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A Study on the Student Oratorical Contest of the Korean Cultural Cold War, 1945~1960

한국 냉전 웅변대회 연구 (1945~1960)

문화냉전의 국가적, 초국적 기획과 연쇄를 중심으로

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English Abstract

This study examines the formation of student oratorical contests and reveals their role within the Cultural Cold War in South Korea between 1945 and 1960. Focusing on contests organized during the U.S. Military Government and Syngman Rhee administrations, it treats these events as a crucial medium for educating and mobilizing the public and students alike. The study further uncovers how such contests became embedded in the process of ritualization, producing youth as anti-communist political actors and vehicles of political representation.

The principal contribution of this research lies in demonstrating how oratory functioned simultaneously as discourse and as coordinated propaganda in the making of anti-communist student political actors, and in illuminating the broader social and political phenomena that this process embodied. This thesis examines the role of student oratorical contests within a socio-political environment shaped by five key dimensions: student political contestation, gendered political training, U.S. foreign information operation, anti-communist education, and pan-Asian anti-communist representation. It investigates how oratory emerged as a cultural form through which students' political identities were constructed both domestically and internationally as representatives of the "anti-communist state." The study further analyzes the process and practice of oratorical contests, highlighting the specific characteristics of speech that enabled these functions.

The first chapter traces the evolution of public speaking in early twentieth-century Korea, examining its engagement with the formation of oratorical practices. The second chapter explores how speech contests were institutionalized and militarized under colonial rule, before turning to the U.S. Military Government period, when oratorical contests shifted from factional propaganda to a key method for privileging right-wing political parties and mobilizing students within the anti-communist movement. The third chapter focuses on female students, analyzing

how right-wing women intellectuals and politicians employed oratorical contests to shape their political participation into a gendered and canonical form, compelling them to articulate sanctioned discourses and rewarding compliance. The fourth chapter discusses the English oratorical contests organized as an information program and how the Korean War transformed oratorical contests into a central instrument of state-led ideological mobilization. The fifth chapter explores the relationship between student English oratorical contests and U.S. information operations in South Korea. It also examines the *New York Herald Tribune's* global student speech program, *The World We Want,* in which Korean delegates were positioned as representatives of anti-communism endorsed by both their homeland and the host state. The sixth chapter shows how the Synman Rhee regime instrumentalized student oratorical contests to consolidate its authority as the center of the anti-communist state. By ritualizing "anti communist youth" events, oratorical contests were incorporated into national campaigns, acquiring the form of political representation through the reproduction of anti-communist myth and symbols. Then, it examines how after the 4.19 revolution, student oratories worked to rein in student agency, calling for renewed dedication to study, economic rebuilding, and “public morality.”

Key words: Korea, Cultural Cold War, Oratorical Contest, Propaganda, Student Mobilization, Anti-Communism

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INTRODUCTION

Aim of Research and Objectives

This research explores the oratorical contest organized in South Korea between 1945 and 1960 as a crucial Cold War cultural phenomenon. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of student oratory as a form of propaganda in the context of the creation of anti-communist student political actors and the phenomena it represents. This study specifically examines the role of student oratorical contests within the socio-political environment shaped during the U.S. Military Government and President Syngman Rhee period. The study aims to investigate how oratory became a cultural form for educating students' political identity, both domestically and internationally. The research will scrutinize how U.S. cultural Cold War strategies engaged with the Republic of Korea's domestic and diplomatic aims to represent students as the anti-communist front, and how speech became one of the methods used to manufacture public opinion.

Oratorical contests have typically been discussed as part of anti-communist education, grouped alongside lectures, films, slogan-making, and essay writing, or more broadly as phenomena through which anti-communism was routinized in everyday life.[1] Yet, scholarship that takes the contests themselves as its primary focus is exceedingly rare. Indeed, the only study to date is Yun Kŭm-sŏn's work on oratorical competitions under Japanese colonial rule.[2] While contests have frequently been mentioned in research on anti-communist education or Syngman Rhee's mobilizational politics, they have been mainly treated as peripheral and cited

[1] Ha Na Lee 이하나, "1950~60-nyŏndae pangong chuŭi tamnon kwa kamsŏng chŏngch'i, (1950~60년대 반공주의 담론과 감성 정치 Anticommunist Discourse and Politics of Affect)," *Sahoe wa yŏksa* 95, (2012): 201-241.

[2] Yun Kŭmsŏn 윤금선, "Ilche kangjŏmgi ungbyŏn taehoe yŏn'gu: 1920 nyŏndae 'hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe' podo kisarŭl chungsimŭro (일제강점기 웅변대회 연구 - 1920년대 '현상 웅변대회' 보도 기사를 중심으로 The Study on the Oratory Contest during the Japanese Colonial Era - Focused on Press Articles on the 1920s 'The Prize Oratory Contest') *Kugŏ kyoyuk yŏn'gu* 77 2021.

only as instances of mobilization within broader anti-communist projects. To date, no systematic study has examined their organizers, sponsors, modes of publicity, participants, winners, frequency, venues, or related publications. Although the Anti-Communist Oratorical Contest continued as late as the South Korean national curriculum period (1987-1991), it has received little sustained scholarly attention.

The oratorical contest was a mundane practice, primarily performed by the younger population, principally students, who sought to persuade the wide range of populace, particularly their own generation. Within the framework of nationalist ideologies, students frequently assumed multiple roles as producers, recipients, mediators, and disseminators of propagandistic discourse. The principal question framing this paper is how oratorical contests become a standard propaganda form for students to "move in the direction" someone desired and how they believed doing so "to be their own."[3]

In this study, I define "oratorical contest" as public events in which participants deliver speeches before an audience on assigned topics, often addressing contemporary political and social issues, with a limited number of winners selected and awarded. The word oratory is the translation of the Korean word "Ungbyun (웅변)", which varied its name, sometimes interchanged with "public lecture" (강연회 *Kangyŏnhoe*), an "indignation meeting" (성토대회 *sŏngt'dodaehoe*), and "rallies" (궐기대회 *Kwŏlgidaehoe*). The term "Daehoe (대회)" usually referred to a contest or competition, but it could also denote a large-scale

[3] Henry Kissinger, a U.S. political scientist, defined "psychological warfare," was "planned use by a nation of propaganda and activities other than combat which communicate ideas and information intended to influence the opinions, attitudes, emotions, and behavior of foreign groups in ways that will support the achievement of national aims." Further, the "most effective kind of propaganda" was defined as the kind where "the subject moves in the direction you desire for reasons which he believes to be his own." National Security Council Directive, 10 July 1950, quoted in Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Opeartions with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Washington: United States Governmnet Printing Office, 1976), Frances Stoner Sunders, *The Cultural Cold War-The CIA and the World of Arts and Letter*, (New York: The New Press), 2000, 4.

demonstration, ceremonial gatherings, or an inauguration. This study will primarily focus on oratories that involve speech, while remaining attentive to related forms of expression. I follow the basic definition of competition as a social practice, as a rivalry over limited resources, with the deliberate organising of an intentional process that involves the selection of winners.[4]

I will use "oratory" and "speech" interchangeably, principally using the word "oratory." The decision to translate the Korean term "Ungbyun" as "oratory" rests on the fact that educators of the U.S. Military Period and the president Syngman Rhee period themselves understood its traditional value with reference to the Greek tradition of oratory. Beyond the recognition of its artistic qualities and its punitive origins in Greek practice, however, it is difficult to argue that Greek oratory exerted any substantial influence on Korean "Ungbyun" as a distinct artistic genre. Moreover, tracing a causal relationship between Greek oratorical tradition and the development of Korean "Ungbyun" in terms of aesthetic transmission lay beyond the scope of this study. Rather, this article adopts "oratory" as the appropriate translation because, in Korea, the term “Ungbyun" was frequently invoked in explicit connection with the Greeks' political tradition and with oratory as an emblem of democratic life in the city-state and thus carried similarly symbolic and ideological connotations.

This study places particular emphasis on student oratorical contests. To be sure, such contests were not confined exclusively to students. In the immediate post-liberation years, when the school system was fragile and unsettled, a variety of youth groups often organized oratorical contests independently. Yet as these events became more institutionalized, students increasingly became their central participants. Because the Bureau of Education was able to mobilize teachers and students most efficiently through its administrative apparatus, school-based oratorical contests spread rapidly and became the dominant form. Over time, eligibility

[4] Jonathan Hearn, *The Domestication of Competiton*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 10.

requirements for participation were progressively narrowed, such that contests came to be defined primarily, and sometimes exclusively, as student events.

This study examines the historical process through which oratorical contests, as both a key apparatus in the formation of the Cold War "discursive system" and a routine public event, took shape and became institutionalized. In particular, it analyzes how the textual composition of speeches in these contests corresponded to, and was structured by, the political demands of their time. This thesis seeks to justify the oratorical contest as a propagandistic form of cultural cold war by applying it to historical materials. Therefore, this study examines oratorical contests in relation to the Cold War historical background, oratorical contests' organizational bodies, the judging committee, sponsors, and their political aims, rhetorical strategies, newspaper publication, and the speakers, as these dimensions collectively illuminate the underlying intentions of such contests. Building on this configurational background, the study will undertake a critical analysis of both the textual and visual dimensions of oratory contests.

State of Art

Cultural Cold War and Psychological Warfare Studies

The Cold War historiography has been accumulated in more than a half century, producing significant amount of knowledge in diverse disciplines. As my research considers "student oratory" to be a form of psychological warfare, I will provide the literature leading up to the emergence of the category of Cold War cultural studies, focusing on psychological warfare. Then I will introduce a group of scholars who scrutinize the formation of cultural forms to formulate ideological and affective orientations towards the "Free World." In the second part,

I will define the cultural Cold War in the context of the Korean Cold War and trace distinctive studies to highlight the importance of oratorical contest as a historical subject.

The history of the Cold War chronologically consists of conflict after the Second World War. The establishment of war chronologies stems from international relations' interests and questions the geopolitical history and conflicts between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and their control over international affairs between 1945 and 1991.[5]

The origins of the Cold War itself have sparked debate among historians, and the question itself has led to the naming of a research frame and position. While scholarly debate between the proponents of the various perspectives under discussion has tended to become polarized around the question of 'whose fault' it was, or 'who started' the Cold War. The analysis of the historiography of U.S. Cold War foreign policy is mostly distinguished from traditionalist, revisionist, and its consequences, which Steven Hurst categorizes into six perspectives.[6] Among them, I will focus on studies related to the 'Culture' that outline how its turn formed the interest in Cultural Cold War studies.

Historical attention to the cultural aspects of diplomacy has flourished recently alongside the noteworthy growth of cultural history more generally. This "cultural turn" in the discipline of history has influenced the traditional field of diplomatic history, and such "cross-fertilization" has expanded the topics, approaches, and methods used in the study of diplomacy.[7]

According to Gordon Johnston, the cultural turn in Cold War studies has four general reasons.[8] First, it questions how propaganda and psychological warfare were conducted both internationally and on the home front. Second, the turn to 'culture' provides one way of

[5] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War*, Cambridge University Press (2005): 2

[6] Steven Hurst, *Cold War US Foreign Policy*, Edinburgh University Press (2005): 7-8. Hurst understands the dangers in the process of categorizing or labelling, and he underlines the ideas can be distorted for the purpose of organizational clarity, and subtle differences and inflections can be ignored in the search for commonalities. In his writing there are no pretenses that each perspective is a completely coherent whole.

[7] Susan Smulyan, "The Cultural Turn in U.S. Diplomatic History," *Diplomatic History* 33 (June 2009): 539., Jennifer Frost, Cina as Cultural Diplomacy and cold War-U.S. Participation in International Film Festivals behind the Iron Curtain 1959-1971*, Journal of Cold War Studies*, (2023):75-100.

[8] Gordon Johnston, "Revisiting the Cultural Cold War," *Social History* 35/3 (Aug. 2010): 291.

responding to Gaddis's question, 'What did ordinary people during the Cold War really think?' [9] Third, the way in which the Cold War ended, abruptly and peacefully following a generalized crisis of legitimacy across the Soviet bloc, led many to argue that ideas needed to be taken much more seriously than was conventional in 'old' Cold War history. Fourth, there is an older tradition of culturally based explanations of politics and 'national characteristics' exemplified by Montesquieu and Tocqueville, whose influence, particularly in the United States, can be traced through the Cold War to the anticipated 'clash of civilizations' where, according to Samuel Huntington, the 'great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.'[10]

Drawing on insights from cultural history, literary theory, postcolonial studies, and anthropology, scholarship on culture and international relations examined how domestic political culture intersects with foreign policy, how national identity and representation are constructed, and how new actors, such as tourists and artists, shape these dynamics.[11]

Historians influenced by cultural studies seek to demonstrate how various 'cultural' assumptions infuse the decision-making environment in which policymakers operate. The 'culturalist' also seeks to expand the range of sources used to identify the foreign policy. Akira Iriye's observation of culture in foreign relations pointed out that nations and peoples deal with one another not only in terms of political, strategic, or material interests but also through their respective cultures.[12] Naoko Shibusawa explains, in the context of competition of "hearts and minds," one can more precisely define ideology and its relationship to culture. In the early

[9] John Lewis Gaddis, 'On starting all over again: a naive approach to the study of the Cold War' in Odd Arne Westad (ed.), Reviewing the Cold War. Approaches, Interpretations, Theory (Lon don, 2000), 36.
[10] Samuel P. Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, xxii, 3 (Summer 1993), 22. Tocqueville's prediction in 1835 that Russia and America were 'destined by some secret providential design to hold in their hands the fate of half the world at some date in the future' was frequently quoted during the Cold War. See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (London, 2003), 484-5.
[11] Hogan, Michael J., and Thomas G. Paterson, eds. *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations. 2nd ed.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 8.
[12] Akira Iriye, "Culture and International History," in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 243–4.

stages of the Cold War, Americans sought to fight against "ideology" to extend the "common sense" or "Truth," but by the end of the Cold War, scholars realized that Americans are not immune to ideological thinking. Citing Antonio Gramsci's definition of "cultural hegemony," she explains how the ruling elites sought to substitute a subset of culture, or a discursive system, for a naturalized narrative.[13]

The task of the historian in cultural Cold War studies, analyzing psychological warfare, became to expose the nature and methodologies of creating what Shibusawa defines as a "discursive system." Scholarship focused on the U.S. government and enterprises that created Cold War machinery to facilitate the expansion of information or a particular doctrine.

A wave of scholarship has transformed the understanding of the covert campaigns in the cultural sphere mounted by Western governments during the Cold War. This “cultural Cold War” was waged by political agencies through a series of clandestinely state-backed foundations, conferences, lectures, tours, art exhibitions, and, above all, cultural magazines.[14]

Beyond the diplomatic, economic, and strategic dimensions, the Cold War also unfolded as a cultural contest in which the U.S. government, through public statements, sought to assert the superiority of the American “way of life” over that of its adversaries. At the heart of this battle was the promotion of U.S. guardianship of “freedom” and “democracy.”[15] Building on Frances Stoner Saunders's pioneering research, scholars scrutinized how psychological warfare was structured and organized internationally, foregrounding the machinations of the U.S.

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[13] Naoko Shibusa, "Ideology, Culture and the Cold War," 65 in Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), online ed., Oxford Academic, January 28, 2013.

[14] Fousek, John. *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Edit. Auerbach Jonathan, Castronovo Russ, *The Oxford Hanbook of Propaganda Studies*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2013., James Smith and Guy Woodward, “Anglo American Propaganda and the Transition from the Second World War to the Cultural Cold War,” Edit. Greg Barnhisel, *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Cold War Literary Cultures*, (London: Blomsbury Academic, 2022), 149.

[15] Scott Lucas, Freedom’s War: The American Crusade against the Soviet Union (New York: New York University Press, 1999). Scott.Smith Giles and Hans Krabbendam, *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960*, Frank Cass publisher, 2003. Vowinckel, Annette eds., *Cold War Cultures Perspectives on Eastern and Western* (Newyork: Berghahn Books, 2012).

government and military administrations and their support for civilian organizations.[16] Its promotion of specific modes of anti-communist writing and visual art and its push for the "freedom" of formal innovation over a dogmatic Socialist realism linked to the "Left."[17]

Existing research has examined how, in the early Cold War period, ideology and propaganda were central to the exercise of U.S. power, both at home and abroad. They analyzed that American policymakers framed foreign policy not only through military, political, and economic means but also through narratives that projected national identity, university values, and visions of freedom and prosperity designed to sell democratic capitalism. A scholarly discourse shows how the U.S. sought to construct and sustain its predominance in the postwar world, shaping public opinion and legitimizing U.S. global leadership.[18]

A related group of work focused on the U.S. government's organizational bodies' origins, tasks, and propaganda strategies leading to new cultural Cold War programs related to global aid acts and U.S. information programs, which in turn made "Free Nations" economically and ideologically dependent on the capitalist and "democratic" United States bloc.[19]

Researchers have pointed to the concept of a cultural Cold War as a supplementary ground on which the superpowers could showcase their achievements and advance their ideological goals, building support for specific visions of modernization, capitalism, development, justice, and

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[16] Frances Stoner Sunders, *The Cultural Cold War-The CIA and the World of Arts and Letter*, (New York: The New Press), 2000, 4.

[17] BARNHISEL, GREG. Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy. Columbia University Press, 2015.

[18] Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion. Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960*. (Oxford University Press, New York, 1994)., John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World-American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War*, (London; The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Shawn J.Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War*, *1945-1955*, (Praeger 2002)., Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War-Eisenhwer's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*, (University Press of Kansas, 2006)., Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way-U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War-Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion 1950-1953*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[19] Cull, Nicholas J, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy*, 1945–1989. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008., and its relations to cultural policy in overseas see Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. Matsuda, Takeshi. *Soft Power and Its Perils: U.S. Cultural Policy in Early Postwar Japan and Permanent Dependency.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

freedom. More recent researchers have defined culture as the crux of the conflict, discussing how Soviet programs intersected with U.S. ones in the Global South.[20] The global conflict suffused daily life in the Eastern Bloc and the West, as attested by cultural output such as television programming, films, entries for competitions and festivals, and a preference for specific genres and modes of cultural production. The Cultural Cold War hardened gender roles and fostered a particular imaginary characterized by mistrust and paranoia.[21]

Building on this understanding, a body of scholars has focused on mass mobilization and the spectacles and ceremonies of the Cold War, especially on the role of youth and the making of national identity through youth participation in state-organized festivals and activism. The transnational flow of ideas and people constituted a historical convergence of diverse ideological intersections; sometimes, young people adapted the festivals to their own needs, framing them outside the bifurcated conflict between the USSR and the United States.[22]

A literary corpus extended the cultural front into children, family, women's education, and public discourse. Efforts to cultivate a generation suited for the "atomic age" emphasized world understanding and civic responsibility. Analysis of civil defense literature reveals how the public education and media conceptualized the U.S. youth as both potential victims of nuclear war and the future atomic scientists or ambassadors of the United Nations, embodying the ideological tensions of the era.[23] A group of studies focused on cultural projects that

[20] Edited by Kerry Bystrom, Monica Popescu et.al, *The Cultural Cold War and the Global South*, Routledge, New York, (2021): 6.
[21] Karin Byström, Maria Popescu, and Christina Zien, eds., *The Cultural Cold War and the Global South* (London: Routledge, 2020).
[22] Vowinckel Annette, Payk. Marcus M, Lindenberger Thomas, *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies.,* Edit.Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney and Fabio Lanza, *De-Centering Cold War History-Local and Global Change*, (Routledge, 2013)., Kim Charles R. Youth For Nation-*Culture and Protest in Cold War South Korea*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018) Theodora K.Dragostinova, *The Cold War From The Margins-A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene*, (Ithaca and London; Cornell University Press), 2021., Pia Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship-The World Youth Festivals and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy*, (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter 2022)., Christopher Gerteis, Mobilizing Japanese Youth-The Cold War and the Making of the Sixties Generation, (Cornell University Press 2021).
[23] Ann Marie Kodas, The Politics of Childhood in Cold War America, New York: Routledge, 2013 Marilyn Irvin Holt. Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945~1960, Lawrence:University Presso of Kansas, 2014., Victoria M. Grieve, Little cold War warriors-American Childhood in the 1950s, Oxford University Press, 2018.

reconfigured relationships in the Cultural Cold War and gender. They analyzed war wives, children's adoption, cinema, literature, and museums, which articulated narratives of global integration and cosmopolitan belonging that supported U.S. expansion in the Pacific. They reveal that the Cold War order in Asia was sustained not only by statecraft and military force but also by cultural narratives, contested memories, and embodied intimacies that shaped the mundane life of the people. The scholarship verifies how Cold War ideological systems delineated boundaries between "appropriate" and "deviant" identities and practices related to gender and sexuality. The gender politics of the era shaped the attitudes of cultural arbiters and policymakers alike, who produced, disseminated, and enforced cultural forms of normative sexual behavior. [24]

Drawing on these findings, this study will also examine how women in Korea, and in Asia more broadly, locally appropriate and rework Cold War cultural norms, and, conversely, how they seek to strategically represent Korea's Cold War cultural conditions to domestic and international audiences.

Korean Cultural Cold War Studies

The Cold War studies of Korea developed as part of the body of area studies research that had accumulated in North America, shaped by the research trends and directions demanded by each stage of the Cold War. Within overseas Korean studies, efforts to illuminate the Korean War and the politics of American hegemony transformed the field's character. In this way, the Cold

[24]Shibusawa, Naoki, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006)., Klein, Christina, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), Briggs, Laura, *Somebody's Children-The Politics of Transnational and Transracial Adoption*, (Duke University Press, 2012)., Yoneyama, Lisa, *Cold War Ruins: Transpacific Critique of American Justice and Japanese War Crimes*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), Muehlenbeck, Philip.E, Gender, Sexuality, and the Cold War, (Tenesse: Vanderbilt University Press, 2017), Klein, Christina, C*old War Cosmopolitanism: Period Style in 1950s American Literature and Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), Woo, Susie. *Framed by Empire: Korean American Identity in the U.S. Military Empire*, (New York: New York University Press, 2023).

War was conceived from the outset as a project of area studies under capitalist and neocolonial conditions.[25] Cold War studies in Korea have been conducted as part of the contemporary necessity of military strategy and as part of the U.S. military government's operations. For that reason, the Cold War literature in South Korea emerged with a certain scale and system as Cold War regionalism. In the 1960s, research on North Korea, or anything related to the 'opposite bloc', was possible when the goals and interests of the United States' private foundation and the Park Chung-Hee government sought it for military purposes from a traditionalist point of view. Cold War research was mostly funded by the Ford Foundation's Asiatic Research Institute to materialize the anti-communist mobilization and psychological warfare strategies.[26]

By the 1970s, scholarship on the Korean War had become divided between traditionalist and revisionist interpretations. In line with Cold War diplomatic contexts, South Korean scholarship inevitably took on a "government-oriented, policy-driven, and conservative" character by attributing responsibility for the division of Korea to the North and, ultimately, to the Soviet Union's designs for global communization. However, as is well known, Bruce Cumings's *The Origins of the Korean War* marked an important turning point with its revisionist interpretations.[27] The so-called "archival turn," brought about by the opening of Soviet and Eastern European archives as well as the release of Chinese sources, transformed not only domestic scholarship on the Korean War but also research trends in modern Korean

[25]Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Unintended Consequences of Cold War Area Studies," in The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years, ed. Noam Chomsky (New York: The New Press, 1997), 195–231, Cho Chi-hyŏng 조지형, "Migug-esŏŭi Han'gukhak-ŭi hŭrŭm kwa chŏnmang: An kwa pak-ŭi saengsanjŏk taehwarŭl wihayŏ." (미국에서의 한국학의 흐름과 전망 - 안과 밖의 생산적 대화를 위하여 Korean Studies in the United States: A Discursive Review and Appraisal), *Miguksa yŏn'gu* 15, 2002.

[26] I Bongbŏm 이봉범, "Naengjŏn'gwa wŏnjo Wŏnjoshidae naengjŏnmunhwa Kuch'ugŭi yŏktongsŏng" (냉전과 원조, 원조시대 냉전문화 구축의 역동성 The Cold War and the aid, the dynamism of the construction of the Cold War Culture during the aidage The aid from American private foundations and Korean culture in 1950~60s) *Han'guk'akyŏn'gu* 39, (2015): 221-276.

[27] Park Hyun Seon박현선, "Naengjŏn munhwa wa Han'gukhak—Kwŏllyŏk, kŭndaesŏng, hakmun saengsan ŭi ŏlkh'in maedŭp p'ulgi (냉전 문화와 한국학-권력, 근대성, 학문 생산의 얽힌 매듭 풀기Cold War Culture and Korean Studies - Untying the Knots of Power, Modernity, and Knowledge Production -)," *Sai* 18, (2015): 287.

history more broadly, producing new perspectives, interpretations, and approaches through "multinational intersecting sources." With the end of the Cold War in Europe, scholars were finally able to step outside the Cold War framework and begin to record it as history.[28]

Only in 1988, when the embargo on Korean Cold War studies research was lifted, did the topography of research change in South Korea, as texts and arguments that had been declassified could be studied properly.[29] Under the National Security Act, texts prohibited included all Marxist literature, socialist authors, North Korean literature, and works from stigmatized writers who defected to North Korea.[30] Researchers called attention to revisiting the conventional binary division of Korea's Cold War, and changed research paradigms brought attention to the postwar period, at which the concept of the Cultural Cold War was actively discussed and concretized.[31]

Since the 1990s, Cold War studies on South Korea have increasingly begun from a self-reflexive inquiry aimed at deconstructing and reinterpreting the very historical structures of the "Cold War system," which was never monolithic but was constantly fractured by divergent national interests, differing conceptions of capital, and the uneven legacies of imperialism and colonial experience.[32]

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[28] Chŏng Yong-uk 정용욱, "T'alnaengjŏn ihu Han'guk ŭi naengjŏnsa yŏn'gu tonghyang"(탈냉전 이후 한국의 냉전사 연구 동향), *Han'guk hyŏndaesa yŏn'gu ŭi chaengchŏm*(한국현대사 연구의 쟁점), (Sŏngnam: Han'gukhak Chungang Yŏn'guwŏn Ch'ulp'anbu), 2022.15-29.

[29] Kim Seong-Su explains that the ban was removed due to the progress of procedural democracy through the 1987 June 10 Uprising and the need for internal and external ideological inclusion in order to host the 1988 Olympic Games. On 19 July, more than 120 North Korean writers, except for five political and literary figures (Hong Myong-hee, Lee Ki-young, Han Seol-ya, Paik In-joon, and Cho Young-chul), who held high-ranking positions in North Korea after the North Korean War, were reinstated and allowed to publish and distribute their works. [29] Kim Sŏng-su 김성수, "Chae Wŏlbuk chakka 'haegŭm' chochi (1988) ŭi yŏn'gusa·munhwasa chŏk ŭimi (재.월북 작가 '해금' 조치(1988)의 연구사·문화사적 의미 The Historical and Cultural Significance of the 1988 'Unbanning' of Repatriated and Northern Writers.)" *Sanghŏ Hakpo* (상허학보)55 (2019):13.

[30] Yu Imha 유임하 2018, "Haegŭmjoch'i 30 nyŏn'gwa Kŭndaemunhaksaŭi pogwŏn" 해금조치 30 년과 근대문학사의 복원, *Pan'gyoŏmunyŏn'gu* (반교어문연구) 50,

[31] Kim Sŏng-su,"Chae Wŏlbuk chakka 'haegŭm' chochi (1988) ŭi yŏn'gusa·munhwasa chŏk ŭimi,"11–49.

[32] Ota Osamu and Hŏ Ŭn 허은, *Tong Asia naengjŏn ŭi munhwa* (동아시아 냉전의 문화 The Culture of the East Asian Cold War), (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2017)., Paek Wŏn-dam 백원담, "Naengjŏn yŏn'gu ŭi munhwajŏk

On this account, the Cold War cultural organizations that had served as executors of cultural diplomacy began to attract attention. Scholars have examined the publishing and academic infrastructure that shaped the cultural and intellectual history of each period, as well as the planning and execution of the cultural Cold War that constituted the ideological framework of the era. Moreover, since 2010, research on Cold War culture has increasingly been produced not by historians, diplomats, or political scientists, but by scholars in diverse fields.[33]

The comprehension and historiography of the Cold War went beyond the bilateral relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, integrating the history of wider regions and individuals and allowing a pluralist reading of Cold War history. Scholars have explored the public's existence in the socio-cultural area in detail and identified the status of culture in daily life in South Korea, such as periodicals, movies, music, sports, and expositions related to the cultural politics of the United States.[34]

A growing body of scholarship has approached Korean cultural cold war history, focusing on the visuality and examining literature, film, theater, adult and children's education, and everyday life.[35]

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chi'yŏkjŏk chŏnhwan munje (냉전연구의 문화적 지역적 전환 문제 Cultural and Regional Shifts in Cold War Studies)," *Chungguk Hyŏndae Munhak* (중국현대문학) 75 (2015): 133.

[33] Ch'oe Chin-sŏk최진석, "Han'guk munhwa naengjŏn yŏn'gu ŭi hyŏnhwang kwa kwaje (한국 문화냉전 연구의 현황과 과제 A Study on the Current State of the Cultural Cold War Studies in Korea)," *Inmun Kwahak* (인문과학)89 (2023), 61.

[34] Yim Sung Mo 임승모, "Naengjŏn kwa taejung sahoe tamnon ŭi oeyŏn: Miguk kŭndehwaron ŭi Han–Il isik (냉전과 대중사회 담론의 외연: 미국 근대화론의 한.일 인식 Cold War and modernization theory in Japan and Korea in the 1960s)," *Hallym Ilbonhak* (한림 일본학)26(2015): 239-264.

[35] Theodore Hughes, Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea: Freedom's Frontier, New York: Columbia UP, 2012. Sangjoon Lee, Cinema and the Culutral Cold War-US Diplomacy and the Origins of the Asian Cinema Network, Cornell University Press, 2020., Kim Ryŏ-sil 김려실, *Munhwa naengjŏn, Miguk ŭi kongbo sŏnjŏn kwa Chuhan Miguk Kongbowŏn yŏnghwa* (문화냉전, 미국의 공보선전과 주한미공보원 영화), Hyŏnsil Munhwa, 2019. Christina Klein, Cold War Orientalism-Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945.1961, Londong, England University of California Press, 2003., Chang Se-jin 장세진, Sangsangdoen Amerika (상상된 아메리카 Imagined America), P'urŭn Yŏksa, 2012. Kim Ryŏ-sil et al. 김려실, Han'guk chŏnjaeng ŭn ŏttŏke kiŏk toe'nŭn'ga—Kyŏnghŏm, kiŏk, p'osŭt'ŭ kiŏk sai esŏ (한국전쟁은 어떻게 기억되는가 경험, 기억, 포스트기억 사이에서),

The research on psychological warfare and propaganda in South Korea has been actively pursued, focusing on the broader patterns that trace how the cultural interventions of superpowers took root in the Global South through local agencies. The studies of psychological operations conducted as part of military campaigns during the Korean War included[36] projects led by the United States Information Service to translate books, programs to support overseas students, and propaganda policies carried out through various printed materials and radio programs. [37]

Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2023. Kim Ryŏ-sil et al. 김려실 외, The Cold War Legacy that Blocks Peaceful Everyday Life, Homilbat, 2023. Chŏn Chi-ni 전지니, *Kŭkchang kwa chendŏ—Naengjŏn kwa Nambukhan kŭkchang ŭi chendŏ chŏngch'i* (1945–1980) (극장과 젠더-냉전과 남북한 극장의 젠더정치(1945-1980), Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2024.

[36] Chŏng Yong-uk 정용욱, "6·25 chŏnjaenggi Migun ŭi ppira simnijŏn kwa naengjŏn idyŏllogi (6·25전쟁기 미군의 삐라 심리전과 냉전 이데올로기) Psychological Warfare and Cold War Ideology in U.S. Leaflet Campaigns during the Korean War." Yŏksa wa Hyŏnsil 51 (2004): 97–133. Chŏng Yong-uk 정용욱 "6·25 chŏnjaenggi Migun ŭi simnijŏn chojik kwa chŏn'gae yangsang (6·25 전쟁기 미군의 심리전 조직과 전개양상 The Organization and Development of U.S. Psychological Warfare during the Korean War.)" *Han'guksaron* 50 (2004):369-404. Yi Im-ha 이임하, *Chŏgŭl ppira ro mudŏra* (적을 삐라로 묻어라 Bury the Enemy with Leaflets), (Seoul: Ch'ŏlsu wa Yŏnghŭi, 2012)., Sŏ Tong-su 서동수, *Han'guk chŏnjaenggi munhak tamnon kwa pangong p'ŭrojyekt'ŭ* (한국전쟁기 문학담론과 반공프로젝트 Literary Discourse and the Anti-Communist Project during the Korean War), (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2012). Yi Haeng-sŏn 이행선, "Han'guk chŏnjaeng, chŏnjaeng sugi wa chŏnsi ŭi chŏngch'i 한국전쟁, 전쟁수기와 전시의 정치, The Korean War, War Memoirs, and the Politics of Display." *Sanghŏ Hakpo* 46 (2016)., O Kuk (오국), "Pukhan ŭi taenam simnijŏn sarye yŏn'gu: 2016 nyŏn salp'odoen 'ppira' rŭl chungsimŭro (북한의 대남 심리전 사례연구: 2016년 살포된 '삐라'를 중심으로 A Case Study of North Korean Psychological Warfare: Focus on the 2016 Leaflet Distribution.)" *Chŏngch'i·Chŏngbo Yŏn'gu* 27, no. 1 (2024): 31–61.

[37] Chang Yŏng-min (장영민), "Han'guk chŏnjaenggi chuhan Miguk kongbowŏn ŭi sŏnjŏn chŏngch'aek (한국전쟁기 주한 미국공보원의 선전 정책) A Study of the Propaganda Policy of the United States Information Service in Korea during the Korean War," *Kunsa* 76 (2010): 123–160. Chang Yŏng-min 장영민, "Han'guk chŏnjaenggi chuhan Miguk kongbowŏn ŭi sŏnjŏn hwaltong: inch'ae maech'ereul chungsimŭro (한국전쟁기 주한 미국공보원의 선전 활동: 인쇄매체를 중심으로 The Propaganda Activities of U.S. Information Service(U.S.I.S.) in Korea during the Korean War)" *Han'guk Kŭnhyŏndae sa Yŏn'gu* 57 (2011): 123-160., Ch'a Chae-yŏng 차재영, "Sŏnjŏn ŭrosŏ ŭi tosŏ pŏnyŏk: Migunjŏnggi Miguk tosŏ pŏnyŏk hwaltong ŭi chŏn'gae wa ŭimi (선전으로서의 도서 번역: 미군정기 미국 도서 번역 활동의 전개와 의미) Book Translation as Propaganda: U.S. Translation Activities during the Military Government Period." *Han'guk Ŏllon Hakpo* 62, no. 3 (2018): 187 - 212, Hŏ Ŭn 허은. "Miguk ŭi munhwa naengjŏn kwa 'chayu Tong Asia' ŭi kuch'uk, yŏnsoe kŭrigo kyunyŏl: Miguk chŏngbu ŭi tosŏ kyehoek kwa Han'guk sahoe chisigin ŭi insik (미국의 문화냉전과 '자유 동아시아'의 구축, 연쇄 그리고 균열: 미국정부의 도서계획과 한국사회 지식인의 인식) America's Cultural

A significant amount of scholarship examined the administration of the U.S. Information Agency, including its control of media and how its techniques played a significant role in shaping public opinion within Korean society. The development of a "Cold War mentality," which equated representative democracy with anti-communism, was systematically constructed through the control of public opinion via newspapers, films, and radio broadcasts, book translation programs, exhibitions and public lectures, and education aid programs.[38]

Finally, this study has drawn extensively on existing research on mobilization policies and ritualization during the Cold War period. Heonik Kowan and Byung-Ho Chung's research examines how North Korea, as both a "partisan state" and a "family state," has symbolically constructed large-scale spectacles and mass events to secure the hereditary transmission of power.[39] Syngman Rhee likewise sought to dramatize "the will of the people" by mobilizing bureaucrats and various organizations to extend his own rule, organizing mass rallies and national commemoration events.[40]

Cold War and Establishment, Succession and Rupture of 'Free Asia' : 'The Book Program' of the US government and Korean intellectuals' perception" *Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'gu* 59 (2013):559-611. Hŏ Ŭn 허은, *Miguk ŭi hegemonī wa Han'guk minjokchuŭi* (미국의 헤게모니와 한국 민족주의 U.S. Hegemony and Korean Nationalism. (Seoul: Koryŏdaehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 2008)., Ch'oe Chin-sŏk (최진석). "Munhwa naengjŏn kigŭ ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa pyŏndong yŏn'gu (1954–1968) (문화냉전기구의 형성과 변동 연구 1954–1968) A Study on the Formation and Transformation of Cultural Cold War Institutions(1954–1968)," Sunkyunkwan University PhD diss., 2019.

