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General Perspectives on the Capitalist Development State and Class Struggle in East Asia

“...in China as in Japan, the writings of the young Marx that laid the foundation for Marx’s uncompromising critique of the state were conspicuously absent...Marxism was scientific socialism as systematized by Engels and then by Stalin, even as Stalin was seeking not to eliminate but to build a powerful Russian nation-state *after* the revolution.”

Germaine Hoston

The State, Identity and the National Question in China and Japan

We begin with a rather complex historical elaboration of the context in which a socialist and later specifically Marxist left arose in Japan, China, and Korea; first of all to show the importance of the entire region (including Siberia) for the early Korean left, especially after colonization by Japan in 1910 made most legal socialist activity in Korea itself impossible. More importantly, this East Asian left, it will be argued, was as statist as the German-influenced modernizers building the region’s capitalism. There was nothing specifically Asian about this, as it characterized mainstream currents of the international left everywhere. Nevertheless, because East Asia (in contrast to e.g. Britain, France, or the U.S.) was a “late developing capitalism”, this statism pervaded the “Marxism” in the region well after World War II, and in Korea in reality until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, if not beyond. This century of

statist “Marxism” was to have profound consequences for the Korean working class movement when it revived in the 1970s and 1980s.

To properly situate the evolution of struggle of the Korean working class, then, it is necessary to present a sketch of the East Asian development state against which it struggled (or did not struggle). Such a sketch requires us to begin with Japan, first of all because Japan pioneered such a state in the region, secondly because Japan’s 1910–1945 colonization of Korea decisively marked capitalist development there, and finally because Park Chung-hee, the true architect of the Korean capitalist development state, was educated by the Japanese military and by his World War II service in Manchuria, where Japan experimented with such a state in its “pure form”.¹

The East Asian capitalist development state was borrowed from the West, most immediately from Bismarck’s Germany.² But such borrowing of course intersects institutions and practices in the borrowing countries, and it led to different results in Japan, South Korea and most recently in China.

The capitalist development state, as opposed to pre-capitalist mercantilism, was first theorized in the U.S. by its first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, himself deeply impressed by Colbert’s mercantilist management of the French economy in the era of Louis XIV. Hamilton’s 1791 Report on Manufactures set down a strategy for building up infant U.S. industry behind strong state protection against the superiority of British exports, a strategy the U.S. applied successfully for decades thereafter.³

¹ According to Alice Amsden, *Asia’s Next Giant* (1989), Park devoted his spare time to reading history, and no period interested him more than Japan’s Meiji restoration. (p. 51)

² For a thorough discussion of the Prussian development state and the parallels with Japan, cf. David Landes “Japan and Europe” in W. Lockwood, *The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan* (Princeton, 1965).

³ It is laughable today to watch U.S. government economic officials lecture developing countries against protecting their own industries. It is even more laughable

Hamilton's overall strategy was theorized by the economist Henry Carey and later his son Mathew.⁴ In the late 1820s, the German Friedrich List encountered the Carey school during his stay in the state of Pennsylvania, and later wrote his own contribution to the mercantilist tradition, *The National System of Political Economy*. List was a key figure in the 1835 creation of the German customs union, precursor to German unification under Bismarck in 1870, and above all to the Prussian development state, which became the paradigm of successful "late development" into the late 20th century, and perhaps beyond. And nowhere was there more receptivity to Prussia, and Germany generally, than in East Asia beginning in the 1870s.

For this reason, it is worthwhile to look in slightly more detail at what Prussia signified.

Prior to Japan's Meiji Restoration in 1868, much of Asia, and particularly Korea, Japan and Vietnam, lived in the Sinocentric world developed over two millennia. Such countries related to China and its Confucian scholar-gentry state administrators as tributary powers to an empire at "the center of the world". Neither China nor its tributaries were "nation states" any more than Valois France or Habsburg Spain were "nation states". China was the empire at the center of the world, and bestowed the Mandate of Heaven on those satellite tributary kingdoms so honored.

This Sinocentric tributary world was thrown into disarray by the British Opium Wars beginning in 1840 and the unequal treaties and port leases which Britain, followed by other Western powers, imposed on the dying Manchu dynasty. In contrast to the first contacts with the West in the 16th and 17th centuries, which were largely rebuffed by a China and a Japan quite capable of matching the West militarily on equal or superior terms, the ongoing dis-

that such economists are largely unaware of the American origins of such a strategy, given the deep indifference in mathematics-crazed American economics departments to the history of economic thought or even to economic history.

⁴ Cf. Michael Hudson, *Forgotten American Economists* (New York, 1975).

membership of the Kingdom of the Middle after 1840 made it clear that the renewed confrontation was with a technologically-superior adversary. To respond adequately meant not merely acquiring modern weaponry but acquiring the social organization, science, technology and industrial power that underpinned a modern military. The advanced decay of the Yi Dynasty (1390–1910) in Korea, controlled by the decadent landed aristocracy (yangban), rendered impossible any coherent response,⁵ but Japan, which had already undergone important pre-capitalist development during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), successfully reorganized itself in the Meiji Restoration and by the 1890s was beginning to be recognized as a formidable world power.

A few Japanese had already visited the West in the 1850s and 1860s before the Meiji Restoration, and began the process of cultural, scientific, technical and military assimilation which was to dominate the following decades. After 1868, however, the Meiji government sent official exploratory missions to the U.S., Britain, France and Germany to get full intelligence on the “best of the West” in every field. As these missions reported back, the Japanese government decided to import approximations of the American public school system, the French army and civil code, and German constitutional law and legal institutions.⁶ After the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, however, attention shifted with full force to the country in Europe which Japan most resembled, Bismarck’s Prussia-dominated newly-unified Germany.

While Britain and France were then the dominant world powers, and about to embark on their imperialist expansion in Africa and Asia, their free-trade economic regimes and ideologies had less to offer Japan than the parallel “late developer” Prussia-Germany. Bismarck’s unification had routed the liberal-democratic opposition

⁵ Korea did fight off French and American naval and military probes between 1866 and 1882, but was being coveted by newly-emergent Japan from 1876 onward.

⁶ For a good survey of these missions and the results, cf. Hirakawa Sukehiro, “Japan’s Turn to the West” in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi (ed.), *Modern Japanese Thought* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 30–97.

and placed Germany on course for rapid capitalist development while preserving the power and wealth of the agrarian Junker class.⁷ Germany had also retained its emperor, a reality which appealed to the Japanese desire to retain theirs (this emperor worship would, of course, play a central role in the future).

Germany was, from 1870 to 1933, far more of a vanguard for underdeveloped countries, in terms of social institutions, than the U.S. In Germany, both top-down statism and a working-class political party were decisive. Germany, from the wars of liberation against Napoleon onward, had the above-mentioned mercantile development ideology, articulated first by Fichte's "closed mercantile state" and then deepened by List (List was translated into Japanese and began to be widely read in the 1880s⁸). This was in turn merely a transposition of the mercantilist (or cameralist) policies of the Prussian state in its 17th and 18th century rise to great power status in Europe. Through the continuity of the Prussian civil service which had been decisive both in the pre-1789 mercantilist phase and in the "creation of a civil society from above" in the Napoleonic period, Germany in 1850 and thereafter possessed a system of educational and research institutions oriented towards technological innovation unknown anywhere else in the world, which, after unified Germany's sudden eruption on the map of Europe in 1864–1870, crowned by its military humiliation of France (then considered to have the world's greatest army), became the envied model of all developing industrial countries. The intensive phase of capitalist accumulation is characterized not merely by Taylorist scientific management; it is characterized just as much by direct ap-

⁷ The respective German and Japanese "revolutions from above" are discussed in Barrington Moore's 1966 classic, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*.

