recognition of the Seoul regime, Pyongyang argues that "even if Syngman Rhee's Government was recognized by the United Nations, what good will it do without the people's support?"

d. Troop Withdrawals: The issue of troop withdrawals is, of course, the primary cause of complaint from both Moscow and Pyongyang. With considerable pride, commentators point to the withdrawal of Soviet troops and ask why America does not do likewise. The answer is always the same: The U.S. retains troops in Korea to guard its investments. (in Korean, 19 January 1949) TRUD makes the familiar charge in an 18 January commentary, analyzing the recently-signed aid agreement (in Japanese), while commentator (Rotov?), quoting Miles Vaughn, says that America is using Korea as a pawn in a "Cold War." (in Korean, 18 January 1949)

American obstinacy in the withdrawal issue is analyzed in a 14 January English language broadcast to North America. The commentary asserts that the "reactionary U.S. press has been trying hard to misrepresent the real state of affairs, distorting facts that are known to all." The entire talk is a restatement of sanctimonious references to the USSR's "unchanging... policy of protecting the rights and sovereignty of small nations" and its "consistent efforts to carry out the Moscow agreement. The broadcast maintains that the U.S. refusal to withdraw its troops has lowered American prestige and "exposed it as the enemy of the Korean people."

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e. Resistance in the South: Korean resistance to American occupation is said to be resulting in open hostilities in various parts of South Korea. TASS, quoting Radio Pyongyang, reports incidents, said to have occurred early in January, in a 12 January transmission for the Soviet provincial press.

The UP's "crude, insolent lie" about the presence of Soviet submarines off Cheju-do is connected with the popular resistance in a RED FLEET account quoted by TASS (in English Morse to Europe, 18 January), and by Radio Pyongyang. (21 January) The Soviet periodical is said to have claimed that the "puppet" Syngman Rhee resorted to the "provocation" about submarines to justify the reintroduction of martial law--the only defense he can put up against the growing popular resistance to his own Government and to American occupation policies.

As has been indicated, Radio Pyongyang is far more enthusiastic than Radio Moscow in reporting details of the "popular resistance" to oppression south of the 38th parallel. It reports such incidents as they occur and in retrospect, and, in addition, addresses appeals to specific groups, e.g., teachers, Christians, cultural workers, farmers, housewives, and trade unionists, to continue their fight for an independent Korea.

f. Southern "Terrorists" in Haeju: Lee Bum Suk's "plot" to assassinate "important" North Koreans by exploding a bomb in Haeju on 19 January was "nipped in the bud" by the alert Republican police, Pyongyang claims in a 24 January broadcast. Lee is said to have been "directly" connected with the band of "terrorist incendiaries" and to have guided their operations.