[38] Charles K. Armstrong, "The cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945-1950." *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol.62, (2003): 71-99. [38] Cha Jaeyŏng. "Chuhan Mijŏmnyŏngun ŭi sŏnchŏnhwaldong yŏn'gu," *Ŏllon kwa sahoe* 5, (1994): 29-52., Hŏ Ŭn, Miguk ŭi hegemonI wa Han'guk minjokchuŭi - naengjŏn sidae (1945-1965) munhwajŏk kyŏnggye ŭi kuch'uk kwa kyunyŏl ŭi tongban -, (Seoul: Koryŏ Taehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 2008). Kim Hak-chae, "T'ŭkjip t'alsikmin naengjŏn gukga ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa kŏmyŏl: chŏngbusurip chŏnhu kongbobu,ch'ŏ ŭi hwaltong kwa naengjŏn tongchisŏng ŭi kyebo", *Taedong munhwa yŏn'gu* 74 (2011): 61-97., Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democrac*y, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2009) Pak Suhyŏn, "Chŏmnyŏnggi Migunjŏng ŭi kongbo hwaltong kwa sŏnchŏn tamnon - Migunjŏng palhaeng chugan sinmun bunsŏk ŭl chungsimŭro –," (PhD diss., Seoul National University, 2021)., Sangjoon Lee, *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War: US Diplomacy and the origins of the Asian Cinema Network*, (Cornell University Press, 2020)

[39] Heonik Kwon and Byung-Ho Chung, North Korea: Beyond Charismatic Politics (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

[40] I Chŏng-ŭi 이정의, Isŭngman taet'ongnyŏng ŭi chŏngchijŏk chawŏn hyŏngsŏng kwa namyong e taehan pip'an'gŏk punseok (이승만 대통령의 정치적 자원 형성과 남용에 대한 비판적 분석, Critical Analysis of Syngman Rhee's Formation and Abuse of Political Resources) (Master's thesis, Kyŏnggi-daehakkyo 정치전문대학원, 2018)., O Cheyŏn 오제연, "Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn'gi 3.1 Undong ŭi chŏngchijŏk sohwan kwa

Previous studies of South Korea's Cold War psychological warfare have largely focused on military objectives or on how psychological operations were conducted at the civilian level through information agencies or political parties. There has been little research on how, within civil society itself, students came into active contact with ordinary citizens and participated directly in propaganda efforts. In this respect, by extending the object of analysis to student oratory contests, the present study helps clarify how a discursive system of psychological warfare and propaganda came to operate at the level of everyday life.

Korean Speech and Public Sphere Studies

The question of what constitutes a speech or oratory, as well as the identity of the speaker, has generally been studied in relation to changes in public speaking during the process of institutionalizing modern oratory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior research has endeavoured to conceptualize oratory as a form of modern media, thereby unravelling the mechanisms by which modern institutions functioned as tangible disciplinary apparatuses for audiences engaged in oratory.

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kyŏnghap (이승만 정권기 3.1운동의 정치적 소환과 경합, The Political Recall and Contestation of the March First Movement under the Rhee Regime)," *Han'guksa Yŏn'gu* (한국사연구) 183 (2018): 358–388., Kang Chŏng-in 강정인 and Han Yu-dong 한유동, "Isŭngman taet'ongnyŏng ŭi kukka kinyŏmil hyaryong e kwanhan yŏn'gu: 'Pangong' kungmin ŭl mandŭnŭn kungmin ŭisik (이승만 대통령의 국가기념일 활용에 관한 연구—'반공' 국민을 만드는 국민의식, A Study on President Rhee's Use of National Commemoration Days: Anti-Communist National Consciousness Formation)," *Hyŏndae Chŏngch'i Yŏn'gu* (현대정치연구) (2014): 195–224., An To-hŏn 안도헌, "1950-nyŏndae huban Taegu chiyŏk chung·kotŭng haksaeng e taehan tongwŏn ŭi chŏngch'i (1950년대 후반 대구지역 중·고등학생에 대한 동원의 정치, The Politics of Mobilization of Middle and High School Students in Daegu in the Late 1950s)," *Chiyŏk Sahoe Hyŏnan kwa Tamron* (지역사회 현안과 담론) 21 (2022): 89–127., Chŏng Ho-gi 정호기, "Kukka ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa kwangjang ŭi chŏngch'i—Migunjŏnggi taejung tongwŏn kwa chip'hap haengdong (국가의 형성과 광장의 정치—미군정기 대중동원과 집합행동, State Formation and the Politics of the Square: Mass Mobilization and Collective Action in the U.S. Military Government Period)," *Sahoe wa Yŏksa* (사회와 역사) 27 (2008): 155–190.

Researchers such as Yi Yŏng-u, Son Sŏk-ch'un, and Song Kŭn-ho focus on how the "method of speech" were introduced to and accepted in Korea, emphasizing the pivotal roles of figures as those associated with Paichia Hakdang, and intellectuals such as Sŏ Chae-p'il (Philip Jaisohn), Yun Ch'i-ho, and Yu Kil-chun in disseminating liberal ideology and the early form of parliamentary politics to the public through debates and public speech educations.[41] Son Sŏk-ch'un and Song Ho-kŭn, in particular, have sought to examine how a "democratic political agency" emerged and how the nascent public sphere began to develop during the Great Korean Empire period, through phenomena such as the rise of mass media, literature, voluntary associations, resistance movements, religion, and mobilization. However, by applying Jürgen Haberma's concpet of public sphere in a schematic manner, these scholars reach the hasty conclusion that Korea's middle class, which ultimately disappeared under state mobilization.[42] The conclusion appears reductive and grounded in an "internatlist developmental framework" within Korean historioraphy. They research compared Korea's speech history mechanically with the historical evolution of the public sphere in Western societies.[43] Moreover, it lacks reflection on the historical conditions under which *public opinion* was constituted within a mobilized state.

Yi Chŏng-ok's accumulated research on oratory examines in detail how the reception of public speech from the early Korean Empire onward developed in direct relation to the political

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[41] Chŏn Yŏng-u 전영우, *Han'guk kŭndae t'oron ŭi sajŏk yŏn'gu* (한국근대토론의 사적 연구), (Iljisa, 1991).

[42] Son Sŏk-ch'un 손석춘, *Han'guk kongnonjang ŭi kuch'o pyŏndong* (한국 공론장의 구조 변동 The Structural Transformation of the Korean Public Sphere), (K'ŏmyunik'eisyŏn Buk'ŭsŭ, 2014)., Song Ho-gŭn 송호근, *Kungmin ŭi t'ansaeng* (국민의 탄생 The Birth of the Nation), (Minŭmsa, 2020).

[43] Kim Chŏng-in 김정인, "Singmin sagwan pip'anron ŭi tŭngjang kwa naejajŏk palchŏllon ŭi hyŏngsŏng (식민사관 비판론의 등장과 내재적 발전론의 형성 Emergence of Critical Analyses of Colonial Historiography and Formation of the "Internal Development theory)," *Sahak Yŏn'gu* 125 (2017): 7–44., Yi Min-u 이민우, "Naejaejŏk palchŏllon e taehan ch'ilmun kwa mosaek—Popyŏnsŏng, ihueng, ingwasŏng (내재적 발전론에 대한 질문과 모색-보편성, 이행, 인과성 Rethinking the Theory of Endogenous Development: Revisiting the Questions of Universality, Transition, and Causality in Korean Historiography)," *Han'guksa Yŏn'gu*, (2025):169-206.

circumstances of the time. Yi traced the diachronic transformation of oratoryintroduced in 1896, it was employed as an enlightenment medium in the 1900s, then gradually became a methodology of mass politics, leading to the rapid diffusion of public speaking. She further explores how, as manuals for speech education became widely popularized, they orchestrated experiences of collective affect and fashioned a modern "speaking body."[44]

Shin Ji-young shifted the focus toward identifying oratory's characteristics as a modern medium, concentrating on how modern institutions functioned as mechanisms of bodily discipline for audiences attending speech meetings. She clarifies the mechanisms through

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[44] Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Yŏnsŏl ŭi sŏsahwa chŏllyak kwa kaemong kwa sŏldŭk ŭi hyogwa (연설의 서사화 전략과 계몽과 설득의 효과 Strategy for making narrative of speech and effect of enlightenment and persuasion on reader)," *Taejung Sŏsa Yŏn'gu* 17 (2007): 151–185., Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Aeguk kaemonggi yŏnsŏl kwa t'oron ŭi suyong kwajŏng (애국계몽기 연설과 토론의 수용 과정 The Process of Accepting Speeches and Debates in the Period of Patriotic Enlightenment)," *Hyŏndae Munhak Iron Yŏn'gu* 43 (2010): 175–197., "Kaehwagi yŏnsŏl ŭi 'kŭndaechŏk malhagi' hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng yŏn'gu (개화기 연설의 '근대적 말하기' 형성과정 연구 A study on process of establishing modern speaking in the Kaewhagy's speech)," *Sihak kwa Ŏnŏhak* 21 (2011): 221–248.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi hoeŭi kyubŏm ŭi suyong kwajŏng (1) - Ŭhoe t'ongyong kyuch'ik ŭl chungsimŭro (근대 초기 회의 규범의 수용과정(1)-『의회통용규칙』을 중심으로 The Process of Accepting Meeting Norms in the Early Modern Period (1) — Concentrated on General Rules for the Assembly)," *Han'guk Munhak Nonch'ong* 59 (2011): 379–409.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi yŏnsŏl kyoyuk sŏe natanan kŭndaechŏk malhagi kyubŏm (근대 초기 연설교육서에 나타난 근대적 말하기 규범 The Process of Accepting Meeting Norms in the Early Modern Period (1) — Concentrated on General Rules for the Assembly)," *Kugŏ Kugmunhak* 161 (2012): 199–235.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "1900 nyŏndae hubangi taeju yŏnsŏl ŭi hwaksan kwajŏng kwa yŏnsŏlmun ŭi yangsang—yŏnsŏlmunjip ŭl chungsimŭro— (1900년대 후반기 대중연설의 확산과정과 연설문의 양상 - 연설문집을 중심으로0The Differentiation and Popularization Process of Speech in the 1900s)," *Sŏgang Inmun Nonch'ong* 36 (2013): 103–148.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi hoeŭi kyubŏm ŭi suyong yangsang (2) - Aeguk kaemonggi Ŭhoe t'ongyong kyuch'ik ŭi suyong yangsang ŭl chungsimŭro (근대 초기 회의규범의 수용양상(2) -애국계몽기『의회통용규칙』의 수용양상을 중심으로- The Process of Accepting Meeting Norms in the Early Modern Period (2) -Concentrated on Aspects of the Accommodation of General Rules for the Assembly in the Period of Patriotic Enlightenment)," *Inmunhak Yŏn'gu* 47 (2014): 465–510.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi 'yŏn'gŭkchŏk sosŏl' kwa kaemong tamnon ŭi sŏsahwa chŏllyak (근대 초기 '연극적 소설'과 계몽담론의 서사화 전략 Early Modern 'Dramatic Novels' and Narration Strategies of Enlightenment Discourses)," *Taejung Sŏsa Yŏn'gu* 20, no. 3 (2014): 367–414.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Hyŏpsŏnghoe ŭi t'oron kyoyuk kwa t'oron munhwa ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng (협성회의 토론교육과 토론문화의 형성과정 Hyeopseong-hoe's Debate Education and the Formation of Debate Culture)," *Kugŏ Kugmunhak* 172 (2015): 177–208.,Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "1900 nyŏndae yŏnsŏl ŭi punhwa kwa taejunghwa kwajŏng (1900년대 연설의 분화와 대중화 The Differentiation and Popularization Process of Speech in the 1900s)," *Sŏgang Inmun Nonch'ong* 47 (2016): 225–259.

which internalized discipline and a reconstructed enlightenment were produced. Using the concept of a "corporeal discoursal space," Shin analyzes lectures (public talks, traveling theater) and debates (roundtables, conventions) during the enlightenment and colonial periods. By "corporeal discoursal space" she means, first, a discursive arena that directly affects the body and elicits bodily responses, thereby inculcating the behaviors and institutional norms operative within it through participation. At the same time, she understands it as a sphere of publicity distinct from the imperial public sphere, and examines how, within the process of modernization, enlightenment and repression, resistance and control, and recurring fractures contended with one another and produced change.[45]

Shin Ji-young's notions are crucial for understanding how, during the U.S. Military Government and Syngman Rhee periods, young women's speech, mediated through the female body, could at once inspire nationalist aspirations and amplify anti-communist imagination in their gendered role. Beyond the political or discursive content of the speech itself, the speaker's appearance, the affective impressions conveyed, and the bodily posture were crucial to mobilizing popular sentiment. The newspapers depicted the "female student orator" as a symbol of emancipation and the development of a democratic state.

Methodology and Thesis Organization

This study will trace the chronology of how oratorical contests became a politically significant tool and how they emerged as a specific cultural form within the context of the Cold War. Each chapter of the dissertation addresses a historical and thematic dimension, providing a critical understanding of how oratorical contests engaged with Cold War political circumstances.

[45] Sin Chi-yŏng 신지영, *Pu/chae ŭi sidae—Kŭndae kaemonggi mit singminjigi Chosŏn ŭi yŏnsŏl·chwadamhoe* (부/재의 시대-근대계몽기 및 식민지기 조선의 연설·좌담회 An Age of Presence/Absence: Speeches and Roundtable Discussions in Enlightenment and Colonial Korea), (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an, 2012).

Chapter 1 investigates the evolution of public speaking from the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. It examines the dual role of public speeches during the colonial period, highlighting both their democratizing potential and their function as instruments of state control. On the one hand, the growing prevalence of public speaking created new spaces for ordinary people to articulate their opinions and participate in emerging forms of modern public life. On the other hand, colonial authorities recognized the persuasive power of speeches and exploited them as vehicles for mobilization, to disseminate Pacific War propaganda, and to legitimize anti-communist ideology.

The second part of Chapter 1 traces the transformation of oratorical contests in Korea from 1945 to 1948, situating them within the broader dynamics of the post-liberation period and the emerging Cold War order. I first explore how the division of the peninsula and the controversy over trusteeship reshaped political alignments and fostered new parties, organizations, and venues for public address. This part also explains how, in the early USAMGIK period, struggles over language, literacy, and public speech became central to determining Korea's postcolonial political order by determining who could speak. It will trace how left-leaning youth activism and oratorical culture positioned young people as key agents in shaping Korea's post-liberation political order and postcolonial nation-building.

Chapter 2 explores how oratorical contests evolved under the U.S. Military Government, shifting from various organization-led forums for political activism into instruments increasingly dominated by right-wing groups. By analyzing these contests alongside related forms of political speech, I show how they functioned as sites of ideological struggle in which students and organizations sought to influence public opinion and legitimize their positions. This part will analyze how right-wing forces used national commemorations and oratorical contests, recast students as symbolic heirs of the independence movement, and discipline student activism by reframing it as disorder rather than legitimate political participation.

Chapter 3 delves into female students' oratory and their political activism. It will examine how women intellectuals sought to mold female students into subjects of the new nation through an oratorical contest. Analyzing both the content of speeches and the language of newspaper coverage, I show how different organizations shaped the discourse that emerged. I then turn to the mechanisms through which female students were mobilized and participated, drawing on essays they published in newspapers and magazines to explore how they considered themselves political actors. At the same time, I consider how the press framed female students' activism, shaping public perceptions that often-imposed prejudices female students had to resist. Finally, I trace how the intensification of anti-communist politics after 1949 generated new representations of the "armed schoolgirl" as an enemy figure, and how oratorical contests intersected with this shift.

Chapter 4 first examines how the engagement with the United States' Information Operations and language education affected the student oratory. The first part of the chapter will investigate the English oratorical contests conducted by the U.S. Office of Civil Information to disseminate and expand the concept of democracy as part of the information program activities. In the second part will examine how, when 1948 Yŏ-Sun Incident outbursted, the South Korean state organized youth and student politics into a centralized, anti communist system by creating "Korean Youth Corps" and "Student Defense Corps," and expanding anti-communust oratorical campaigns that turned student into disciplined instruments of state ideology. Then, it explores how during the Korean War students were mobilized and indocrinated through militarized oratorical contests.

Chapter 5 explores the transnational U.S. student delegate’s speech program in the New York Herald Tribune. During the Eisenhower administration, the U.S. government's educational policies, cultural content, and Cold War rhetoric heavily influenced the Baby Boomer generation by nominating them to the crusade to save the endangered world. The Youth Forum

made strategic use of CBS television broadcasting as a vehicle of cultural diplomacy. By discussing sessions on core "American values," the program positioned itself to cultivate affinity among students receptive to U.S. cultural and intellectual influence. I principally use the CBS broadcast videos to analyze the debate and arguments discussed during the program. By analyzing the Korean student delegates' debate and speech and their representation in Korean media, I will analyze the performative arena where Cold War ideologies were normalized and disseminated domestically and internationally.

In Chapter 6**,** I argue how the Syngman Rhee administration strategically employed student oratories to consolidate its authority as the nucleus of the anti-communist state by projecting the image of the 'anti-communist youth' across Asia. In the aftermath of the Korean War, the oratorical contests became increasingly ritualized and were staged in diverse regions to support state-sponsored commemoration, festivals, and campaigns. I will examine how these contests functioned as platforms for uniting domestic and international anti-communist forces in Korea, while simultaneously presenting the nation as a model of anti- communism. The chapter then considers the growing critiques of student mobility and the repetitive nature of such ceremonial performances. Finally, I analyze how, following the April Revolution, oratorical contests shifted their rhetorical emphasis, even as elements of anti-communist discourse persisted.

This study primarily used Korean newspapers to compile data on oratorical contests. In addition, it examined Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) documents and materials related to the United States Information Service (USIS) contained in NARA records available in Korean databases. The article is the first to make systematic use of previously unexamined collections of oratorical texts (ungbyŏn sŏnjip). Contests identified through newspapers were cross-checked against speech anthologies published between 1949 and 1965, and texts associated with those contests were selected for analysis. Alongside these written sources, the New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum was examined using available audiovisual materials.

CHAPTER 1 The Formation of Public Speech in the Korean Peninsula

1.1. The Rise of Oratorical Contests as Political Expression

1.1.1. The Domestication of the Public Speech

The first part of this chapter outlines how reformist leaders helped make public speech a central tool of civic engagement through debate clubs, lectures, and print culture at the end of the 19th century. It traces the introduction of debate in early nation-building efforts, the constraints, and the emergence of indirect forms of discourse. The second part of this chapter provides information on how and why public speeches expanded among the populace to express their political opinions, and at the same time, how, during the colonial period, public speeches became a tool for mobilizing people to propagate wartime ideology.

The traditional value of speech underwent a drastic change in late 19th-century Korea, as it recognized the public space and sovereignty as a new political actor. The influence of the speech and debate system in the Korean Peninsula originated from the interests of East Asians in modern speech as a tool for enlightenment. Intellectuals in East Asia regarded speeches as a crucial linguistic act to be actively employed during the era of "civilization and enlightenment" in the late 19th century, a period marked by efforts to disseminate new knowledge and popularize political ideas.[46] Koreans have long been aware of living in a society with clear

[46] Fukuzawa Yukichi translated the word 'speech' from English to Japanese which corresponds to the Western concept of public speaking, and laid the foundation for establishing the modern way of speaking in Japan. Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kaehwagi yŏnsŏl ŭi 'kŭndaejŏk malhagi' hyŏngsagwajŏng yŏn'gu (개화기 연설의 '근대적

physical and cultural boundaries, of being a distinctive community. What emerged as a novel concept in the late 19th century was the idea of national sovereignty and a state existing within an international community of sovereign states.[47] Between 1875 and 1894, awareness of national sovereignty expanded regarding the geopolitical role of Chŏson, influenced by both external and internal factors.

The advocacy for independence and internal reforms by the "Enlightenment Faction" (*Gaehwapa*) and the outbreak of the "Kapsin Coup" (*Kapshin Chŏngbŏn*) attempted to reconstruct the notion of the governed population. Diverse intellectuals, leaders, and politicians who sought to reform the monarchy began to organize social groups and initiated efforts to conceptualize the nation-state's political identity. The "nation-building process" was launched through the implementation of educational reforms and the dissemination of national ideology through publications.[48] The "Enlightenment Faction" established several organizations known as "Societies" (*hoe*) and spearheaded a movement aimed at restoring national sovereignty and constructing a new nation-state. The "Societies" served as a contemporary public platform for fostering people's opinions. Notably, during this period, the small "Societies" transcended their role as a political forum, also functioning as a literary platform that facilitated dialogue and engagement with the public. The public gathering was facilitated through textual media, such

말하기' 형성과정 연구A study on process of establishing modern speaking in the Kaewhagy's speech" *Sihak kwa Ŏnŏhak* (시학과 언어학) 21 (2011): 227.

[47] Michael J. Seth, A History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present (Lanham, MD: Rowan&Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 251.

[48] The very conception of the newspaper implies the reaction of even 'world events' into a specific imagined world of vernacular readers. Serially published newspapers were by then a familiar part of urban civilization. So was the novel, with its possibilities for representing simultaneous actions in homogeneous empty time. The cosmic clocking which had made intelligible our synchronic transoceanic pairings was increasingly felt to entail a wholly intramundane, serial view of social causality; and this sense of the world was now speedily deepening its grip on Western imaginations. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 63, 210. Cho Kyu-t'ae 조규태, "Han'guk kŭndae chŏngchi·sahoe tanch'e ŭi 'kungmin' mandŭlgi - Tongnip Hyŏphoe·Taehan Chaganghoe·Taehan Hyŏphoe·Singanhoe rŭl chungsim ŭro (Making 'National People' of Korean Modern Political and Social Organizations - Focusing on Dokliphyuphoe, Daehanjaganghoe, Daehanhyuphoe, Shinganhoe)," *Sungshil Sahak* (숭실사학) 39 (2017.12): 5.

as newspapers, magazines, and journals, which were closely tied to patriotic enlightenment movements.[49]

The "Independence Club" (*Tongnip hyŏphoe*) was an early manifestation of building an organization to promote a sense of nationhood with a shared culture, history, and mutual destiny, combined with the concept of national sovereignty, marking the beginning of modern Korean nationalism.[50] The newspaper played a crucial role in shaping civic movements that advanced recognition of people's rights. The reformist Philip Jaisohn (*Sŏ Chaep'il*) launched *The Independent* (*Tongnip sinmun*), a bilingual Korean English newspaper, in April 1896 to inform the public about the Anglo-American ideology of civil liberties and promote Korea's modernization. Consequently, Philip Jaisohn established the "Independence Club" in July to enhance people's awareness of popular rights and national sovereignty through public discussions and lectures.[51] The "Independence Club" conducted educational and cultural campaigns, sponsoring lectures and debates, to promote the ideals of individual freedom and national independence. They organized public debates every Sunday on issues of "national" concern.[52] After March 1898, debate topics began to incorporate contemporary problems as central themes. The discussion shifted from daily customs and social norms to a broader scope of speech and debate forums, which began engaging with domestic and international events. These forums evolved into civic oversight institutions that responded to and exerted influence on significant occurrences. The speech and debate became institutionalized as a mechanism for

[49] Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi hoŭigyunŏm ŭi suyong yangsang (2) - Aeguk Kyemonggi『Ŭhoe T'ongyong Kyuch'ik』ŭi suyong yangsang ŭl chungsim ŭro-근대 초기 회의규범의 수용양상(2) -애국계몽기『의회통용규칙』의 수용양상을 중심으로- (The Process of Accepting Meeting Norms in the Early Modern Period (2) -Concentrated on Aspects of the Accommodation of General Rules for the Assembly in the Period of Patriotic Enlightenment)," *Inmunhak Yŏn'gu* (인문학연구) 47 (2014.): 473.
[50] Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 38.
[51] Park Y. Eugene, Korea: A History, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2022), 224.
[52] Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea Korea*, 250.

addressing national affairs, solidifying their role as a routine and integral part of public discourse.[53]

Intellectuals sought the prerequisites for achieving sovereignty and independence in transforming the state's structural framework. "Ten Thousand People's Cooperative Association" (*Manmingongdonghoe*), organized primarily by the "Independence Club," represented a novel political movement aimed at shaping public opinion through civic assemblies and integrating these views into national governance. The gathering of the populace and the opportunity to listen and participate in the speech could address contemporary issues,[54] allowing everyone to contribute, regardless of status or age. The experience gave people a clearer sense of their right to speech.[55] The experiential practice of these speech and debate forums fostered a transformative awareness of equality in speaking, as well as a recognition of the concept of the "people" (*min*) and their "right to speech" (*ongwon*). The evolving sensibility transcended the hierarchical structure of forums and the roles of speakers and audiences, culminating in broader expressions during street assemblies.[56] Consequently, the features of debate, speech, and oratory were affected by the education of the discussion, national movements, and campaign speeches on the street. At the end of the 19th century, Philip Jaisohn decided to educate the populace regardless of their social class. He founded the "Paeje

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[53] Sin Chi-yŏng 신지영, "Yŏnsŏl, t'oroniranŭn chedo ŭi yuip kwa kamgak ŭi pyŏnhwa (연설, 토론이라는 제도의 유입과 감각의 변화 The introduction of the speech-discussion system and the metamorphosys of modern sense), " *Han'guk Kŭndae Munhak Yŏn'gu* (한국근대문학연구) 6-1 (2005.4): 9–41.

[54] According to the records, a "twelve-year-old child gave a speech at a community meeting, and when he said, 'Our country will be ruined,' he cried, and people everywhere wailed and shed tears." "Chapbo," *Maeil Sinmun*, November 11, 1898., Another child, Chang Yŏng-nam, who is about 13 years old, moved people's hearts by "With a whole heart, he spoke very carefully and with caution." "chapbo, sodong ŭi ki," *Maeil Sinmun*, November 11, 1898., "The All-People's Congress" (*Manmin Gongdonghoe*), which was developed around the Independence Club, was a new from of political movement that sought to form public opinion through popular assemblies and reflect it in national governance. Sŏ Hŭi-gyŏng 서희경, "Taehanmin'guk 'Minjugonghwaje' ŭi kiwŏn (대한민국 '민주공과제'의 기원 The Origins of the 'Democratic Republicanism' in Republic of Korea," *Simin kwa Segye* (시민과 세계)14 (2008.12): 55.

[55] Yi Chŏng-ok, "Kaehuagi yŏnsŏr ŭi 'kŭndaejŏk malhagi' hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng yŏn'gu," 231.

[56] Shin Chi-yŏng, "Yŏnsŏl, toron iranŭn chedo ŭi yuip kwa kamgak ŭi pyŏnhwa," (2005): 27-30.

Academy" (*Paeje Hakdang*) and "Cooperative Association" (*Hyŏpsŏnghoe*) in October 1896, teaching the rules and methodologies of debate. The Association's debate education was fundamental in shaping the debate culture that permeated the "Enlightenment Movement" in the late 18th century.[57] "Paeje Academy's" objective was to "cultivate the practice of deliberating all matters in an orderly manner and advancing initiatives based on popular consensus among the descendants of Choson."

Furthermore, Philip Jaisohn aimed to leverage this effort as a foundation for "Establishing a National Assembly as a precursor to the future legislative body and preparing representatives for their roles therein."[58] In 1898, efforts to establish a parliament commenced, spearheaded by the "Independence Club." The initiative aimed to facilitate direct political participation by the populace through the delegation of parliamentary functions to the government's advisory body, known as the "Parliamentary Institution" (*Junchjuwon*). In the summer of 1897, the "Independence Club" held street speeches at the main entrance of the royal palace and on the parallel street of Jongno, aiming to include the participation of the masses. In the early days, the association held only one or two debates per month while staying at "Paejae Academy." However, after the street speeches, the number of debates increased to an average of three per month, and the debate topics began to focus on contemporary social issues.

As King Gojong (1852~1919) saw it as a possible threat that endangered his monarchy, he soon disbanded the "Independence Club," and the movement to establish a parliament languished. However, the studies and research on speech education persisted and continued to

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[57] Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Hyŏpsŏnghoe ŭi toron kyoyuk kwa toron munhwa ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng (협성회의 토론교육과 토론문화의 형성과정 Hyeopseong-hoe's Debate Education and the Formation of Debate Culture)," *Kugŏ Kugmunhak* (국어국문학) 172, (2015.9): 203.

[58] Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi hoeŭi kyubŏm ŭi suyong kwajŏng: Ŭihoe t'ongyong kyuch'ik ŭl chungsim ŭro (근대 초기 회의 규범의 수용과정(1)-『의회통용규칙』을 중심으로 The Process of Accepting Meeting Norms in the Early Modern Period (1) — Concentrated on General Rules for the Assembly)," *Han'guk Munhak Nonch'ong* (한국문학논총) 59 (2011): 389.

be widespread. For instance, Yun Ch'iho believed that by learning the parliamentary rules that apply to the world at large, the people could realize parliamentary democracy as soon as possible.[59] Therefore, Yun Ch' iho translated Henry M. Robert's *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies* into Korean, changing its title into *Rules of Order for Parliament* (*Ŭihoe T'ongyong Kyuch'ik*) and continued publishing in magazines, newspapers, and speech education books, spreading the norms of parliamentary meetings to the public.[60]

New forms of public discourse, such as speeches and debates, further facilitated women's participation in communication, enabling them to assert their views in the public domain. Participating in the speech, women challenged traditional norms, such as the notion that women should remain silent in public matters. This shift was made possible by the convergence of nationalist ideology and the modern concept of popular sovereignty, which redefined women as citizens with a voice in the nation.[61] Following a brief flourish of public speech, upon annexing Korea, the Japanese exercised tight control over the press and the education system to facilitate colonial rule. The "Newspaper Law (1907)," the "Peace Preservation Law (1907)," and the "Publication Law (1909)" were among the measures designed to ban the right of assembly, any form of political organization, and the circulation of Korean-language publications.[62] The Japanese colonial power prohibited public or political speeches, as well as

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[59]Jo Gye-Won 조계원, "Taehan chegukki manmin/kwanmin kongdonghoe (1898-nyŏn) rŭl turŏssan kukwang kwa Tongnip hyŏphoe ŭi kaltŭng: 'tongp'o,' 'minhoe' kaenyŏm ŭl chungsim ŭro (대한제국기 만민/관민공동회(1898년)를 둘러싼 국왕과 독립협회의 갈등 - '동포,' '민회' 개념을 중심으로 Political Conflict on the Convention of 10 Thousand People (1898) in the Daehan Empire Discourse)," *Han'guk Kŭnhyŏndaesa Yŏn'gu* (한국근현대사연구) 201, 19 (2), 97-124.

[60] The original book was published in 1876 in Chicago and influenced the rules of the Assembly. According to Yun Ch'iho's diary, while he was studying in the United States, he participated in several conferences and debates and became the university debate club president. These experiences led him to believe in public speech and its effectiveness in sharing opinions equally. Yi Chŏng-ok, "Kŭndae ch'ogi hoeŭi kyubŏm ŭi suyong kwajŏng: Ŭihoe t'ongyong kyuch'ik ŭl chungsim ŭro," Han'guk munhak nonch'ong 59 (2011): 390~400.

[61] Yi Sŏn-ok 이선옥, "Kŭndae kongnonjang esŏ ŭi yŏsŏng tamnon: Yŏnsŏlch'e sinsosŏl ŭl chungsim ŭro (근대 공론장에서의 여성 담론 : 연설체 신소설을 중심으로 A Discourse of Women in Modern Public Sphere - Focusing on the Oratorical Sinsoseol)," *Yŏsŏng Munhak Yŏn'gu* (여성문학연구) 34 (2015): 61-62.

[62] Victor Cha and Ramon Pacheco Pardo, *A New History of South and North Korea*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2023), 14.

various rallies, speeches, and school debates, requiring prior permission for all such activities. Even with prior authorization, police were present at speeches to censor ideas, leading to increased media restrictions and political repression.[63] Consequently, at the end of the 1900s, the debate novel[64], newspaper, magazine, and manual for speech education[65] were raised as alternatives and indirect methods for expressing public opinion.

In short, reformist groups and figures such as Philip Jaisohn promoted debate clubs, public lectures, and publications that placed speech at the center of civic life and circulated ideas about democracy and rights across social classes. The rise of speech and debate in Korea marked a significant turning point in the nation's political evolution. Despite subsequent colonial

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[63] Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi 'yŏn'gŭkchŏk sosŏl' kwa kaemong tamnon ŭi sŏsahwa chŏllyak (근대 초기 '연극적 소설'과 계몽담론의 서사화 전략 Early Modern 'Dramatic Novels' and Narration Strategies of Enlightenment Discourses)," *Taejung Sŏsa Yŏn'gu* (대중서사연구) 20, no. 4 (2014): 376.

[64] A new literary genre, the " speech style new novel (연설체 신소설 yonsolche sinsoseol)" emerged, characterized by scenes in which characters delivered speeches or engaged rhetorically styled monologues. These works frequently adopted the formal structure of political oratory, typically following a sequence comprising an introduction, development (often enriched with classical allusions), reversal (through social critique), and conclusion (marked by self-reflection or self-recognition). Within this rhetorical framework, authors introduced various modifications and creative techniques to sustain narrative engagement while preserving the performative essence of speech delivery. Yi, "Kŭndae kongnonjang esŏ ŭi yŏsŏng tamnon: Yŏnsŏlch'e sinsosŏl ŭl chungsim ŭro," 2015. 74-82. Another genre, the "dramatic novel (*yŏn-gŭkch'e sosŏl*)" emerged in the late 1900s, during a period when all public speeches and assemblies among common people were prohibited. *Record of the Assembly of Birds and Beast* (*Kŭmsuhoeŭirok*) depicts a gathering of the animals who deliver speeches and perform on stage. The narrative incorporates rhetorical expressions and representations of audience reactions, thereby inducing readers to experience, in a synaesthetic manner, collective affects generated within the scene of public assemblyYi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi 'yŏn'gŭkchŏk sosŏl' kwa kaemong tamnon ŭi sŏsahwa chŏllyak (근대 초기 '연극적 소설'과 계몽담론의 서사화 전략 Early Modern 'Dramatic Novels' and Narration Strategies of Enlightenment Discourses)," *Taejung Sŏsa Yŏn'gu* (대중서사연구) 30, no. 3 (2014.12): 412.

[65] Contemporary speech manuals have evolved from traditional, instructor-led training methods to text-based, self-directed learning formats, allowing readers to cultivate rhetorical competence independently. These manuals prioritize the development of techniques that enable speakers to engage, persuade, and emotionally move their audiences through effective appeals and memorable, accessible delivery. Moreover, they underscore the need to achieve harmony between conceptual content and linguistic form during speech preparation by addressing the classical rhetorical principles of invention, style, and arrangement. Through this integrated pedagogical framework, these resources aim to equip speakers with the skills to communicate their messages with clarity, persuasive force, and rhetorical sophistication. Yi Chŏng-ok 이정옥, "Kŭndae ch'ogi yŏnsŏl kyoyuksŏ-e natanan kŭndaejŏk malhagi kyubŏm (근대 초기 연설교육서에 나타난 근대적 말하기 규범 Modern Norms of Speaking with Reference to Speech Textbooks in the Inchoate Early Modern Period)", *Han'guk Munhak Nonch'ong* (한국문학논총), (2012.8):199-235.

suppression, the early efforts laid the foundation of civic culture grounded in public discourse, popular sovereignty, and the democratization of knowledge and political agency.

1.1.2. The Institutionalization of the Oratorical Contest

The first part of this chapter examines the emergence and institutionalization of public speech as a form of cultural resistance and political expression in colonial Korea. It traces how intellectuals, educators, and social groups used oratory as a tool for national education, ideological awakening, and women's emancipation amid increasing colonial surveillance and control. The second part will analyze the transformation of oratorical contests in colonial Korea during Japan's wartime regime, focusing on their politicization, institutional control, and role in ideological mobilization. It explores how contests developed into tools for anti-communist and anti-American propaganda, youth indoctrination, and support for pro-imperialist war efforts under the Japanese Empire.