⁸ Cf. T. Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought* (London 1989). Or, "Friedrich List('s).. influence on late Meiji thinking on economic policy probably exceeded that of any other single foreign economist" A. Mikuni and R.T. Murphy, *Japan's Policy Trap: Dollars, Deflation, and the Crisis of Japanese Finance* (Washington, 2002), p. 97.

appropriation of science to the production process itself, in contrast to the haphazard methods of earlier industrial development. In this realm, the Prussian system of technische Hochschulen and state research institutes was unrivaled, and the results, by the 1880s, were there for all to see in the German chemical, electronics and steel industries, as well as in scientific agriculture and military applications. Virtually the entire creation of Japanese universities in the 1870s onward was based on the German model, with German scholars and administrators visiting Japan in abundance.

But there is still more to the significance of this “German (or Prussian) development state”. German cartel structures, and regulation thereof, were studied and copied, and Japan looked to Germany’s Reichsbank as a model for the Bank of Japan.⁹

Finally, Germany was the vanguard in the containment of a working-class political party and the enlistment of that party in its own state apparatus.¹⁰ Prior to serious industrialization in Japan beginning in the 1870s, and much later in Korea, this was not an immediately pressing reality in the early Meiji period. But it was decisive for what came later, with the beginning of labor unrest in the 1890s as well as the introduction of Marxism among Japanese intellectuals ca. 1900. In anticipation of both such unrest and the introduction of Marxism, the German Historical School in both economics and social policy (Brentano, Stein, Schmoller) was

⁹ “Banks modeled on contemporary German institutions had been launched in Japan in 1870. (but) ... Iwasaki Yataro, the founder of the Mitsubishi empire, introduced an important institutional modification to the imported German model... Iwasaki’s ‘idea of a bank was an institution to attract capital for investment in the industries and businesses of the Mitsubishi zaibatsu in such a form that the public would in no way acquire title of ownership or control. The public would come in as “depositors”, not as “investors”. In other words, he looked upon a bank not as a means to create a capital market...(but) as a substitute for a capital market.” Mikuni/Murphy, *Japan’s Policy Trap*, p. 107.

¹⁰ For a full confrontation of Marxian theory with the Listian statism that dominated both German economic strategy and, covertly, a fair portion of the German Social Democratic Party, cf. R. Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism. Karl Marx vs. Friedrich List* (Oxford, 1988).

introduced to Japan by the 1880s,¹¹ in the vain hope that Japan could circumvent the noxious social consequences of capitalist development and the dangers to the institutions of the status quo so apparent in the European revolutionary movements.

Beneath appearances, however, the German Social Democratic Party had been dominated from the outset, in practice if not in theory, by the statist and class-collaborationist orientation of Ferdinand Lassalle. Marx, in his 1875 Critique of the Gotha Program already saw in the Lassallean idea of a “people’s state” a dangerous idea totally alien to his own theory, an idea moreover arguably an antecedent to the later ideology of the fascist “community of labor”. This would indeed have potent consequences in the development of the working-class movement and Marxian theory in Japan.

Understanding East Asia’s late 19th century encounter with the West in its Japanese, Korean and Chinese specificities requires an analysis of timing, both in developments in the West itself and in the readiness of the three respective countries to absorb developments there.¹² The earliest major impact occurred through 1870s

¹¹ “In 1891, for example, Kanai Noburu, a distinguished academic economist whose creative interpretations of the German historical school had inspired many of the early Meiji bureaucrats, had warned that ‘if workers are treated like beasts, then after several decades unions and socialism will appear’.” (in Carter Eckert, *Offspring of Empire. The Koch’ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876–1945* (Seattle, 1991), p. 203.

¹² “I have spoken of the conceptual state in relation to the idea of the nation. In Meiji Japan, such a purely abstract notion of the state was inconceivable...The native Japanese Shinto concept of an organic polity nurtured the conflation of nation and state in Japan, but it was not alone in doing so. The Confucianism that Japanese borrowed from China likewise offered no conceptual distinction between state and society. Tianxia (all under heaven, or tenka in Japanese) was a cultural rather than a political abstraction. As a result, in striking contrast to the West, the state existed as a purely political notion in neither China nor Japan until it was introduced forcibly by the interstate system of the Western powers. Despite this basic similarity and shared political influences, however, there were important divergences between the Chinese and Japanese Confucian systems as political doctrines and between the intellectual milieus into which Marxism was introduced early in the twentieth century.” (Germaine Hoston, *The State, Identity and the National Question in China and Japan* (Princeton, 1994), p. 95.

and 1880s translations of then-dominant figures such as Darwin, John Stuart Mill and Thomas Huxley, and of Herbert Spencer's sociological application of Darwin. What Asian intellectuals took from Social Darwinism, in particular, was its "survival of the fittest" lesson for the plight of their own respective countries in the newly-discovered world of power politics that had dislodged the earlier Sinocentric order. The misunderstandings and lack of proportion in such encounters led to a hodge-podge of translations and influences which only slowly came into realistic focus. Hence, for example, Adam Smith could be translated and debated after Mill and List, or the then-reigning German neo-Kantianism¹³ before Rousseau, and the ideas of Henry George and his single tax on income from land could have a far greater impact in East Asia (where the struggle between peasant and landlord sharply posed the question of ground rent) than they ever had in the U.S.¹⁴

Tsarist Russia (and after 1917, revolutionary Russia) in fact loomed largest for the emergence of Asian radicals attempting to develop a critical response to Western impact, as opposed to slavish

¹³ "Twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals encountering Kant's rationalism began at the finished end of his system, without asking the same questions of being that he had posed at its inception...Chinese intellectuals saw in Kantianism both an emancipation of the ego and an ethic which, instead of determining moral behavior by the consequences resulting from it, declared that good conduct was an unconditional law, a categorical imperative." (F. Wakeman, *History and Will. Philosophical Perspectives of Mao tse-tung's Thought* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 180.

¹⁴ "As early as the 1870s the Japanese had translated Rousseau, Montesquieu, Bluntschli, Darwin" as well as "the novels of Hugo, Dostoevski, Turgenev...the poetry of Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, Heine..." The Japanese had "a keen and sometimes arrogant sense of their peculiar status as (modern culture's) agent in Asia." Jerome Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China* (New York, 1981), p. 141. Sun Yat-sen incorporated George's single tax on land into all his successive programmatic formulations. In China, "Within scarcely more than two decades, the Chinese intellectual avant-garde had run the entire gamut of Western thought from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle through Locke, Montesquieu and Rousseau, and on to Marx, Mill, Bentham, Kropotkin, Spencer, and Darwin, and even to John Dewey and Bertrand Russell." (R. Scalapino and G.T. Yu, *Modern China and Its Revolutionary Process*. (Berkeley, 1984), p. 110.

mimicry of ill-understood ideologies. Russia, like China, was an overwhelmingly agrarian society dominated by a very small and decadent elite. Hence, the example of the Russian Populists (already in decline in Russia itself) fired the imaginations of Chinese, Korean and Japanese oppositional figures who by the 1890s began making plans, some of them successful, to assassinate top officials and the Japanese emperor himself. The influence of Russian Populism was quickly followed by that of anarchism, through the great impact of Tolstoy and even more by Kropotkin's works, such as *The Conquest of Bread*, his *History of the French Revolution*, and the idea of mutualism. By 1900 Tokyo had begun to play the role for Asian radicals (continuing into the 1930s) that London and Zurich played for Europe, and thousands of Chinese and Korean students went there to discover Marx, Nietzsche, Kropotkin and a clearer, more concrete sense of the European workers' movements attempting to modify or overthrow capitalism. Thousands of Japanese had already gone to study in Germany, and were followed by Chinese going to study in both Germany and in the U.S. (in which latter, for example, the Christian Sun Yat Sen came under the influence of both German Protestant modernism and of Georgism),¹⁵ and similar currents settled in Paris where they encountered the French variants of anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. As late as 1920, anarchism was more influential than Marxism in the Chinese, Korean and Japanese radical movements.¹⁶

The greatest problem posed for the absorption of Western (above all German) ideas and institutions in Japan, the most ad-

¹⁵ Donald Treadgold, *The West in Russia and China, Vol. 2. China 1582–1949* (Boulder, CO 1985), ch. 3.

