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WEEKLY SURVEY
29 OCTOBER 1948

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KOREA: PROFUSION OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA

Korea

Events of the past week have given Soviet propagandists plenty to talk about, and both the Moscow and Pyongyang radios make much of them. Among a profusion of topics the following are outstanding and are given an almost-equal preference: The South-Korean insurrection; withdrawal of Red troops; diplomatic recognition of North Korea by Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland; Syngman Rhee's visit to Japan; and, of course, the usual comparisons between life in north and south. Allegations regarding the oppression of Koreans in Japan, agitation regarding the Korean issue in the United Nations, and many lengthy commentaries defaming American and South-Korean political personalities increase the bulk of the amazingly voluminous verbiage.

a. Rebellion Spreading Despite U.S. Interference: Starting 21 October, both the Moscow and Pyongyang transmitters began reporting in detail on alleged successes of the rebels in South Korea, usually in direct contradiction to Seoul headquarters' claims. Suncheon, for example, was claimed by each side at the same time. In this connection, suppression and censorship of information was attributed by Pyongyang to the South Korean Government, which attempted "to inspire confidence in the hearts of the people." During the past two days, however, boasts of success have changed from the specific to general phrases such as "continued advances northward" and "extension of gains." As a substitute for details of the mutiny's alleged success, complaints against American armed interference are becoming frequent. No evidence of a master plan has yet been monitored from either Moscow or Pyongyang, and both are careful to refer to their southern friends as "insurrectionists," "revolting units," "patriots," "progressive elements," or simply "the people"--but never as Communists.

TASS, on 22 October, quotes a TELEPRESS correspondent in Tokyo when telling the Soviet provincial press that American special police are carrying out mass arrests in South Korea, and uses this as a peg to bring in the "huge impression" made on peoples of the Far East by the Russian troop withdrawal. Pyongyang follows this on 27 October with an account of U.S. "armed interference" in the insurrection, mentioning nine planes said to have been transferred to the "puppet" Government and already in use.

"Such action by the American troops is all the more worthy of attention, in view of the recent conference between Syngman Rhee and General MacArthur pledging the defense of the South Korea Government. Meanwhile, an 'AFP' dispatch, dated Seoul October 21, reports that this attitude of the American troops has given courage to the puppet Government in its predicament caused by the gravity of the opposition within the South Korea against the Syngman Rhee puppet Government. Hence, the bold martial law proclamation by Syngman Rhee."

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b. Soviet Troop Withdrawal: The recent departures of Red troops from North Korea continue to be hailed on all sides as a tremendous expression of the friendship and generosity of Russia toward its pupil, and farewell speeches and parties in honor of the men are still abundant. But the number of troops involved, when they went, and where, is apparently to remain veiled in secrecy. The political implication, however, is exploited for all it is worth. The Red troops came, built a "Garden of Eden" for the Republic of Korea (Harbin, in Cantonese, 26 October), and then withdrew. The Americans are invited to do the same.

At least twice, the Korean withdrawal is linked to Germany. A NEW TIMES editorial on the U.N. cites Russian "good faith" in withdrawing its troops from Korea and trying to solve such problems as the Berlin issue, but the western bloc refuses to cooperate and is responsible for the failure in international relations. (Moscow, in English for North America, 20 October) And Hans Maassen, on 21 October over the Leipzig radio, quotes General Clay as saying, "I do not see for the world why, when we have come so far, we should leave now" -- to which Maassen answers:

"Unfortunately, the Allied control regulations forbid me to reply to General Clay with more far-reaching conclusions drawn from the Korean example and apply them to Germany. But one thing is certain. Should the occupation forces withdraw from Germany, the Americans will be best advised to take with them at once across the ocean any Western German Puppet Government just as they must now take under their wings Syngman Rhee in South Korea in order to protect him against the national rising of the Koreans."

Of the many on-the-spot commentaries from lesser propagandists, the following are typical: "Worker Kim of the Pyongyang street car department will speak on the topic, 'Let Us Thank the Departing Soviet Troops for Their Warm Assistance.'" "Speech by Mr. Cha Sung Yong of the Pyongyang Central Post Office: 'While Praising the Merits of the Soviet Troops, We Strongly Demand that American Troops Withdraw at the Same Time.'" And, anonymous, "The Sinister Ambition of the American Imperialists in Refusing the Pressing Demands of the Korean People." (Pyongyang, 26 October 1948)

c. Diplomatic Recognitions of North Korea: Shortly after the Moscow gesture, the Czech and Polish decisions to recognize North Korea give rise to new protestations of enthusiasm of East European friendship by Radio Pyongyang. "The establishment of diplomatic and economic relations with democratic nations insures the democratic development of the Fatherland," (27 October) is one of scores of similar commentaries. A flood of others express joy and thanks to Stalin, while a new trend is to be noted in two commentaries, "What Kind of a Country Is Czechoslovakia?" (22 October), and "What Kind of a Country Is Poland?" (21 October), in which listeners are told of the progress, with the assistance of the Soviet Union, of these nations.

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d. "Country-Selling" Syngman Rhee: In broadcasts from neither Moscow nor Pyongyang has the visit of Rhee to Japan worn thin. They still tell how he had to be guarded against his own countrymen in Tokyo; how he "insulted" his compatriots by failing to attend a meeting they were "forced" to attend under guard of Japanese police (Pyongyang, 27 October); and how he urged retention of American troops in Korea and oppression of Koreans in Japan. The lead of a 23 October broadcast is typical: "Traitor Syngman Rhee returned to Seoul on 20 October after his country-selling conversations with MacArthur...." And a Soviet Home Service broadcast of 22 October finds it "interesting... that Syngman Rhee left for Tokyo following the visit to Japan of Chiang Kai-shek's representative, Chang Chun."

e. Southern Vice vs. Northern Progress: Singled out most recently for special defamatory attention are Lee Bum Suk, Southern Premier, and Sin Ik Hui, Chairman of the South Korean National Assembly. Moscow's Gessin takes on the first task (in Korean, 21 October) and finds that Lee Bum Suk's reference to "the freedom of Korea is an insult to freedom" because he and his fellows, with American aid, have deprived the South Koreans of their freedom. Sin Ik Hui, to Radio Pyongyang, is an opportunist and "a turkey which changes colors constantly," but his day of reckoning will come.

More specifically, recent backward steps forced on the South Koreans include, Pyongyang says, seizure of the electrical-industry monopoly by the Americans; plans for establishment under Syngman Rhee of a "dictatorship and despotic police State"; and the raising of shipping rates as much as 40 percent by the puppet regime. Up north of the 38th parallel, however, the "people's regime" is being "reinforced more than ever before." To prove this, Radio Pyongyang broadcasts long and late on land reform, organization of the "democratic youth," attention by unions to workers' welfare, rising standards of living, and improvements in all sorts of industries and agriculture. All this, of course, is replete with gratitude for the guidance of "His Excellency, Kim Il Sung" and "our dear Stalin."