Despite the harsh curtailment of freedom of expression and limited public places and political actions, diverse intellectuals engaged in efforts to cultivate national education. In the 1910s, local elites, Christian organizations, and adherents of "The Religion of the Heavenly Way (*Cheondogyo*)" established schools to educate and nurture young leaders.[66] The youths trained through these institutions later played a pivotal role in leading the "March 1st

[66] About "Cheondogyo" see Edward Irons, " Han'guk sinjonggyo ŭi palchŏn esŏ Ch'ŏndogyo ŭi wichi (한국신종교의 발전에서 천도교의 위치 The Place of Cheondogyo in the Development of Korean New Religions.)" *Sinjonggyo Yŏn'gu* (신종교연구) 52, 0 (2025): 267-292.

Independence Movement" of 1919.[67] The so-called "Samil (March 1st)" Movement was a nationwide demonstration against the Japanese occupation.[68]

Following the "March 1st Independence Movement," Koreans were granted the right to publish newspapers and magazines, leading to the launch of various publications.[69] The spread of public speeches and lecture meetings in the 1920s was closely tied to innovations in the media sphere. Social movements rapidly expanded and actively utilized multiple forms of media to advance their causes. The media concept expanded to include print publications, such

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[67] Cho Kyu Tae 조규태, "Han'guk kŭndae chŏngch'i·sahoe tanch'eŭi 'kungmin' mandŭlgi – Tongnip Hyŏphoe·Taehan Chaganghoe·Taehan Hyŏphoe·Singanhoe rŭl chungsimŭro (한국 근대 정치・사회단체의 '국민' 만들기 - 독립협회・대한자강회・대한협회・신간회를 중심으로 - Making 'National People' of Korean Modern Political and Social Organizations - Focusing on Dokliphyuphoe, Daehanjaganghoe, Daehanhyuphoe, Shinganhoe)", *Sungsil Sahak* (숭실사학), 39, (2017):26~29. During the 1910s, mounting dissatisfaction with Japanese colonial rule in Korea gave rise to increasingly vocal demands for independence. Yet public consciousness extended beyond the pursuit of complete sovereignty to encompass calls for political participation, local self-governance, and the freedoms of speech, press, and assembly. While some Koreans regarded immediate independence as premature, they did not consider it unattainable. Among the educated and politically conscious, a shared conviction persisted in the potential to achieve a measure of national autonomy and self-determination. Kwon Taeeok 권태억, "1910-nyŏndae Ilche ŭi 'munmyŏnghwa' t'ongch'i wa Han'gugin tŭl ŭi insik: 3·1 undong ŭi 'kŏjoksŏng' wŏnin kyumyŏng ŭl wihan hanaui siron. (1910년대 일제의 '문명화' 통치와 한국인들의 인식 : 3.1운동의 '거족성' 원인 규명을 위한 하나의 시론 Civilization' project of Japan and Korean's perception in the 1910s: how the March First Independent Movement was possible to become nationwide)," *Han'guk munhwa* (한국문화) 61 (2013): 335.

[68] President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, who, in his Fourteen Points, called for the principle of "national self-determination," led them to believe that their protest would resonate with the international community. Victor Cha, A New History of South and North Korea,15. The end of World War I and the Versailles Peace Conference inspired hopes for colonial peoples worldwide. Various nations declared their independence, with many of these declarations receiving international recognition at the Paris Peace Conference the following year. In 1918, European countries, including Belarus, Latvia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Czechoslovakia, issued declarations of independence, marking a significant turning point in the region's political landscape. Kwŏn Podŭrae 권보드래, *Samwŏl iril ŭi pam—P'ongnyŏk ŭi segie kkuneun p'yŏnghwa ŭi kkum*, (3월 1일의 밤 - 폭력의 세기에 꾸는 평화의 꿈 The Night of March First: Dreaming of Peace in the Century of Violence), (Seoul: Tolbaegae, 2019), 61.

[69] Notably, the inaugural editorial of *Gaebyeok* (The Opening) titled "Know the World," which was written in the style of speech, exemplified this trend of bold and critical discourse on political, economic, and social issues. Gaebyeok highlighted media innovation while also promoting the formation of youth organizations and the expansion of public speech events. In fact, periodicals and newspapers played a pivotal role in organizing public meetings and student discussions, and speech contests. Ji Young Shin 신지영, "Sinch'ejŏk tamron konggan ŭl tullŏssan sakŏnsŏng – 1920-nyŏndae yŏnsŏl·kangyŏnhoe esŏ 1930-nyŏndae chwadamhoe ro (신체적 담론공간을 둘러싼 사건성 - 1920년대 연설・강연會에서 1930년대 좌담會로 - Eventual Aspects Connected with Collective Discourse Styles — From Oratorical Meetings in 1920's to Round-Table Talks in 1930's —)," *Sanghur Hakbo* (상허학보) 27, (2009):319-365.

as daily newspapers and magazines, as well as theatrical spaces, where short plays, lectures, and public meetings were held to engage and mobilize the public. The organization of lectures and debates in colonial Korea presupposed the ideological enlightenment of youth, which was central to fostering intellectual engagement. In this context, the activities of youth associations not only encouraged the discovery and cultivation of artistic sensitivity but also facilitated the ideological empowerment of their members, allowing for the simultaneous development of cultural and political awareness.[70]

In the early 1920s, as Imperial Japan implemented its so-called "cultural policy,"[71] there was a surge in academic journals, the formation of various activist groups, and the expansion of educational movements. Within this context, oratory competitions began to be organized by newspapers, magazines, and Christian, Buddhist, and Cheondoist[72] organizations, schools, and youth and labor associations. Speech competitions were typically held in large public venues such as theaters, public halls, churches, kindergartens, and temples. Speech contests were mainly monitored and controlled by police officers in attendance. This surveillance was essential since most oratory topics were closely linked to national self-strengthening, giving these events a "current affairs oratory (*Siguk ungbyŏnhoe*)."[73]

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[70] Ba Seon Ae 배선애, "Kŭndae midio rosŏ ŭi kŭkchang kwa sikminji sidae munhak chang ŭi tonghak: 1920-nyŏndae chun kŭkchang kigwan kwa chuch'e hyŏngsŏng ŭi yangsang – Sonyŏnhoe hwaltong ŭl chungsim ŭro (1920년대 준극장 기관과 주체 형성의 양상-소년회 활동을 중심으로 The aspect of 1920`s semi-theatre institution and Subject formation: Focused on the activities of juvenile society)," *Taedong munhwa yŏn'gu* (대동문화연구) 69, (2010): 309-346.

[71] Lim Yu Kyung 임유경, "부온(不穩)"과 통치성 -식민지 시기 "불온"의 문화정치 "Buron"(不穩) and Governmentality -The cultural politics of "Buron" in the colonial period." *Taedong munhwa yŏn'gu* (대동문화연구) 90, (2015): 371-419. "

[72] Sung Joohyun 성주현, "Hanmal·Ilche kangjŏmgi Ch'ŏndogyoŏi sahoe pokchi hwaltong – kyoyuk hwaltong ŭl chungsim ŭro (한말·일제강점기 천도교의 사회복지활동 - 교육활동을 중심으로 - Social Welfare Activities of Cheondogyo during the Korean-Japanese Colonial Period : With a focus on educational activities), " *Donghak Hakkbo* (동학학보) 72 (2024): 307-341.

[73] Yeun, Keum-sun 윤금선, "Ilche kangjŏmgi ungbyŏn taehoe yŏn'gu – 1920-nyŏndae 'hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe' podo kisarŭl chungsimŭro (일제강점기 웅변대회연구-1920년대 '현상 웅변대회' 보도 기사를 중심으로- The

By the late 1920s, censorship of speech events intensified, with authorities restricting topics related to politics, economics, and social issues, permitting only “cultural topics.” In some instances, organizers were required to explicitly declare that the competitions aimed to “promote education and advance culture” to evade political scrutiny. Nonetheless, the "Attending Policeman (*Imsŏk kyŏnggwan*)" was consistently present and intervened when public discourse became politically provocative.[74]

The assembly and speech contests were practicable even within the colonial context due to the implementation of cultural policies in colonial Korea. Such policies included measures such as the limited allowance of gatherings and associations for Koreans, as well as the "Choson Language Promotion Regulation (1920)" aimed to enhance the language proficiency of the governor-general and its subordinate officials. The Japanese Government’s order was not merely a passive allowance but a broader institutional plan that sought to make the activities of Koreans, such as gathering, speaking, and writing, more visible. The efforts to institutionalize and organize gathering activities were part of a larger “mediating” project of culture, designed to ensure that colonial officials could understand the Korean language and improve their ability to interpret and translate it into Japanese. Thus, it was a strategic effort to embed cultural control through language and communication, reinforcing the colonial administration's dominance while fostering a controlled linguistic exchange.[75]

Study on the Oratory Contest during the Japanese Colonial Era - Focused on Press Articles on the 1920s 'The Prize Oratory Contest')," *Kugŏ Kyoyuk Yŏn’gu* (국어교육연구) 77, (2021): 42~48.

[74] Park Heon Ho 박헌호, "‘Munhwa chŏngch’i’gi sinmun ŭi wisang kwa pan-gyŏmyŏr ŭi naejŏk nonni — 1920-nyŏndae minkanji rŭl chungsimŭro (문화정치기 신문의 위상과 반검열의 내적 논리 :1920년대 민간지를 중심으로 Position of Newspapers in "the Cultural Politics" Period and Internal Logics of Anti-Censorship - focusing on Korean-language civil newspapers in the 1920’s)," *Taedong munhwa yŏn’gu* (대동문화연구), (2005): 210.

[75] Lee Hye Ryoung 이혜령, "Munjibang ŭi ŏnŏdŭl — t’ongyŏk ch’eje rosŏ ŭi sikminji ŏnŏ hyŏnsang e taehan sogo (문지방의 언어들-통역체제로서의 식민지 언어현상에 대한 소고 Speaking at the Threshold -A Study on Colonial Linguistic Phenomenons as the Interpreting System in the Colonial Korea)," *Dong-ak ŏmunhak* (동악어문학) 54 (2010) : 45-98., Lee Hye-ryong 이혜령, "Chibae wa ŏnŏ: sikminji kŏmyŏl ŭi keisŭ (지배와

Between the 1920s and 1930s, public speaking gained prominence as an expression of national consciousness and a necessary skill for cultured individuals, closely tied to self-development and social etiquette. In addition to live events, speech contests were broadcast on the radio[76] and published in magazines. In some cases, oratory manuscripts were collected for publication rather than delivered live, reflecting the growing influence of mass media in disseminating oratorical practices.[77]

The diversification and specialization in activist efforts altered the form and structure of public speech, which was practiced in various social movements, including youth, student, women's, children's, and labor movements.[78]

Some public schools functioned not only as a site for formal education in speech and as an autonomous political actor to extend and foster a new generation of ideologically Korean people, but also as a space for imposing forms of control and violence and indoctrinating the colonial ideology of Imperial Japan. A significant number of Youth association members were students, and the broader social atmosphere, shaped by enlightenment discourse, emphasized education and academic achievement. As a result, the primary focus of young members was on academic learning, character development, and educational issues. They engaged in discussions ranging from practical questions, such as "Is vision or hearing more important in learning?" to broader societal debates on whether "the most urgent need for our society is industrial development or education." These discussions also explored the balance between "intellectual education and moral education," as well as "whether education should prioritize sound moral values or extensive knowledge." Furthermore, members critically examined the

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언어:식민지 검열의 케이스 Domination and Language -Case of the Colonial Censorship By Japanese Imperialism-.)," *Bangyo ŏmunyŏnku* (반교어문연구) 44, (2016): 266.

[77] Yeun, Keum-sun, "Ilche kangjŏmgi ungbyŏn taehoe yŏn'gu – 1920-nyŏndae 'hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe' podo kisarŭl chungsimŭro," 42-48.

[78]Cho Kyu Tae, "Han'guk kŭndae chŏngch'i·sahoe tanch'eŭi 'kungmin' mandŭlgi – Tongnip Hyŏphoe·Taehan Chaganghoe·Taehan Hyŏphoe·Singanhoe rŭl chungsimŭro," (2017): 27~29.

educational roles of public institutions, such as schools, and private institutions, like families. Their debates extended to analyzing the key components necessary for social development and stability, including distinctions between agriculture and commerce, thereby deepening their understanding of social structures. In discussing who should lead the task of social reform, the youth increasingly recognized their own social responsibilities and sought to strengthen their sense of duty through autonomous reflection and debate. [79]

The public speech also grew among women leaders exposed to democracy, freedom, and gender equality, and developed a distinct awareness of women's emancipation. The new generation of women with a more progressive understanding of gender equality actively used speech conventions to persuade the public.[80] The "All-Korea Women's Oratory Contest" (*Chŏn Chosŏn yŏsŏng ungbyŏn taeho*), organized by the *Tong-a Ilbo*, was the first public speaking competition in Korea exclusively for women. Approximately 20 organizations participated in the event, with 12 schools represented. Among the non-school participants, five were youth organizations, while the remaining seven were educational institutions.[81] The promotion of the "All-Korea Women's Oratory Contest" framed the event as a historic moment for Korean women, emphasizing their emergence from long confinement in the private sphere: "The first loud and lively voices of Korean women, who have long been confined within the home, will indeed stir interest and offer insights to Korean society, allowing us to glimpse their perspectives on life." Tickets for the event were sold at two locations, "Dong-A Women's

[79] Ba Seon Ae, "Kŭndae midio rosŏ ŭi kŭkchang kwa sikminji sidae munhak chang ŭi tonghak: 1920-nyŏndae chun kŭkchang kigwan kwa chuch'e hyŏngsŏng ŭi yangsang," 309-346.

[80] Yun Jung-Weon 윤정원, "'Yŏja ch'ŏngnyŏn' ŭi tŭngjang: 1920-nyŏndae 'Taegu Yŏja Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe' hwaltong ŭl chungsimŭro ('여자청년'의 등장: 1920년대 '대구여자청년회' 활동을 중심으로 Appearance of 'Young Women' : Focusing on the Activities of the 'Daegu Women's Association' in the 1920s," *Taegu Kyŏngbuk Yŏn'gu* (대구경북연구), 20(3), (2021): 139.

[81] "Yŏryu ungbyŏn manmul sosenghan sinch'un byŏkdu e sinjin yŏsŏng ŭi sinjin kiyŏm! (여류웅변 만물소생한 신춘벽두에 신진여성의 신진기염!)," *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), 03.18.1925.

Association and Deokwon Store," for 10 jŏn each.[82] The proceeds from ticket sales were designated to support future student organizations and beneficial social projects.[83] The topics addressed by the female speakers included “women’s occupations,” “flaws in modern economic structures,” “medical care and nursing,” “gender equality,” “the ideal of the wise mother and good wife,” and “social reform.”[84] Notably, the contest broke from the traditional format where judges determined the winners. Instead, the outcome was decided through an audience vote. Each attendee recorded the name of their preferred speaker on a ballot attached to their ticket, which they submitted upon exiting the venue. [85] This voting system underscored the participatory nature of the event, reflecting the democratization of public discourse and the audience's active engagement in shaping the outcome. The women’s oratory continued to be organized until the mid-1930s, especially in collaboration with newspaper companies and women's college leaders, who institutionalized regular oratory conventions in both English and Korean for high school students and college women.[86]

This part of the chapter has shown that, public speech in colonial Korea evolved into a powerful medium for cultural assertion and social critique. Despite colonial censorship, speech contests and oratory events fostered national consciousness and empowered the marginalized voices of youth and women. Schools, religious organizations, and emerging media cultivated

[82] Jŏn was subunit of the Chosŏn monetary currency.

[83] “Yŏryu ungbyŏn manmul sosenghan sinch’un byŏkdu e sinjin yŏsŏng ŭi sinjin kiyŏm! (여류웅변 만물소생한 신춘벽두에 신진여성의 신진기염!)", *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), 03.18.1925.

[84] “Yŏryu ungbyŏn Paehwa han tansang tanha kojodoen sin yŏsŏng ŭi kibek. (여류웅변 배화한 단상단하 고조된 신여성의 기백)", *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), 03.21.1925.

[85] “Yŏryu ungbyŏn sŏljŏn cheilp’o nŭn kŭmya! Chindu e iphan sŏnbongjang ŭi yongja! (여류웅변 설전제일포는 금야! 진두에 입한 선봉장의 용자!) " *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), 03.19.1925.

[86] Key figures including Kim Hwal-lan of Ihwa Yŏja Taehak, Sŏ Ŭn-suk of Ihwa Yuchiwŏn, Im Yŏng-sin of Chung’ang Yuchiwŏn, Tokko Sŏn of Kyŏngsŏng Yuchiwŏn, Kim T’ak-wŏn of Yŏja Chagang, and Esther Hong of Yŏja Sinhak, together with the prominent activist Lyuh Un-hyŏng, then president of the Chosŏn Chung’ang Ilbo (Korea Central Daily News), collaborated to organize a major intercollegiate women’s oratorical contest in 1935. The Chosŏn Chung’ang Ilbo mounted an intensive publicity drive, running sustained promotional coverage beginning two months before the event. “Tanyŏn!! mando in’gi rŭl chipchunghan ponsa chuch’oe ŭi sinch’u odae sŏngsa,”, (단연!! 만도인기를 집중한 본사주최의 신추오대성사)," *Chosŏn Chung’ang Ilbo* (조선중앙일보), 09.23.1935.

civic discourse, which fed into mass movements such as the March 1st Independence Movement. Oratorical contests were also subject to strict surveillance and censorship, particularly on political themes. Women's participation in oratorical contests expanded notably in the 1920s through high-profile contests promoting democratic engagement and gender equality.

1.1.3. The Militarization of the Oratorical Contest

This part of the chapter examines how wartime oratorical contests were transformed into instruments of imperial control, serving Japanese ideological and militaristic objectives. It traces how youth and workers were mobilized through speech-centered propaganda, how the medium of public speaking was co-opted from earlier reformist and educational movements, and how these events ultimately reinforced the colonial state's policy agenda and wartime ideology.

Following the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the subsequent transition to a wartime regime, speech contests organized by newspapers or within educational institutions began to decline. Instead, oratory competitions orchestrated by government and civilian organizations under the Japanese Empire gained prominence. Many of these competitions focused on anti-communism and counterintelligence, convening speakers from various districts to deliver speeches aimed at "promoting anti-communism, counterintelligence, and Japanese spirit" as well as "enhancing morale for loyalty and patriotism during the current national crisis." The judges for these contests typically included local police chiefs, district officials, and principals of elementary schools in the area, provided they were branch managers of local newspapers or directors of propaganda offices.[87]

[87] "Ungbyŏn taehoe Hwanghae kakchi sŏ,(웅변대회 황해각지서)," *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), 08.13.1942.

Japan’s wartime reforms aimed at establishing a total war system brought about several significant changes, two of which had a major impact on the operation of oratory contests in Korea. The first was controlling Korean-language media and consolidating newspapers, which restricted public discourse in Korea. The second was the reorganization of youth organizations to facilitate the mobilization of labor and military forces, restructuring these groups to align with the goals of the Japanese Empire’s war effort.

Japan's media control policies went beyond merely suppressing the editorial tone of newspapers; they fundamentally restructured the entire press system. These policies effectively eliminated Korean-led media activities, resulting in the near-total disappearance of Korean voices in journalism. In contrast, Japanese-published newspapers, including the Governor-General's official gazettes, rapidly expanded, dominating the colonial media landscape and consolidating the colonial government's control over information dissemination.[88]

As the need for military and labor resources grew increasingly pressing, Japan recognized the strategic importance of its youth population and made them a primary target of wartime mobilization policies. The colonial government intensified its control over non-student youth by reinforcing oversight of youth associations and training centers. Although organizations targeting elementary school graduates had existed previously, the focus on youth control, education, and mobilization became more pronounced as Japan sought to consolidate its power over this demographic. The establishment of the "Choson Youth Corps (조선청년단)" marked

[88] On January 10, 1941, Japan enacted Ordinance No. 37, known as the Newspaper Publication Restriction Order, as part of enforcing Article 20 of the National Mobilization Act. Later that year, on December 13, Ordinance No. 1107, the Newspaper Business Act, was also proclaimed. These measures were designed to tighten state control over media operations, aiming to suppress any content that could potentially hinder Japan's war efforts. Articles deemed even slightly disruptive to the war agenda were strictly prohibited, reflecting the regime's determination to eliminate dissent and maintain a tightly controlled narrative in support of the war. Park Yong-Gyu 박용규, " Ilche malgi (1937–1945) ŭi ŏllon t’ongje chŏngch’aek kwa ŏllon kucho pyŏndong (일제 말기(1937~1945)의 언론통제정책과 언론구조변동) A Study on Press Control Policies and the Transformation of Press System during the Last Period of Japanese Occupation in Korea," *Han’guk Ŏllon Hakpo* (한국언론학보), 46(1), 194-228.

a significant shift in these policies. Unlike earlier organizations limited to elementary school graduates, the "Choson Youth Corps" encompassed all out-of-school adolescents and young adults, regardless of their educational background. This organization became the central mechanism of Japan's youth mobilization strategy in Korea, serving as a key institution for ideological indoctrination and preparing young people for wartime labor and military service.[89]

The colonial government organized and directed youth groups under the pretext of graduate supervision. This strategy aimed to recruit and systematically organize the youth population, a key labor force, to reinforce the colonial regime's control over human resources.[90] This initiative was driven by Japan's intention to showcase its power as a dominant empire in Northeast Asia and to strengthen and expand its organizational structures.[91] Youths were systematically incorporated into these efforts, with all adolescents being enlisted as members of youth associations. Under the "National Spiritual Mobilization Movement" (*Hwangguk sinminhwa*) [92] framework, the Empire's administration underwent strict disciplinary training

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[89] **Ch'oe Wŏn-yŏng** 최원영. "Ilche malgi (1937–45) ŭi ch'ŏngnyŏn tongyŏn chŏngch'aek – ch'ŏngnyŏndan kwa ch'ŏngnyŏn hunryŏnso rŭl chungsimŭro, (日帝末期(1937~45)의 青年動員政策 - 青年團과 青年訓練所을 중심으로 Youth Mobilization Policies during the Late Japanese Colonial Period (1937–1945): Focusing on Youth Associations and Training Centers," *Han'guk Minjok Undongsa Yŏn'gu* (한국민족운동사연구), 21(0), 1999: (251-299).

[90] "국민총훈련을 목표, 청년단 대개조 단행," *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), 03.12.1941, 8, Chŏng Hye-jŏng 정혜정, "Ilcheha chorŏpsaeng chido hakkyo wa ch'ŏngnyŏn hunryŏn tanch'e ŭi chojikhwa (1927–1943), 일제하 졸업생지도학교와 청년훈련단체의 조직화(1927~1943) Under the Japanese imperialism Encouragement School of Graduates and Youth Training Organizations)," *Han'guk kyoyuk sahak* (한국교육사학), 32(1), (2010): 163.

[91] 朝鮮總督府學務局 (Chosŏn Chongdokpu Hakmukuk), " Seinendan no Shintaisei Kaisetsu, Bunkyō no Chōsen (青年團の新體制解說 Explanation of the New System of Youth Groups)," 文教の朝鮮 (*Munkyŏ ŭi Chosŏn*) 188, 04.1941, 188.

[92] The Asia-Pacific War education policy was an extreme form of assimilation policy aimed at transforming Koreans into "soldiers of the imperial army" who would absolutely obey the emperor, a goal distinct from the concept of loyal "citizens" outlined in the First and Second Educational Ordinances. This policy sought to utilize the bodies, knowledge, and skills of Korean students entirely for war mobilization through education. How schoolgirls were mobilized and educated see Park Hyunok and Chang, Kyusik 박현옥, 장규식. "Hwangguk sinminhwa chŏngch'aekgi hakkyo kyoyuk ŭi pyŏnjil kwa yŏhaksaeng ŭi chŏnshi tongwŏn (황국신민화 정책기 학교 교육의 변질과 여학생의 전시동원 Changes in School Education and the Mobilization of Female Students during the Asia-Pacific War," *Yŏksahak Yŏn'gu* (역사학연구), 96 (2024): 147-183. To see the changes in

designed to instill loyalty to the empire and reinforce Japan's militaristic and ideological control over the younger generation. This training aimed to cultivate obedient subjects who would contribute to the empire's expansionist agenda and support its wartime policies.[93]

The oratorical contest itself reiterated the established structure and system that had been in place up to that point, albeit with new arguments. Furthermore, one of the most notable changes in the early 1940s was the consolidation of newspapers and the prohibition of the Korean language. Additionally, the names of contest winners began to be recorded exclusively in Japanese, as part of the assimilation policy, due to the family name-changing system (ch'angshi chedo).[94]

Mostly, Youth oratorical contests began to be arranged as part of military conventions, as well as anti-American and anti-English oratorical contests and anti-communist contests. Following the signing of the "Anti-Comintern Pact" between Japan and Germany on November 25, 1936, and Italy's accession to the pact on November 6, 1937, the three nations solidified their cooperative stance against communism. This collaboration culminated in the formation of the "Tripartite Alliance," which marked a pivotal step in the consolidation of the Axis Powers. Ultimately, this alliance contributed to the expansion of the Second World War, positioning the Axis in direct opposition to the Allied powers led by the United States and the United Kingdom.[95] Through this alliance, Japan aligned itself with the fascist bloc, and the Japanese

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education policy and government system of Korea duirng the Pacific War period see Kwon, Ohhyun 권오현, "Hwangguk sinminhwa kyoyuk chŏngch'aek kwa yŏksa kyoyuk ŭi pyŏnhwa (황국신민화 교육정책과 역사교육의 변화 The Alteration of History Education in the Japanese Imperialism Period(1938~45)," *Sahoehwa Kyoyuk Yŏn'gu* (사회과 교육연구), 18(4), (2011). 1-13.

[93]Chŏng Hye-jŏng 정혜정, "Ilcheha chorŏpsaeng chido hakkyo wa ch'ŏngnyŏn hunryŏn tanch'e ŭi chojikhwa (1927–1943), (2010): 181.

[94] Lee Jong-khil (이종길), "Ilche ŭi Han'guk shikmin chibae kijop mit ch'angshi chedo wa kŭ hugwa" (日帝의 한국 식민지배 기조 및 창씨제도와 그 후과), *Tong'a Pŏphak* (동아법학) 93 (2021): 195–243.

[95] Jeremy A. Yellen, "Japan and the Tripartite Pact, 1940," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol.51, no.3 (2016): 555-576., Christian Goeschel, "Performing the New Order: The Tripartite pact," 1940-1945*, Contemporary European History* 33 (2024): 411-427.

Empire actively propagated anti-communist and anti-Soviet sentiments in Korea, aiming to mobilize the public and wage an ideological war. Through numerous lectures, exhibitions, and other public events, Japan disseminated anti-communist messages, portraying the Soviet Union and the Comintern as threats to civilization and demonizing them in the process.[96]

The Soviet Japanese War propaganda framed communism as an intellectual vanity project, irrelevant to the ordinary and impoverished Korean populace. It was portrayed as an "enemy of humanity," a "germ," and a "demon" that should be rejected by common sense. The Japanese Empire used these images to shape public opinion against communism.[97] In various regions of Korea, "Anti-Communism and Counterespionage Week" was designated, during which anti-communist ideas were promoted through films, lectures, radio programs, and speech contests. The campaign included street parades, public book burnings of leftist publications, and ceremonies to recognize and reward right-wing organizations and individuals loyal to anti-communist causes.[98] With the enforcement of the National Defense Security Act in 1941, national counter-espionage education within Korea was significantly strengthened. The education implemented a variety of mechanisms such as school education, reinforced speeches by youth associations and patriotic groups (*aekukban*). Additionally, it was disseminated through radio broadcasts, dramas known as "national plays," films, and novels.[99]

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[96]Hwang Dong-Ha 황동하, " Pang'gong hyŏpchŏng (Panggong hyŏpchŏng, Anti-Comintern Pact) ŭi munhwajŏk hyokhwa: sikminji Chosŏn ŭl chungsimŭro (방공협정(防共協定, Anti-Comintern Pact)의 문화적 효과: 식민지 조선을 중심으로 The Cultural Effects of the Anti-Comintern Pact(防共協定) on Colonial Joseon)," *Yŏksa Yŏn'gu* (역사연구),(41), 238~239.

[97] Yi, Tae-hun 이태훈. "Ilchemal chŏnshi ch'eje gi Chosŏn Pang'gong Hyŏphoe ŭi hwaltong kwa panggong sŏnchŏn chŏnnyak (일제말 전시체제기 조선방공협회의 활동과 반공선전전략 Activities of the Joseon Anti-Communism Association during the Wartime Mobilization period, and their strategy of anti-North Korea propaganda)," *Yŏksa wa Hyŏnsil* (역사와현실) 93, (2014): 129-175.

[98] "Pang'gong pangch'ŏp chu silsi" *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), 07.05.1939.

[99] Kwon, Myŏng-a 권명아, "Yŏja sŭpai-dan ŭi sinhwa wa 'choŭn Ilbonin' toe-gi: Hwangminhwa wa kungmin pangch'ŏp ideollogi ŭi sanggwan-sŏng ŭl chungsim ŭro (여자 스파이단의 신화와 '좋은 일본인'되기 -황민화와 국민방첩 이데올로기의 상관성을 중심으로-The Myth of Female Espionage Bands and "Becoming a Good

Conventions under the titles “Anti-communism,” “counterespionage,” and "Encouragement for the Destruction of Britain and America" continued to be held regularly in various regions as part of the total national mobilization.[100] For instance, on May 27, 1942, during the Navy Memorial Day, the Ip’o branch of the "Ideological Defense Cooperation Association" held a “Destroy Britain and America Oratory Contest.” A total of 13 speakers delivered speeches on the theme of "Destroy Britain and America" to an audience of approximately 500-600 people.[101] In another case, the "Chosŏn Anti-Communist Association" organized in Suwon inviting youth to talk about "Anti-communism" and "counterespionage" freely on the stage, after submitting a draft of the manuscript.[102] Yu Hyŏn-guk, from Kyŏngsŏng (Seoul), delivered a speech titled “The Essence of Prosperity in Asia.” Pak Sŭng-gŭk, from Yanggam, spoke on “Prosperity of Asia and Anti-Communism.” Yi Tong-an, from Suwŏn, addressed “The Determination of Korean Youth toward Anti-Communism,” and Pyŏn Ki-jae, from Osan, gave a speech entitled “Anti-Communism and the Revitalization of the Spirit.”[103]

Japanese)" *Tongbang Hakchi* (동방학지) 130 (2005) : 321-322.

[100] “Ch’ongdongwŏn Kyŏngsŏng Yŏnmaeng ŭi sabaek yŏ isajang taehwe” (총동원경성연맹의 사백여이사장대회), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), July 2, 1939; “Kangnŭng Pang’gong Pangch’ŏp il” (강릉방공방첩일), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 20, 1939; “Pang’gong Pangch’ŏp sŏnjŏn yŏnye taehwe kaech’oe” (방공방첩선전 연예대회개최), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), September 12, 1939; “Pang’gong Pangch’ŏp sŏnjŏn kŭk kamsangmun pyŏŏ tangsŏnja” (방공방첩선전극 감상문표어 당선자), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), October 8, 1939; “Pang’gong tan kyŏlsŏng ilchunyŏn kinyŏm haengsa sŏnghwang” (방공단결성일주년 기념행사성황), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 1, 1939; “Suwŏn ch’oyo ŭi hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehwe” (수원초요의 현상웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 8, 1939; “Hyesan ungbyŏn taehwe” (혜산웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), May 23, 1940; “Pang’gong ungbyŏn taehwe” (방공웅변대회), *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), August 19, 1942; “Pang’gong ungbyŏn taehwe (kakchi)” (방공웅변대회(각지)), *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), August 22, 1942; “Pang’gong ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang” (방공웅변대회 성황), *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), August 26, 1942.

[101] “Mi-Yŏng kyŏngmyŏl ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang” *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), 06.01.1943.

[102] “Suwŏn ch’oyu ŭi hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehwe” (수원초유의 현상웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 8, 1939.

[103] “Taesŏnghwang-ŭro chongmakhan hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehwe” (대성황으로 종막한 현상웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 14, 1939.

Oratory contests promoting the themes and significance of the Pacific War were used to justify the conscription of Korean youth. These events were designed to have the conscripts themselves articulate the necessity and honor of military service, inspiring and influencing their peers who were also subject to conscription. One such event, organized by the "National Total Mobilization Federation of Korea" (*Kungmin ch'ongnyŏk Chosŏn yŏnmaeng*), was the "Youth Morale-Boosting Resolution Speech Contest to Commemorate the Implementation of the Conscription System" (*Chingbyŏngje silsi kin'yŏm ch'ŏngsonyŏn sagi yangyang kyŏlŭi p'irŏk kangyŏn taehoe*). The contest gathered 14 provincial representatives, selected from local competitions, at the Bumin Hall Auditorium in Kyongsŏng. The contest was attended mainly by students from secondary schools who had reached the age of conscription. The judging panel consisted of the head of the reporting department and editors from the *Maeil Shinbo* newspaper, senior officials from the "National Total Mobilization Federation of Korea," and a naval lieutenant commander. The winning speeches included first place: "Rise, Young Men" by Hoshiyama (Gyongsangbukdo representative, fourth-year student at Gyeŏngbuk Secondary School) in second place: "The Meaning of Conscription and Our Resolve" by Kanemura (Chungchongnamdo province representative, student at a commercial high school), and third place: "There Is Only One Path" by Yoshiyama (Jŏllabukdo province representative). The winners were awarded prizes and certificates from the President of the Federation and the Director of the "Korean Army Press Department." After the contest, the participants sang the imperial Japanese navy anthem, "Umi Yukaba" (海行かば), to conclude the event.[104]

In addition to students, young workers from companies were also encouraged to participate in speech contests. In January 1944, a "factory speech contest (Kongjang ungbyŏn taehoe

[104] "Irosŏra chŏlmŭn-itudŭl" chingbyŏng kyŏlŭi p'ir'yŏk pul ŭl tohan ch'ŏngsonyŏn Ŏje ungbyŏn taehwe ("일어서라 젊은이들" 징병결의 피력 불을 토한 청소년 어제 웅변대회)" *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), October 4, 1943.

공장웅변대회)" was held in Haeju (해주), co-hosted by various companies including "Chosŏn Cement Company (*Chosŏn Simente-sa*), Jŏngbang Chosŏn Heavy Industries (*Chŏngbang Chosŏn Chung'gŏngŏp*), Chungoe Mining Haeju Refinery (*Chungoe Kwangŏp Haeju Cheryŏnso*), Yukhaeun Shipping Company (*Yukhaeun Chusikhoesa*), Michang Flour Milling Company (*Mich'ang Chebun*), and Chosŏn Fisheries Joint Stock Company (*Chosŏn Susan Chusikhoesa*)." The factory speech contest was open only to men under 35, and those who placed in the competition were awarded prizes ranging from 10 to 30 hwan.[105]

In 1944, the "Sŏngdong District Youth Promotion Corps" of Tajon held a speech contest, gathering middle-ranking youth from within the district to commend their efforts in strengthening wartime production. The "Gyeongseong Youth Corps" was awarded certificates of appreciation and monetary rewards during the event. A young worker named Hagashima Izuru took the stage as a representative of the organizing committee and delivered a speech titled "The Time Has Come for 2,600 Korean Compatriots to Rise." According to reports, the youth representatives from the event proclaimed, "Let us dedicate all our efforts to increasing production and focus solely on the destruction of Britain and America." The event concluded around 9 p.m. after the oratory session, followed by a viewing of the "Japanese News," marking the end of the program.[106]

Not only man was but also Korean women were actively mobilized to expand wartime propaganda discourse. Women were encourged to urge Korean men to enlist and were themselves called upon to demonstrate voluntary expressions of patriotic enthusiasm. Following the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, a dominant model of female identity emerged within the realm of realpolitik under the guise of "traditional East Asian femininity."

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[105] "Hoesa, kongjang taehang ungbyŏn taehoe(회사, 공장대항 웅변대회)" *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), 01.28.1944.

[106] "Myŏljŏk ŭi yŏlhwa ch'ungjŏn, Sŏngdong Ch'ŏngnyŏn Ch'ujin taeje ŭi angyang ungbyŏn taehoe" (멸적의 열화충전, 성동청년추진 대전의 앙양 웅변대회), *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), 11.01.1944.