¹⁶ From 1911 “until 1920, no doctrines had a greater influence on young Chinese radicals than those of Proudhon, Bakunin and above all Kropotkin. The activities of contemporary anarchists, such as Kotoku and Osugi Sakae in Japan, Emma Goldman and William Haywood in the United States, and Errico Malatesta in Italy, were a further inspiration to them.” (Scalapino/Yu, *Modern China*, p. 506.) For portraits of Kotoku and Osugi, cf. also Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, pp. 140–148. Cf. also below.

vanced East Asian country, was the position of the emperor. Thus the German constitutional theories of Bluntschli¹⁷ and Gneist were most useful and congenial in the elaboration of the kokutai (usually translated as the ‘social community’ presided over by the emperor). Liberal legal theorists such as Minobe Tatsukichi later contested the dominant kokutai theory¹⁸ of the emperor as a living god and descendant of the unbroken sun-god imperial dynasty founded in the 3rd century AD, and counterposed a theory of the emperor as merely an organ of the state, but they were marginalized and paid a heavy price for lese-majeste. An alternative interpretation of the emperor was synthesized with Marxism by the most important Japanese theorist of fascism, Kita Ikki, and it is to this problematic that we now turn, for worship of the Japanese emperor was central to the colonial domination of Korea, which latter contributed importantly to the formation of Korean capitalism, in 1910–1945.

East Asia had begun to seriously assimilate Millsian liberal, German Historical School, anarchist and Marxist theories of society, not as they had evolved over a century in Europe, but in rapid succession over a few decades when it was confronted by a further ideology: fascism. Fascism developed in Europe by a dialectic which could not be, and was not, developed in East Asia in identical form. East Asia did not have the long ferment of the post-1789 counter-revolution of Burke, De Maistre, De Bonald or Savigny, theoreticians of the virtues of the ancien regime after its power had been deflated and placed irrevocably on the defensive by the French Revolution. It instead was destined to encounter modern

¹⁷ Kato Hiroyuki had translated parts of Bluntschli’s *Allgemeines Staatsrecht* in the early 1870s. According to Germaine Hoston, the Japanese were influenced, in addition to Bluntschli and Gneist, by the German legal theorists Lorenz von Stein, A. Mosse, K. Rudolph, H. Roesler, G. Jellinek and H. Schulze, p. 87. In general, the mystical Shinto-inspired theory of the tenno (emperor) collapsed state and nation into one (Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, p. 92)

¹⁸ On Minobe, cf. F. Miller, *Minobe Tatsukichi. Interpreter of Constitutionalism in Japan* (1965). Minobe (Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, p. 92) thought that the emperor should be treated legally like all other monarchs.

reaction in the theories of the plebeian revolt against the older conservatism that began, in a complex process, in France in the 1880s, an “aristocratic” rebellion by non-aristocrats, riding the wave of the emerging plebeian mass politics in continental Europe that would come to the fore in the Boer War (1899–1902), the French Dreyfus Affair, a new anti-Semitism, or such Central European movements as Pan-Germanism (by 1900, East Asia had imported this ideological matrix in its homegrown Pan-Asianism, a backlash against Western world domination that provided a useful cover for Japanese imperialist expansion through World War II¹⁹). This new synthesis bore fruit in Europe in the brief 1911 collaboration between the radical followers of George Sorel in the Cercle Proudhon with the monarchists of Action Française, out of which came the post-World War I fascist militant Georges Valois. But its most important practical extension, for the purposes of mass political movements, came in the impact of Sorel’s myth of the proletarian elite and the general strike on the Italian revolutionary syndicalists. These included Errico Corradini, who in 1910 had elaborated the theory of the “proletarian nations” such as Italy, locked in struggle with the plutocratic “capitalist nations” Britain and France. Benito Mussolini, prior to 1915 still a fire-breathing leader of the internationalist left wing of the Italian Socialist Party, would find this ideological ferment ready-made when he broke to the right to found the first fascist movement to provide the shock troops against the working class (in 1919–1920) and seize power (1922).

¹⁹ Pan-Asianism is discussed in passing in Germaine Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*. A full study, unfortunately marred by the post-modern fad in American academia, is D. Ham, *A Meiji Discourse on Asia: A Study of Asianism*, (U. of Chicago PhD Thesis, 1993). Ham writes, after conceding that Asianism quickly became an ideology for Japanese domination of Asia, that “the future of Asianism is full of possibilities. However...the tension between the Asian consciousness and the national consciousness still remains an integral part of Asianism as a discourse. Thus, one should not underestimate the potential of Asianism but must closely observe future developments in Japan’s intellectual and ideological environment.” (p. 231). Indeed. For the post-modernists, any stick, even those tainted by fascism and militarism, will do, apparently, to beat the universalist “master narrative”.

Mussolini's first successful appropriation of this decades-long irrationalist ferment against Enlightenment and Marx-influenced theories of society demonstrates the fundamental truth that fascism comes from the non-Marxist left.²⁰

The real synthesis, however, was made not in Italy but in Germany. The lineage from Stirner- Proudhon- Bakunin- Nietzsche- Sorel to fascism is a tortuous and highly contested one. But one clear thread goes from the aestheticized Absolute Ich of German Idealist philosophy, specifically of Schelling and Fichte, once removed from the Kantian framework against which both philosophers were rebelling. Hegel later located "universal labor" (by which he meant creativity) in the state civil service, headed by the Prussian monarch. But after the failed revolutions of 1848, and Marx's materialist relocation of human creativity in "sensuous transformative praxis", the aestheticized self continued to make its way, increasingly divorced from any universal social framework, in which "freedom" was no longer understood in relationship to "necessity" (as in Marx) but as increasing revolt against "constraint". Once individuality is separated from the social and proceeds according to its own logic, consciously or not, it requires a larger mediating force to "mediate" the war of "aestheticized" wills, and this mediating force is ultimately the state. In real practice in the late 19th century anarchist movement, ideas of "mutualism" increasingly pointed to the need for a larger coordinating body to adjudicate the commonality of decentralized "conscious egos" or units of production or communities. Hence the curious evolution from a kind of Nietzschean aestheticized will-to-power to the fascist states headed by Mussolini and later Hitler, both of whom specifically referred to themselves as "artists" rather than politicians.

Such a development could not occur in a similar form in East Asia, where an uprooted pseudo-aristocratic middle class had not yet had time to develop. Indeed, as Joseph Levenson remarked.

²⁰ The best statement of this perspective on fascism in João Bernardo, *Labirintos do fascismo*, (Porto, 2003).