This identity was encapsulated in slogans such as “Women Behind the Lines” and “Mothers of the Nation’s Soldiers.”[107]

During the period of total mobilization, concrete institutions and organizations were established to facilitate the mobilization of women. Through newspapers, radio and female activists, a discourse was gradually constructed to regulate and discipline Korean women.[108] Female intellectuals assumed roles of enlightenment and guidance for rural and lower-class women. Rather than being confined to rear-line activities such as social service or relief work, they came to occupy positions as leaders in the ideological education of the “female masses.”[109]

To rationalize and legitimize these forms of collaboration with the state, female intellectuals employed various literary and rhetorical forms, including essays, commentaries, and speeches. Particularly propagandistic texts were often written in accessible formats such as oratory, discourse essays, and poetry to ensure public comprehension. Many of these figures came from the education sector or women’s organizations; as principals of public and private schools, and college professors, they urged students and young women to volunteer as wartime auxiliaries, conscripted students, or military draftees, justifying fascist war efforts and promoting active cooperation with the war regime.[110]

The Government-General of Chŏson utilized public forums, such as lectures, speeches,

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[107] Kwon, Myŏng-a 권명아, “Sikminji kyŏnghŏm kwa yŏsŏng ŭi chŏngch’esŏng – P’asijŭm chejeha ŭi munhak, yŏsŏng, kukka” (식민지 경험과 여성의 정체성-파시즘 체제하의 문학, 여성, 국가, Experience of the colonial and subject positioning of women-The literature, women, and the nation under the fascist regime (1930-1945) *Hanguk Kŭndae Munhak Yŏn’gu* (한국근대문학연구)11 (2005): 83.

[108] Kim, Mi-jŏng 김민정, "Chŏnsi cheje-gi Chosŏn Ch’ongtongbu ŭi yŏsŏng nodongnyŏk tongwŏn chŏngch’aek kwa silt’ae" (전시체제기 조선총독부의 여성노동력 동원정책과 실태 Wartime Women's Labor Mobilization Policies of Japanese Government General of Korea and Actual Aspect). PhD diss., Korea University, 2015, 142.

[109] Kwon, Myŏng-a, “Sikminji kyŏnghŏm kwa yŏsŏng ŭi chŏngch’esŏng – P’asijŭm chejeha ŭi munhak, yŏsŏng, kukka,” 84.

[110] Pak, Su-hyŏn 박수현, “Chŏnsi p’asijŭm-gi (1937–1945) Chosŏn chisigin ŭi cheje hyŏpryŏk yangsang kwa nonni – sinmun chapchi ŭi chin’il kŭl ŭl chungsim ŭro” (전시파시즘기(1936-1945) 조선 지식인의 체제협력 양상과 논리,Types and Logics of Korean Intellectual's Collaboration under Japanese Fascist Period(1937-1945))," *Hanguk Minjok Undongsa Yŏn’gu* (한국민족운동사연구) 46 (2006): 177.

symposia, and roundtable discussions, as discursive spaces through which Korean women could be brought into contact with colonial authority. These venues were designed to instill in women a sense of duty to "modernize" those who were deemed "unreformed" by encouraging lifestyle improvements grounded in the national polity's consciousness. Prominent female figures were labeled as "authorities on Korean women's issues" and "female orators," titles that elevated their social status and portrayed them as symbolic agents of patriotic service on the home front.[111]

In sum, wartime oratorical contests became instruments of imperial control, reinforcing Japan's ideological, political, and militaristic objectives. Through youth mobilization and mass propaganda, these oratorical contests played a critical role in consolidating colonial authority and preparing Korean society for total war. Not only were students encouraged to enlist, but factory workers also participated in oratorical contests to solicit support for the war effort. The medium of the "speech," once associated with enlightenment movements, patriotic campaigns, women's education, and female student activism, was co-opted into the fascist regime's discursive machinery. These speeches, aligned with the political and social imperatives of the wartime state, contributed to the reproduction of the colonial government's policy agenda and ruling ideology.

1.2. The Trusteeship and the Korean Political Division after the Moscow Conference

When the Pacific War ended, the administration and supervision of Japan's occupied colonies were based on the United Nations Charter's international trusteeship system. The trusteeship

[111] Kang Nam Kyu 강남규, ""Ch'ong tongwŏn cheje-gi 'Maeil Sinbo'e natanan Chosŏn yŏsŏng tongwŏn tamnon yŏn'gu," (총동원체제기 '매일신보'에 나타난 조선 여성 동원 담론 연구 A Study on the Discourse on the Mobilization of Korean Women in "Maeil Shinbo", the period of the total mobilization system)" Master's thesis, Sungkyunkwan University, 2022, 197.

system involved the temporary administration and governance of a designated dependent territory by a management body entrusted by the United Nations (or the international community) until the territory attains the capacity for "self-governance" and achieves "independence." This management body, typically a coalition of states with vested interests in the region, operated under the oversight of the United Nations General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council.[112] The UN Trusteeship Council formed Eleven trusteeships, and Micronesia was administratively assigned to the United States. Micronesia, however, was designated as a “strategic trust” because the region had considerable military importance, and American postwar designs on the occupied zones ran directly contrary to the determined trends of the times, which were to decolonize previously controlled and exploited areas.[113]

The strategic value of Korea for the U.S. was traditionally little. At the time of the Cairo Conference, the staff of F.D. Roosevelt, especially in army circles, with George C. Marshall at its center, thought that Korea was not important to it. However, military leaders stated they could not consider a military occupation of the Korean Peninsula.[114] The U.S. military feared that the Korean divisions would probably gain control and influence the setting up of a Soviet-dominated local government and thought that at least a token force of American soldiers or Marines would be stationed in Korea during the trusteeship.[115]

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[112]Chapter XII: International Trusteeship System (Articles 75-85), United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-12. (Accessed 03.12.2024.)

[113] Dirk Anthony Ballendof, Foreword, Hal. M. Friedman, *Creating an American Lake-United States Imperialism and Strategic Security in the Pacific Basin, 1945~1947*, (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press 2001), xi~xii, 14. A concept developed specifically by Under Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas in early 1945 to find middle ground between the military’s call for annexation and State Department opposition to European-style colonialism, strategic trusteeship entailed a situation which in the United States would have sole authority for the occupation, defense, and administration on Micronesia and most of the island taken from Japan north of the Equador. The idea of strategic trusteeship epitomized the US position that its security was to be absolutely guaranteed in the postwar Pacific.

[114] “Memorandum by the Secretary of Defense (Forrestal) to the Secretary of State,” 26 [29] September 1947, in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The Far East, Volume VI, ed. John G. Reid (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972), 818, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v06/d624 (accessed 18 November 2025).

[115] No.1274“The Secretary of War (Stimson) to the President,” July 16, 1945, FRUS: 1945: The Conference of Berlin: The Potsdam Conference, II (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1960) 740.0011 P.W./7-1645

Roosevelt's idea was for a forty-year tutelage, which was reduced to twenty or thirty years at the Yalta Conference.[116] Based on its understanding of Korea's political forces, the State Department formulated a policy of trusteeship for an indefinite period. At the conference in Cairo, Roosevelt and Churchill, in an offhand manner, expressed it in ambiguous terms: "…In due course Korea shall become free and independent." Roosevelt's policy of four-power "trusteeship" for Korea persisted until the resolution of its decision to partition and occupy in August 1945.[117] The trusteeship concept was, in Willard Range's words, a "grand design for a new world order…aimed at nothing less than the creation of a new system of international relations."[118]

John Reed Hodge, commander of the 24th Corps of the United States Eighth Army, became Commanding General, United States Armed Forces in Korea (USAFIK). On September 8, Hodge and the 24th Corps arrived in Incheon Harbor, and on September 11, Hodge announced that the Japanese civil government would be replaced with a military governor, General Arnold.[119]

With the Government's political authority, the conflict surrounding the beginning of Korean politics emerged. This period marked a political landscape in which a wide range of actors including the Provisional Government long active abroad, the political parties taking shape in Seoul and Pyongyang, revolutionary organization returning from overseas, and various political and religious groups that had operated underground domestically resumed their activities, formed new alliances, or fragmented into competing factions.

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[116] The first public statement on Korea's trusteeship was mentioned in the Cairo Declaration.
Seth Michael J., *A Concise History of Modern Korea*, 83.

[117] Roosevelt showed pride in the American contributions to the enlightenment of the Philippines and pointed out that newly independent countries were not capable of self-nurtured independence and that they all needed a preparation period. This was said from the radio speech in honor of the 7th Anniversary of the Philippine's independence on November 15, 1942. Shin Bok-Ryong Shin, "The Decision Process of the Trusteeship in Korea, 1945-1946: Focusing on the Change of U.S. Ideas," *Pacific Focus* 19, no.1 (2004): 176.

[118] Bruce Cumings, The Origins of The Korean War Volume1: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1989): 103.

[119] Ibid.,138-140.

Although a socilaist leader, Lyuh Un-hyŏng formed the "The Preparatory Committee for Korean Rehabilitation" (Chosŏn Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe), initially appeared positioned to assume role vacated by the Japanese Governor-General, the establishement of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) prevented him from gaining such recognition. As competing political forces and parties rapidly proliferated, Korea entered in a period acute political instability. In this context, debates emerged over political representatives, specifically the relationship between "leaders who sought to represent" and "the people who were to be represented."[120]

After John Carter Vincent, the Director of the "Far Eastern Affairs Bureau at the U.S. State Department," publicly revealed the Korean trusteeship plan in October 1945, all Korean political factions reacted immediately, opposing the trusteeship. The anti-trusteeship sentiment widespread throughout Korean society.[121] After observing the tensions and the Korean's reaction to the idea of the possible trusteeship in November, William R Landon, a political advisor warned the U.S. Department of State and recommended to abandon the trusteeship plan.[122] Vincent Carter claimed, "After one month's observation of liberated Korea and with my background of earlier service in Korea, I am unable to fit trusteeship to actual conditions here or to be persuaded of its suitability from moral and practical standpoints, and therefore believe we should drop it."[123] General Hodge reported on December 16, "In the minds of all

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[120] Yi Haeng-sŏn 이행선, *Haebanggi munhak kwa chugwŏn inmin ŭi chŏngch'isŏng* (해방기 문학과 주권인민의 정치성 The Korean Literature in Liberation Period and the Politics of Sovereign People), PhD diss., Kookmin University, 2013, 15.

[121] John J. McCloy, "Letter to Dean Acheson," November 13 1945. RG 59 General Records of the Department of State, 1756 - 1999, Central Decimal File 1945-49, 740.00119 Control (Korea)/11-145-11-3045, NARA, National Library of Korea (accessed December 12, 2024).

[122] "So far as can be determined, the trusteeship idea is repugnant to all parties and elements in Korea. If established, it may cause a revolt and complicate problems to the extent of nullifying its advantages.…It is my considered opinion, that regardless of all measures taken and regardless of our success or failure in the Korean occupation, the establishment of Korean independence will be accompanied by violence and some form of blood purge, during and after its establishment" History of the United States Army Forces in Korea, Part II, Chapter IV American-Soviet Relations, The first year, The Moscow Conference and Korea, https://db.history.go.kr/id/husa_002_0030_0080_0020. (accessed 09.12.2024)

[123] Ibid.

Koreans, “Trusteeship” hangs over them as a sword of Damocles, it is imposed now or at any future time it is believed possible that the Korean people will actually and physically revolt.”[124]

On December 16, 1945, the foreign ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union convened in Moscow to discuss various postwar problems that had remained unresolved in wartime negotiations. The three powers met with the hope that their faltering relationships could be restored to the mutually advantageous bass of the wartime alliance. The Moscow Conference concluded on December 27. The United States was the prime proponent of trusteeship for Korea, and the Soviets thought their interest in Korea would be better served through an independent government than through a multilateral body that the Americans could dominate.[125] The proposal didn’t mention a Korean administrative body or interim government that might function under the trust powers while allowing for individual Korean administrators and consultants.[126] They agreed to be set up a provisional Korean democratic government, and in order to assist its formation, there would be established a Joint Commission consisting from representatives of the United States command in southern Korea and the Soviet command in northern Korea. Once a commission was formed, they were going to consult with Korean democratic parties and social organizations.[127]

On December 27, the decisions of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers had not yet been officially announced. Despite this, two Korean newspapers *Choson Ilbo and Dong-a Ilbo,* published speculative reports from the *Washington Hapdong Dispatch* dated December 25 confirming the decision of trusteeship for the Korean Peninsula. The imprecision of media

[124] “Telegram, The Political Adviser in Korea (Benninghoff) to the Secretary of State, Seoul, January 23, 1946,” in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, The Far East, Volume VIII, eds. John G. Reid and Herbert A. Fine (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1971), 616; 740.00119 Control (Korea)/1–2346; https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1946v08/d464 (accessed 18 November 2025).
[125] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, 215.
[126] Ibid. 216.
[127] “The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the Acting Secretary of State,” telegram, Moscow, December 27, 1945, 3 a.m., in Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, General: Political and Economic Matters, vol. II, eds. N. O. Sappington et al. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1967), 815, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v02/d268, (accessed December 22, 2024).

significantly influenced the public's perception of the solid opposition to trusteeship, contending that the common stereotype of trusteeship emerged as the newspapers regarded it as antithetical to independence and fostered criticism.[128] Mostly, the misreport of *Donga-Ilbo* on 27 December 1945 escalated into fierce competition among political forces for state control, ultimately determining Korea's political division. People firmly believed that the Soviet Union approved a five-year trusteeship in Korea at the Moscow conference, which could delay their independence.[129]

The political landscape in the immediate U.S. Military Government period, which previously exhibited a broadly collaborative process between left and right factions, shifted into one primarily defined by the ideological dichotomy between nationalism and socialism-communism. The domestic dissemination of the Moscow Conference decisions and the ensuing debates over trusteeship significantly influenced this transformation.[130]

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[128] Han Jinwook 한진욱, "Haebang chikhu Imjŏng seryŏg ŭi pant'ak undong e kwanhan koch'al (해방직후 임정세력의 반탁운동에 관한 고찰 A Review of an Anti-Trusteeship of Chungking Provisional-Government Leaders After Korean Independence)", *Sahoe Yŏnku* (사회연구) 6, (2005):51., Chŏng Yong-uk 정용욱 "1945 nyŏn mal 1946nyŏn ch'o shint'akt'ongch'i p'adong kwa Migunjŏng: Migunjŏng ŭi yŏron kongjag ŭl chungsim ŭro (1945년 말 1946년 초 신탁통치 파동과 미군정 —미군정의 여론공작을 중심으로— The Trusteeship Turmoil and Manipulation of Public Opinion by U.S. Military Government in Korea, in late 1945 and early 1946)," *Yŏksabi p'yŏng* (역사비평) 62 (2003) : 299.

[129] The news about the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, reported in domestic newspapers then, was transmitted via Associated Press . An examination of the articles published during that period reveals that neither the distributing news agency nor the domestic newspapers verified the reliability or authenticity of the content. Instead, they focused on hastily disseminating and spreading the articles. AP did not translate the articles verbatim according to established principles but instead inserted subjective opinions into the translations. Similar to the patchwork editing found in "Stars and Stripes," sections of the original "Hapdong News Agency (합동통신)" text were selectively excerpted and pieced together within the articles. In retrospect, "Hapdong News Agency (합동통신)", by leveraging the Korean public's anti-trusteeship sentiment, aligned itself with certain American media outlets that were leading anti-Soviet and anti-communist narratives. This contributed to fostering an anti-Soviet and anti-communist atmosphere within Korean society. Kim Tong-min 김동민, "Tong'a Ilbo shint'akt'ongch'i waegok podo yŏn'gu (동아일보 신탁통치 왜곡보도 연구)," *Han'guk ŏnron chŏngbo hakpo (*한국언론정보학보) 52, 2010. Chŏng Yong-uk 정용욱, "1945nyŏn 12wol mal kuknae ŏllon ŭi Mosŭkŭba samsang hoeŭi oesin podo yangsang (1945년 12월 말 국내 언론의 모스크바 삼상회의 외신 보도 양상), *Han'guk saron* (한국사론) 69 (2023) : 429.

[130] Following the intense confrontations over opposition to trusteeship and support for the Moscow Conference decisions, political forces in South Korea coalesced into two major blocs: the right-wing "Representative Democratic Assembly of the Republic of Korea" and the left-wing "Democratic National Front." In the preceding

The "Korean Provisional Government" (KPG, *Imshijŏnbu*) formed the "Anti-Trusteeship National Mobilization Committee" (반탁총동원위원회), to lead the anti-trusteeship movement and began pushing for the exercise of practical governmental authority. The Korean officials and employees of the U.S. Military Government cooperated with these efforts.[131] Judiciary employees, including those from the courts, prosecutor's offices, and other legal institutions, also joined the anti-trusteeship movement, announcing their decision to strike and demanding the immediate recognition of the KPG.[132] The widespread support signalled growing momentum for the KPG's authority in the rapidly changing political landscape.[133] According to the testimony of Yun Chi-yong (윤치영), who worked as Syngman Rhee's secretary, the anti-trusteeship movements outburst across the country and abroad.[134] The

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period, the framework of "nation versus anti-nation" had served as the dominant axis of political alignment in Korea. By contrast, within the U.S. military government, the prevailing distinction was between "radicals" and "conservatives (or democrats)." Chŏng Yong-uk.정용욱, "Chehyu wa paeje ŭi ijungju: Han'guk hyŏndaesa esŏ minjokchuŭi, kongsanjuŭi, kŭrigo chwau taerip (제휴와 배제의 이중주; 한국현대사에서 민족주의, 공산주의, 그리고 좌우 대립)," in *Han'guk sahoe sasangsa yŏn'gu* (한국사회 사상사연구) (Nanam Ch'ulp'an 나남출판, 2003), 377-404.

[131] On December 29, a collective resignation statement was issued, and they established contact with the Provisional Government. "Ch'ongsajik ŭl kyŏrŭi (총사직을 결의), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 30, 1945. The statement released on 29th included the decision to resign en mass, but on January 1 of 1946, they resolved to "support the Provisional Government" and to follow the directives of the "National General Mobilization Central Committee of Anti-Trusteeship" "Kunjŏng ch'ŏng chikwŏn ŭn pokmu (군정청직원은 복무), *Tong'a Ilbo*, January 3, 1946.

[132] "Pŏwŏn esŏ ch'ong payŏp (法院에서 총파업)," Tong'a Ilbo, December 30, 1945., "Sahapchin ch'ong payŏp (사법진 총파업)," *Chayu Sinmun*, January 1, 1946., The police soon joined in, with the chiefs of eight police stations in Seoul visiting the Provisional Government on December 31 under Minister of Interior Shin Ik-hui (신익희), pledging to follow its directives. "Sich'ŏng chikwŏn to ch'ongsajik kyŏljŏng (시청직원도 총사직 결정)," *Chayu Sinmun*, December 31, 1945.

[133] Yi Tong-hae. "Haebang chikhu Taehan Min'guk Imshi Chŏngbu ŭi t'ongil undong" (해방직후 대한민국임시정부의 통일운동) *Yŏksa Munhwa Yŏn'gu* (역사문화연구) 89 (2024): 39.

[134] The protest spread to the overseas Koreans, "Youth League of Independence Demand" (조선독립촉성청년연맹) decided to hold a convention in Tokyo on 21 January and send a determination to the Allied command (연합군 사령부). "Haewisŏ koham ch'inŭn pant'ak sŏng" (해외서 고함치는 반탁성), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 17, 1946. In Shanghai, more than half of the 8000 Korean residents gathered in Lu Xun Park and submitted the resolution document to the Soviet Union, U.S. and British consulates and the Chinese

theatre and auditoriums filled up with people claiming the immediate independence of Korea. The streets were plastered with banners and posters. “Reject the Trusteeship,” “Step down the Military Government,” “All parties and factions unite to reject the trusteeship”[135] The civic gathering grew every day, not only in Seoul, but also in other regions. Incheon, Busan, Daegu, Gwangju, Jeonju, Yeongju, and overseas Koreans in China and Japan. Diverse associations gathered emergency meetings, distributing flyers to protests in opposition to the trusteeship.[136]

On 30 December, the leaders of the Provisional Government[137] established the "National General Mobilization Central Committee of Anti-Trusteeship" (신탁통치반대 국민총동원중앙위원회), and elected 76 central committees, and they promulgated A guideline for the anti-trusteeship movement on 3rd January to avoid an upsurge of protests.[138]

The fundamental issue underlying the KPG and other right-wing bloc’s active leadership in the anti-trusteeship movement layed not so much in the term “trusteeship” itself and its implication of Korea’s continued colonial subjugation. Rather, in the political reality of determining which class would seize power in the context of the establishment of a provisional government as outlined in the Moscow Conference agreement. Residual forces from the Japanese colonial regime and the former ruling class strategically masked the class-based

government. “Sanghae Han’guk kyominhoesŏdo saguk e pant’ak kyŏlŭi chech’ul” (상해한국교민회서도 사국에 반탁결의제출), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 4, 1946.

[135] “Chŏnhwan’gi ŭi naemak (23) Pant’ak undong (3)” (전환기의 내막 <23> 반탁운동 3), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 7, 1981.

[136] “Kak chibang ŭi hangjaeng mosŭp” (각지방의 항쟁 모습), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 31, 1945.

[137] The Provisional Government during the liberation period refers to the interim government established by Korean leaders in exile to gain independence from Japanese colonial rule. Formed in 1919 in Shanghai, China, it aimed to represent Korean sovereignty, organized resistance efforts. Yi Tong-hae 이동해, “Haebang chikhu Taehan Min’guk Imshi Chŏngbu ŭi t’ongil undong (The Unification Movement of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea Right after the Liberation)” (해방직후 대한민국임시정부의 통일운동), *Yŏksa Munhwa Yŏn’gu* (역사문화연구) 89 (2024): 27–58.

[138] “Tongnip undong ŭro chae chŏn’gae” (독립운동으로 재전개), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 4, 1946

nature of the movement, repackaging it as a "patriotic nationalist struggle." In doing so, they utilized anti-communist ideology as a political weapon to expand their influence and consolidate power.[139]

The KPG framed "Anti-trusteeship" as an "independence movement." The regulations established on January 3, 1946, commanded to "adhere to the directives of the Central Committee and maintain public order in a manner, respect the public peace based on the non-violent mind," underlining "this movement aims to advocate the cancellation of Trusteeship; we must exercise caution to maintain amicable relations with Allied Nations."[140] Cho So-ang, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the KPG, made clear that they didn't want to oppose the Allied powers' authority, but "The spontaneous eruption of domestic popular movements must exert international influence, leading foreign observers to recognize that trusteeship over Korea is untenable."[141]

Overall, after Korea's liberation in 1945, the United States and Allied powers proposed an international trusteeship to guide the peninsula through a transitional period before full independence. The misleading media reports caused acute political instability, rapid party proliferation, and widespread anti-trusteeship protests involving both officials and ordinary citizens. The movement quickly solidified into a nationalist campaign that deepened the divide between right-leaning nationalists and left-leaning socialists, laying the groundwork for Korea's political fragmentation and future conflict.

1.3. Politics of Voice and Contesting Mobilization

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[139] Kim Haeng-sŏn 김행선, *Haebang chŏngguk chŏngch'i undongsa* (해방정국 정치운동사) (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2004), 211.

[140] "Tongnip undong ŭro chae chŏn'gae" (독립운동으로 재전개), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 4, 1946
The Severance medical school students published the "anti-trusteeship statement" to prime minister Kim Ku in earlier period, 17 December 1945. "Pant'ak ŭi shiwii undong ŭn minjok ch'ongŭi ŭi panyŏng" (반탁의 시위운동은 민족총의의 반영), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 2, 1946.

1.3.1. National Language as Political Battlefield

This chapter explores how, during the early USMAGIK period, language and public speech became central arenas in the struggle to define Korea's political future. As everyday Koreans flooded streets and schools with rallies, assemblies, and spontaneous oratory, linguistic practices became deeply politicized. The chapter examines how competing actors sought to control public discourse through literacy campaigns, new ideological vocabularies, and staging speech events. In doing so, it shows that the making of a post-colonial national order was inseparable from battles over who could speak, in which language, and with that authority.

The USAMGIK period was not marked only by the competition of the policymakers but also characterized of the dispersal and eruption of long-suppressed desires for political participation and local autonomy. It was also a moment in which the inhabitants of the Korean Peninsula emerged rapidly as political actors in the formation of a nation-state, embarking on struggles to secure political power and obtain full membership in society, which had been denied to them during the colonial era.[142]

At the heart of political conflict, the question was whether institutional political power could accommodate the non-institutionalized expressions of political sovereignty by the people during negotiations over political representation. The political conflict often revolved around questions of what forms of political communication could be publicly recognized and legitimized. While the people demanded freedoms of speech, assembly, and association, the

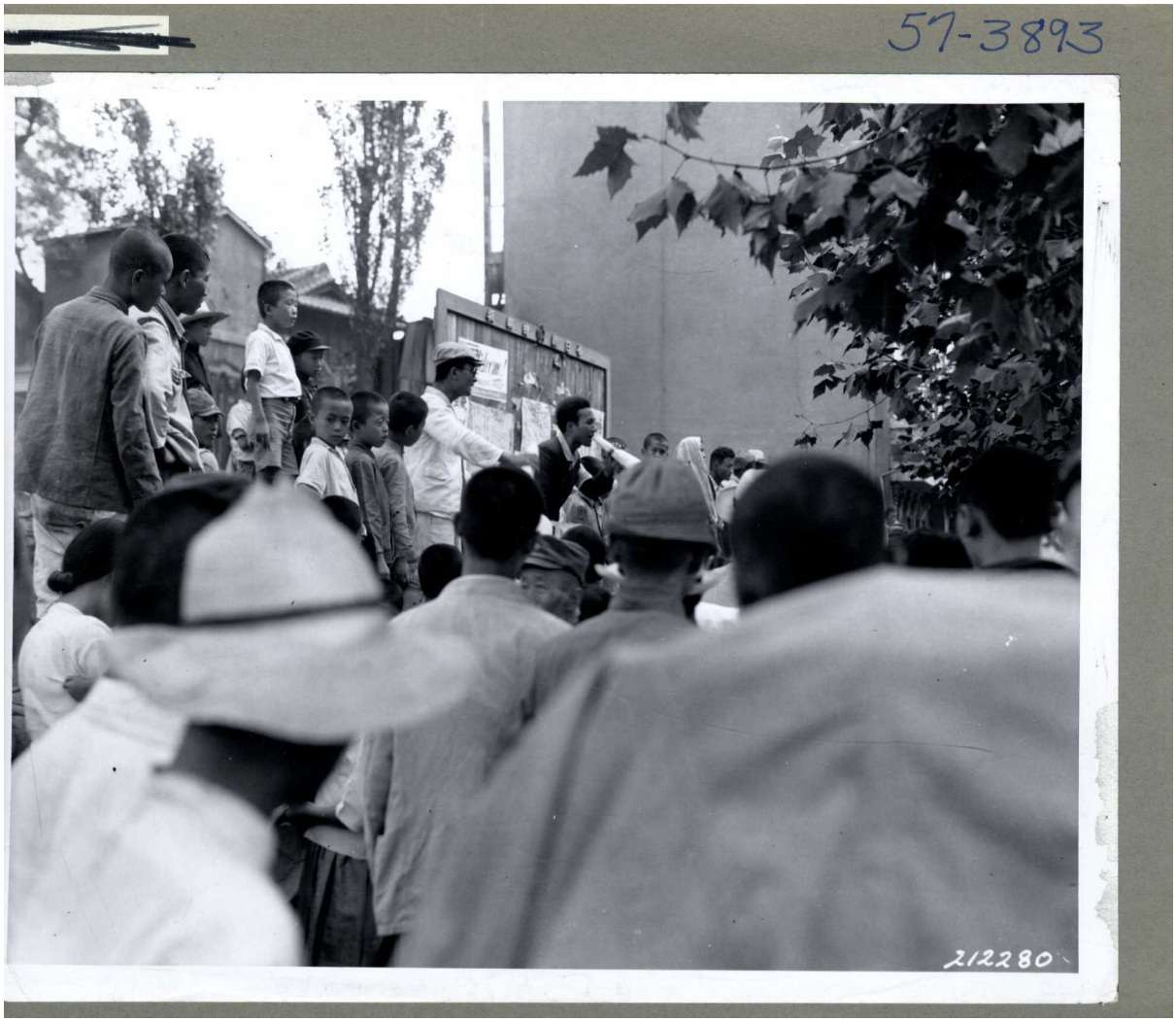
[142] Yi, Hye-ryŏng 이혜령, "Tong-Asia kŭndae maech'e, ŏnŏ, kŏmyŏl yŏn'gu ŭi kwichŏk kwa mirae" (동아시아 근대 매체, 언어, 검열 연구의 궤적과 미래 The Trajectory and Future of Research on Modern East Asian Media, Languages and Censorship), *Taedong Munhak Yŏn'gu* (대동문화연구) 112 (2020) : 134.

political establishment treated their embodied, direct actions as unlawful, responding with repression.[143]

Fanya Isaakovna Shabshina (Фаня Исааковна Шабшина), a Soviet national who served at the Japanese Consulate in Seoul between 1940 and 1946, wrote about her observation of the street in Seoul. "Marches were happening all over, and gatherings or impromptu meetings often just sprang up on their own. In those cases, the first person to step up to the platform took the lead. Elders, young people, workers, teachers, lawyers, students, and shopkeepers all got up to speak. Breaking free from the long years of enforced silence, isolation, and misrepresentation, everyone expressed their own opinions. It was precisely here that an extreme form of mass 'assembly democracy' was truly emerging."[144]

[143] "Pujŏng ppira tansok Rŏ changgwan ilban-e pogo" (不正삐라 단속 러 장관 일반에 포고), Tong-a Ilbo (동아일보), 05.27.1946, 2.,"P'oktong unun ŭi yuŏnbiŏ akchiljŏgin nangsŏl-e pulgwa, Chang pujang tam" (폭동 운운의 유언비어 악질적인 낭설에 불과, 張부장 談), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), 08.11.1946, 2.,"Samil chŏnhu p'oktong sŏl" (삼일전후 폭동설), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), 02.25.1947, 2. Yi Haeng-sŏn, *Haebanggi munhak kwa chugwŏn inmin ŭi chŏngch'isŏng*, 107-108.

[144] Fanya Isaakovna Shabshina (Фаня Исааковна Шабшина), *1945-nyŏn Namhan esŏ* (1945 년 남한에서), Hanul (한울) 1996, 78.



"Koreans, after years of domination by the Japanese, demonstrate free speech at the railroad station, in Keijo, November 9, 1945. (Figure 1.1)[145]

This photograph, taken by the U.S. military government, depicts a young man standing on a platform, shouting passionately through a makeshift megaphone created from rolled paper. Beside him stands a man wearing glasses and a hat, seemingly acting as a moderator. Children are gathered on either side of the platform, and a crowd composed of various ages and genders listens attentively to the speaker. The image offers a vivid, if fragmentary, representation of the

[145] National Archives and Records Administration, "212280," 1945–1954, RG 306, Records of the United States Information Agency, RSD Series, Box 30, Picture no. Army 212280 (College Park, MD). Accessed November 15, 2025, National Library of Korea digital collection, https://www.nl.go.kr/NL/search/mods_view.do?contentsId=CNTS-00060870182

politics of sound that characterized this period. Freed from restrictions, speech contests, lectures, and panel discussions were held, far exceeding the number of newly established political parties, organizations, and committees. These groups distributed a large volume of leaflets under titles such as “Statement of Purpose,” “Declaration,” “Proclamation,” “Notice,” “Alert,” and “Warning,” subcategorized under the name of “Pira (Leaflet)." People actively participated in a range of political events, including welcome rallies for the Allied forces and commemorative ceremonies in the public sphere.[146]

These scattered, simultaneous speeches created a space in which the broadly dispersed, loosely connected populace could imagine themselves as political subjects and experiment with political possibilities. This unfolded even before the policymakers of the liberation period undertook concrete efforts to produce sovereign subjectivities, to define "people" as the exercisers of sovereignty.[147]

The auditory landscape of late 1945 played a pivotal role in street politics, disseminating information, mobilizing public sentiment, and persuading individuals to adopt one another's political positions. Political factions seeking to seize power began mobilizing the people to consolidate their own influence, intensifying partisan conflict. Some modes of struggle that emerged were not institutionalized tools of the political establishment but rather forms of political practice familiar to the populace or created in response to the prevailing social conditions.[148]

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[146] Chŏng, Sŏn-t’ae 정선태, “Haebang chikh’u ŭi chŏndanji, ‘pulgilhan ausŏng’ ŭi hŭnjŏk tŭl.” Ppira ro tŭnnŭn haebang chikh’u ŭi moksori (삐라로 듣는 해방 직후의 목소리) edited by Kim Hyŏn-sik and Chŏng Sŏn-t’ae, (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch’ulp’an, 2013) (Accessed March 11, 2025.).

[147] Im Chongmyong 임종명, " Haebang chikhu inmin ŭi munjeseong kwa ellit’ŭ ŭi inmin sunch’i (해방 직후 인민의 문제성과 엘리트의 인민 순치. "The Problematics of Inmin (People) and Its Domestication to Elite Politics right after South Korean Liberation from Japanese Colonialism)," *Dongbang Hakchi* (동방학지) no.168(2014): 38.

[148] Jeong Seon-Tae 정선태, "Ppira, maech’e-e matsŏnŭn maech’e – haebang chikh’u sosŏrŭl t’onghae pon ppira ŭi chŏngch’ihak (Leaflets as a Medium against Media: The Politics of Propaganda Leaflets in Novels of the Immediate Post-Liberation Period), " *Sŏgang inmun nonch’ong* (서강인문논총) 35(2012) : 5-32.

Linguistic and educational concerns preoccupied both political regimes and the occupying forces of North and South, as well as the American and Soviet militaries. The linguistic transition of the liberation era was, above all, a process of dismantling the imperial language of Japanese colonial rule. Yet, at the same time, the spoken languages of the post-liberation moment, English and Korean, existed alongside an invisible written linguistic layer saturated with Sino-Korean vocabulary and residual Japanese compounds. In this multilinguistic condition, the relationship between the minority language and the imperial language, between subordination and resistance, was constantly renegotiated through act of speech. Thus, the politics of utterance during post-liberation must be understood as unfolding within a linguistic, political, and cultural performativity that continually redefined the possibilities and limits of speaking itself.[149]

During this period, two major sociolinguistic transformations were taking place. First, the Korean language was restored to its rightful status as the "national language" (kugŏ). Under Japanese colonial rule, the empire's policy of linguistic assimilation resulted in inequality in access to education had left the illiteracy rate high as 78%. In the aftermath of liberation, this situation prompted a massive mobilization of the national symbolism of decolonization alongside a rapid expansion of both formal schooling and adult education. Following the Ministry of Education's directives, "literacy campaigns" (*munmaeng t'oech'i undong*) were carried out across cities, towns, and villages, as well as in factories, companies, religious organizations, agricultural associations, and adult education societes.[150]

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[149] Shin Ji Young, 신지영, "Ssuyŏjin kŏt kwa malhaejin kŏt – "Ijung (ichung)" ŏnŏ kŭlsseugi-e natanan t'ongyŏk, taehwa, koyumyŏng," (쓰여진 것과 말해진 것 -"이중(異重)" 언어 글쓰기에 나타난 통역, 대화, 고유명 What is Written and What is Said : Translation, Dialogues, and Proper Nouns in Multi-glossic Ecriture"), *Minjok Munhaksayŏn'gu* (민족문학사연구), 59(0), 407-464.

[150] I, Ŭng-ho 이응호, *Kwangbok ihu ŭi kugŏ kyoyuk* (광복 이후의 국어교육). Seoul: Hansam (한샘), 1992, 25.

Second, the question of English interpretation and acquisition emerged as both a pressing and deeply consequential issue, so much so that Koreans referred to the U.S. Military Government as "a governemnt of interpreters, by interpreters, and for interpreters."[151] English represented powerful new form of capital and authority. Alongside the influx of American culture and aid materials, it served as a potent symbol of connection to the great power of the United States and its Military Governement. In this context, both Korean and English were intimately tied to question of power. English functioned simultaneously as a marker of cosmopolitan cultivation signifying one's participation in a newly global modernity, and as a means of political survival, enabilng individuals to access and interpret the problamations, annoucements, and discourses issued by the U.S. Military Government. [152]At the same time, the national language itself was bond up with the motivations and agent of post-liberation language policy. The effort to institutionalize and standardize "our language" to a "national languge" was inseparable from broader attempts to establish lingustinc nationalism that could serve as a foundation for constructing a cohesive national community and, ultimately, for articulating the languae policy of a democratic state.[153]

Third, with the advent of what might be called an era of "interpreting politics," the multilingual situation of the time not only exposed the class dialects that reflected the uneven distribution of linguistic power but also corresponded to the contested condition of dual sovereignty. The

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[151] Grant Mead, *Chuhan Migunjŏng yŏn'gu* (주한미군정 연구), Translated by An Chong-ch'ŏl (안종철), (Seoul: Kongdongch'e 공동체 1993), 136–137.

[152] Yim Sehwa임세화, " Pult'ong ŭi ŏnŏ, pŏnyŏktoen chŏngch'i – Haebanggi 't'ongyŏk chŏngch'i' wa munhak ŭi ŏnŏ rŭl chungsim ŭro (불통(不通)의 언어, 번역된 정치 - 해방기 '통역정치'와 문학의 언어를 중심으로 - The Language of Miscommunications and Translated Politics - Focusing on the 'Interpreting Politics' and the Literary Language in the Liberation Period)," *Sai mun SAI* (사이間SAI), 26(0): 55-95.

[153] Lee Hye Ryoung 이혜령, " Tonga Asia kŭndae ŏmun chisŏ ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chaep'yŏn; ŏnŏ pŏpchehwa ŭi naeshyŏnŏllijŭm – 1950-nyŏndae Han'gŭl kansohwa padong ilgo (동아시아 근대 어문 질서의 형성과 재편 ; 언어 법제화의 내셔널리즘 -1950년대 한글간소화파동 일고-.Nationalism in the Legislation for Linguistic standard of Modern Nation-State: a Study on the 1950`s Hangeul Simplication Dispute)," *Daedong Munhwa Yeongu* (대동문화연구)58 (2007): 183-224.

emergence of newly coined ideological terms in contemporary dictionaries reveals the layered conceptual struggles of the time, in which language itself became a site of political contestation. The proliferation of neologisms of this period reflected the influence of international negotiations, treaties, and declarations centered on the United States and Soviet Union, as well as the competing ideological orientations of socialism and American-style democracy. These shifting lexical categories did not merely document linguistic change; instead, dictionaries themselves functioned as manuals for understanding political propaganda. Simultaneously, the dictionary served as an instrument of propaganda, mediating how competing domestic and international political forces sought to define, appropriate, and circulate meaning.[154]

The publication of the *People's Prime for the Eradication of Iliteracy* (*Munmaeng t'oech'i inmin tokpon*) by the left-wing publisher "Haebangsa" in February 1946, is another example of language learning as a political contestation. Designed as a textbook for peasant and labor schools, the primer sought not only to promote the "eradication of illiteracy among the working masses" but also to facilitate their "political enlightenment." The textbooks were designed for the rapid dissemination of Korean literacy and at the same time structured their teaching materials around progressive content that addressed both the "urgent and immediate demands of the people's enlightenment movement." The primer introduced vocabulary such as "People's Committee," "Liberation of the Peasantry," and "Alliance of Peasant and Workers." The textbook shows how intellectuals sought to teach language through the language of revolution and social transformation, instructing readers in the ideals of national independence and the

[154] Ho Dok Hwang 황호덕, "T'ŭkchip 1 kaenyŏm-ŭro ponŭn haebang chŏnhusa – munhak, chŏngch'i, ilsang: Haebang kwa kaenyŏm, maengsehanŭn yukt'oe ŭi ŏnŏdŭl – Migunjŏnggi Han'guk ŭi ŏnŏ chŏngch'ihak, yŏngmunhakto siin tŭl kwa sinŏ sajŏn ŭl chungsim ŭro (특집 1 개념으로 보는 해방 전후사 -문학,정치,일상 : 해방과 개념, 맹세하는 육체의 언어들 -미군정기 한국의 언어정치학, 영문학도 시인들과 신어사전을 중심으로 Liberation and Concept, the Language of Avowing Bodies -Linguistic Politics in South Korea during the US Military Government Period, Focusing on English Scholar of Korea and the Making Dictionaries of Neologisms)," *Daedong Munhwa Yeongu* (대동문화연구) 85 (2014): 91-131.

liberation of the lower classes as the foundation for building a new nation.[155] Tu sum, the reconfiguration of languages was directly linked to the struggle for power through the reorganization of ideological consciousness.

The formation of a "national language" was, in its initial phase, effectively carried out under the supervision of the U.S. Military Government, which institutionalized and supported the dominance of the "Korean Language Society" (*Chosŏnŏhakhoe*), through the structural mediation of English-Korean translation and administration. Although members were closely connected to the "Korean Democratic Party" (*Hanmindang*), which had emerged as a key policymaking and ruling force within the U.S. military administration. Within the newly forming state, therefore, there was an active effort to control the material and symbolic mechanisms of linguistic nationalism. The campaign for literacy eradication functioned as a precondition for shaping citizens as political subjects, while the expansion of educational opportunities served as a crucial means of demonstrating ideological and moral superiority amid the systemic competition between North and South Korea.[156]

Thus, the project of lingustic standardization was haped not only by and internally driven decolonial desire but also bu the intervention of the U.S. Military Government and the emerging Cold War political order, resulting in new forms of lingustic differentiation. Building on this premise, the politics of voice during this period can be understood as a form of political communication that transmitted, persuaded, and educated the populace that received information chiefly through spoken expression.

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[155] Cho, Yun-jŏng 조Cho, Yun-jŏng (조윤정). “Haebanggi ŭi chisikchang kwa ‘Munmaeng t’oech’i inmin tokpon’ ch’ulp’an ŭi ŭimi” (해방기의 지식장과『문맹퇴치인민독본』출판의 의미 The Intellectual Field of the Post-Liberation Period and the Significance of Publishing The People’s Reader for Eradicating Illiteracy)," *Kŭndae Sŏjihakhoe* (근대서지학회) 19 (2019): 134-138.

[156] Lee Hye Ryoung 이혜령, "Tonga Asia kŭndae ŏmun chisŏ ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chaep’yŏn; ŏnŏ pŏpchehwa ŭi naeshyŏnŏllijŭm – 1950-nyŏndae Han’gŭl kansohwa padong ilgo," 192.

The clash between ruling powers that emphasized procedural legitimacy in political expression and the people's uncompromising demands for substantive political and economic democratization was an inevitable phenomenon. The rumor, once turned into public opinion, often exerted more political influence than direct action. Popular gossip, such as uprisings and flyers, reflected and shaped political sentiment. The political establishment was thus compelled to contend not only with acts of direct action but also with the circulation of rumors, catchphrases, and hearsay as forms of political resistance.[157]

The oratories held from late October to December of 1945 differed significantly from those of the colonial period, and organizers emerged in response to different political circumstances. The speech outbursts spontaneously in the town's districts and regions, delivering oratory on several topics. People participated in forums, where representatives from organizations mostly appeared on stage. These multiple "speech gatherings" lacked clearly defined categories based on their features. Speech gatherings were referred to by various names, often without a consistent distinction between the different types of speech events. The announcement of speech gatherings could be called "oratorical contests" (*ungbyŏndaeho*e), "public lectures" (*Kangyŏnhoe*), an "indignation meeting" (*sŏngt'dodaehoe*), "Rise rallies" (*kwŏlgidaehoe*), and "speech contests" (*yŏnsŏldaehoe*), which were often interchanged.

In essence, after liberation from Japanese rule, the Korean populace became vocal political actors, organizing mass assemblies, rallies, and spontaneous speeches to demand greater participation and rights. The struggle for control over public discourse and language intensified under U.S. military governance, with language serving both as a tool for national identity and as an arena for ideological contest. The multilingual enviornment of the period reflected both linguistic hierarchies and the tension of dual sovereignty. Newly coined ideological terms in contemporary dictionaries demonstrate how language functioned as a site of political struggle

[157] Ibid. 107-108.

and conceptual negotitation. There were massive efforts to promote literacy, restore Korean as the national language, and politicize education, while English became an instrument of power and social mobility. Political factors used direct action and rumors to influence public sentiment, and various forms of public speech gatherings reflected the dynamics and contestation of both politics and language during this period.

1.3.2. Emergence of Left-Wing Organizational Oratory: "Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association."

This part of the chapter investigates how youth activism became a central force in shaping Korea's political landscape in the immediate post-liberation period. It examines how left-leaning organizations sought to politically educate young people and position them as agents of social transformation. By analyzing the group's call to purge "collaborators," challenge capitalist authority, and advance workers' and women's rights, the chapter highlights the emergence of Southern youth leadership. In doing so, it shows how leftist oratorical culture carved out a significant space in the struggle to shape Korea's postcolonial nation-building.

Within the setting of speech rallies, the younger generation emerged as a critical interlocutor. The perception of youth as new agents in nation-building efforts, together with the political objectives pursued by political parties and organizations through their engagement, became an essential consideration. Recruiting young people as a political force and educating them to spread their message have become key objectives for all political factions. Consequently, the potential and collective strength of youth groups came to be recognized as indispensable for contemporary political movements and educational initiatives.[158]

[158] Kim Haeng-sŏn 김행선, *Haebang chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn undongsa* (해방정국 청년운동사) (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2004), 69–71.

After the surrender of the Japanese Empire, the Japanese high officials in Korea approached influential Koreans to request an interim administration to preserve law and order, to allow the Japanese to leave Korea unscathed.[159] Lyuh Un-hyŏng, who had prepared the Korean independence through the underground socialist resistance "National Building Alliance" (*Kŏnkuk Dongmaeng*), and headed the " Preparatory Committee for Korean Rehabilitation," (PCK, *Chosŏn Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe*), organized "State-Building Security Corps" (SSC, *Kŏn'guk ch'iandae*).[160] The SSC was composed of students, youth groups and was charged with maintaining public order. The PCK exerted considerable influence over youth circles and came to be regarded as both a symbol and a center pillar of the emergent autonomous power structure developing across the country. In addition, the various youth organizations that formed spontaneously in the immediate post-liberation period either affiliated themselves with or cooperated with local branches of the Committee, thereby strengthening their ties with the broader populace. Leftist youth groups, which originated in efforts to preserve public security, increasingly took the initiative as they merged with larger popular movements.[161]

One of the first oratorical contests during the USAMGIK period was also organized by a leftist group called "Reform and Progress Society" (*Hyeŏkjinsa*), established in October 1945. Their primary aim was to promote "mass enlightenment and the dissemination of political

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[159] Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of Korean War*, 70.

[160] On August 15, 1945, following Japan's defeat, Endō Ryūsaku(遠藤柳作), the Chief of Civil Affairs in the Governor-General's Office, requested Lyuh Un-hyŏng to ensure the safety of Japanese personnel. Lyuh agreed to assume responsibility for maintaining public order under five conditions he presented. Lyuh believed that, although Korea had been liberated by the Allied Powers, the task of preparing for state-building should be undertaken autonomously by domestic forces. He formed the "The Preparatory Committee for Korean Rehabilitation" (Chosŏn Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe) together with figures such as An Chae-hong, Yi Sang-baek, and Yi Man-gyu. Lyuh sought to shape the Committee into a unified front that would bring together all national forces, excluding only those deemed anti-national or anti-democratic. Jeon Jae-ho 전재호, "Lyuh Un-hyŏng ŭi chŏngch'i inyŏm: Minjokchuŭi, kongsanjuŭi, minjujuŭe e taehan insik ŭl chungsim ŭro (여운형의 정치 이면: 민족주의, 공산주의, 민주주체에 대한 인식을 중심으로 Yeo Un-hyeong's Political Thoughts: With a Focus on His Positions Towards Nationalism, Communism, and Democracy)," *Hyŏndae Chŏngch'i Yŏn'gu* (현대정치연구) 6, no. 1 (2013): 94.

[161] Chŏng Pyŏng-jun, 1945nyŏn Haebang chikhu sa (1945년 해방 직후사) (Seoul: Tolbaegae, 2024), 52, 70, 107, e-book.

knowledge." The society intended to publish a magazine titled "Hyeŏkjin" and planned to undertake various publishing initiatives and social welfare activities.[162] The "Reform and Progress Society" organized oratorical contests targeting youth, serving as a form of social education and mass enlightenment. They placed particular emphasis on the role of young individuals, advocating for oratorical contests as opportunities for students to voice the "lion's roar for nation-building from students who will carry the new Chosŏn on their shoulders," and to "experience the noble spirit of young students."[163] The "Reform and Progress Society" founded a branch called the "Innovation Oratory Association (*Hyŏksin Ungbyŏnhoe*)" and programmed a speech rally featuring thirty-six speakers on November 1st and 2nd, 1945, at the Jongno Christian Youth Association Hall (YMCA Hall).[164]

The newspaper announcement stated that participants were representatives of progressive organizations from all regions, and they "shouted out all urgent problems that Korea is facing currently related to the way of national construction."[165]

<Table 1.1>. Speech Rally of *Innovation Oratory Association* (November 1-2, 1945)

Speech Title	**Affiliation**	**Speaker**
The Immediate Task of the Youth (Cheongnyeon-ui Dangmyeon Immu)	Seoul People's Committee, Pak Yŏng-gak (Seoul Inmin Wiwŏnhoe)	Pak Yŏng-gak
The Task of Founding Women (Geon-guk Yeo-seong-ui Immu)	Uichŏn People's Committee (Uich'ŏn Inmin Wiwŏnhoe)	Kim On

[162] However, after releasing the first issue of "Hyeokjin" on February 6, 1946, the organization ceased operations, with its headquarters located in Jongno, Seoul. "Chŏn'guk namnyŏ ungbyŏn taehoe" (전국남녀웅변대회), *Minjung Ilbo* (민중일보), 11.14.1945.

[163] **"Chŏn'guk Haksaeng Ungbyŏn Taehoe Kaech'oe (전국학생웅변대회 개최),"** *Sin Chosŏnbo (신조선보)*, November 13, 1945. **"Chŏn'guk Haksaeng Ungbyŏn Taehoe (전국학생웅변대회)"** *Chayu Sinmun (자유신문)*, November 13, 1945.

[164] "Hyŏksin ungbyŏnhoe il·i-il taegangyŏn" (혁신웅변회 1, 2일 대강연), *Sin Chosŏnbo* (신조선보), 11.01.1945.

[165] "Kŏn'guk ŭi sajahu, Hyŏksin ungbyŏnhoe ŭi kangyŏn(건국의 사자후, 혁신웅변회의 강연)", *Sin Chosŏnbo* (신조선보), November 2, 1945.

Who is the Vanguard of the Fight! (Tujaeng-ui Jeonwi-neun Nugun-ga!)	Former Labor Union (Ch'ul Chŏn Nodong Chohap)	Pak Kwang-hŭi
The Trusteeship Problem (Shintak Gwanli Munje)	Korean People's Party (Chosŏn Inmindang)	Hwang Un
The Task of Seoul Citizens (Seoul Simin-ui Immu)	Seoul People's Committee (Seoul Simin Wiwŏnhoe)	Maeng Chong-ho
The Way that Homland should go (Joguk-ui Galgil)	National Building Women's League (Kŏnyŏ Tongmaeng)	Ch'il-Sŏng
For the Establishment of the National United Front (Minjok Tongilseon Seongseong-eul Wihaya)	Seoul People's Committee (Seoul Inmin Wiwŏnhoe)	Na Bŏm-gu
This is the Problematic Struggle (Uryeo Tujaeng-eun Ireohada)	Pyŏngt'aek Women's People's Committee (Pyŏngt'aek Puin Inmin Wiwŏnhoe)	Kim Gak
The Relativity of Struggle (Tujaeng-ui Sangdaeseon)	National Building Women's League League (Kŏnyŏ Tongmaeng,)	Pang Bŏng-rang
Where Do the National Traitors Go! (Minjok Banyeokja-neun Otero!)	Korean Cultural Association (Chosŏn Munhwa Hyŏphoe)	Sŏ Kang-il
Seoul's Administration is by the Will of Citizens! (Seoul Sijeong-eun Simin-ui Chong-ui-ro!)	Seoul Citizens' Committee, (Seoul Simin Wiwŏnhoe)	Maeng Nak-chung
The Essence of People's X (Inminjeong X-ui Bonjil)	Korean People's Party (Chosŏn Inmindang)	Yi Gŏl-so
Women and Politics (Buin-gwa Jeongchi)	Kŏnyŏ League (National Building Women's League)	Ko Myŏng-ja
The Road of National Revolution (Minjok Hyeokmyeong-ui Gil)	Liberation Literary Society) (Haebang Munuhoe)	Yu Sŏng-han
How to Form a United Front (Tongil Jeonseon-eun Yeoha-hi Halga)	Ich'ŏn Women's People's Committee (Ich'ŏn Puin Minjok Wiwŏnhoe)	Cho Pyŏng-gŏn
Workers and Peasants Cry Out! (Nonong Gyegeub-eun Wechinda!)	Pyŏngt'aek Farmers' Union, Ch'oe (Pyŏngt'aek Nongmin Johap)	Ch'oe Kyŏng-hwan
Undecided (Mijeong)	Korean Communist Party (Chosŏn Kongsandang)	Chŏng Ch'un-sik
The Road to the Liberation of Korean Women	Women's League,	Pae Chŏg-sam

(Joseon Yeoseong-ui Haebang-ui Gil)	(Punyŏ Tongmaeng)	
Trusteeship and the Method of Struggle (Sint'ak Gwanli-wa Tujaeng Bangbeop)	Korean Comrades' Association (Chosŏn Tonguhoe)	Yu Chŏl-dong

*Source: "Hyŏksin ungbyŏnhoe 1, 2-il taekangyŏn," *Sin Chosŏnbo*, November 1, 1945., Kŏn'guk ŭi saja-hu, "Hyŏksin ungbyŏnhoe ŭi kangyŏn," *Sin Chosŏnbo*, November 2, 1945. (X are invisible words)

This table demonstrates that the speech rally attracted participation from not only party representatives but also members of the people's committee, labor unions, women's organizations, and various associations. These diverse groups articulated their perspectives on Korean independence, engaging in discourse pertinent to the political issues. The themes of the competition similarly encompassed a broad range of topics: the responsibilities expected of youth, the new role of women in politics and women's emancipation, how to deal with national traitors, how to unite the people's forces in the process of nation-building, demands from the working and peasant classes, and popular revolution. Additionally, somewhat prematurely, the issue of trusteeship was incorporated among the subjects of discussion, as the Yu Chŏl-dong "Korean Comrades' Association" decided to discuss about "Trusteeship and the Method of Struggle."

Among the coalition-based speech organizations that emerged during this period was the "Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association" (CAOA, *Chŏson Siguk Yŏnsŏldan*). The CAOA was established through the collaboration of youth associations, and they proclaimed its founding purpose as "the active promotion of Korea's reconstruction and the overthrow of national traitors." It further articulated its mission in explicitly sacrificial terms, declaring that they will devote themselves entirely to the nation and by first engaging in "a battle of words (*Yŏronjŏn*)." In doing so, the organization clearly conceptualized its activities as a form of "speech warfare."[166]

[166] "Minjok panyŏkcharŭl t'ado, Chosŏn kŏnsŏrŭl chŏkchŭkchŏk ch'ujin khojŏ, Chosŏn siguk yŏnsŏltanŭl

On October 27th, 1945, under the auspices of various youth organizations and newspapers, and hosted by the CAOA, diverse association representatives delivered speeches on the national situation and the founding of the state. The organization included the "Student Soldiers' Alliance" (*Hakpyŏng Tongmaeng*), the "Youth Raiders Troop Corps" (*Ch'ŏngnyŏn Tolgyŏktae*), the "Chosŏn Student Corps" (*Chosŏn Hakto-dae*), and the "Chosŏn Liberation Youth League" (*Chosŏn Haebang Ch'ŏngnyŏn Tongmaeng*). The event was also referred to as "Great Oratorical Rally of Fervent Youth on Current Affairs." *The Korean Daily News* (*Mail Sinbo*) highlighted the presence of Ko Ingwŏn and Hwang Iksu representing the "Student Soldiers' Alliance", Kim Ilok of the "Youth Raiders Troop Corps," and Ri Tonjŏng from "Chosŏn Liberation Youth League." The article advertized saying, "Their frank expression of contemporary sensibility and advocacy of Korea's sovereignty stirred the blood of the audience, leaving a deep impression through thunderous applause and enthusiastic acclamation."[167]

<Table1.2>. "Youth Current Affairs Oratorical Rally" hosted by "Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association (CAOA)" (October 27, 1945)

Speech Title	**Affiliation**	**Speaker**
Revolution of Blood (P'i ŭi Hyŏngmyŏng)	Student Soldiers' Alliance (Hakpyŏng Tongmaeng)	Ko In'gwŏn
The Revolution of Youth in the Transitional Period of Nation-Building (Kŏn'guk kwadogi ŭi ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭi hyŏngmyŏng)	National Foundation Youth Association (Kŏn'guk Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe)	Im Sijae

kyŏlsŏng (민족반역자를 타도, 조선건설을 적극적추진코저, 조선시국연설단을 결성)," *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), October 25, 1945.

[167] "Chŏngŭi ŭi k'al ŭl ppobadŭlgo kŏnsŏl ilto ro maejin haja Ch'ŏngnyŏn siguk yŏlhyŏl tae yŏnsŏlhoe (정의의 칼을 뽑아들고 건설일도로 매진하자, 청년시국열혈대연설회)", *Maeil Sinbo* (매일신보), October 29, 1945.

Chosŏn Is a Nation of Slash-and-Burn Farmers (Chosŏn ŭn hwajŏnmin ŭi kukka ida)	Inwang Youth League (Inwang Ch'ŏngnyŏn Tongmaeng)	Cho Sŏn'gu
Why Can Capitalists and Landlords Not Become Warriors of Democracy? (Wae chabon'ga, chiju nŭn minjujuŭi chŏnsa ka mot toenŭn'ga?)	Youth Raiders Troop Corps (Ch'ŏngnyŏn Tolgyŏktae)	Kim Ilok
Let Us Put Aside Momentary Emotions and Found the Nation from a Perspective of Great Unity (Ilssi ŭi kamjŏng ŭl pŏrigo taedongjŏk kyŏnji esŏ kŏn'guk haja)	Chosŏn National Foundation Youth Association (Chosŏn Kŏn'guk Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe)	Cho Kut'ae
Whither Chosŏn? (Chosŏn ŭn ŏdero)	Student Soldiers' Alliance (Hakpyŏng Tongmaeng)	Hwang Iksu
What Is Our Task? (Uri ŭi hal il ŭn muŏs inya?)	Chosŏn Student Corps (Chosŏn Hakto-dae)	Kim Hyŏn'gi
On Women's Liberation (Yŏsŏng haebang e taehaya)	Women's Youth League (Yŏch'ŏng Tongmaeng)	Pang Pongnang
Youth, Let Us Join the Liberation Struggle! (Ch'ŏngnyŏn tŭra haebangjŏn e chamgahaja)	Chosŏn Liberation Youth League (Chosŏn Haebang Ch'ŏngnyŏn Tongmaeng)	Ri Tongjŏng
The Objective Situation and the Complete Independence of Chosŏn (Kaekkwanjŏk chŏngse wa Chosŏn ŭi wanjŏn tongnip)	National Foundation Youth Association (Kŏnch'ŏnghoe)	T'ae Chaeki

*Source: "Ch'ŏngnyŏn siguk yŏnsŏl," *Sin Chosŏnbo*, October 27, 1945.

An examination of the organization to which the speakers at this speech rally belonged reveals that most were youth and student groups affiliated with the "National Foundation Security Corps" (*Chŏnguk Ch'iandae*), which was responsible for maintaining public order and security

during the first few months after the liberation. [168] Although the composition and features of each group differed, the majority were left-wing student organizations that would eventually be incorporated into the "National Federation of Youth Organisations" (*Chŏnguk Ch'ŏngnyŏn Tongche Ch'ongdongmaeng*), founded on November 29, 1945.[169] As reflected in the Kim Ilok's speech titled "Why Can Capitalists and Landlords Not Become Warriors of Democracy?", the oratory reveals a critical interrogation of the purported fairness and equity of landowners and capitalists' participation in the making of a democratic society. Notably, T'ae Chaeki's speech "The Objective Situation and the Complete Independence of Chosŏn," shows his awarness of Chosŏn (Korea) occupied by two military forces and and his will to talk about principle of self-determination. These speech rallies still took shape in a broadly coalitionary form, allowing the voice of diverse organizations to be heard within a shared public space.

The CAOA went on to organize two additional speech rallies within the span of two weeks. The second rally, entitled the "Second Youth Current Affairs Oratorical Contest," was held on 9 to 10th November in the main auditorium of the Catholic Church. It was again jointly sponsored by fifteen youth organizations and supported by the city's newspapers.[170]

<Table1.3>. "The Second Youth Current Affairs Oratorical Rally" hosted by *Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association.* (November 09-10, 1945).

Speech Title	**Speaker**

[168] Yu Sŏnyŏng 유선영, "Haebang chikhu chwa–upha kye'yŏl mudoin tŭr ŭi ch'i'an hwaltong (해방 직후 좌.우파 계열 무도인들의 치안 활동 Activities of Keeping Public Order among Right and Left Wing Martial Arts Practitioners right after Joseon's Liberation)," *Taehan Mudohakhoeji* (대한무도학회지) 20, (2020):2-6.

[169] Centrist youth groups such as National Foundation Youth Association, withdrew from the united front under the divisive policies of the Korean Democratic Party., Kim Haeng-sŏn김행선, *Haebang chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn undongsa* (해방정국 청년운동사), (Sŏnin 선인, 2004), 119.

[170] "Kŏn'guk ŭn uri ŭi son ŭro, che ihoe ch'ŏngnyŏn siguk kangyŏn sŏnghwang" (건국은 우리의 손으로, 제2회 청년시국강연성황), *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), November 14, 1945.

On the Formation of a United Front (T'ongil chŏnsŏn kyŏlsŏng e kwan hayŏ)	Mun Ilmin
Dr Rhee's Broadcast and Our Resolve (Yi Paksa ŭi pangsong kwa uri ŭi kako)	Pak Yongjin
Expectations of the Korean Provisional Government (Han'guk Imshi Chŏngbu e taehan kidae)	Chosŏn Student Corps
The Military Government and the People's Republic (Kun jŏngbu wa Inmin Konghwaguk)	Ch'oe Yongjun
Who Are the Traitors to the Nation? (Minjok ŭi paesinja nŭn nugu nya)	Yi Hojun
Our Youth Cry Out (Uri ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭn purujinda)	O Yŏngho
Political Organisations and National Traitors (Chŏngchi tanchae wa minjok pan'yŏkja)	Pak Ch'ŏngnak
The Central Council for the Promotion of Independence and the Political Views of Our Youth (Tongnip ch'oksŏng chungang hyŏphŭihoe wa uri ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭi chŏnggyŏn)	Chŏn Sŭngjun
The Traitors We Condemn (Uri ŭi yoguhaneun paesinja)	Yun Hyewŏn
The Liberation and Future Path of Korean Women (Uri Chosŏn yŏsŏng ŭi haebang kwa nagal kil)	Chin Hyeja
The Complete Independence of Chosŏn and the Liberation of the Labouring Masses (Chosŏn ŭi wanjŏn tongnip kwa nodong taejung ŭi haebang)	Yi Yŏsong
We Too Are Prepared to Shed Blood (Uri to p'i rŭl hŭllil kako ga itta)	Kim Insuk

*Source: "Ch'ŏngnyŏn siguk yŏnsŏl 9, 10 yangil Ch'ŏndogyooesŏ," *Sin Chosŏnbo*, November 2, 1945.

The church was reportedly full of audience, and the newspaper declared the gathering an overwhelming success. *The Central Times of Korea* (*Chungang Sinmun* 중앙신문) reported that most speeches clustered around four major themes, each revealing the political urgency of the liberation period. First, speakers called upon Korean youth to take the lead in eliminating national traitors and those who obstructed independence, presenting such eradication as the necessary precondition for forging a genuine united front. Second, the intermediaries and brokers who surrounded Dr. Syngman Rhee in the nation-building project were singled out as obstacles and denounced as figures to be purged. Third, speakers insisted that true national unity could only be realized through the "People's Republic," a polity proclaimed as the embodiment of the people's collective will, which therefore demanded absolute and unwavering support. Finally, while participants expressed boundless gratitude towards both the United States Military Government and the Allied Forces, they also voiced deep indignation that cooperation with these authorities was being undermined by the disruptive presence of traitors and other subversive elements within the nation.[171]

Report covering oratorical contest further underscores the left-leaning character of the CAOA: First, the newspaper that reported on the content of the speech was *Chungang Sinmun,* a left-wing paper based in Seoul.[172] As the CAOA explicitly identified "public opinion warfare" as one of its primary objectives, *the Chungang Sinmun'*s coverage of the speeches illustrates how it sought to encourage broader public participation and support mass mobilization effort of the leftist youth organizations. Second, they reveal that the CAOA recognize the People's Republic, established on September 6, 1945, as a legitimate government of Korean peninsula.[173] They

[171] "Kŏn'guk ŭn uri ŭi son ŭro, Che 2 hoe ch'ŏngnyŏn siguk kangyŏn sŏnghwang (건국은 우리의 손으로 제2회 청년시국강연성황)", *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), November 14, 1945.

[172] O In-hwan, *Haebanggi Sŏul ŭl nubida* (해방기 서울을 누비다) (Seoul: Haebanggi Han'guk Haksul Chŏngbo, 2022), 22.

[173]

are advirtising to the public even after the official statement issued on October 10, 1945, by Military Governor Arnold declaring that the U.S. Military Government was the sole government south of the 38th parallel and ordering dissolution of the "People's Republic," which lacked both authority and substance.[174] At the same time, the speeches also conveyed gratitude toward the U.S. Military Government and the Allied Powers, revealing the leadership of the People's Republic's optimistic expectation that a peaceful transfer of government power might be achieved through U.S. and Soviet cooperation.[175]

On 23 November, only two weeks after the previous rally, the CAOA convened its third speech rally. The event was advertised in evocative terms, “Listen! To the cries of youth inflamed with patriotic fervor, hear the passionate words of youth who fight solely for the happiness and truth of thirty million people.” They also encouraged the people from the provinces to attend, and they planned to leave for the provinces for a speech tour. [176] However, the names of the speakers or their speech titles haven't been reported, also raising the possibility of cancellation due to anti-tursteeship movements.

Overall, during the immediate post-liberation period, youth emerged as pivotal political actors in Korea's reconstruction, with competing parties fundamentally seeking to mobilize and educate them. Leftist groups such as the "Reform and Progress Society" and the "Innovation Oratory Association" organized early speech rallies and contests as tools of political and social education. The "Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association" (CAOA), established by left-

[174] "Korean People's Republic, " History of the United States Army Forces in Korea Part 2, Korean History Database,https://db.history.go.kr/contemp/level.do?itemId=husa&levelId=husa_002_0020_0020_0020 (accessed, September 10, 2025.)

[175] Kim Mu-yong 김무용, “Haebang hu Chosŏn Kongsandang ŭi nosŏn kwa Chosŏn Inmin Konghwaguk (1945.8–1945.12), 해방 후 조선공산당의 노선과 조선인민공화국 (1945.8-1945.12) Line of Korean Communist Party and the People’s Republic of Korea after Korea’s Liberation),” *Han’guk Sahakpo* (한국사학보) 9 (2000): 351.

[176] "Ch’ŏngnyŏn siguk yŏnsŏl kŭmil Ch’ŏndogyodang esŏ (청년시국연설 금일천도교당에서), *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), November 23, 1945.

wing youth organizations, promoted "speech warfare" and convened major rallies focused on themes such as the purging of collaborators, unification under the People's Republic, challenging the authority of capitalists and landlords, and advancing workers' and women's rights. While these activities demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with the U.S. Military Government, they also underscored the importance of indigenous leadership. Left-leaning newspapers amplified these initiatives, and oratorical activism persisted despite occasional disruptions from anti-trusteeship factions.

CHAPTER 2 The Student Oratory and Political Propaganda during the United States Military Occupation Period.

2.1 The Rise of Right-Wing Student Movement and Anti-Trusteeship Student Oratory

2.1.1. The Foundation of Anti-Trusteeship National Union of Students and Their Oratory

This chapter investigates the anti-trusteeship student movement of early 1946 by treating oratorical contests as a privileged lens onto the formation of post-liberation political culture in Korea. It argues that these contests, amplified by right-wing organizations and allied newspapers, functioned as an immediate and effective vehicle for right-wing propaganda. They used staged performances and made anti-trusteeship rhetoric highly audible and visible to the populace and thereby helped transform it into a nationalist and anti-communist political culture that structured the early Cold War order in South Korea.

The fundamental issue underlying the anti-trusteeship movement lay in a concrete political question posed by the central provision of the Moscow Decision: namely, the establishment of a provisional government and the struggle over who would ultimately seize state power. By commodifying the anti-trusteeship movement as a form of "patriotic nationalism," the right wing deployed anti-communist ideology as its primary weapon, trasforming its previously defensive posture into an offensive one and using the movement as an opportunity to expand its political influence.[177]

The anti-trusteeship movement served as a pivotal indicator in shaping the trajectory of youth political activism in Korea. The right-wing student faction consisted of individuals who held distinctly opposing views toward the situation in the northern regions.[178] Their strong anti-communist stance and dissatisfaction with the policies and conditions north of the 38th parallel positioned them as key contributors to the growth and ideological consolidation of the right-wing movement.[179]

As seen on first chapter, the perception of youth during the U.S. Military Government period as new agent in the project of nation-building, together with the objecvies persued by political

[177] Kim Haeng-sŏn, *Haebang chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn undongsa*, (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2004), 211.

[178] In the northern regions, efforts to consolidate political power for the establishment of a new government were being systematically organized at the local level. The plan to establish a political party by the anti-Japanese guerrilla groups (항일유격대) was realized with the cooperation of the Soviet military command. The anti-Japanese guerrilla groups, which had fought alongside the Soviet forces against Japan during the Pacific War, intensified their contacts with indigenous communists starting in late September. The party's central committee worked to unify competing youth organizations through the North Korean Democratic Youth League (북조선민주청년동맹), mobilizing youth and students from various social backgrounds. These individuals were incorporated into the league, which was organized in factories, enterprises, rural areas, and schools. Additionally, these groups managed various initiatives, including night schools, adult education programs, and reading circles. They also conducted educational activities for league members using diverse methods such as lectures, oratory contests, explanatory talks, discussion sessions, propaganda materials, and theatrical performances. In this process, factions emerged, some supporting the plans and others opposing them. This divergence highlighted the ideological and social tensions within the rapidly evolving political landscape in the north. About the North Korean nation-building process and the mobilization of youth see Kim Kwang-un 김광운, *Pukhan chŏngch'isa yŏn'gu 1: Kŏndang, kŏn'guk, kŏn'gun ŭi yŏksa* (북한 정치사 연구 1: 건당·건국·건군의 역사) (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2003).

[179] Ryu Sang-yŏng, "8.15 ihu chwa, uik ch'ŏngnyŏn tanche ŭi chojik kwa hwaltong" (8.15 이후 좌·우익 청년단체의 조직과 활동), in Chŏng Hae-gu 정해구 et al., *Haebang chŏnhusa ŭi insik* (해방전후사의 인식) (Seoul: Han'gil, 1989), 71-72.

parties and organizations thorugh their mobilization, emerged as a critical factor of the time. When the anti-trusteeship emerged as the central political issue, young people who sought to constitute themselves as new political subjects both internalized these ideologies and engaged actively on their basis. Within this context, leftist youth, or those opposed to the establishment of a separate southern government, came to be branded as subversive, dangerous, and criminalized as targets of condemnation, thereby increasingly pushed into invisibility. By contrast, the mobility of right-wing youth was valorized, reinterpreted as a process of self-transformation and growth, and thus made visible.[180]

Beginning in late December 1945, anti-trusteeship student organizations operated as coalitions, loosely affiliated with figures such as Syngman Rhee and Kim Gu, the designated representative of the "Korean Provisional Government" (KPG *Imsi chŏngbu*). These coalitions frequently emerged from pre-existing groups within individual universities. The leading youth movement within the anti-trusteeship campaign constituted a comprehensive organizational process, which can be characterized as a "counter-revolution." The coalition process was deemed complete only when all “revolutionary forces” within South Korea had been eradicated through the enforced homogenization of society under anti-communist ideology. Furthermore, the far-right's employment of terror and intimidation tactics was instrumental in establishing an anti-communist government from above, thereby differentiating the South Korean state.[181]

Among the groups that reacted immediately to the trusteeship chaos was one small "Oratory Club" (*Ungbyŏn Kurakpu*) located in "Sajik Park" in Seoul. They weren’t a political association but more an organization primarily focused on oratory education, where authorities

[180] 오태영, 해방과 청년 이동의 (비)가시화: 이념 공간의 재편과 젠더적 위계질서를 중심으로, 동악어문학 제 75집. 2018, 28.