“How could anti-academicism in Ming China take the form it did in the West, where an avant-garde in the arts, straining against the conventional taste of an outside public, was part of a generally vaguely displaced intelligentsia, iconically restless in a world it could not dominate? In China, where the intelligentsia did dominate, as gentry officials, disdain of the elders and contempt for the public were unlikely, to say the least. The easy Western association of anti-academicism with youthful individualism was impossible there. No higher praise could be meted out...than to say of a painter that he entered completely into the spirit of some old master.”²¹

It is not necessary here to determine whether the Japanese regime from the 1930s to 1945 was specifically fascist or merely a particularly harsh military dictatorship. The Meiji “revolution from above”, formalized in its borrowings of Prussian constitutional law, created an elite political culture in which, initially in the 1890s, at most 5% of the population could vote and where the state bureaucracy from the beginning held the real power of decision.²² The system was characterized by a condominium of civilian rule and the power of the military, itself deeply influenced by the Prussian model.²³

²¹ J. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate* (Berkeley, 1965), p. 28. Interestingly, on the other hand, early Japanese anarchists were among the few who viscerally rejected Prussian-influenced Japanese statism, and in terms not unlike the Russian Populists. “Vehemently rejecting imported German statist elements in the Meiji polity, Kotoku and his followers also experienced a deep yearning for the restoration of what they believed to be traditional Japanese virtues, many of which were expressed in the kokutai notion of the organic community itself.” Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, p. 139.

²² “The Bismarckian system is described...as follows: ‘The prime minister remained responsible to the king, not to parliament, and the army remained under the king’s control. In practice, this arrangement gave extraordinary power first to Bismarck, then to the Prussian and Imperial bureaucracy, both vis a vis the monarch and the parliament.’” Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle. The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925–1975*, (Stanford, 1982), p. 36.

²³ Various works have attempted to define the nature of ultimate power in the Japanese system: “Power in Japan is masked. For upward of a thousand years now, the country’s ruling elite has understood and employed the key to maintaining an unbroken hold on power: disguising and diffusing the sources of that power...Indeed,

A closer look at the development of this statist-imperialist militarism in Japan is important, because it was in the expansion of the Japanese empire, above all in Manchuria, that a qualitative threshold was crossed which would have great implications for the post-1945 development of Asia. The Tokugawa period had bequeathed to its successor a literate population (already as literate as Great Britain in 1868) and a rational bureaucracy. With such a legacy, from the beginning of the Meiji period, as we have seen, Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' in fact wore "the brass knuckles of Listian mercantilism".²⁴ As early as 1850, the Tokugawa state had already sponsored construction of a steel plant. In the early Meiji period, this policy was expanded with the construction of the Kamaishi Ironworks (1874), and later (1897) with the Yawata steel mill (the contemporary Nippon Steel) built with production equipment acquired from Germany's Gutehoffnungshuette.

One key figure in this strategy was Toshimichi Okubo (1830–1878), a member of the commission sent to Europe in the early 1870s. Okubo discovered List's ideas in Germany and his 1874 economic program was suffused with Listianism. After Okubo's assassination, the Meiji state embarked on "the largest non-coerced privatization of industrial facilities in history".²⁵ The interpenetra-

it is the nature of that power—the extralegal power of the Japanese bureaucracy—that looms perhaps as the greatest conceptual block that Westerners face in grasping the full nature of policymaking in Japan." Mikuni/Murphy, *Japan's Policy Trap*, pp. 39–41. "Japan's bureaucratic elite holds itself above any notion of accountability to judicial institutions rooted in the rule of law...one reason that it is so difficult to analyze the policy process in Japan—it is deliberately not written down." (op. cit p. 51). Cf. also Johnson, *MITI and Japanese Miracle*, p. 26 ff. As Johnson puts it, "...I am concerned to explain why the discrepancy between the formal authority of the Emperor (prewar) or the Diet (postwar) and the actual powers of the state bureaucracy exists and persists, and why this discrepancy contributes to the success of the developmental state." (p. 36)

²⁴ R. Samuels, *Rich Nation, Strong Army: National Security and The Technological Transformation of Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1994), p. 14.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 38. However, "Even after nominal equity control of the new enterprises was turned over to the descendants of the feudal elites at what amounted to give-away prices in the 1880s, the elites still acted as if it were up to the bureaucracy

tion of economic and military development was total, and would remain so into the 1940s. From the 1870s onward, state support had transformed the Mitsubishi corporation into “one of the world’s greatest military-industrial combines”.²⁶ The German victory over France in 1870–1871 had impressed upon the Japanese the importance of industry for military strength. By 1877, “the Japanese armaments industry was entirely owned and operated by the Meiji state”,²⁷ and even before, the restoration had been “the bell-weather for Japan’s forced march to industrialization”.²⁸ The 1890s, however, saw a shift to privatized arms production. But the military throughout was a key stimulus to the rest of the economy and many modern Japanese corporations “originated with the Meiji military establishment”.²⁹

Because of the unequal treaties which prevented Japan from imposing protective tariffs, the Industrial Bank of Japan was established in 1900 and “was used to steer foreign capital away from direct investment and toward portfolio holdings as a way of limiting foreign control of Japanese industry”.³⁰ As early as 1880, however, the state promoted the rise of the zaibatsu, or industrial conglomerates, precursors of Korea’s modern chaebol. In 1911, Japan regained control over tariff policy. After World War I, a plan for “industrial rationalization” was developed (not unlike the “rationalization movement” underway in Western Europe in the same period) and this culminated in 1931, simultaneous with the “Manchuria Incident”, in an “Important Industries Control Law” establishing an “Indigenization Promotion Council”.

Japan’s emergence as a world power took place, obviously, in the context of late 19th century imperialism and arms races. Control of

to take whatever measures necessary to ensure the continued viability of the enterprises.” (Mikuni/Murphy, *Japan's Policy Trap*, p. 106.)

²⁶ Samuels, *Rich Nation, Strong Army* op. cit. ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 84.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 87.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 39.

the Korean peninsula was one of its foremost initial goals. Such control brought it immediately into conflict with late Imperial China, which had exercised suzerainty over Korea for centuries, and with Tsarist Russia's relentless eastward expansion. Japan's military triumph in the 1894–95 war with China not only marked its emergence as a coming world power, but also abolished China's suzerainty over Korea. This victory marked a final break with the Sinocentric "Mandate of Heaven", whereby Korea's yangban class had looked upon Japan as a remote backwater satellite of China, inferior to itself. The war also brought U.S. and German imperialism forcefully into East Asian politics for the first time, whereby Japan was effectively robbed of important territorial goals in China while Germany in 1898 was awarded the lease of Kiouchou on the Liaotung peninsula. Japanese troops also played the key role in putting down the 1900 Boxer Rebellion.

Still more important, however, from a world historical viewpoint, was Japan's further victory in the Russo-Japanese war, which not only established Japan's claim to Korea but stunned the world as the first victory of a non-Western power over a major Western country³¹ as well as sparking the 1905 Revolution in Russia, dress rehearsal for 1917. Nevertheless, as in 1895, Western imperialist pressure again robbed Japan of the full fruits of victory, and solidified an ultra-nationalist sentiment in Japan that elevated the power of the military over the civilian government.