[181] Kim Haeng-seon 김행선, Haebang jeongguk cheongnyeon undongsa, 217.

from various fields conducted nightly oratory lectures to train individuals in public speaking.[182] They became the first organization to invite young students and unexpectedly held the "National Oratory Contest for Opposing Trusteeship and Promoting Independence" on January 5, 1946. Their rapid reaction to the anti-trusteeship oratory contest was possible because they had planned the "National Oratory Contest for Promoting Independence" in advance for late December. The contest invited individuals or representatives of organizations to present their views and aspirations on "the completion of independence and the construction of a nation" in a 15-minute speech. Participants were requested to submit their speech topics and manuscripts to the "Oratory Club" by December 26. However, as the anti-trusteeship movement gained momentum, the "Oratory Club" adapted by adding "Opposing Trusteeship" to the contest's title, renaming it.

<Table 2.1>. "Oratory Club's" "National Oratory Contest for Opposing Trusteeship and Promoting Independence" (January 5-6, 1946)

Speech Title	**Speaker's Name**
Blood Pact Alliance (Hyŏljŏn tongmaeng)	Ha Man
Extermination (Kŭnmyŏl)	Yu Man-sŏk
Unity for Independence (Tongnip tanggyŏl)	Hŏ Ung: Bonpo
To Live or Die (Chuknŭnya sanŭnya)	Wang Yun-wŏn: Seoul
A Bowyer (Kungs-a)	Kim Kwang-mu
Defending to the Last (Sasu)	Pak Sŏng-kŭn
Opposition to Trusteeship (T'akch'i bandae)	No Sŭng-hu

[182] "Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Chŏnguk Namnyŏ Hyŏnsang Ungbyŏn Taehoe" *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문) December 12, 1945., "T'akch'i Pandae Chaju Wanjŏn Tongnip Ch'okchin Taehoe," *Minjung Ilbo* (민중일보), January 6,1946.

Let’s Fight Together (Mungch’yŏ ssauja)	Kim Tŏk-maeng
Fall Seven Times, Stand Up Eight (Ch’iljŏn p’algi)	Yu Yŏng-gi
An Indomitable Spirit (Paekchŏl pulgul)	Bang-yak
Reflections of a Displaced Person (Ch’unanmin sogam)	Pang Tŏk-jin
Let’s Unite (Mungch’ija)	Ch'oe Ch'an-yŏng: Heju
Youth (Ch’ŏngnyŏn)	Kim Hae-jong
Let’s Gather (Mohija)	Kim T'aek-chun
The Labor Question (Nodong munje)	Yi Chong-t'ae
Justice and Victory (Chŏngŭi wa sŭngni)	Kang Hyŏn-ha: Iwon
Saving the Nation (Kuguk)	Chin Kŭm-do
Completing Nation-Building (Kŏn’guk wansŏng)	Kim Tŏk-sŏn
Great Unity (Taedong tanggyŏl)	Kim U-jae
Drawing Maps on Blank Paper (Paekchi-e chido kŭrija)	Yun Chi-hŏn
Urgent Issues (Kŭngŭp munje)	Yu Sam-jae: Iwon
Death or Independence (Chugŭm inya tongnip inya)	Ko Min-yong
Youth (Ch’ŏngnyŏn)	Pak Kap-sŏng
Principled State (Chuŭi kukka)	Kim Wŏn-ho
Untitled (Muje)	Han Yŏng-bong

Source: “T'akban Ungbyŏn Taehoe” *Chosŏn Ilbo,* January 01, 1946, “T'akch'i Pandae Tongnip Ch'okchin Chŏnguk Namnyŏ Ungbyŏn Taehoe - Ungbyŏn Kurakpu Chuch'oe-ro” *Taedong Sinmun,* January 05, 1946.

In addition to the various issues people faced at the time, the inclusion of Park Sung-gŭn's speech titled “Opposition to Trusteeship” shows clearly that the "Oratory Club" received

submissions even after the proposed deadline on December 26, 1945. Organizers were flexible, likely reflecting the rising intensity of the anti-trusteeship movement and their desire to incorporate the most current and relevant voices into the event. On this day, a panel of judges, including Kim Chang-je and three others, selected eight winners from the contest.[183] The winning titles were “Unity for Independence,” “To Live or Die,” “Let’s Unite,” “Justice and Victory,” “Urgent Issues,”[184] which represent the interests of the jury wanting to highlight the trusteeship issue.

Notably, the participants came from various regions, with half of them hailing from northern areas, such as Pyongyang, Iwon, and Heju in the Hwanghae Province. This demonstrates the potential for travel between cities across the 38th parallel, enabling people from both the northern and southern regions to share their views.[185]

The student group which raised as a principal oratorical speaker in this pollical occasion, was "Anti Trusteeship National Union of Students," (ATUS, *Pant’ak Haksaeng Ch’ongyŏnmaeng*). The ATUS was established by students from "Bosŏng College" and "Severance Medical College" who played a particularly leading role in steering anti-trusteeship movement. On December 30, 1945, students from "Bosŏng College" convened the "Preparatory Committee of the anti-trusteeship student movement" (*Shint’akt’ongch’i Pant’ae Haksaeng Chunbi*

[183] Kim Chang-je was was an educator deeply interested in youth movements, actively engaging in lectures and writing to educate and inspire young people. In his youth, he held debate and speech events at Honghwa School (홍화학교), where he criticized political corruption and advocated for "political reform." Furthermore, as a person of profound faith, who established the first local student YMCA at Yŏnngsaeng Middle School" in "Hamheung" (함흥) in South Hamgyeong (함영) Province, in April 1915. Kim Kwŏn-jŏng 김권정, “Kim Ch’ang-je ŭi saengae wa sasang” (김창제의 생애와 사상), Han’guk *Kidokkyo Yŏksa Yŏn’guso Sosik* (한국기독교역사연구소소식) 18 (1995):7-15.

[184] “Hyŏnsang ungbyŏn susangja” (현상웅변수상자), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 9, 1946.

[185] Tŭng Kim Tŏk-X (P'yŏngyang), Hŏ Ung (Mokp'o) 2-tŭng, Kang Hyŏn-ha (Iwon), Kim Yŏn-sŏng (Seoul), 2-tŭng Yu Sam-jae (Iwon), Wang Yun-wŏn (Seoul), 4-tŭng Ch'oe Ch'an-yŏng (Hwanghae), Kim Sang-go (Sŏul). “Hyŏnsang Ungbyŏn Taehoe, Ipsangja Kyŏljŏng Palp'yo,” *Chungang Sinmun*, 1946.01.08. Among the spekers, Kim Yŏn-sŏng and Kim Sang-go, both from Seoul, do not appear in the previously published list of speakers. It is presumed that the names of two students with the surname "Kim," reported earlier by *The Chosun Ilbo*, were misidentified. In cases where the Chinese characters for names in the newspaper were obscured or unclear, the phonetic readings recorded in the *Naver News Library* were used as references. This suggests that some discrepancies in the historical record may be due to errors or limitations in the original reporting.

Wiwŏnhoe). By January 2nd and 3rd, representatives from nineteen specialized colleges and secondary schools had gathered in Hanchŏng building of Jongno street and decided to found the "Anti Trusteeship National Union of Students." They aimed to form a movement that would not be a mere symbolic organization but would lead a systematic and actionable campaign opposing trusteeship, emphasizing the reclamation of Korean sovereignty.[186] The participants gathered at the Seoul Stadium where they read aloud the "Resolution Statement"[187] and the "letter"[188] addressed to the students of the Allied Nations. Group of students started to march in Jongno street carrying national and school flags and banners chanting "Long live Korean independence." The march concluded around four in the afternoon singing the national anthem when they reached the U.S. Military Government Headquarters.[189]

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[186] The article includes detailed information about the universities the participating students belong to, as well as the number of participants from each university. "Silhaeng undongŭl t'oŭi (실행운동을 토의)", *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보) 1946.01.03., "Chŏnmun chungdŭng 19-kyo haksaeng pant'ak hoehap (전문중등 19교 학생반탁회합)" , *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보) January 4, 1946.

[187] The Resolution Statement listed the regulations to follow for the movement of AUTS and requests for Anti-trusteeship. 1)An absolute rejection of foreign rule disguised as self-determination. 2) Immediate, unconditional, and complete independence. 3)Total liberation on an international scale. 4) The establishment of a unified government. 5) Cooperation with Military Government. 6) Relentless eradication of traitors. 7) This stands as an unyielding declaration and a sacred pledge in the name of freedom, dignity, and the homeland., "Aeguk-ŭi sunhyŏl-ŭn kodong pant'ak, tongnip undong-ŭn hakto-ŭi ilsa-ro chakil, haksaeng taehoe yŏlgo siwi haengnyŏl. (애국의 순혈은 고동 반탁, 독립운동은 학도의 일사로 작일, 학생대회 열고 시위 행렬)", *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 08, 1946.

[188] "Message from the Students of the Republic of Korea, Anti Trusteeship National Union of Students, To Students of the Allied Nations.We, the students of the Republic of Korea, extend our heartfelt gratitude to the students of the Allied Nations for their cherished efforts in the struggle for global peace and liberation. With this letter, we also wish to convey our current situation and aspirations. Reflecting on the past, for 40 years under the oppressive rule of Japan, we, the students of the Republic of Korea, actively or passively fought for the cause of justice. However, our struggles and passions faced relentless storms of oppression and brutal coercion, hindering them from bearing fruit. Yet, the noble efforts of the Allied youth for world peace supported our cause and brought our struggles to fruition, allowing us to share in the peace that was ultimately achieved. On that day, we, the students of the Republic of Korea, offered our sincere gratitude to the students of the Allied nations, our true companions, and could not withhold our genuine sentiments of appreciation. With the singular goal of achieving national independence, we have continued to strive and persevere. However, recent proposals for a five-year trusteeship, born of partial misunderstandings, have reached our ears. In response, we, the students of the Republic of Korea, firmly and conscientiously oppose this notion. We earnestly appeal to the conscientious and justice-oriented students of the Allied nations, emphasizing that Korea has a 40-year history of struggle and a resplendent cultural heritage. We humbly seek your support for our demand for immediate national independence and conclude with this sincere request. Dated January 7, 1946, The Students of the Republic of Korea (translated from original Korean text) "Haksaengdŭl Pant'ak ŭi Yŏlhwa (학생들 반탁의 열화)" *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보) January 08,1946.

[189] Ibid.

"The picture of students marching for the anti-truesteeship protest" January 8, 1946. (figure.2.1.)[190]

The ATUS convened a rally at 11:00 a.m. on January 7, 1946, at Seoul Stadium and recruited all students from secondary schools and higher educational institutions to bring their school flags and the national flag. Approximately 10,000 students gathered, representing forty-six specialized colleges and universities and fifteen secondary schools. The organization committee presented a *Resolution Statement* addressed to students from the Allied Nations.[191]

Following a street parade, students proceeded to "Jŏngdong Church," where they inaugurated the formation of the ATUS.[192] Yi Chŏlsŭng of "Bosŏng College" was elected as a chairman. The inauguration was further endorsed by speeches from Paik Nam-hun of the "Anti-Trusteeship National Mobilization Committee" (*Pant'ak Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe*), and Kim Changyŏp, representing the "Central Youth League for the Promotion of Independence"

[190] Ibid.

[191] Chil-il haksaengdŭl-ege t'akch'i pandae siwi, *Chosŏn Ilbo*, January 06, 1946. Considering that the number students in Korean peninsula was only 7 thousand, one-seventh students were gathered to participate in this event.

[192] "Silhaeng undong ŭl t'oi" (실행운동을 토의), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), January 3, 1946.,"Chŏnmun chungdŭng sipku kyo haksaeng pant'ak hoehap" (전문중등19교 학생반탁회합), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 4, 1946.

(*Tongnip Ch'ok-sŏng Chungang Ch'ŏngnyŏn Ch'ongyŏnmaeng*) both of whom emphasized significance of student unity in the national movement. Additionally, Sygnman Rhee sent conveyed his support through a congratulatory message delivered by his chief secretary, Yun Chi-yŏng, underscoring the political importance of the student-led initiative. Cho So-ang, the Foreign Minister of KPG who was also leading the anti-trusteeship movement, supplied an office for ATUS in a building in Gwansudong district. Their office was neighboured with "The Korean Patriotic Women's Association," (KPW, *Taehan Tongnip Ch'ok¬sŏng Aeguk Puinhoe*) also, participating in ant-truteeship movement.[193] Namely, ATUS launched its activities successfully with an active support and backing of leading figures in the right-wing political camp.

Soon, ATUS started to organize political activities in which oratorical contest served as an immediate tool to draw the public, particularly students, and to assert superiority over the left-wing students who had hitherto played having leading roles in the student movement.[194] ATUS actively expanded its activities by collecting speeches for oratory contests and widely soliciting slogans, poems, and novels related to opposing trusteeships. They aimed to broaden the cultural and intellectual reach of the anti-trusteeship movement, fostering greater engagement across diverse mediums.[195]

ATUS leaders considered crucial the involvement of the secondary school students for expanding the nationalist movement and ensuring its continuity. The president, Yi Chŏlsŭng explained that "Compared to university students, who numbered only a few thousand at the time, secondary school students were far more numerous and guaranteed a stronger foundation

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[193] Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng 이철승, *Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa* (한국학생건국운동사) (Seoul: P'yŏnghwa Munje Yŏn'guso, 1989), 131.

[194] Koryŏ Taehakkyo 100nyŏnsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe 고려대학교 100년사편찬위원회, *Koryŏ Taehakkyo haksaeng undongsa* (고려대학교 학생운동사) (Seoul: Koryŏ Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2005), 109-111.

[195] "Pant'ak chŏngguk haksaeng ungbyŏn taehoe (반탁 전국학생웅변대회)," *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), 1946.01.17.

for organizational growth."[196] The extensive participation of secondary school students was instrumental in demonstrating the scale and effectiveness of the student federation during anti-trusteeship protests. Most regional branches of the federation were predominantly led and driven by secondary school students. Their involvement significantly enhanced the reach and impact of the movement, underscoring their critical role in the broader anti-trusteeship efforts.[197]

While the right-wing political associations were fomenting anti-trusteeship opinions, "Central People's Committee of the Korean People's Republic" (CPC, *Chosŏn Inmin Konghwaguk Chungang Inmin Wiwŏnhoe*) issued an official statement expressing support for trusteeship decision. "Resolution of the Centeral People's Committee on the Decisions of the the Three-Power Conference" was published in *Chosŏn Ilbo* on January 4, 1946, underlining that trusteeship derived from the decisions of the Allied Powers at the Moscow Conference and it was a concrete implementation of promises made during the Potsdam Conference. "The decision of the Moscow Conference was not only a progressive decision to secure the liberation of the Korean people, but also one that supports the establishment of a democratic government and the democratic development of Korea, thereby progressively completing Korea's full independence and enabling it to advance to the status of a civilized nation in the world."[198] ATUS issued a counterstatement taking an immediate response to the CPC's opinions in a confrontational structure. They framed the "pro-trusteeship" stance as "traitorous conspirators," who were supported by communist and socialist factions.[199]

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[196] Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng 이철승, Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa, 136.

[197] Ibid, 136.

[198] "Sageguk-e kyeoljeongseo (사개국에 결정서)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), 1946.01.04, "Makpu kyŏlchŏngŭl chiji (막부결정을지지)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), 1946.01.05.

[199] "Statement," January 12, 1946. **"**Those who speak of trusteeship or guardianship instead of complete freedom should leave Korea. Who dares to claim that supporting the Moscow Conference decisions represents Korea's progressive path? Where is the justification for such a claim? Observe the desperate final throes of **traitorous conspirators** who, driven by hidden forces and vested interests, seek to destroy our 5,000-year history and brilliant culture by selling out the nation. We, the students of Korea, stand united (in eliminating traitorous students). Like

As public opinion rapidly shifted in favor of the anti-trusteeship movement, the CAOA hold speeches to navigate the situation. The urgency of the moment is evident in the hastily prepared notices that appeared in newspapers. Unlike previous previous event they had organize, the announcemnt reveal that, alothough the affiliated organizations and thems had been set, the speakers themselves had not yet been recruited. The organization listed were not merely youth groups or individuals but a broad coalition of left-leaning forces, including the People's Republc, the Korean Communisty Party, and the National Federation of Farmers' Unions. Moreover, the presence of a speaker who identified his affiliation as the "The Preparatory Committee for Korean Rehabilitation" despite the organization already having been absorbed into the "People's Republic," illustrates the confusion within the left-wing movement at the time. It appears that the CAOA hastily organized the speech to counter the rapidly spreading negative sentiment and misunderstanding surrounding the "People's Republic" and the Moscow Decision. In addition, they also undertook a provincial tour to stir local opinion around the trusteeship issue.[200]

<Table2.2>. “The Fifth Youth Current Affairs Oratorical Rally” hosted by "Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association." (Jauary 09-10, 1946)

Speech Title	**Organization / Speaker**
The Course of Negotiations between the People’s Republic and the Government (In’gong kwa chŏngbu ŭi kyosŏp	People's Republic, undetermined

the students of the Allied nations, we must hear the chimes of peace. This is the correct path for the new Korea.” Anti Trusteeship National Union of Student. Kim Hyŏn-sik and Chŏng Sŏn-t’ae eds. 김현식, 정선태 편저, *Ppira ro tŭt nŭn Haebang chikhu ŭi moksori* (, 삐라로 듣는 해방 직후의 목소리) (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch’ulp’an, 2013), Korean Database (KRpia), https://www.krpia.co.kr/product/main?plctId=PLCT00005222 (accessed March, 12, 2024)

[200] “Chosŏn siguk yŏnsŏltan, Namsŏn sunhoe kangyŏn” (조선시국연설단, 남선순회강연), *Sin Chosŏnbo* (신조선보), January 13, 1946.

chŏnmal)	
On the National United Front (Minjok t'ongil chŏnsŏn e taehan chujang)	People's Republic, undetermined
On the Moscow Conference (Samsang hoeŭi e taehaya)	Communist Party of Korea
The Path for Youth (Ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭi kalgil)	People's Republic, Ri Chŏngyŏng
The Trusteeship Question and the Future of Korea (S'int'ak munje wa Chosŏn ŭi changnae)	National Council of Korean Labor Unions, Pak Pongu
On the National United Front (Minjok t'ongil chŏnsŏn e taehaya)	National Federation of Peasant Associations (Chŏngguk Nongmin Johap Ch'ongyŏnmaeng), Pak Kyŏngsu
On Support for the Moscow Conference (Samsang hoeŭi chiji e taehaya)	The Preparatory Committee for Korean Rehabilitation(Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe), Ko Myŏngja
The Nature of Trusteeship and Our Circumstances (S'int'ak ŭi ponjil kwa uri ŭi sangt'ae)	(Munhyŏp), Yi Wŏnjo
Safeguard the United Front (Chŏnsŏn ŭl Jŏngri haja)	(Hyŏn), Undetermined

Source: "Che ohoe siguk yŏnsŏl taehwe kaech'oe" (제오회 시국연설대회 개최), *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), January 20, 1946. "Siguk yŏnsŏl taehwe sip i il ro yŏn'gi" (시국연설대회 12일로 연기), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), January 12, 1946.

Despite some tentative to correct the information, the pro-trusteeship opinions didn't successfully communicate to the public. The USAMGIK deliberately amplified a narrative in which supporting trusteeship was portrayed as being pro-Soviet and traitorous, while opposing trusteeship was equated with patriotism. A representative case is observed from the press conference between "People's Republic" leader Pak Hŏn-yŏng and Richard Johnston. The media manipulation was clarified when the New York Times correspondent Richard Johnston allegedly embellished Pak's remarks, intentionally exaggerating the story to inflict significant political damage on Pak's and the CPC.[201] "National Traitor Communist" portrayal were designated in anti-trusteeship leaflets despite denials by the 12 journalists who attended Pak's press conference. Journalist reported a joint statement, clarifying that the allegations against Pak Hŏn-yŏng were not true.[202]

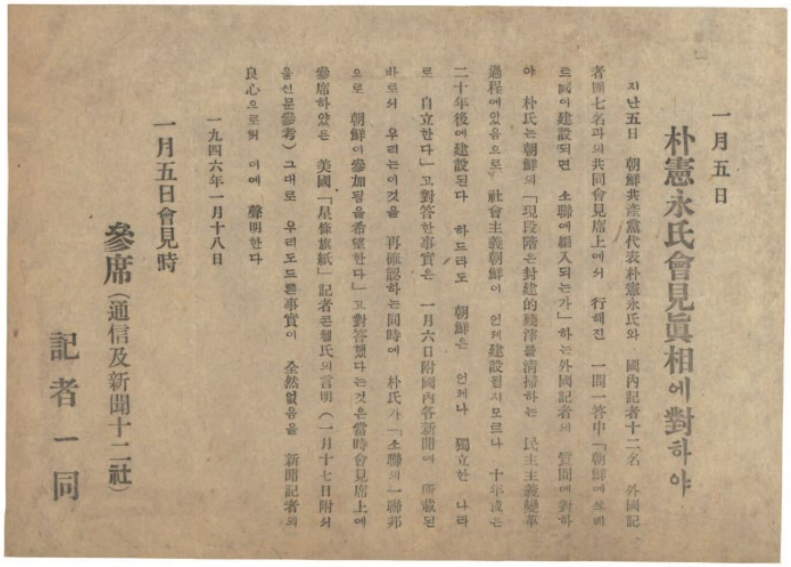
Nevertheless, from the right-wing's perspective, journalist' denials were dismissed as mere fabrications, labelled as part of the "Korean Communist Party's schemes and policies."[203] The mutual hostility between factions escalated, with both sides accusing the other of "destructive

[201] Chŏng Yong-uk 정용욱, "1945nyŏn mal 1946nyŏn ch'o shint'akt'ongch'i p'adong kwa Migunjŏng: Migunjŏng ŭi yŏron kongjag ŭl chungsim ŭro" (1945년말 1946년 초 신탁통치 파동과 미군정-미군정의 여론공작을 중심으로-), *Yŏksabi p'yŏngsa* (역사비평사) 62 (2003): 301–305.

[202] "1wol 5ire isseotdeon Bak Heonyeong-ui gijahoe-gyeon-e chamseokhan tongsin mit sinmun 12sa gija ildong-ui <Bak Heonyeong-ssi hoegyeon jinsang-e daehayeo," (1월 5일에 있었던 박헌영의 기자회견에 참석한 통신 및 신문 12사 기자 일동의 <박헌영씨 회견 진상>에 대하여, "Regarding the truth of Mr. Pak Heon-young's press conference, by the twelve correspondents and newspaper reporters who attended Pak Heon-young's press conference on January 5) 1946.01.18., Kim Hyŏn-sik and Chŏng Sŏn-t'ae eds. *Ppira ro tŭt nŭn Haebang chikhu ŭi moksori*, Korean Database (KRpia), https://www.krpia.co.kr/product/main?plctId=PLCT00005222 (accessed March 12, 2024)., "UP kijaui podo (UP기자의 보도)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), 1946.01.17.

[203] "Maegukjeok jeongchi gak danche gineup hyeob-uihoe <Bak Heonyeong-ui maeguk eonsaneun sasil – giman, molyag-e daejung-eun sokji mala> (매국적정치 각 단체 긴급협의회 <박헌영의 매국 언사는 사실-기만, 모략에 대중은 속지 말라>Emergency Council of Various Anti-National Political Groups: 'Pak Heon-young's treasonous remarks are true — the public must not be deceived by trickery and schemes.')" February 20, 1946, Kim Hyŏn-sik and Chŏng Sŏn-t'ae eds. *Ppira ro tŭt nŭn Haebang chikhu ŭi moksori*, Korean Database (KRpia),https://www.krpia.co.kr/product/main?plctId=PLCT00005222 (accessed March, 12, 2024)., "Chŏnggukjŏg ŭro paegyŏk undong" (전국적으로 배격운동), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 17, 1946.

propaganda.” They hurled terms like “fascist,” “traitor to the nation,” and “dictator” at each other, claiming their opponents were “obstructing national unity and causing division.”[204] Amid the ignition of the anti-trusteeship movement, ATUS initiated a psychological and public opinion war, exchanging leaflets and oratories to attack each other’s positions and sway public sentiment.



一月五日

朴憲永氏會見眞相에對하야

지난五日 朝鮮共産黨代表朴憲永氏와 國內記者十二名 外國記者團七名과의共同會見席上에서 行해진 一問一答中「朝鮮에서 새로운 民主的이建設되면 소聯에編入되는가」하는外國記者의 質問에對하야 朴氏는朝鮮의「現段階는封建的殘滓를淸掃하는 民主主義變革過程에있음으로 社會主義朝鮮이 언제建設될지모르나 十年或은二十年後에建設된다 하드라도 朝鮮은 언제나 獨立한 나라로 自立한다」고對答한事實은 一月六日附國內各新聞에 所載된바로서 우리는이것을 再確認하는同時에 朴氏가「소聯의一聯邦으로 朝鮮이參加됨을希望한다」고對答했다는것은當時會見席上에參席하였든 美國「星條旗紙」記者콘웰氏의言明(一月十七日附서울신문參考)그대로 우리모드른事實이 全然없음을 新聞記者의良心으로써 이에 聲明한다

一九四六年一月十八日

一月五日會見時

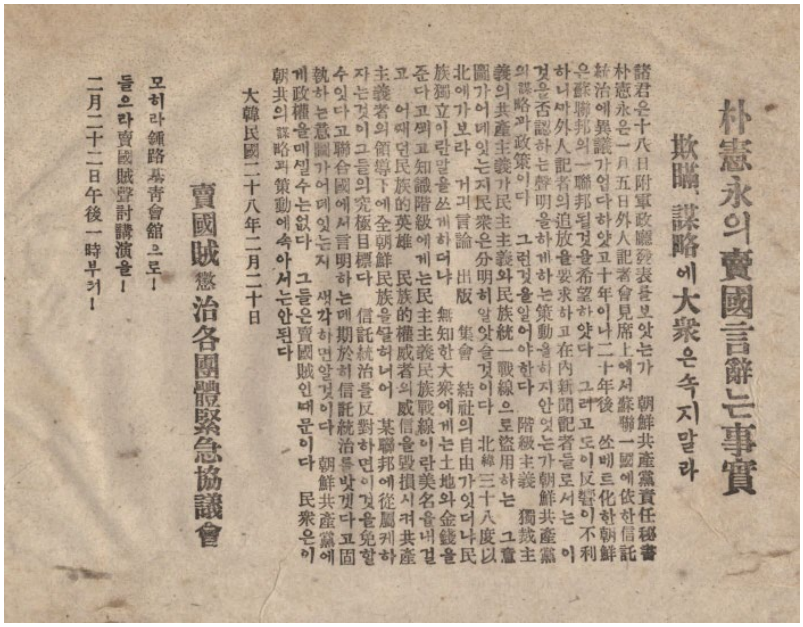
參席(通信及新聞十二社)

記者一同

“On the Truth of Mr. Pak Hŏn-yŏng’s Press Conference” by the Twelve Correspondents and Newspaper Journalists Who Attended Pak’s Press Conference on 5 January. (January 18th, 1946) (figure.2.2)[205]

[204] "T’akch’i bandae Kungmin Ch’ongdongwŏn Wiwŏnhoe, Kongsandang e mutnora (탁치반대국민총동원위원회, <공산당에 묻노라>, Committee for Total National Mobilization Against Trusteeship, “I Ask the Communist Party”" (January 1946). "Chosŏn Kongsandang Ch’ŏngnyŏn Tongmaeng Sŏul Si Wiwŏnhoe, Ch’inae hanŭn ch’ŏngnyŏn chegun, (조선공산당청년동맹 서울시위원회, <친애하는 청년 제군>, Seoul City Committee of the Youth League of the Communist Party of Korea, “Dear Young Comrades”)" (January 23, 1946).

[205] Kim Hyŏn-sik and Chŏng Sŏn-t’ae, eds., *Ppira ro tŭt nŭn Haebang chikhu ŭi moksori*, https://www.krpia.co.kr/product/main?plctId=PLCT00005222 (accessed March, 12, 2024).



朴憲永의賣國言辭는事實

欺瞞, 謀略에大衆은속지말라

諸君은十八日附軍政廳發表를보았는가 朝鮮共産黨責任秘書 朴憲永은一月五日外人記者會見席上에서蘇聯一國에依한信託統治에異議가없다하였고十年이나二十年後 쏘비트化한朝鮮은蘇聯邦의一聯邦될것을希望하였다 그러고도이反擊이不利하니까外人記者의追放을要求하고在內新聞記者들로서는이것을否認하는聲明을하게하는策動을하지안었는가朝鮮共産黨의謀略과政策이다 그런것을알어야한다 階級主義 獨裁主義의共産主義가民主主義와民族統一戰線으로監用하는 그意圖가어데있는지民衆은分明히알았을것이다 北緯三十八度以北에가보라 거기言論 出版 集會 結社의自由가있더냐民族獨立이란말을쓰게하더냐 無知한大衆에게는土地와金錢을준다고하고知識階級에게는民主主義民族戰線이란美名을내걸고어데던民族的英雄 民族的權威者의威信을毁損시켜共産主義者의領導下에全朝鮮民族을말허니어 某聯邦에從屬케하자는것이그들의究極目標다 信託統治를反對하던이것을免할수있다고聯合國에서言明하는때期於히信託統治를밧겟다고固執하는意圖가어데있는지 생각하면알것이다 朝鮮共産黨에게政權을맽길수는없다 그들은賣國賊인때문이다 民衆은이 朝共의謀略과策動에속아서는안된다

大韓民國二十八年二月二十日

賣國賊懲治各團體緊急協議會

모히라 鍾路 基青會館으로!

들으라賣國賊聲討講演을!

二月二十二日午後一時부터!

"Emergency Council of All Patriotic Political Organisations: 'Pak Hŏn-yŏng's Remarks Are Truly Treasonous – Do Not Be Deceived by Trickery and Slander'" (February 20th, 1946). (figure.2.3)[206]

The clash between youth intensified further after the "Anti-Trusteeship Student Oratory Contest" held at "Jŏngdong Church" on January 18, and the subsequent "Hakbyŏng Alliance Incident" deepend the division between the left and right youth factions. An oratorical contest organized by ATUS in January managed to gather thousand audiences. After saluting the flags and singing the national anthem, seven students spoke on the stage.

<Table 2.3>. ATUS Student Oratorical Contest (January 18, 1946)

Oration Title	Student	Affiliated Institution
Our Strength for the Land of Three Thousand Ri (Samch'ŏlli kangsan ŭn uri ŭi him ŭro)	Ch'a Kuk-ch'an	Collge of Commercial and Industry

[206] Ibid.

Rebort by the Representative of Korean Students in Japan (Chaeil Han'guk yuhaksaeng taep'yo pogo)	Kim Sŏk-ha	Chosŏn University
Justice and Students (Chŏngŭi wa hakto)	Pak Yong-man	Overaseas Student
Trusteeship and Women's resoulution (T'akch'i wa yŏsŏng ŭi kyŏrŭi)	Hong Man-gil	Women Medical College
The Truth of North above the 38th Parallel (Samsip palto ibuk ŭi chinsang)	Kim Tŭk-sin	Divinity College of Pyŏngyang
Korea, Where Are You Headed? (Chosŏna, ŏdi ro)	Yi Chong-hwan	Divinity College
Reading of the Denunciation Statement (Sŏngt'omun nangdok)	Cho So-ran	Central Women's College

Source: "Pant'ak ŭi chŏlmŭn kiyŏm, chakil haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang" (반탁의 젊은 기염, 작일 학생 웅변대회 성황), *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), January 19, 1946.

> "Let us reclaim the three thousand *ri*[207] with our strength. Let's defend our land and our nation to the very end. As students, we only cry out with passion. Let us become the saviours of our unfortunate Korea. And let us drive away the swallowtail butterflies that defile our beautiful flower garden of the whole land."[208]

[207] Ri is a local unity to indicate 1200km (10ri equals to circa 3.9km) which indicates the whole length of the Korean peninsula. Usually was used metaphorically to refer to the whole Korea.

[208] "T'ohwa ŭi yŏlbyŏn ŭro hanggŏ" (토화의 열변으로 항거), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 19, 1946.

Cha Guk-chan, a secondary school student and member of ATUS, asserted the role of students as saviours of the nation, calling for self-reliance and independence in the face of external forces, symbolized by the “swallowtail” and “butterflies.” He urged students to actively stand against these intrusive powers and protect their homeland's sovereignty. According to the report, Cho So-ran, the daughter of Cho So-ang[209], made a powerful appeal against the trusteeship, garnering significant support and enthusiastic responses from the audience:[210] “Those who advocate communism in Korea must be willing to die under the traditional "T'aegŭkki" (Korean national flag), and should fight for the "people of white clothes"[211] in profound history.”[212] While advocating national symbols as their own, she created distance from the communist as the betrayer of the nation.

After concluding their oratory, five hundred students initiated a street demonstration. According to the testimony of Kye Hun-je a member of ATUS, they didn’t plan any street parade until “the immediate trigger became the inflammatory speeches delivered by the student representatives.” For instance, he remembered that Cho So-ran appealed by describing the

[209] Cho So-ang was a multilingual internationalist who was pivotal in the diplomatic efforts and external communications of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea. Beginning with his drafting of the "Declaration of Independence of Korea," he utilised his extensive knowledge of political science, law, and Eastern and Western philosophy to compose a diverse array of documents. These included constitutions, legal codes, political party policies, state-building programs, international declarations, and diplomatic correspondence, often tailored with sophisticated styles and languages appropriate to their purposes. Cho was both the ideological architect who provided theoretical justifications for the independence movement and the Provisional Government, and one of the most prominent theorists and writers among the independence movement's leadership. Through his writings, one can discern the Korean Provisional Government's political stance, international outlook, and ideological foundations, articulated with precision and logical coherence. Hwang Ho-dŏk 황호덕, "Chŏngch’e wa munch’e: Taehanmin’guk Imsi Chŏngbu ŭi ŏnŏ chŏngch’ihak kwa Cho So-ang – Hanmunhak ŭi maengsŏ, Cho So-ang ŭi sŏnŏn·sŏngmyŏng·kangnyŏng ch’ipp’il kwa “Han’guk munwŏn” ŭl chungsim ŭro (근현대 동아시아에서 지성과 담론의 교류 Form of Government and Form of Writing Linguistic Politics of the Korean Provisional Government and Roles of Cho So-Ang -Focusing on the Oath of Sinographs, Cho So-Ang`s Declarations, Statements, Platforms and Korean Literary World (Han`gukmunwon)," *Sarim* (사림) no,45, (2013): 31-67.

[210] Chŏng Kuk-ro 정국로, *Han’guk haksaeng minju undongsa* (한국학생민주운동사) (Seoul: Han’guk Hyŏndaesa Yŏn’guso, 1995), 102.

[211] As a long rhetorical tradition she referred "people of white clothes" to Koreans. 백의민족들! 조선일보, 1927.05.20.

[212] T’ohwa ŭi yŏlbyŏn ŭro hanggŏ” (토화의 열변으로 항거), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 19, 1946.

sacrifices of her father, who had spent a long period in exile in China, dedicating himself to the independence of Korea. “My father, who endured countless hardships overseas, returned to Gunsan on December 1st. Overwhelmed with joy at the liberation, he shed tears of gratitude. But before those tears could even dry, the great powers imposed the yoke of trusteeship upon us. Where then, is there a place for our nation to stand? We must resolutely oppose trusteeship.[213]

A student from Pyongyang Theological School triggered also the audience's sentiment. She said that she immigrated to the south because of the communist pestering. She claimed, “Your brothers in the north are trembling with fear even at this moment. Do you realize that the Soviet forces and communist thugs are scheming to dishonour your sisters?”[214] Her extremist rhetoric of “sexual terrorism” mobilized the students, portraying women as being under attack by sexualized and violent communists. The sexual violence was generalized and instrumentalized to construct anti-communist enemy images and mobilize nationalist sentiment.

In the afternoon, during the street protest, a confrontation occurred between ATUS and left-wing students. Students tried to submit petitions to the Soviet Consulate[215] and the USAMGIK office in Bando Hotel, they proceeded to the "People’s Newspaper Office" (*Inminbosa*), and "Seoul People's Committee" (*Seoul Inmin Wiwŏnhoe*) where they launched an attack on the office and destroyed windows and composing stands and scattered documents.[216] In retaliation,

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[213] “Nambuk ŭi taehwa (63) Pant’ak kwa chant’ak ŭi hoeori (12) 1.18 Pant’ak haksaeng sagŏn” (남북의 대화<63> 반탁과 찬탁의 회오리 (12) 1.18 반탁학생 사건), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), March 14, 1972.