Furthermore, in the wake of both the 1895 and 1905 Japanese victories, working-class struggle erupted on the home front, just as the earlier Historical School-oriented intellectuals had feared. Even though industrial workers were scarcely 1 % of the population in Japan in these years, a three-year strike wave persisted from 1896 to 1898, and a second one erupted in 1906–1907, most importantly among shipyard workers, in particular in the dramatic Ashio

³¹ Japan's 1905 victory was celebrated throughout the colonial world and by forces as disparate as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the United States.

shipyard uprising. In Korea, though obviously in different (and less economically-developed) circumstances, there was also the slow emergence of working-class struggle. Hamkyung nam-do miners had attacked a local government office in 1888 over heavy taxation; the first Korean trade union was organized by dock workers in Mokpo and Koonsan harbors in 1898, and these workers had carried out eight strikes by 1903; railroad workers struck five times in 1901 alone, and workers at the Kyungsung Electric company rioted over wages. In 1909, miners at the Sakju Sindandong mine had rioted and fought against Japanese troops sent to quell them.³²

In spite of the bellicose patriotic mood reigning in Japan in 1905, the nascent socialist left there had opposed the Russo-Japanese war, and denounced the European left which (because of its historical enmity to Tsarism) had supported Japan, for which the emperor had commended it³³ (interestingly, the sole European radical of stature to attack left-wing support for Japan was the Menshevik Martov). However, the denial, again, of the full rewards of the Japanese victory by the mediation of the Western powers fed the Pan-Asian mood in broad layers of Japanese society, and the idea

³² This information on early Korean strikes is from Kim Youngkon's three-volume book (in Korean) *The Korean History of Work and the Future*, vol. 1 (Seoul, 2005), pp. 151–153, kindly provided by the author.

³³ John Crump, *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan* (London 1983), pp. 73–74. The centrality of the German SPD for Japanese socialists up to the repression of 1911 was patent: “For most of the decade after 1901, all socialists agreed on the efficacy of a parliamentary policy. The electoral success of the German Social Democratic Party, which they regarded as a mentor and a model, gave them heart.” (from B. Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, p. 161). Marxism as such, however, was first introduced to Japan by Sakai Yuzaburo (1859–1900). Sakai went to Europe as a state functionary in 1889, the year of the founding of the Second International. He resigned his state position and attended the International's 2nd Congress in 1891. He wrote about Marxism in a newspaper, to little visible effect. (J.-P. Vilaine, „Les classes laborieuses au Japon, Part IV”, *Echanges*, no. 110, pp. 38–39.) As G. Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question* op. cit, p. 94, put it “Kokutai, then, with its admixture of distinctively Japanese and Confucian elements, may be regarded as the mainstream Meiji orthodoxy, the backdrop against which Marxist ideas were introduced at the turn of the twentieth century.”

that Japan's special imperial mission included driving the Western (white) powers out of Asia. Japan after 1905 effectively controlled Korean politics, and in 1910 officially colonized Korea and Formosa (later Taiwan) (this development, as shall be seen, was not without importance for the emergence of both countries as Asian "Tigers" 60 years later).

The further and final deflation of China's "Mandate of Heaven", relative to its former tributaries (France had colonized Annam, the future Indochina, in 1884), was the Chinese Revolution of 1911,³⁴ in which the anti-Confucian ferment of the previous four decades came to fruition.³⁵ While Sun Yat-sen became the president of the Chinese Republic in the following year, the latter proved such an ineffectual successor to the Manchu dynasty that by 1919 radical youth had gone over en masse to anarchism and Marxism. Korean exiles from the new Japanese colony in their homeland played a role in the development of the Chinese Revolution through the key turning points of 1919, 1927, and 1949, and much of the evolution of the Korean left in these decades took place in China, Manchuria, Siberia and Japan.³⁶

The Chinese Revolution of 1911 was also crucial for the evolution of the main future theoretician of Japanese fascism and imperial expansion, Kita Ikki.³⁷ Kita in 1911 was still a socialist and inter-

³⁴ World War I and the world revolutionary wave from 1917–1921 have obscured the historical memory of the wave of revolutions and uprisings of which the Chinese Revolution of 1911 was a part. These included the Russian 1905, the Iranian Revolution of 1906, an anti-colonial uprising in India in 1909, the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920, the Portuguese Revolution of 1911, and the Lena gold fields strike in Russia in 1912, which signaled the reawakening of working-class struggle in that country after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution.

³⁵ This anti-Confucian ferment is described in the early chapters of Jerome Grieder, *Intellectuals and the State in Modern China* (New York, 1981).

³⁶ The best portrait of this East Asian diaspora of Korean revolutionaries is Kim San, *The Song of Ariran* (New York, 1941).

³⁷ On Kita Ikki, cf. George Wilson, *Radical Nationalist in Japan: Kita Ikki, 1883–1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969) and B. Tankha, *Kita Ikki and the Making of Modern Japan* (Honolulu, 2006); B. Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, pp. 214–219.

nationalist, and saw a Chinese-Japanese collaboration as fundamental for the eradication of Western imperialism from Asia. But his experiences in China at that time left him deeply disappointed, convincing him that the Republic's failure to constitute a strong state was its foremost problem. These experiences marked a turning point en route to Kita's 1919 synthesis of Marxism and the Japanese emperor cult, which one writer has called "one of the great classics of world fascist thought...putting socialist demagoguery in the service of an ultra-nationalist program".³⁸

Korea itself had hardly been absent from this regional ferment. The clear imminence of imperialist attack beginning in the 1870s had exposed the decadence of the yangban class as sharply as the American opening of Japan in 1853 had exposed the weakness of the Tokugawa regime there. But the one attempt in 1884 to launch a reform from above similar to Meiji through a progressive coup had been a complete failure. Japanese troops had to be brought in to crush the peasant Tonghak Rebellion of 1894. A lively newspaper and magazine press debated the question of what it meant to be "modern", and the growing presence of Japan as the regional vanguard of modernity resulted in the soaring popularity of Japanese books in Korea.³⁹ Korean students, like their Chinese counterparts, flocked to Tokyo.⁴⁰ Just as Japan a few decades before had dis-

³⁸ Bernardo, *Labirintos do fascismo*. In Kita's view, the emperor was important "not so much as an institution...a symbol of community...In Japan...the imperial institution had been preserved to represent the national culture, but its potential as a social monarchy had been suppressed by the rise of bourgeois and bureaucratic politics within the constitutional order...Kita was indifferent to the idea of a divine emperor." in B. Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, pp. 215–216. Other sources put it somewhat differently: "The central importance of the Imperial institution lies in the sacred cloak it provides for bureaucratic infallibility; the assassinations and open intimidation that characterized Japanese political life before 1945 and the 'scandals' that have erupted regularly since then substitute for an institutional means of changing course." In Mikuni/Murphy, *Japan's Policy Trap*, p. 105.

³⁹ Cf. A. Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York, 2002)

⁴⁰ "The influence of Japanese radicalism was of course very strong upon the young Koreans...The Japanese university was almost the only place where Koreans could feel the bonds of sympathy, equality and comradeship. Naturally, they moved

covered itself to be a “nation” as opposed to a tributary satellite of the Middle Kingdom, so too did Korea in the two decades prior to annexation by Japan.⁴¹ After 1910, the colonial authorities imposed a harsh regime of censorship on Korean-language publications and began their project of forcibly transforming Korea into a province of Japan.

East Asia was far more involved economically than militarily in World War I. The Japanese economy entered a boom phase stimulated by demand from abroad.⁴² In China, on the other hand, “by 1915 the failure of the republican revolution to achieve its intended purposes was manifest”.⁴³ Japan (like China), enrolled on the Allied side, did invade Siberia in 1918 with 70,000 troops in the coordinated international attempt to crush the Bolshevik Revolution, and of course used this military pretext to further promote its imperial appetites for Manchuria. In the same year, severe rice shortages in Japan itself led to the Rice Riots around the country, which were

to the left at the same pace as many of their Japanese comrades—in some cases, more rapidly. During this period, more Korean Marxists were being made in Japan than in Russia.” (R. Scalapino and C.-S. Lee, *Communism in Korea*, Part One (Berkeley, 1972), p. 57.) For police statistics on the total Korean population in interwar Japan (totaling 730,000 by 1937) broken down by political affiliation, *ibid.* pp. 180–183.

⁴¹ Cf. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire*, p. 226. “The Korean elite in particular would have found the idea of nationalism not only strange but uncivilized... (they) thought of themselves less as Korean than as members of a larger cosmopolitan civilization centered in China.” In 1834, Kim Jong-ho had published a map of Korea, and was persecuted for a “crime” against Confucian orthodoxy (M.J. Rhee, *The Doomed Empire. Japan in Colonial Korea* (Aldershot et al., 1997), p. 38. Because of their “predecessors’ long participation in the transnational realm of East Asia” writes Andre Schmid, “former universals, rooted in the now largely discredited Confucian epistemology, came to be particularized...as ‘Chinese’.” (Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, p. 60).

⁴² “Between 1915 and 1918, Japan’s cumulative current account surplus amounted to 2.7 billion yen; by comparison, annual GDP at the beginning of the war stood at 4.7 billion yen.” Mikuni/Murphy, *Japan’s Policy Trap*, p. 103. It should also be noted that this wartime boom sparked the first large-scale emigration of Korean manpower to Japan.

⁴³ J. Grieder, *Intellectuals and State*, p. 205.

brutally suppressed. But the decisive political impact of World War I in East Asia was the contempt with which all three countries were treated by the Western powers at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. Japan's attempt to have the conference adopt a resolution denouncing racism and white supremacy was rejected, as were attempts by a Korean delegation to have Woodrow Wilson's right to self-determination applied to Korea. Attempts to redress the imperialist dismemberment of China were similarly ignored. Hopes initially raised in Korea by Wilson and Versailles were the immediate backdrop to the March 1, 1919 independence movement there, where mass demonstrations led to confrontations with the Japanese military and police throughout the country, followed by a ferocious repression.⁴⁴ The Chinese response was the May 4th Movement of the same year, the immediate precursor to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party,⁴⁵ and the opening of the 1919–1927

⁴⁴ In reality, nationalism and official Communism in Asian were inseparable. "... the early Korean Communists were a great disappointment to the Lenin government. The Korean Communist movement was a homogenized movement, and the purely nationalist element in it could never be satisfactorily strained out." Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 61. In 1926, KCP leader Kim Tan-ya "argued that, since most Korean socialists were also nationalists, it was entirely appropriate for Communists to serve as a vanguard for the nationalist movement." (ibid. p. 81) In Japanese exile, after the repression of the late 1920s there, "the only outlet for unalloyed Korean nationalism in Japanese politics was through the Communist movement." (ibid. p. 186)

⁴⁵ M. Meisner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism* (1967) Meisner shows that as of 1921, Li, a key founder of the CCP, was closer to Bergsonism than Marxism. Another historian writes that the origins of the CCP "...are shrouded in a kind of primeval mist of history, so that even today it is not entirely clear...how many, and what...mists participated. What is striking, in any event, is how few of them were left at the end...when the CCP took over China, about half of them had gone over to the KMT (and)...the remainder had either been excluded from the party or executed by the enemies of the CCP. *It is more noteworthy still that the founding of the party did not mean the beginning of the study of Marxism.*" (my emphasis-LG). in Wolfgang Bauer, *China and the Search for Happiness* (English: New York 1976, trans. of 1971 German), p. 373. Similarly, Mao tse-tung (Wakeman, *History and Will*, p. 201) wrote no less than 12,000 characters in marginal notes to the German neo-Kantian Friedrich Paulsen's book *System der Ethik*. "What Paulsen

radicalization which culminated in the Canton and Shanghai massacres of Communists by Chiang Kai-shek in the latter year.

The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 electrified the East Asian left as it electrified the radical left everywhere. As indicated earlier, Tokyo since 1900 had been, in Korean revolutionary Kim San's words, "a Mecca and a refuge for revolutionaries of many kinds" from both China and Korea.⁴⁶ Korean revolutionaries "learned their theory in Tokyo and their tactics in organization and action in China".⁴⁷ The Chinese and Korean Communist Parties were both founded in China in 1921;⁴⁸ the Japanese Communist Party was founded a year later.

offered Mao tse-tung was a rational justification for placing the will over the intellect. (p. 202). Frederick Wakeman's book is one serious attempt to show how Western and Asian influences mixed in the emergence of statist Marxism in China. In his summary of Mao's thought up to the mid-1930s, Wakeman writes (p. 293) "From Paulsen and the neo-Kantians came the assurance that reason created social forms... From K'ang Yu-wei, Yen Fu and the Darwinists came the notion of objective and universal laws of science... And from T.H. Green (a British neo-Hegelian whom Mao also studied intensively-LG) came not only the intense glorification of will, not just the civil society of a Rousseau, but the depiction of political society as an instrument of individual realization. *State/society, reintegrated, would force the individual to be free...*" (my emphasis-LG).

⁴⁶ Kim San, *Song of Ariran*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Ibid p. 35. As G. Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, p. 113) puts it "...Japanese socialists were the primary agents in a process that began as early as 1900. Their influence on Chinese radicals was exercised through a combination of direct contact with Chinese students living in Japan and written works in Japanese—original and translated writings—concerning Western Marxism." The same could be said for Korean radicals.

⁴⁸ On the early history of the Korean CP, cf. Dae-sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement 1918–1948* (Princeton, 1967). In the famous debate between Lenin and the Indian M.N. Roy on the question of support to bourgeois nationalist movements in the colonial world, the Korean delegate Park Chin-sun, along with Roy, "quite vociferously championed the idea that for the triumph of the revolution in the West, victory of the revolution in the colonies was a necessary condition and it was, therefore, imperative on the part of the European proletariat to extend all possible help to the struggles of the colonial people." (in Sobhannlal Datta Gupta, *Comintern and the Destiny of Communism in India, 1919–1943* (Calcutta, 2006), p. 67)

Between 1919 and 1927 (and particularly in 1924–27), the close collaboration between the Kuomintang of Sun Yat-sen and then (after Sun's death) Chiang Kai-shek with the Third International and the Chinese Communist Party meant that the nationalist Kuomintang itself, and Chiang in particular, absorbed both the military and organizational methods of Soviet advisors.

The CCP, however poorly prepared theoretically and politically, did not have to wait long for its trial by fire in working-class struggle.⁴⁹ In response to the post-Versailles handover of Germany's colonial possessions to Japan – the event that sparked the May 4th movement – by June 100,000 workers were on strike, and the ministers who had agreed to the concessions to Japan were fired. Further strikes of tobacco and silk workers, sparked by CCP organizers, followed in 1921. In 1922, it was the turn of the cotton workers, then, again, the silk and the mill workers.⁵⁰ In February 1925, workers at 11 Japanese-owned mills in Shanghai, struck against brutalization by Japanese managers, with nationalist and class demands intermingled. On May 30, 1925 a British policeman killed eleven students and the following day a two-month strike wave began, supported because of its nationalist dimension by even the middle class and Chinese factory owners.⁵¹ At this point the Communist Party's alliance with the Kuomintang – to the point of

⁴⁹ “Before 1919 strikes were not unknown—indeed as the value of wages fell during the First World War they increased. But they were sporadic and disorganized; sometimes factory foremen led them, sometimes the action was leaderless and moved swiftly from smashing machines to total surrender...But unions scarcely existed.” Paul Mason, *Live Working or Die Fighting. How the Working Class Went Global* (London, 2007), p. 191.

⁵⁰ “In a very short time, two things had happened. First, workers in different industries...had moved from individual strikes to coordinated solidarity action...No amount of cock's-blood wine and incense could keep the gangsters on board once they realized the unions were acting for the workers' wider interests, rather than just providing a bargaining tool for the gang's position in the enterprise. Second, the Kuomintang had shown that it too could organize workers, and it did not need communists to do so.” (ibid., p. 196).

⁵¹ The CCP in 1925, on the strength of these events, grew in 1925 from 980 to 10,000 members (ibid., p. 198)

ordering its members to join the latter, and having everything to do with the Soviet factional situation and national interests and nothing to do with the interests of Chinese workers – proved suicidal. In February 1927, the General Labor Union, which had grown out of the earlier strikes, had 800,000 Shanghai workers on strike to greet Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition, and staged an uprising against the local warlord. But in April 1927, Chiang – at this time still a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International – moved against the Shanghai working class and 30,000 mainly CCP militants died in the ensuing repression. This crushing defeat effectively ended the CCP's relationship with the Chinese working class, and set the party on the course that ended with the 1949 bureaucratic-peasant revolution, in which the Chinese working class was largely if not entirely passive.⁵²

The Korean CP, for its part, working in the shadow of the Japanese colonial administration in Korea itself, and because of the large-scale emigration from the peninsula to China, Manchuria, Siberia and Japan, was more an émigré party than a domestic one. Nevertheless, by 1925, three different Communist groups were active on the peninsula, distressing not only the Japanese authorities but also the Western missionaries by their influence. In exile, the party was riven by factions in Shanghai and Irkutsk that were more geographical than ideological. The tone of a more radical faction in Japan, independent of the first main party leader Yi Tang-hwi, was set by the extremist student and anarchist groups in exile. In Korea, the “unyielding quality of the Communists was matched by the effi-

⁵² Because of its deep involvement in Chinese exile with the course of the Chinese revolution up to 1927, this disaster had the most immediate impact on the Korean Communist Party as well. “Under the stimulus of Comintern directives... (Korean)...Communists began to work once again in the mid-1920s for a new united front modeled after the Kuomintang-Communist alliance. They finally succeeded... (in March 1927-LG)...The timing could scarcely have been less auspicious...Shanghai became the scene of bloody attacks upon the Communists.” (Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 170.)

ciency and ardors of the Japanese police”⁵³ and concerted Communist actions were far more effective than the occasional bomb set by supporters of the nationalist government-in-exile in Shanghai. Nevertheless, due in large part to repression, there were no less than four failed attempts to found a Korean Communist Party between 1925 and 1928. After 1928, the evolution of the Korean Communist movement took place far more in exile, and first of all among the large Korean émigré population working in Manchuria.

The influence on Japanese police repression in Korea in the 1920s, however, should not be exaggerated. Japan at the time was not yet the militarist state it became in the 1930s, and after the initial harsh repression of the nationalist uprising of March 1919, the colonial government had responded with a certain liberalization, allowing “social organizations” (but not explicitly political ones) which made it possible for Korean CP militants to be active in the Korean Labor-Farmer Federation, as well as youth and peasant organizations. However, in contrast to Japan or even China, periodic repression until 1930 created a situation in which “no individual – indeed, no single faction – was able to place an imprimatur firmly upon the KCP because all tenure in office was too brief.”⁵⁴

The influence of Marxism and the Third International took the Japanese intelligentsia by storm by the late 1920s.⁵⁵ The first Japan-

⁵³ Ibid., p. 74

⁵⁴ Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 131.

⁵⁵ Cf. Germaine Hoston, *Marxism and the Crisis of Development in Prewar Japan* (Princeton, 1986) and *State, Identity and National Question* and G. Beckmann and O. Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (Stanford, 1969). Prior to Fukumoto Kazuo in the 1920s, the most interesting Japanese radicals had been Kokuto Shusui (1871–1911), and Osugi Sakae (cf. note 39). Kokuto was executed with 11 others in 1911 for allegedly having inspired a plot to assassinate the emperor. For a portrait of Kokuto. Cf. B. Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, pp. 154–157. Significant in this ferment was the fact that “Notably, in China as in Japan (and one can assume, also in Korea-LG) the writings of the young Marx that laid the foundation for Marx’s uncompromising critique of the state were conspicuously absent...Marxism was scientific socialism as systematized by Engels and then by Stalin, even as Stalin was seeking not to eliminate but to build a powerful Russian nation-state after the revolution.” (Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*,

ese translation of Marx's *Capital* appeared in 1924.⁵⁶ Anarcho-syndicalism had peaked following mass demonstrations Tokyo, Kyoto, Nagoya and Kobe in 1919–1920⁵⁷ (a parallel anarchist influence, according to Kim San, peaked among Korean exiles in 1921–1922⁵⁸). Kim San also found the Japanese Communists to be true internationalists in their dealings with the Korean radical exiles⁵⁹ (Despite widespread anti-Korean racism in Japan, this solidarity extended to parts of the Japanese workers' movement as well. The *Yuaikai* (Fraternal Society), in 1919 called for equality between Japanese

p. 119.

⁵⁶ "It is important to note, however, that Marxism arrived in Japan in far less coherent fashion than it had come to be understood by Western European and Russian Marxists. Consequently, the Marxism that the participants in the debate on Japanese capitalism had at their disposal was the doctrine elaborated—even revised, some would argue—by Friedrich Engels and Russian theorists after him." (Hoston, *Marxism*, pp. 42–43.)

⁵⁷ Osugi Sakae (1885–1923) stands out as a theoretician of Japanese anarcho-syndicalism. For a portrait of his role in the Japanese workers' movement in the 1910s and 1920s. cf. B. Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, pp. 187–193. "By late 1922, anarcho-syndicalist influence in the union movement had begun to weaken. Because of their insistence on spontaneity rather than organization and coordination, their demand for individual union autonomy rather than acceptance of the federation's centralized authority, and their failure to achieve much by direct confrontation, the anarcho-syndicalists lost influence to reformists and Communists. The news that the Soviet Union had begun to persecute anarchists such as Emma Goldman and to disregard the will of local soviets while centralizing all power in the party and central committee impelled Osugi to announce his disgust with Bolshevism and to break off all contact with Japanese Marxist-Leninists (sic). For Osugi, the establishment of the New Economic Plan (which he believed was little more than a disguised attempt to establish state capitalism), and the reinstatement of national industrial discipline represented the end of the revolutionary era in Russia." (p. 190). Osugi and his life companion Ito Noe were executed in a police barracks in the repression following the September 1923 Tokyo earthquake. Osugi also distinguished himself by his work with Korean radicals in Japan, and "the anarchist movement in Japan had a substantial Korean contingent". (Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 182).

⁵⁸ Kim San, *Song of Ariran*, p. 58. The writings of Kropotkin, despite his support for Tsarist Russia in World War I, retained their influence in this period (p. 40) and the first modern Korean writer, Li Kwang-ssu, was a Tolstoyan. According to Kim (p. 61) many Korean Tolstoyans become terrorists.

and foreign laborers; the Federation of Miners in Hokkaido established a Korean section there in 1920. A Korean Labor Federation was founded in Tokyo in 1922, but apparently consisted largely of anarchist and communist students rather than workers.⁶⁰

One early faction of interest following the 1922 founding of the JCP arose around the figure of Fukumoto Kazuo (1894–1983),⁶¹ whose ideas were characterized as “little more than an adaptation of the extremism of Lukacs”⁶² during the latter’s early 1920s left-communist phase. Japanese worker and peasant radicalism was gaining momentum in that period, while anarcho-syndicalism entered decline. The years 1921–1922 saw increased working-class violence, met in 1922 by a government crackdown. The Japanese government used the terrible 1923 Tokyo earthquake as a pretext for further repression, hundreds of Korean leftists were killed, and 100,000 Koreans of all kinds were deported.⁶³ In the spring of 1924, under these blows, the JCP dissolved itself. In coordination with the Third International’s 1924–28 phase when Nicholai Bukharin’s influence was at its peak, a Farmer-Labor Party was founded in 1925, but the movement was hopelessly divided. It was also the high moment of the influence of Fukumoto, a former law student who had been to Europe and who had worked with the German Communist Party in 1922 while studying Marxist classics. Fukumoto’s orientation was toward a “correct, unified theoretical basis” for the movement, over and against more opportunist and pragmatist factions. In large part due to Fukumoto’s influence, the JCP was re-established in 1926, though powerful forces, including the

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 36. The Japanese Communists continued the pre-World War I tradition of Japanese socialists of opposition to Japanese imperialism in Korea, and were the main Japanese group defending the Korean exiles against government repression and general antipathy in the 1920s.

⁶⁰ Vilaine, «Classes laborieuses, Part VIII», *Echanges* (Winter 2006–2007), p. 30.

⁶¹ On Fukumoto, cf. pp. 198–204 in B. *Modern Japanese Thought*.

⁶² G. Beckmann et al., *Japanese Communist Part*, p. 118.

⁶³ Kim San, *Song of Ariran*, p. 37. Thousands of people were killed in the anti-socialist and anti-Korean riots of September 1923, in particular by paramilitary groups organized with the backing of the government.

Comintern's representative in Japan, also opposed "Fukumotoism", the latter ultimately being accused of an affinity with Trotskyism.⁶⁴ Fukumotoism was finally defeated at a special meeting in the Soviet Union in 1927,⁶⁵ but the JCP itself was again suppressed in 1928. An underground organization, applying the new "social fascist" theory of the Comintern, did grow in 1928 and 1929, but with the beginning of the Manchuria war in September 1931 party leaders received long prison sentences and further repression in 1932 ended the organizational history of the JCP until 1945. The impact in Japan of Marxism and Third International Communism in the 1920s and 1930s, however, would not be without further consequences for the development of the Korean state and the Korean left, because important Japanese Marxists, and in particular Takahashi Kamekichi,⁶⁶ while not embracing the fas-

⁶⁴ Fukumoto also had a powerful echo in Korea. After repression had wiped out a second KCP organization in 1926, student radicals returned from Japan took over the party organization. "Almost without exception, they were strongly under the influence of Fukumoto Kazuo, the dynamic young theorist and Japanese Communist leader, who was now at the height of his power." (Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, pp. 84–85.) This phase of the KCP ended with the mass repression and arrests of February 1928. The denunciation of Fukumotoism in Japan in July 1927 was also aimed at the Korean party, and deeply reflected the deflection of responsibility by the Stalin-Bukharin leadership of the Comintern after the Chinese catastrophe a few months earlier. Prior to that catastrophe, the Comintern had been ordering the Korean CP to follow the Chinese example and ally more closely with nationalists. Even afterward, this emphasis continued, until the Sixth Congress of the Comintern adopted the Third Period "class against class" "left turn".

⁶⁵ By this stage of its Stalinist degeneration, the Comintern was conflating nationalism and Communism to such a point that "some Japanese scholars...(re-marked)...that Comintern policy in Japan was more often inspired by the fortunes of the turbulent revolution in China than by due consideration of the peculiarities of the Japanese situation." (Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, p. 113.) On the other hand "the materialist Marxism that was introduced into Japan was transmitted directly to China, and it was reinforced there through the influence of the writings of Joseph Stalin after he won the struggle to succeed Lenin as the paramount leader of the CPSU after 1929." (ibid.)

⁶⁶ "Japanese Marxists, then, found that they could not simply ignore Takahashi's work, even though they objected to his conclusions...Even a leftist, it seemed, could easily manipulate the Marxian framework to legitimate an ultrarightist policy of mil-

cism of Kita Ikki, went on to theorize a progressive role for Japanese imperialism in Asia, and some went to work in the imperial administration of the new Japanese colony in Manchukuo.⁶⁷ In these years, on the other hand, the JCP did distinguish itself by its insistence on the Korean question in Japan itself as well as its denunciation of Japan's expansionist imperialism.⁶⁸

The final suppression of the Japanese Communist Party under the consolidation of military dictatorship took place in 1931.⁶⁹ Chiang Kai-shek's crushing of the Canton and Shanghai workers in 1927 had also been, as indicated previously, for Korean Communists working with the CCP in China, a "terrible blow".⁷⁰ It was the ultimate foreign policy catastrophe of the Comintern's 1924–1928 "second period" of "support for the progressive anti-imperialist

itary expansionism." (Hoston, *Marxism*, p. 79.)

⁶⁷ Cf. G. Hoston, *State, Identity and National Question*, Ch. 8 for an account of all the Japanese Communists broken by repression who articulated various forms of "national socialism" and apologies for Japan's "anti-imperialist" empire as repentance.

⁶⁸ "After 1929, the Communist Party of Japan steadily increased its emphasis upon the Korean issue, and found an ever larger percentage of its members within the Korean community." (Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 186) "...by the early 1930s...Koreans accounted for more than one-half of the membership of the Communist labor movement in Japan..." (ibid., p. 189).

⁶⁹ 1931 was also the most explosive in labor conflicts during the interwar period in Japan, with 864 labor conflicts according to official statistics. Vilaine, "Classes laborieuses, No. IX", *Echanges*, 121 (Summer 2007), p. 29. Korean workers in Japan participated in further strikes in the 1930s: in April 1932, workers building a railway line in Iwate prefecture struck and were savagely attacked by yakuza; other strikes in infrastructure construction occurred in 1934 and 1935 (Vilaine, "Classes laborieuses, Part X", *Echanges*, 124, (Spring 2008), p. 30.

⁷⁰ Kim San, *Song of Arivan*, p. 4. According to Scalapino and Lee, the Korean party in the 1920s was top-heavy with journalists and other middle-class elements. The Comintern functionary Kuusinen said that "even if one searched with binoculars for workers in the Korean Communist Party one would not find them". Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 124. "...Koreans were involved with the Chinese revolution at almost every level, despite the fact that their numbers were not large...some attended and even taught at the Whampoa Military Academy... Korean radicals were also involved in the labor, cultural and student movements now burgeoning on the Chinese scene." (ibid., p. 150)

bourgeoisie” in the colonial world, and sealed the fate of Bukharin (to the advantage of the equally responsible Stalin) a year later.⁷¹ The Third International turned to its “class against class” Third Period (1928–1934) which saw the Asian parties rush into “ultra-left” catastrophes in the Chinese and Vietnamese “communes” of 1930 (The main echo of this period in Korea was the 1929 Kwangju student revolt of fall 1929, followed by sympathy strikes extending into 1930. The KCP was more directly involved in May 1930 riots in Manchuria stemming from an application of the “ultra-left” “Li Li San line”).⁷² After the 1927 break with the Comintern, Chiang Kai-shek, for his part, turned to close collaboration with German military advisors, headed by none other than General Hans von Seeckt, a collaboration which continued intermittently until the outbreak of World War II in Europe.⁷³ Thus the Chinese Nationalists in turn, after absorbing Soviet military and organizational methods for nearly a decade, underwent the education in German military methods which had been de rigeur in Japan since the 1870s.

⁷¹ The classic account is Harold Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (1938; the numerous subsequent editions show the impact of Isaacs’ move to the right. See also L. Trotsky, *Leon Trotsky on China* (New York 1976).

⁷² Scalapino/Lee, *Communism in Korea*, p. 156.

⁷³ Cf. F.F. Liu, *A Military History of Modern China, 1924–1949* (Princeton, 1956). For further details on the operations of von Seeckt and the “White International’s” ties to various warlords in China, cf. Bernard Wasserstein, *The Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln* (New Haven, 1988).