[214] Ibid.

[215] According to Ahn Ho-sang's testimony, as a guiding member of the ATUS, he observed the protest march while following it. When the students were unable to communicate with the staff at the Soviet consulate, he tried to communicate and translate student’s intention in German. However, the staff informed them to return the next day, and the students, without submitting their resolution, headed towards the Bando Hotel. “Chŏnhwan’gi naemak (26) Pant’ak undong (6) chŏngch’i chiphoe kŭmjiryeŏng” (전환기 내막 <26> 반탁 운동 ⑥ 정치집회 금지령), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 12, 1981.

[216] “Ilbu haksaeng pokhaeng Inmindang tŭng Inminbo tŭng sŭpgyŏk p’akhwe” (일부학생 폭행 인민당 등 인민보 등 습격 파괴), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), January 20, 1946., It was not the first time that the *People’s Newspaper Office* was attacked from the opposite political parties. On December 29th 1945, 20 gansters broke into

a group of approximately fifty people, composed of members of the "Choson National Army Preparatory Corps" (*Chosŏn Kukkun Chunbi Dae*) and "Youth General Alliance" (*Ch'ŏngnyŏn Ch'ongdongmaeng*) assaulted them with guns.[217]

Although the possession of weapons was strictly forbidden by USAMGIK,[218] some private Korean military organizations created immediately after the liberation had seized weapons by attacking police stations or outposts, disarming Japanese police, and didn't declare having weapons.[219] After being informed of the presence of the guns, the policemen started to investigate students in the street, eventually encountering three students in possession of dynamites.[220] Three students were members of the "Student Soldier Alliance" (*Hakpyŏng Tongmaeng*)[221] who didn't have any direct relations with the group of students who attacked

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the newspaper company destroying the press. the U.S. MP had to intervene and stop them. "Chosŏn Inminbosa sŭpgyŏk padŭm" (조선인민보사 습격받음), *Seoul Sinmun* (서울신문), January 2, 1946.

[217] the National Army Preparatory Corps, the Liberation Youth Corps, and the Youth Assault Corps, "Hakpyŏng Tongmaeng Pant'ak Haksaeng Sagŏn chinsang (1)" (학병동맹반탁학생사건진상(상)), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), March 5, 1946., Various documents identify different groups as the perpetrators of the attack, suggesting that multiple leftist youth organizations were likely involved. This assumption is supported by the fact that on January 20, 1946, marking the second anniversary of the student soldiers' conscription into the battlefield, a large number of students had gathered at the *Allied Soldier Students* (Hakbyŏng Dongmeng 학병동맹) headquarters in Samcheong-dong, Seoul, to prepare for the commemorative event. "Hakpyŏng ch'udohoe chunbi" (학병추도회준비), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 31, 1945.

[218] The USAMGIK had previously issued Military Government Ordinance No. 3 (September 23, 1945), prohibiting unauthorized possession of weapons, ammunition, or explosives. Ordinance Number 3, September 23, 1945, A. V. Arnold, Military Occupation Court, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), United States MdCpNA, (450/81/03/04/E.67-A-245/Box18). Subsequently, it enacted Military Government Ordinance No. 5 (September 29, 1945) to regulate the arming of civilians. Ordinance Number 5: General Order Number 3 is Superseded and Amended to Read, September 29, 1945, A. V. Arnold, Police Station, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), United States, MdCpNA, (450/81/03/04/E.67-A-245/Box18).

[219] Kang Hye-gyŏng 강혜경, Han'guk kyŏngch'al ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa sŏnggyŏk (1945–1953) (한국경찰의 형성과 성격(1945–1953)) (PhD diss., Sookmyŏng Women's University, 2002), 21.

[220] "Ch'onggi apsu, paek yŏmyŏng kŏmgŏ" (총기압수, 백여명검거), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 20, 1946. No Yŏng-gi 노영기, Yukkun ch'angsŏlgi (1947nyŏn–1949nyŏn) sukkun e kwanhan yŏn'gu (육군 창설기 (1947년~1949년) 숙군에 관한 연구) (Master's thesis, Sŏnggyun'gwan Univeristy, 1998), 5–6.

[221] The Student Soldeir Alliance (Hakbyŏng Dongmeng 학병동맹), or the Korean Student Soldier Alliance, was established on September 1, 1945, by leftist individuals who had been conscripted as student soldiers during the late period of Japanese colonial rule and subsequently returned to Korea. This organization are regarded as an advance guard or an action unit of socialist groups. Lee Gong Soo 이강수, "해방 직후 대한민국 國軍의 창군과 그 역사성(Formation of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces and Their Historical Implications)" Kunsa (군사) 88 (2013): 39.

the ATUS. They were students who were preparing the "Student Soldier Alliance's Assembly and Memorial Ceremony," which was planned on 20th January in Seoul.[222]

The fact that students carried weapons served as a catalyst, proving the police with justification to apprehend members of "Student Soldier Alliance." The policemen to conduct raids, arrests, and ultimately issue a dissolution order for the CNA.[223] On the 18th night, armed police officers surrounded the "Student Soldier Alliance's" office to confiscate weapons and conduct investigations, leading to an exchange of gunfire with the students. During this confrontation, three students lost their lives.[224]

While left-wing newspapers tried to take an impartial attitude and report the situation as a whole, the rhetoric of right-wing newspapers clearly illustrates how they were shaping public opinion to make the ATUS' acts of destroying the newspaper company appear justified.[225] *Daedong Sinmun* reported by portraying ATUS students' actions as an "impulsive crowd behavior driven by patriotic motives." Also, *Daedong Sinmun* emphasizes that during the attack, there was no adult leader or any specific directions.[226] By describing right-wing

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[222] "Hakpyŏng Tongmaeng sagŏn chinsang" (학병동맹사건진상), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), January 29, 1946.

[223] Lee Hye-ryoung 이혜령, " "Haebang(gi): ch'ong tŭn ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭi nanal-tŭl (해방(기): 총 든 청년의 나날들Liberation ; Days of young men holding a gun)" *Sanhur Hakkbo* (상허학보) 27(2009) : 9-50.

[224] "Pongnyŏk haengwi ch'ŏljŏ pakmyŏl" (폭력행위철저박멸), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), January 20, 1946.

[225] *The Free Press* (자유신문) interviewed Cho Byŏng-ok (조병옥), the Director of the Police Bureau under the USAMGIK, regarding its decision to only announce statements concerning injuries among the anti-trusteeship students while providing details about the fatalities among the *Student Soldier Alliance* students. Cho responded that the two incidents were being treated as related events and that the police were merely carrying out their duties impartially. "Haksaeng t'ereo, hakpyŏng sŭpgyŏk ŭn chŏlt'ero kongjŏnghi tongil ch'wi'gup" (학생테러, 학병습격은 절대로 공정히 동일 취급), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), January 24, 1946., Jang Taek-sang, who was the Chief of the Capital Police at the time, intended to mobilize the entire police force with the objective of "eradicating illegal activities, regardless of political parties or organizations." In reality, this incident marked the large-scale commencement of police efforts to suppress leftist movements. Choisunwoo and JinPark 최선우, 박진, " Migunjŏnggi sudo kyŏngch'al ch'ŏngjang Chang T'aek-sang yŏn'gu (미군정기 수도경찰청장 장택상(張澤相) 연구),미군정기 수도경찰청장 장택상(張澤相) 연구, A Study on 'Jang, Taek Sang' The Chief of the Metropolitan Police Agency in the Era of U.S Military Government)" *Kyŏngch'alhak Nonch'ong* (경찰학논총) 5, no.1 (2010): 203.

[226] "Pant'ak haksaeng sagŏn kwa yŏron" (반탁학생사건과 여론), *Taedong Sinmun* (대동신문), January 24, 1946.

student's actions as compulsive and heroic behavior, it made it easier for right-wing politicians to implicitly support them and appear to be chastising them as a grown-up adult.[227]

However, ATUS was assisted by Shynman-Rhee's political faction and PVG members always supported them as mentors. Yi Chŏl-sŭng, the leader of ATUS, testified in later years that financial resources were essential for sustaining the student movement and Syngman Rhee advised careful spending and required receipts for expenditures. The funds were effectively utilized for purposes such as producing banners and covering mobilization costs. Furthermore, when faced with difficult situations, Rhee appealed to the students, and they attentively listened to his words. Similarly, Kim Gu of KPG treated the students with respect, referring to them as "Jisa," namely individuals willing to dedicate themselves to the nation and its people.[228]

In few weeks ATUS organized "National Oratorical Convention for Male and Female Students" on January 26, [and] it functioned as extension of the anti-trusteeship movement of the 18th of January. They also used the occasion to disseminate their experience on the "Student Soldier Alliance Incident."

<Table 2.4> "National Oratorical Convention for Male and Female Students," (January 26, 1946.)

Speaker's Name	**Affiliation**	**Oratory Title**

[227] Jang Tek-sang, the Chief of the Gyŏnggi Provincial (경기도) Police, took personal action to secure the release of anti-trusteeship student activists detained in the police interrogation rooms. Jang let Yi Chŏl-sŭng go back home, to "release the chairman without charges, so will naturally pave the way for the release of the others." Yi Chŏl-sŭng visited the Syngman Rhee to ask opinions and he took action to comfort the injured students. In response, Rhee and Kim Gu, accompanied by Eŏm Hang-sŏp, visited the wounded students at Severance Hospital to express their support. "Chŏnhwan'gi ŭi naemak (26) Pant'ak undong (6) chŏngch'i chiphoe kŭmjiryeŏng" (전환기의 내막 <26> 반탁 운동 ⑥ 정치집회 금지령), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 12, 1981.

[228] "Nambuk ŭi taehwa (63) Pant'ak kwa chant'ak ŭi hoeori (12) 1.18 Pant'ak haksaeng sagŏn" (남북의 대화<63> 반탁과 찬탁의 회오리 (12) 1.18 반탁학생 사건), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), March 14, 1972.

Yun Ho-yŏng	Kyŏngsŏng Medical College	Where Are the 30 million People Going?
Yang Ki-sun	Ewha Women's College	Female Students and the Nation
Yun Sŏk-u	Severance Medical College	Student's Movement Independence Movement
Kim Chin-ung	Bosŏng College	Scientific Analysis of Trusteeship
Kim Ho-dong	College of Theology	What Do Students North of the 38th Parallel Yearn For?
Hŏ Ch'ŏl-gap	Myŏngnyun College	About the International Situation
Yi Chong-hwan	General Affairs Department	The Truth Behind the January 18 Student Incident

source: "Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang" (학생웅변대회 성황), Chungang Ilbo (중앙일보), January 27, 1946.

Clearly, this event wasn't a national contest nor regional, but a scheduled speech of the ATUS members. The fact that ATUS publicized in the newspaper their internal assembly to be seen as a "national oratorical contest," was their strategy to be symbolized as a student representative of the whole nation.[229] Notably, there were Female student's speech reflecting about women's role for the Nation, and they tried to give perspectives on Truesteeship issue speaking about also the International situations. Kim Ho-dong also referred to the northern site's anti-communist student's movement, which helped to justify their activism.[230] The concluding

[229] Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng 이철승, Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa, 131~133.

[230] About Anti-Soviet and Anti-Communists Movements in North Korea After the Liberation of Korea see

session of the contest was devoted to a special report entitled “The Truth of the January 18th Student Incident.” They also made fliers of the same title, which used the rhetoric to attack the left-wing students. ATUS clearly described their march and terrorist action as “sacred” and “patriotic will” while describing the other side of students as “traitors,” “evils,” “dens,” and “fake communists.”[231]

Pant’akch’i Chŏngguk Haksaeng Ch’ongyŏnmaeng , <Poara!! 1·18 sagŏn ŭi chinsang ŭl>, January 1946. (figure.2.4)[232]

In their flyer, ATUS highlighted how much their female students were fighting against them “weaponless” till the end, while left-wing students “were paid” to act against them. Their “sin”

Kwangseo Kee 기광서, " Haebang hu Pukhan pansopan’gong undong ŭi silsang (해방 후 북한 반소반공운동의 실상The Anti-Soviet & Anti-Communist Movements in North Korea After the Liberation of Korea)," *Tongbuk’a Yŏn’gu* (동북아연구), 34(2), 137-174.

[231] Kim, Hyŏn-sik, and Sŏn-t’ae Chŏng, eds. *Ppira ro tŭtŭn haebang ch’ikhu ŭi moksori*, (P’yŏngt’aek: Somyŏng Ch’ulp’an, 2013) “Pant’akchŏn’guk Haksaeng Ch’ongyŏnmaeng, Poara!! 1.18 Sagŏn ŭi Chinsang (January 1946).” (Accessed 18 August, 2025.)

[232] Ibid.

was guided by the “most evil” and “treacherous” leader Pak Hŏn-yŏng, while they were the “heroes” who would “take back” their lands with death under the “national flags.”[233]

The oratorical contest became also a tool to react immediately to the social issue as seen in the the “denunciation rally” they organized when counterfeit case at "Choson Jeongpansa" (Offset printing company) become an issue.[234] The allegation that the left-wing printing company had engaged in money falsification exerted a strong influence on the political situation, reinforcing USAMGIK’s suppression of KCP.[235]

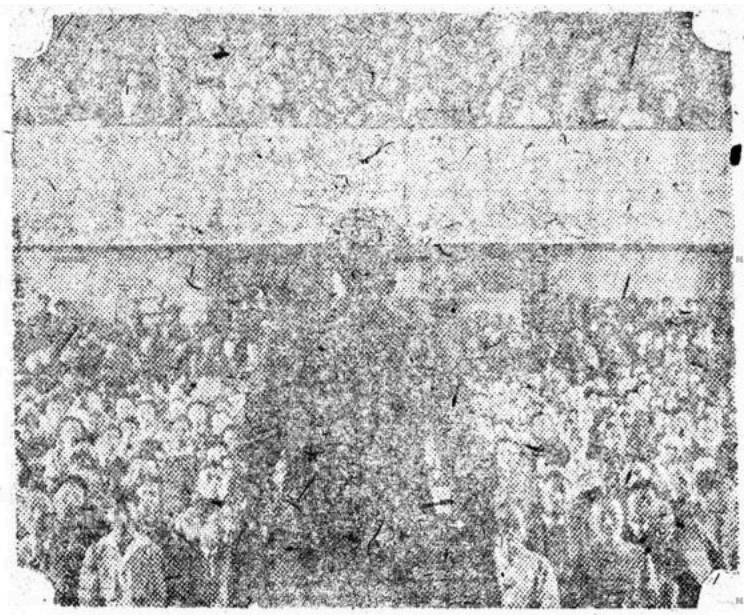
Regardless of whether it was true or not, it became a perfect case to attack the KCP. Indeed, ATUS didn’t wait any fact-finding investigation into the truth but responded immediately with speech rally justifying their event as “An effort to expose those who were orchestrating strikes and obstructing national reconstruction among the general public.” The rhetoric employed in promoting the event was overtly accusatory, as reflected in the headline of an article advertising the rally: “National Disgrace: A Mass Protest Against Counterfeiting Draws Large Crowds.” During the event, a student named Joo Il-ok recited a statement denouncing the incident,

[233] “While marching with shouts of "Hurray (Manse)" and the national anthem, when we reached the accursed Inminbo, the deep resentment towards the traitorous fake communists who were mere pawns of the Inminbo exploded. With extreme rage and righteous indignation, the assembled crowd, along with some outraged students, finally brought divine punishment upon this den of traitors. Next, the people's anger erupted at the traitors' dens, including the People’s Party and the Seoul Citizens' Committee. (...) In particular, the patriotic female students, despite our repeated warnings, fell under the blows of the military police (MP), but they stood up again, singing the national anthem loudly alongside the male students, vowing to fight until the very end. Our determination only grew stronger. Oh! The treacherous surprise attack by the despicable traitors on our sacred march! Beloved thirty million compatriots, deliver your just judgment upon them! (…) The rioters began to drag away the female students, but the patriotic fighters locked arms and continued to sing the national anthem loudly, offering weaponless resistance to the enemy hordes. When a male student witnessed them being dragged into the traitors' den, he quickly informed the police, leading to the rescue of our brave warriors and the arrest of two enemy agents. Sisters and brothers, surely demonstrated today the unwavering fighting spirit of our cause, a hundred deaths without yielding, showing the burning patriotic will of our women. From now on, we are determined to thoroughly eradicate the most despicable and vicious traitors led by Pak Hŏn-yŏng and achieve our complete independence.” Ibid.

[234] Some executive members of Korean Communist Party (KCP) and the factory workers in a printing company, were accused of printing bank notes amounting to 12 million wons for the purpose of financing business of the party. “Minjok ŭi ch’iyok wip’ye sŏngt’o sŏnghwang” (민족의 치욕 위폐성토성황), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), May 19, 1946.

[235] Lim Sŏng-uk, A Study on the “Counterfeit” Case at Chosun Jeongpansa during the United States Occupation of South Korea (PhD diss., Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 2015), 310-311.

declaring, “Truth is the foundation of prosperity, while falsehood is the root of all evils. Counterfeiting is not only a disgrace to our nation but also an insult to the revolution.”[236]



The "denunciation rally" to talk about counterfeit case at "Choson Jeongpansa." (Figure2.5)[237]

The first part of the chapter has shown that the anti-trusteeship student movement of early 1946 played a formative role in consolidating right-wing nationalism and anti-communism during the U.S. Military Occupation Period. Right-wing student organizations, most notably the “Anti-Trusteeship National Union of Students,” strategically deployed oratory contests, mass rallies, and street demonstrations to mobilize youth against trusteeship and left-leaning groups.

The oratorical contest emerged as a crucial medium through which right-wing students translated institutional conflict into nationalistic emotion and propaganda. The decision of one Oratory Club to retitle its planned contest around "Opposing Trusteeship," drawing twenty-six speakers, illustrates how rapidly the issue reshaped student speech argument. ATUS, in

[236] “Minjok ŭi ch’iyok wip’ye sŏngt’o sŏnghwang” (민족의 치욕 위폐성토성황), *Tong’a Ilbo* (동아일보), May 19, 1946.
[237] Ibid.

particular, used oratorical events to attract students and citizens, assert dominance over left-wing groups, and issue confrontational counter-statements that framed pro-trusteeship forces as "traitorous conspirators" aligned with communities and socialists. At the same time, the asymmetry of communicative power was clear: pro-trusteeship organizations such as " the Chosŏn Current Affairs Oratorical Association" failed to achieve comparable visibility, while episodes like the Student-Soldier Alliance incident and ATUS's inflation of and internal assembly into "national oratorical contest" reveal how speech-making became both a mechanism for claiming national representation and a flexible tool for rapid reaction to unfolding social issues.

2.1.2. The Competition for the National Commemoration Legacy and the Oratorical Contest

This section examines how right-wing forces appropriated national commemorations, especially March First and Liberation Day, as stages for anti-trusteeship propaganda. Through these contests, it shows how party politicians, newspapers, and youth organizations worked together to shape public opinion, legitimate their leadership, and recast student speakers as symbolic heirs of the independence movement.

The March First Movement was celebrated as a national day for the first time in 1946. The March First Movement was a nationwide and multitudinous anti-colonial struggle in which colonized Koreans resisted Japanese imperialism and colonialism. Until 1945, people didn’t have the chance to celebrate, and finally, after the end of the Pacific War, they recognized it as Memorial Day. The preparatory committee aimed to honour the independence movement and to bring together representatives from various religious organizations, political parties, cultural

associations, youth groups, and women's organizations in Seoul. The commemorative activities were scheduled to take place over three days, starting on March First, in Seoul and other regions.[238] However, both the left-wing and the right-wing sought to assert leadership over the commemoration of the March First Movement. As they failed to reach an agreement on joint organization, each side ultimately held its own commemoration.[239] Right-wing factions named their commemoration day "Kimi Independence Memorial National Rally" (*Kimi Tongnip Sŏnŏn Chŏngguk Kinyŏm Taehwe*) at the Seoul Stadium, while the left-wing faction held their "March 1st Movement Memorial National Rally (*Undong Kinyŏmhoe*)" at Namsan Park and near the ancient palace, in Ch'anggyŏngwŏn.[240] In this process, the March First Movement politicized, becoming an object of appropriation and contestation. In doing so, the right-wing appropriated the March First as evidence of their national legitimacy and as justification for their activities.[241]

The ideological struggles surrounding the March First Movement drew their force from the movement's powerful symbolic value. It was, after all, the only historical event in the colonial period that could legitimately be described as a nationwide nationalist uprising. In the postwar context, the March First Movement came to be understood as a latent political asset capable of universalization and totalization. The March First could "appear to be grounded in the consent of the majority," and thereby support claims to political authority in the newly emerging order on the Korean peninsula. Consequently, the March First Movement became directly linked to

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[238] "Samil undong kinyŏm e chwa-uik hyŏpjohan chech'ul" (삼일운동기념에 좌우익협조안제출), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 11, 1946.

[239] "Samil kinyŏm haengsa chongsi taerip, 'Kimi' ch'ŭk, cheŭi kŏbu" (삼일기념행사 종시대립, '기미'측, 제의 거부), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 17, 1946.

[240] "Kimi Tongnip Kinyŏmhoe wa Samil Kinyŏmhoe ka Samilchŏl kinyŏmshik ŭl kak'gak kŏhaeng" (기미독립기념회와 3.1기념회가 3.1절 기념식을 각각 거행), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), March 1–2, 1946.

[241] Im Chong-myŏng, "T'al shikmin shigi (1945.8–1948.7) Namhan esŏ ŭi Samil ŭi sohan kwa pyosang" (임종명, 脫식민시기(1945.8 ~ 1948.7) 남한에서의 3.1의 召喚과 表象*), Taedong Munhwa Yŏn'gu* (대동문화연구) 66 (2009): 297–333.

the legal authority of the Provisional Government and served as a foundational resource for consolidating its own claims to power.[242]

Right-wingers desired to persist in the anti-trusteeship campaign through the March First Commemoration. After the commemorative ceremonies at the Seoul Stadium, ATUS scheduled "National Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Students" on March 9-10th. The titles of the oratorical contest were explicitly aligned with the anti-trusteeship movement: 1. The Nation and Students, 2. Opposition to Trusteeship, 3. Awakening of Small and Weak Nations, 4. Students and Politics, 5. Women and National Independence.[243] ATUS received submissions from secondary school and college students at their office, promising a prize of 500 won to the first-place winner. Five newspapers sponsored the contest: *Choson Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo, Hansŏng Ilbo, Segye Ilbo, and Daedong Sinmun.*[244]

The newspaper's enthusiastic support for the students' oratory contest can be attributed in part to the close relationship between the press and the KDP's leading figure, the dominant right-wing force at the time. Key political actors within the KDP were deeply embedded in the media world, especially at the *Dong-a Ilbo.* Kim Sŏng-su, the newspaper's proprietor, and Song Jin-u, its president, were among the party's principal leaders. Because Song Jin-u concurrently served as president of the *Dong-a Ilbo* and the KDP, which An Chae-hong headed, this further underscored the political entanglement between media and conservative factions.[245]

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[242] Kong, Im-soon 공임순, " "3·1 undong ŭi yŏksajŏk kiŏk kwa paeban, kŭrigo kyesŭng ŭl tullŏssan inyŏm chŏngch'i – 3·1 undong ŭi popyŏn(juŭi)jŏk chip'yŏng kwa kaso/kwaing ŭi taepyosaeng (3.1운동의 역사적 기억과 배반, 그리고 계승을 둘러싼 이념정치 -3.1운동의 보편(주의)적 지평과 과소/과잉의 대표성- Historical memory and betrayal of the 3.1 Movement, and ideological politics about it's succession" Han'guk kŭndae munhak yŏn'gu (한국근대문학연구) no.24 (2011): 213.

[243] "Samil kinyŏm undong kwa haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe kaech'oe" (3.1 기념운동과 학생웅변대회 개최), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 24, 1946.

[244] "Deureora haksaeng-ui bureujijeumeul-doglib seoneon ginyeom jeongguk haksaeng ungbyeon daehoe gaechwe -9-il Jeongdong yebaedang-eseo (들어라 학생의 부르지즘을-독립선언기념 전국 학생웅변대회 개최-9일 정동예배당에서)," *The Dae-dong Sinmun*, March 08, 1946.

[245] Gang Jun-man, Hanguk eollonsa (한국언론사), (*Inmul gwa Sangsangsa*인물과 사상사 2019),131–132.

An examination of the ideological orientation and editorial stances of major newspapers of the period shows that *Dae-dong Sinmun* and *Segye Ilbo* represented the far right, while *Hansŏng Ilbo, Dong-a Ilbo, and Josŏn Ilbo* aligned with the right-wing bloc.[246] Taken together, these factors make clear that the newspapers, in effect, provided students with platforms for public speaking to advance and legitimize the broader anti-trusteeship movement.

The newspaper contest advertisement stated, “In honour of the great aspirations left by the martyred patriots, we hope that the one million students nationwide, driven by their fervent patriotism, will actively participate as future leaders in nation-building.” The student oratorical contests were characterized by an explicit display of political alignment and sponsorship, equating students with patriotic predecessors in the independence movement. Also, the Judges of the competition were from the right-wing political faction, such as An Chae-hong. As mentioned before, he was the representative of KDP and president of the *Hansŏng Ilbo* and Vice Chairman of the "National Mobilization Committee Against Trusteeship" (*Chŏngguk Pant’ak Wiwŏnhoe*),[247] and Ŏm Hang-sŏp, head of the Public Relations of the "Provisory Government."[248] The last, Won Se-hun, was one of the representatives of KDP at the time and

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[246] O In-hwan 오인환, *Seoul-eul nubida* (서울을 누비다), (Hanguk Haksul Jeongbo 한국학술정보 2023), 21.

[247] An Chae-hong was a nationalist activist who had played a leading role in establishing the "Singanhoe," the first united front of nationalist and socialist forces during the colonial period. As president of the *Hansŏng Ilbo*, he was also a journalist and a nationalist historian who, prior to becoming a political figure, devoted himself to the study of national history as part of the anti-Japanese struggle. Immediately after liberation, he served as a preparatory committee member of "The Preparatory Committee for Korean Rehabilitation" (*Kŏnjun*)" and delivered radio addresses through the Kyŏngsŏng Central Broadcasting Station. As a member of Kŏnjun, he organized the "Kyŏngwidae," composed of students, youth groups, and police officers, to restore public order, and he later called for the establishment of the "Muwidae," the force that would correspond to a national guard in the ensuing period. Chŏng Pyŏng-jun 정병준, *1945nyŏn Haebang chikhu sa* (1945년 해방 직후사) (Seoul: Tolbaegae, 2024), 126 (e-book).

[248] Ŏm Hang-sŏp was active at the time within the "Korea National Party" and the "Korean Independence Party," serving as Kim Ku’s director of propaganda. Having participated in the "Shanghai Youth Alliance," he sought to achieve national independence through the unification of the Korean people. Grounded in this objective, he organized various public lectures and discussion forums in his youth, promoting the necessity of national unity and disseminating the organization’s goals to a broader audience. In addition, as part of his efforts to build a vanguard organization, he gathered twenty youths affiliated with military academies and, on July 11, 1936, established the Youth Corps of the Korea National Party. Kim Yun-mi 김윤미, “Ilpa Ŏm Hŏng-sŏp ŭi tongnip undong kwa Taehan Min’guk Imshi Chŏngbu hwaltong” (一波 엄항섭의 독립운동과 대한민국 임시정부 활동Eom Hang-Seop's Independence Movement and Activity of the Provisional Government of the Republic of

was actively involved as a member of the "Emergency National Assembly" (*Pisang Kungmin Hoeŭi*), working to bridge and unite the left-wing and right-wing factions. [249] Right-winged judges were individuals who, in their youth, had each struggled for national liberation in their own ways. Having personally experienced the significance of youth and mass movements, they embodied multiple identities. Judges were educators, youth leaders, journalists, activists, and historians. At the oratorical contest, where young students gather, these three judges, united under the political banner of anti-trusteeship, served as arbiters who sought to align the students' aims and experiences into a shared narrative, selectively endorsing and excluding particular forms of "oratory" in accordance with their ideological convictions.

The students not only use their voice to participate in oratory contests. According to Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng, from March First onward, fierce competition broke out between the left-and right-wing factions to attract crowds to each side. The leftist rally featured some of the most popular figures of the time, including the comic storyteller Sin Pul-ch'ul, dancer Ch'oe Sŭng-hŭi, and actors Hwang Ch'ŏl and Mun Ye-bong. To prevent citizens from attending the leftist event, Ham Chong-bin climbed onto a truck near Ch'anggyŏngwŏn, using a microphone to urge the crowd to head toward Seoul Stadium instead. Likewise, female students tried to redirect citizens moving toward Namsan back to the stadium but were injured by attacks from leftist students.[250]

Korea), *Han'guk Tongnip Undongsa Yŏn'gu* (한국독립운동사연구) 75 (2021): 47–82.

[249] Wŏn Se-hun, he is generally regarded as a figure from the non-mainstream faction of the "Korea Democratic Party, (KDP *Hanmindang*)" and as part of the right-wing socialist current, often referred to as "leftist social democracy" after the late 1920s. Born in Hamgyŏng Province, he is believed to have taken part in the Iljinhoe movement of the Tonghak (Eastern Learning) reformists during his youth, engaging in enlightenment activities. Later, in Ussuriysk, Primorsky Krai, he founded the "Taedong School" and served as its principal, gaining experience in education. Moreover, he was continuously involved in Shanghai as a Preparatory Committee member of the National Representative Assembly, and, as editor of the weekly journal *Chungang Shibo*, he contributed writings introducing national independence activists through his journalistic work. Cho Kyu-t'ae, "Wŏn Se-hun ŭi Imshi Chŏngbu surip·pyŏnhyŏk hwaltong kwa minjok yuiltang undong" (Won Sei-hoon's activities of establishing and reforming the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea and the Movement for the National Single Party in 1919~1927 원세훈의 임시정부 수립.변혁 활동과 민족유일당 운동), *Sungsil Sahak* (숭실사학) 29 (2012): 117–148.

[250] Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng, *Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa*, 155-157.

This testimony suggests that beyond the "rhetorical battles" waged through organized mass rallies, the very act of gathering people to the site of an oratory contest was itself a form of public opinion warfare. Moreover, it indicates that many citizens, regardless of political alignment, viewed these rallies also as a kind of entertainment and spectacle, attending them more out of curiosity than ideological commitment.

On March 9, 1946, ten predetermined students stepped on the stage. Eight were chosen by the judges, effectively granting victory to nearly all the students who spoke at the contest. Notably, except for Yi Se-ch'ang, all winners were members of the ATUS.[251] That is to say, the announcement in the newspaper to recruit the speaker was just a formality. Ensuring the recognition of federation members as winners, the event served to reaffirm and support ATUS students. The oratorical contest was heavily driven by the intention to bolster the morale of the union members and to encourage the continuation of their anti-trusteeship activities.

<Table2.5> "National Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Students (March 9-10, 1946)."

University and College Division.			
Prize Grade	**Oratory Title**	**Student Name**	**Affiliation**
1st Prize	The Man on This Land Sheds Tears (I ttang e sanai mok meyŏ unda),	Ham Chong-bin (Ham Tong)	Bosŏng College

[251] "Ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang" (웅변대회 성황), Yŏngnam Ilbo (영남일보), March 12, 1946., "Chŏlmŭn hakto dŭr ŭi yŏlbyŏn: Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe taesŏnghwang" (젊은 학도들의 열변: 학생웅변대회 대성황), Hansŏng Ilbo (한성일보), March 12, 1946., The name of the winners were compared to the list of member's from Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng, *Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa*, 131-134.

2nd Prize	Awakening of the Weak Nations (Yaksominjok ŭi chagak),	Yi Ha-jŏn	Yŏnsei College
3rd Prize	Politics and Students (Chŏngch'i wa haksaeng),	Yi Oe-yun	Hyehwa College
4th Prize	Let's Go, Fight, and Win (Nagaja ssauja igija).	Yun Sŏk-u	Severance Medical College
Secondary School Division.			
Prize Grade	**Oratory Title**	**Student Name**	**Affiliation**
1st Prize	If You Want Trusteeship, Give Us Death (T'akch'i rŭl churyŏmyŏn chugŭm ŭl talla),	Kim Ho-jung	Central Secondary School
2nd Prize	A Report from the 38th Parallel (Samp'alsŏn chinsang pogo),	Im Yŏng-ae	Pyŏngyang, Sookmyung Girls' Secondary School
2nd Prize	Find Our Path (Ch'ajara uri ŭi kirŭl),	Im Se-ch'ang	Central Middle School
3rd Prize	Under the Taegeukgi (T'aegŭkki mit'esŏ).	Song Wŏn-yŏng	Yangjŏng Secondary School

Source: "Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe ipsangja" (학생웅변대회입상자), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), March 12, 1946.

In this contest, 1st Prize winner Ham Chong-bin claimed that people must "unite under the banner of anti-trusteeship." At the same time, he warned about how Western cultures are now "infiltrating" their society and were a threat to their "cultural identity."

> "When liberation came, our people rejoiced, believing that independence and sovereignty would soon follow. However, now, six months after liberation, political parties have sprung up in chaos across Korea; the nation remains divided, and our national leaders are engaged in conflicts and divisions. Moreover, the Moscow Agreement threatens to impose foreign shackles upon us once again, and Western cultural influences, including western dance, are infiltrating our society, threatening our independent spirit and cultural identity. As a man of this land who worries about the future of our nation, I cannot help but feel deep sorrow. Let us all face the grave reality surrounding our nation, awaken with great resolve, and unite under the banner of anti-trusteeship to achieve independence with our own hands."[252]

Ham Chong-bin's effective rhetorical tactic was linking the Moscow Conference's decision to the populace's apprehension of being dominated anew by foreign powers and the potential loss of their national identity. In this manner, he subtly indicated that consenting to trusteeship was unacceptable.

The table of the winning titles reveals how the contests fused student identity with political agency and normalized student activism as a legitimate weapon against trusteeship. A title like *Politic and Student* explicitly assert that students belong inside the political arena, while mobilizing slogans such as *Let's Go, Fight, and Win* cast youth as the proper vanguard of anti-trusteeship struggle. The presence of a female student from Pyongyang, delivering a report

[252] Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng, Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa, 159.

from the 38th Parallel, as seen in the first part of the chapter, leads one to presume that her gendered voice and borderland origin implicitly authorize her to speak as a witness to the Northern situation, lending moral weight to the right-wing narrative. At the same time, a title like Under the Taegeukgi shows how students symbolically appropriate the national flag, positioning themselves literally “beneath” and thus in harmony with the nation, so that their anti-trusteeship stance appears not as one opinion among many but as the natural expression of Korean sovereignty itself.

On March 9, the ATUS "Secondary School League" was officially formed, with the event held at "Semunan Church" and attended by approximately one thousand students from secondary schools. At the site of the event, garlands were sent by Shyngman Ree and Kim Ku, clearly showing their support. Cho So-ang attended as an honored guest. In his speech, he remarked, “It is truly disheartening that even middle school students are now compelled to take to the streets. However, the nation is in dire need of your patriotic spirit.” [253]

Like the March commemoration, "Liberation Day" (*Kwangbokchŏl*) ceremonies functioned as political arenas in which competing factions sought to assert and legitimize their own authority. In both 1946 and 1947, strong pressure was placed on the left and right to prepare joint commemorations. Yet because the USAMGIK also regarded the occasion as significant, the August ceremony was organized primarily under Military Government leadership, producing a cross-factional official program. However, the left-wing faction refused to participate in the commemoration event and held its own separate ceremony.[254]

Right-wing newspapers and affiliated politicians sought to reforge the connection between "Liberation Day" and the anti-trusteeship movement by staging oratorical contests through the newly organized coalition of right-wing youth and student groups. On August 15, the "National

[253] Ibid., 136.
[254] Kim Min-hwan. “Han’guk kukka kinyŏmil sŏngnip e kwanhan yŏn’gu.” Master’s thesis, Seoul National University, 2000, 37–39.

Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Students" was held to commemorate the "Liberation Day." The organization body was called "National Student Federation" (NSF, *Chŏnguk Haksaeng Ch'ongyŏnmaeng*), which was formed on July 31, 1946, as a coalition of right-wing youth associations.[255]

The themes established of the "Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Secondary Students" included: 1) "Reflecting on 15 August," (2) "The Causes of National Division," (3) "The Political Views of Students," (4) "International Justice and Weak Nations," (5) "Independent Sovereignty and National Unity," (6) "A Critique of Middle-School Boycotts," (7) "An Examination of the Conduct of Leaders," (8) "What Does the 38th Parallel Mean?" and (9) "The Causes of Economic Disorder," alongside other freely chosen topics. For the contest, Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, Kim Sŏng-su, and An Chae-hong of KDP and KPG were appointed as honorary judges. The panel of judges comprised An Ho-sang, Yi Sŏn-gŭn, Chin Sŭng-rok, Pak Myŏng-hwan, Kim San, Hwang Sin-dŏk, and Hwang Ki-sŏng. They also appointed student judges, Yi Ch'ŏlsŭng, Kim Insu, Yun Hansŭl, Ch'ae Munsik, Pak Yongman, and An Kyŏngdŭk.[256] All of the judges were figures broadly associated with right-wing political parties and were actively participating in the anti-trusteeship movement.[257]

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[255] "National Student Federation" (NSF, Chŏnguk Haksaeng Ch'ongyŏnmaeng) was formed, bringing together the "Anti-Trusteeship Student Federation" (Pant'ak Haksaeng Ch'ongyŏnmaeng), the "Independence Student Front" (Tongnip Haksaeng Chŏnsŏn), the "Kyŏngsŏng University Comrades' Association" (Kyŏngsŏng Taehak Tongjihwe), the "North-west Students' Wŏn'o Association" (Sŏbuk Haksaeng Wŏn'ohwe), the "League of Overseas Students" (Yuhaksaeng Tongmaeng) and other right-wing groups. Koryŏ Taehakkyo 100nyŏnsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe 고려대학교 100년사편찬위원회, Koryŏ Taehakkyo haksaeng undongsa, 120.

[256] Naora ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto-dŭra (나오라 청년 학도들아), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), August 07, 1946. Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng and Kim In-su were members of the ATUS from Posŏng Middle School; Yun Han-sul and Ch'ae Mun-sik were from Seoul National University; Pak Yong-man was affiliated with the Association of Korean Students Abroad; and An Kyŏng-dŭk was from Yonhŭi College. All were early members of the Anti-Trusteeship National Student Federation. Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng (chairman), Ch'ae Mun-sik (vice-chairman), Pak Yong-man (vice-chairman), and Kim In-su (director of general affairs) played leading roles and, as the principal officers, guided the NSF. Yi Ch'ŏl-sŭng, *Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa*, 193-199.

[257] Examination of their social activities shows that all of them were actively enaged with the U.S. Military Governement, or Korean Democratic Party, or Korean Provisional Government. An Ho-sang, was then serving as a faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Seoul National University. Yi Sŏn-gŭn, while acting as an advisor to ATUS in 1946, was also working as chief editorial writer at the *Hansŏng Ilbo*. Chi Sŭng-rok served simulatenosuly as member of the Educational Deliberation Committee of U.S. Military Government's Bureau of Education and as the director of the Korea University Library. Pak Myŏng-hwan was head of the Youth Department of the KDP. Kim San, Hwang Sindŏk was head of the Women's League for National Reconstructuon

They held preliminary rounds of oratorical contests in provincial locations such as Kwangju, Inch'ŏn, Suwŏn, and Ch'ŏngju, with the first-prize winners from each district gathering in Seoul for the final round. A total of twenty-five students were scheduled to deliver speeches.[258]

<Table 2.6> "National Student Oratorical Contest on Winning Independence (August 12-13, 1946)"

	Speech Title	Affiliation and Speaker
1	Let Us Fight On to the Final Victory (Ch'oehu ŭi sŭngni kkaji naaga ssauja igija)	Yŏnsei University, Kim Dŭk-sin
2	The Causes of National Division (Minjok punyŏl ŭi wŏnin)	Political College, Pak Wŏn'gil
3	Looking Back on 15 August (8.15 rŭl hoego ham)	Yŏsei University Pak Pyŏnggil [2nd prize]
4	Within Liberation (Haebang sok e)	Kŏnkuk College, Chŏng Hodong
5	Revolution Through Bloodshed (Hyŏngmyŏng ŭn yuhyŏl rosŏ)	Methodist Theological College, Kim Chinch'ŏl
6	Who Is Responsible for National Division? (Minjok punyŏl ŭi chaegimja nŭn nugu nya?	Sungkyunkwan Secondary School, An Chungdŏk
7	International Justice and Weak Nations (Kukche chŏngŭi wa yaksominjok)	Korea University, Pak Wŏnsu

(Kon'guk Punyŏ Tongmaeng), and Hwan Ki-sŏng, was active as chief of the Women's Bureau of "Natioanl Association for the Korean Independence's promotion (Taehan Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Kungminhoe)." About judge's information see Encyclopedia of Korean Culture, https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0035104, https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0044685,https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0054752,https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0065231,https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0014983. (accessed March, 13, 2024).

[258] Chŏngguk haksaeng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe (전국학생현상웅변대회), *Taedong Sinmun* (대동신문), December 28, 1946. Hakch'ong ungbyŏn taehoe, Ch'ŏndogyo kangdang-sŏ (학총웅변대회, 천도교강당서), *Taehan Tongnip Sinmun* (대한독립신문), December 25, 1946.

8	Who Bears American Blood? (Miguk ŭi p'i rŭl kajin ja kŭ nugu nyo?)	Chungang Kŭm Hok Secondary School [3rd prize]
9	The Causes of National Division (Minjok punyŏl ŭi wŏnin)	Tongkuk University, Ch'oe Kugyŏn
10	Let Us Fulfil Our Responsibilities (Chaegim ŭl wansuhaja)	Seoul Secondary School, Ch'oe Sunju
11	My Political Views as a Student (Hakto rosŏ na ŭi chŏnggyŏn)	College of Education, Pak Iksu
12	Looking Back on 15 August (8.15 rŭl hoego ham)	Jin Girl's Commercial High School Chŏng T'aegyŏng [Secondary division, 2nd prize]

Day2

	Speech Title	Speaker
1	Who Delayed Independence? (Tongnip ŭl chiyŏn sik'in ja nŭn nugu nya?	Chŏn'gi, Yi Sŭngch'ŏl
2	Students Nationwide, Unite! (Chŏn'guk haksaeng ŭn mungch'yŏra)	Methodist Theological College, Kang Wŏnjik
3	One Year of Construction and Destruction (Kŏnsŏl kwa p'akoe ŭi ilnyŏn)	Political College , Son Tosim
4	A Student's Political Views (Hakto ŭi chŏnggyŏn palp'yo)	Pukch'ŏng Secondary School, Yi Sŏnbae

5	A Student's Political Views and Overcoming the National Crisis (Hakto ŭi chŏnggyŏn kwa choguk wigi t'agae)	Sŏngkyunkwan University, Hong Hyŏnch'ang
6	Reflecting on 15 August, Youth Must Unite (8.15 rŭl hoei hayŏ ch'ŏngnyŏn a mungch'yŏra)	Kukjŏn, Han Chŏnghyŏn
7	An Urgent Appeal to Thirty Million Compatriots (Samch'ŏnman tongpo ege kup kohanora)	Yangjŏng Song Wŏnyŏng [Secondary division, 1st prize]
8	National Unity and Independent Sovereignty (Minjok t'ongil kwa chaju tongnip)	Hanyang University, Yu Chiho
9	A Cry of 15 August (8.15 rŭl koham)	Kyŏnggi Women's Secondary School, Chŏng Yangwan
10	The World Condemns Injustice (Ch'ŏnhan ŭn akho chŏnggo)	Korea University Ham T'ong [3rd prize]
11	The Path of Youth (Ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭi chinro)	Yuhaksaeng, Kim Chuyŏn [1st prize]
12	The Road to Independence (Tongnip ŭi kil)	Yŏnsei University, Kye Hajŏn

Source: "Tongnip chŏnch'wi chŏngguk haksaeng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe,"(독립전취전국학생현상웅변대회), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), August 13, 1946. "Tongnip chŏnch'wi ungbyŏn taehoe ipsangja palp'yo (독립전취 웅변대회 입상자 발표)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), August 17, 1946. *The University, College, Secondary school names were reported in abbreviations. When the names of affiliation are not identified, it was written in transliterated name on the table.

The oratorical contest conferred prizes in the names of figures associated with the KDP and KPG. Awards were thus presented under the names of Dr. Syngman Rhee, Premier Kim Ku,

Cho So-ang of the KDP, and the president of the *Maeil Sinbo*. The hierarchy of political figures determined the ranking of the prizes, which became a standard way to prize students accordingly.[259]

The NSF-organized oratorical contest continued to be sponsored by the same political party members and newspapers, and in December, it recruited students from diverse regions with the same arguments.[260] Also in 1947, NSF organized a series of nationwide events to commemorate the first anniversary of the January 18 clash with the "Student Corps." They included "Student Movement Report Rally"(Hakaseng undosa pogo taehwe), "Traitor Purge Rally" (Maeukno sto'ang taehwe), and the "Renewed Anti-Trusteeship Enlightment Campaign" (Pant'ak ŭi chaegaemong undong). On this occasion, the NSF issued a declaration vowing that "we shall fight to the last man and to the very end in order to achieve absolute opposition to trusteeship and the fulfillment of independent sovereignty." The NSF wanted to commemorate Januray 18 as "the day on which, while crying out against trusteeship, they were suddenly attacked by armed mobs and left a bloody record in the history of the anti-trusteeship movement."[261]

As in early 1947, both Left and Right on the Korean Peninsula appeared poised for intensified confrontation, the right continued their anti-truesteeship campaign across diverse regions through public lectures, radio broadcasts, and the distribution of leaflets. The USAMGIK expressed concern that the second wave of anti-trusteeship movements might erupt. Among the right-wing organizations, the NSF, though not large in scale, was regarded by U.S. authorities

[259] "Tongnip Chŏnch'wi Chŏnguk Haksaeng Hyŏnsang Ungbyŏn Taehoe," (독립전취전국학생 현상웅변대회) *Tonga Ilbo* August, 13 1946.

[260] "Minju t'ongil chŏnggwŏn surip haksaeng ungbyŏn taehoe (민주통일정권수립학생웅변대회)," *Susan Kyŏngje Sinmun* (수산경제신문), December 12, 1946.

[261] "Pant'ak chae-gae undong-ŭl Kŏn'guk Ch'ŏngnyŏn Yŏnmaeng-sŏ chŏn'gae" (반탁재개운동을 건국청련서 전개), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 8, 1947.

as capable of mobilizing mass demonstrations.[262] The USAMGIK succeeded in persuading Syngman Rhee and Kim Ku to halt the large-scale right-wing student demonstrations scheduled for January 18, 1947.[263] Although the NSF did not proceed with a mass rally as initially planned, it continued its activities within the framework of student cultural movements. In May, the NSF organized an oratorical contest at the Seoul Christian Youth Association Hall and its Gwangju branch, and, in South Chŏlla Province, sponsored by the provincial Bureau of Education and Bureau of Public Information, for middle school students.[264] They focused their movement especially in the Gwangju area because the new left-wing party, the "Korean Workers' Party" (*Namnodang*), was expanding significantly there.[265]

As part of its national convention in October, NSF held provincial-level oratorical contests, after which two representatives from each regional federation were selected to compete in the central tournament. The oratorical contest, held over two days in the Catholic Church Hall in Kyŏngundong-Seoul and including both middle and university students, was reported as "a magnificent post-liberation oratorical contest, a historical gift meant to inspire patriotic fervor."[266]

Students gathered from 81 localities were introduced as "representative contestants who will play a significant role in the national salvation movement." In the preliminary round, twenty speakers and ten university students were to be selected, with the first and second prizes named "Syngman Ree Award" and "Kim Ku Award."[267]

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[262] G-2 Periodic Report #431 (16 January 1947).

[263] Park, Myung Soo 박명수, "(제2의 반탁운동과 1947년 초 국내 정치세력 동향 The Second Anti-trusteeship Campaign and Korean Political Landscapes in Early 1947)," Soongsil Sahak (숭실사학) 39 (2017): 199.

[264] 5,6양일 천도교당서 구국열의 사자후, 학생웅변대회, 현대일보, 1947.10.02., 전국학생총연맹에서 각도대표자대회와 웅변대회를 개최, 대한일보, 1947.10.03.

[265] Park, Myung Soo, 184.

[266] "5·6 yangil Ch'ŏndogyo-dang-sŏ kuguk-yŏr ŭi sajahu, haksaeng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehwe" (5·6 양일 천도교당서 국국열의 사자후, 학생현상웅변대회), *Hyŏndae Ilbo* (현대일보), October 2, 1947.

[267] "Kakto taehang haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe Kŭmo-il Ch'ŏndogyo-dang-sŏ" (각 도 대항 학생 웅변대회

Among the judges, Im Sŏ-jŏng left the following remarks:

> "The fervent efforts of the students deeply moved me, but the speakers must strive to express their emotions with coherence and to grasp the mood of the audience. In my view, we may well have discovered a true gem: Yun Yang-ha of Naju Middle School in Chŏllanam-do is undoubtedly a 'Demosthenes of Korea,' in whom the audience places great expectations. I hope a capable mentor will carefully nurture him. Meanwhile, Kang Kŭn-ho of Gunsan Middle School, though only fourteen years old, was bold and vigorous, displaying remarkable spirit and promise. The contestants from each province performed admirably. Like marathon runners, they should aim to compete confidently even in international oratorical contests and arm themselves with the passionate conviction necessary never to abandon the conscience of the nation."[268]

The organizational methods and Im Sŏ-jŏng's comments on the oratorical contest suggest several implications. First, by organizing oratorical competitions across the provinces, the NSF sought to disseminate student movement grounded in the anti-trusteeship campaign throughout various regions and gather them in Seoul. The speakers were hailed as "individuals possessing a national conscience" and as "patriots" as they spoke about the anti-trusteeship. Second, they were also invoked as Korea's "Demosthenes" and as "marathon runners" figures who would one day represent Korea on the world stage, prepared as the nation's future talents.

The specific invocation of marathon runners was likely intended to evoke Son Ki-jŏng, the Korean athlete who had won the marathon at the 1936 Berlin Olympics and had since become a powerful symbol of Korean nationalism. It is important to note that around the same time, in February 1946, the documentary film *Olympia* and its first part, *Festival of the Nation*,

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금오일 천도교당서), *Hyŏndae Ilbo* (현대일보), October 5, 1947.

[268] "Kuguk-yŏre pult'anŭn haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe chongmak" (구국열에 불타는 학생웅변대회 종막), *Hyŏndae Ilbo* (현대일보), October 8, 1947.

suddenly reappeared in Korean theaters. The re-screening of this documentary film rekindled the joy of liberation through the lens of national pride. Thus, the period during which these oratorical contests were held coincided with broader efforts to reestablish Son Ki-jŏng and the marathon as nationalistic symbols in the post-liberation era.[269]

That is to say, the oratorical contests resonated with contemporaneous attempts to rearticulate and reconstruct national symbols. Participation in these contests served as a means by which students could be linked to that tradition and envision themselves as successors to the nation's symbolic figures, reaffirming their potential to be reborn as future representatives of the state.

This part of the chapter has shown that, after 1945, the March First Movement was a politicized object of appropriation and contestation. ATUS's decision to attach "National Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Students" to the March First commemoration, with explicitly anti-trusteeship themes, demonstrates how commemoration was repurposed as a vehicle for opposing trusteeship in the name of the people.

The chapter also highlighted how this process was sustained by dense linkage between party politics, the press, and the oratorical stage. Key KDP figures embedded in the media world ensured enthusiastic coverage and ideological, financial alignment. While right-wing judges served as arbiters who sought to channel students' experiences into a shared anti-trusteeship narrative, selectively endorsing certain forms of "oratory" and excluding others. The winners of the oratory were largely drawn from within the federation, turning contests into instruments for affirming ATUS members and boosting their morale. Also, the testimonies suggest that

[269] Sim, Hye-gyŏng 심혜경, "Han'guk sŭp'och'ŭ minjokchuŭi (Sports-nationalism) ŭi han kiwŏn: Haebang chŏnhu Olympia (Leni Riefenstahl, 1938) 1-bu Minjok ŭi chejŏn, ollimp'ik kwa marat'on munhwa / kirok yŏnghwa ŭi sangyŏng ŭl chungsim ŭro (한국 스포츠-민족주의(Sports-nationalism)의 한 기원 : 해방 전후 <올림피아>(레니 리펜슈달, 1938) 1부 <민족의 제전>, 올림픽과 마라톤 문화/기록영화의 상영을 중심으로 One Origin of Sports-Nationalism in South Korea : Focused on screening of Olympia : Part 1 Festival of Nations(1938) and other Kulturfilm/documentary related to Olympic and marathon around the liberation period.)" Yŏngsang Yesul Yŏngku (영상예술연구) 25 (2014): 329-331.

these events functioned as a form of public opinion warfare not only through their rhetorical content but through the very act of assembling a crowd. Many citizens attended as much out of curiosity and a desire for spectacle as out of ideological commitment.

Finally, the chapter has shown that the same pattern extended beyond March First to Liberation Day, where right-wing coalitions like the National Student Federation staged oratorical contests for secondary school students, expanded preliminaries into the provinces, and showcased contestants from 81 localities as "representative" agents of national salvation. These campaigns coincided with efforts to re-elevate figures such as marathon champion son Ki-jŏng, binding youth oratory to sport heroism. In this sense, March First and Liberation Day contests functioned as key cultural events through which the right-wing appropriated historical memory, shaped public opinion, and installed student speakers as living emblems of a renewed, anti-communist nation.

2.1.2. “Plan for a National Seoul University” and Control of Student Activism

This section examines the 1946 “National Seoul University” plan and the wave of student resistance it provoked, and shows how authorities sought to contain that activism by redefining student identity through oratorical contests. By reading these contests alongside strikes, editorials, and official responses, it traces how academic achievement, national duty, and cultural pride were mobilized to discipline student politics and recast activism as disruption rather than legitimate participation.

On July 13, 1946, Minister of Education Yu Ŏk-gyŏm (유억겸) and Lieutenant Colonel Aubrey. O. Pittinger officially announced “Plan for a National Seoul University” (Kuknip

Seoul Chonhap Taehak-an, 국립서울종합대학안; hereafter National University Plan). [270]

The proposal sought to merge Kyŏngsŏng University with nine professional schools in the vicinity of Seoul to establish a single comprehensive institution. Immediately after its announcement, the schools concerned, along with various social and political organizations, launched a year-long campaign of opposition, arguing that the plan was impractical, premature, undemocratic, and even anti-national.[271] At the heart of the controversy over the National University Plan was a clash of perspectives concerning whether university autonomy, which had become most clearly institutionalized under the Japanese Empire, should be eradicated as a colonial legacy or inherited as a practice to be maintained.[272]

When the National University Plan was confirmed by Ordinance No.102 on August 22, student and faculty self-governing committees waged a prolonged campaign of resistance through organized school strikes and street demonstrations.[273] Students from other universities and even secondary schools joined the campaign, making it a nationwide protest movement in which a cumulative total of 40,000 participants from 57 schools took part.[274]

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[270] Sŏul Taehakkyo Pŏpkwadaehak Tongch'anghoe (서울대학교 법과대학동창회), *Seoul Taehakkyo Pŏpkwadaehak Paengnyŏnsa: 1895–1955* 서울대학교 법과대학백년사 2004), 233-224.

[271] Yŏksabi p'yŏngsa p'yŏnjip wiwŏnhoe (역사비평사 편집위원회), *Nonjaeng ŭro iknŭn Han'guksa, Kukdae-an p'adong* (논쟁으로 읽는 한국사, 국대안 파동), (Yŏksabi p'yŏngsa 역사비평사 2011),

[272] Kim Kisŏk (김기석), *Illansŏng sangsaenga ŭi t'ansaeng, 1946: Kukrip Sŏul Taehakkyo wa Kim Il-sŏng Chonghap Taehak ŭi ch'angsŏl* (일란성 상생아의 탄생, 1946: 국립서울대학교와 김일성종합대학의 창설), (Kyoyuk Hwahaksa (교육화학사 2001), 4. The National University Plan was characterized by a centralized form of educational administration in which a six-member board of trustees, composed entirely of government officials, held ultimate decision-making authority over faculty appointments and all matters related to university governance. The appointment of the president and the deans of individual colleges, faculty meetings, personnel decisions concerning staff, the conferral of degrees, and virtually all matters falling within the president's academic authority were subject either to the approval of the board or to policies set by it. The central issue here was that this arrangement refused to recognize the university self-governing committees that, during the liberation period, had been formed in several institutions around the participation of both faculty and students. See I Hŭi-su 이희수, "Kihwek yŏnjae: Kyoyuksa: Migunjŏnggi ch'adoe ŭi kyoyuk undong," Kukdae-an bandae undong (기획연재: 교육사:미군정기 최대의 교육운동, 국대안 반대운동)," (Uri Kyoyuk 우리교육), 1990, 121–122.

[273] I Chae-o (이재오), *Han'guk haksaeng undongsa: 1945–1979* (한국 학생운동사: 1945~1979), (Seoul: Parabuksŭ 파라북스 2011), 91–104.

[274] Kim Kisŏk, *Illansŏng sangsaenga ŭi t'ansaeng, 1946: Kukrip Sŏul Taehakkyo wa Kim Il-sŏng Chonghap*

The Ministry of Education and school authorities increasingly couldn't control the growing wave of student strikes. Not only in Seoul but also in provincial cities such as Inch'on and Ch'unch'on, students pressed their demands, which included opposition to the National University Plan, the defense of academic self-governance, the protection of teachers' livelihoods, and resistance to police interference in educational institutions.[275] The Director of the Bureau of Education admonished the student boycotts at a principal's meeting convened to address the secondary school strikes. He remarked, "At a time when students ought to be learning even a single additional character, abandoning the classroom to engage in destructive actions is a betrayal of their proper duty.[276] Also, the Director of the National Police contributed to the creation of a binary framework: students who led or participated in strikes were cast as obstructers of nation-building, while those who focused on their studies were labeled "diligent students" and "patriotic students."[277] The National Police Bureau began conducting stricter investigations and making arrests of middle school and elementary school teachers throughout southern Korea. Authorities accused teachers participating in strikes, saying that under the order of leftist political organizations, children were systematically incited and agitated with leftist ideology. Also, they undermined the educational system and attempted to "communize" their colleges and broader education sphere through clandestine cell-based networks.[278] The process of restructuring the educational system was consistently accompanied by ideological and political vetting enforced through administrative power, while opposition to these reforms was routinely suppressed through the mobilization of police

Taehak ŭi ch'angsŏl, 32.

[275] "Maenghyu chibang e pagŭp, Inch'ŏn o-junghak Ch'unch'ŏne sam-junghak (맹휴 지방에 파급, 인천 5중학 춘천에 3중학)," *Susang Kyŏngje Sinmun* (수산경제신문), February 14, 1947.

[276] "Ponbun chik'hira, kyojang hwauisŏ t'oŭi (본분직히라, 교장화의서 토의)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 12, 1947.

[277] "Hak'wŏne toragara (학원에 돌아가라)," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), February 12, 1947.

[278] "Millŏng ŭi chŏksaek kongjang (밀령의 적색공장)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), September 10, 1947.

force.[279]

Public opinion regarding the strikes increasingly shifted in a negative direction. Although several editorials sought to understand student activism as part of the formation of a "democratic academy," the dominant public opinion portrayed the student strike in negative terms.[280]

An insightful editorial in the *Choungoe Sinmun* (중외신문) observed that the prevailing tendency to speak of student strikes as if they were uniformly the product of political agitation was itself peculiar. The piece warned that attempts to resolve the strikes because of such preconceptions were extremely dangerous. At the same time, it stressed that the effort to exploit student boycotts solely for political purposes, turning them into instruments of partisan struggle, was equally perilous. Even if students had been stirred by outside agitation, the educator argued, this agitation itself was rooted in the desperate conditions of the schools, and thus the educational authorities should "judge conscientiously and eliminate the problem at its roots."[281]

Some students stood with the authorities and argued that their demands should be pursued while continuing their studies. Representatives from the various colleges convened to form the "Seoul National University Construction Student Association" (CSA, *Seoul Taehakkyo Kŏnsŏl Haksaenghoe*), asserting that the boycott was intended to advance the "communization" of the academy.

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[279] Chang Chi-yŏng장지영, *Haebanggi (1945–1950) haksul ŭi chijŏnghak* (해방기(1945~1950) 학술의 지정학 A Study on the Geopolitics of Scholarship (Liberal Arts) in the Liberation Period (1945~1950)), PhD diss., Sŏnggyun'gwan Taehakkyo (성균관대학교), 2019, 72

[280] "Maenghyu ŭi kyŏnhae wa haegyech'aek (맹휴의 견해와 해결책)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 16, 1947. "Saejega him ŭl haphaesŏ sae hak'wŏn ŭl kŏnsŏlhaja, Kyŏngsang kyomubu-jang I Hunŭng sŏnsaeng tam (사제가 힘을 합해서 새 학원을 건설하자, 경상교무부장 이훈응선생 담)," *Yŏsŏng Sinmun* (여성신문), May 10, 1947. Maenghyu nŭn Ilje ŭi chanjaeyo hak'wŏn ŭn molyak sŏndongjang anida → Paewuja iruja sewuja, igŏsi tongnip ŭi kil ida (맹휴는 일제의 잔재요 학원은 모략선동장 아니다→ 배우자 이루자 세우자, 이것이 독립의 길이다)," *Hyŏndae Ilbo* (현대일보), February 12, 1947.

[281] "Tongmaeng hyuhak, param e puch'ineun mal (동맹휴학, 바람에 부치는 말)," *Jungoe Sinmun* (중외신문), February 14, 1947.

CSA sought to counter other student movements by investigating the strikes and convening a "fact-finding meeting on the strike."[282] At the delegates' congress organized by the NSF, alongside calls for the establishment of a provisional government and the withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet forces, an additional demand was introduced. They began opposing the students' strike and reopening schools that had been closed across southern Korea.[283] CSA in the College of Commerce began including striking students in their anti-trusteeship declarations.[284] CSA proclaimed, "We repudiate the destructive terrorist acts of those strikes who have already forfeited their student status, and we oppose their objectives."[285]

During this period, student strikes also broke out in Chŏllanamdo, including in cities such as Kwangju and Mokp'o, in response to the National University Plan. As student activism intensified, some oratorical contests were organized to regulate student behavior.[286] On March 15, 1947, the Literature and Art Club of "Chŏnnam Girl's Middle School" sponsored an event titled "Regional School Oratorical Contest for Chŏnnam Boys and Girls." The stated purpose of the competition was "to provide students with a lively opportunity for research presentation through practical action rather than theory." The winners were selected by teacher Kim Hu-gŭn, who served as judge, delivered detailed commentary on the speeches, and then announced the results. *Tonggwang Sinmun* subsequently published an excerpt from one of the student speeches.

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[282] "Kŏnsŏl Haksaenghoe chuch'oe maenghyu jinsang pogohoe (건설학생회주최 맹휴진상보고회)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 13, 1948.

[283] "Hakto chaegim wansu (학도책임 완수)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), April 27, 1947.

[284] "Sangdae bant'ak siwi (상대반탁시위)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), July 8, 1947.

[285] "Akchil punja kŏbu, Kŏnsŏl Haksaenghoe sŏngmyŏng (악질분자 거부, 건설학생회 성명)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 13, 1947.

[286] "Maenghyu ro Mokp'o kongjung p'ae-gyoryŏng (맹휴로 목포 공중 폐교령)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 25, 1947. "Kwangju Sŏjung e p'ae-gyoryŏng, Ku-wŏl Iril e saero kaekyo (광주서중에 폐교령 9월 1일에 새로 개교)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), March 29, 1947.

"If we truly love our country and are women driven by a burning love for our nation, then above all, we must know! We must learn! What kind of patriotism is it if we do not understand the reality of Chŏson? What kind of independence without true love for the nation? Our power lies in knowledge. That power is stronger than the atomic bomb. Knowledge is the only weapon that can shape the world. Students must follow their teachers, juniors must follow their seniors, and together the entire student body must unite like iron and stone, becoming cultured Korean women who stand proudly, equal to the women of any nation on earth."[287]

The rhetorical strategy of this oration was to delimit the grounds of patriotism. Students who failed to pursue knowledge were portrayed as having no rightful claim to speak of love for the nation. Female students who abandoned the aspiration to become intellectuals were, in turn, dismissed as forfeiting both their own potential for development and that of the nation itself. In this framing, they could neither become "cultured Korean women" nor compete on equal terms with "the global women."

The College of Law at Seoul National University decided to organize an oratorical contest on November 1-2, 1947. In the "First National Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Secondary School Students," the university offered the extraordinary incentive of automatic admission to the College of Law without examination for the first-prize winner, and students from twenty secondary schools participated.[288]

<Table 2.11> Seoul National University, College of Law's "First National Oratorical

[287] "Wisŏn paewuja! Chŏngguk namnyŏ jung ungbyŏn taehoe (위선배우자!, 전국남여중웅변대회)," *Tonggwang Sinmun* (동광신문), March 16, 1947.

[288] "Hwang Yŏngja-yang iltŭng; junghaksaeng ŭi ŭigich'ungjŏn; Chŏngguk junghak ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang (황영자양 1등; 중학생 의기충전; 전국중학웅변대회 성황)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), November 4, 1947.

Contest for Male and Female Scondary School Students"(November 1~2, 1947)

Oratory Title	Speaker	Affiliation
Our Students' Revolution (Uri hakto tŭl ŭi hyŏngmyŏng)	Chu Yong-gang	Hwi mun sedondary school (*Hwimun Chunghak*)
The Current Situation and the Democratic Path of Students (Hyŏnjŏngse wa minjujuŭi haksaeng haengno)	Kang Sang-bong	Kyŏngsŏng Industrial School (*Kyŏngsŏng Kongŏp*)
The Duty of Chosŏn Students (Chosŏn hakto ŭi sikpun)	Son To-sŏng	Sadaebu Secondary School (*Sadaebu Chunghak*)
Even though the Autumn Has Come (Kaŭl ŭn watkŏn man)	Kim Yong-sŏn	Hanyang Industrial Secondary School (*Hanyang Kongchung*)
The Cry of Students Born in a Weak Nation (Yaksominjok ŭro t'aeŏnan haksaeng ŭi chŏlgyu)	Kim Yong-ho	Sŏngdo Secondary School *Sŏngdo Chunghak*
Students of Chosŏn! (Chosŏn ŭi haksaeng tŭl i yŏ)	Pak Yŏng-ja	Ihwa Women's Secondary School (*Ihwa Yŏ Chung*)
The Path for Nation-Building Students (Kŏn'guk hakto ŭi naagal kil)	Ch'oe Hye-suk	Chungang Women's Secondary School (*Chungang Yŏ Chung*)

The Trash Can (Ssŭregitong)	Han Sun-hŭi	Tŏksŏng Women secondary School (*Tŏksŏng YŏChung*)
The Revolution of Students (Hakto ŭi hyŏngmyŏng)	Song Tae-wŏn	Kyŏnggi secondary school (*Kyŏnggi Chungk*)
Appeal to Chosŏn Students (Chosŏn haksaeng ege koham)	Yi Yun-gyun	Tonggyŏng secondary school (*Tonggyŏng Chung*)
National Spirit (Minjok chŏngsin)	Yi Ho-gyo	Ibok secondary school (*Ibok Chung*)
Let Us Be Sŏ Yun-bok (Sŏ Yun-bok i toeja)	Sŏ Kyŏng-hwan	Yongsan Secondary School (*Yongsan Chung*)
Rise, Students! (Hakto tŭl a irŏsŏra) (Second Prize)	Hong Kil	Seoul Secondary School (*Seoul Chung*)
The Path to Nation-Building and Democratic Life (Kŏn'guk kwa minju saenghwal ŭi kil) (Third Prize)	An Ri-da	Chinmyŏng Women's Secondary School (*Chinmyŏng Yŏja Chung*)
Chosŏn Students Cry Out: Withdraw! (Chosŏn haksaeng ŭn oech'inda, kŭdaetŭl ŭn mŭllŏsŏra)	Maeng Wŏn-sik	Sŏngnam Secondary School (*Sŏngnam Chung*)
The Path of Today's Chosŏn Students (Hyŏnha Chosŏn hakto ŭi kalgil)	Chŏng U-sŏk	Kyŏnggi Secondary School (*Kyŏnggi Chung*)

Young Men of Chosŏn, Embrace the Academic Spirit (Chosŏn ŭi chŏlmŭn i tŭl a, hakkujŏk chŏngsin ŭl kajŏra)	Ch'oe Pyŏng-no	Taedong Secondary School (*Taedong Namchung*)
Let Students Advance (Hakto tŭl ŭn naagaja)	Kim Myŏng-dae	Sŏngbuk Secondary School (*Sŏngbuk Chung*)
Let Us Study (Urineun paeuja)	[Unknown]	Paehwa Women's Secondary School (*Paehwa Yŏja Chung*)
The Resolution of Youth Students (Ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto ŭi kakko)	Ko Yŏng-gi	Kyŏngdong Secondary School (*Kyŏngdong Chung*)
True Learning (Chamdaun peum)	Chŏn Yŏng-hŭi	Chinmyŏng Women's Secondary School (*Chinmyŏng Yŏja Chung*)
Genius, Arise! (Ch'ŏnjaeyŏ irŏnara) (First Prize)	Hwang Yŏng-ja	Chungang Women's Secondary School (*Chungang Yŏja Chung*)
What Is the True Path of Patriotic Students? (Chinjŏnghan aeguk hakto ŭi kil ŭn muŏt)	Paek Myŏng-suk	Kyŏnggi Women's Secondary School (*Kyŏnggi Yŏja Chung*)
First, Revolutionize Yourself (Mŏnjŏ chagi rŭl hyŏngmyŏng hara) (Fifth Prize)	Yun Myŏng-jung	Kyŏnggi Secondary School (*Kyŏnggi Chung*)

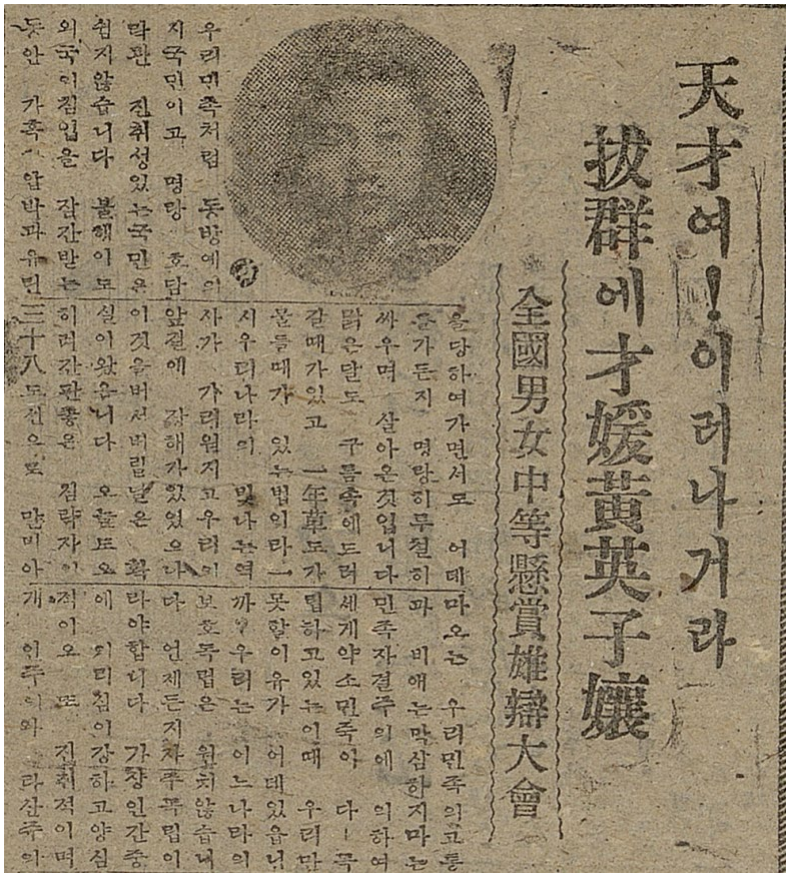
Students of Chosŏn, Find Yourselves First (Chosŏn ŭi hakto yŏ mŏnjŏ ne chasin ŭl ch'aja ra)	Pak Sim-ch'un	Seoul Secondary School (*Seoul Chung*)
Leaning Against the Sun (T'aeyang ŭl tŭngjigo)	An Yŏng-sun	Yongsan Secondary School (*Yongsan Chung*)
Nation-Building and Youth Students (Kŏn'guk kwa ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto)	Ch'ae Su-san	Kyŏnggong Industrial Secondary School (*Kyŏnggong Chung*)
What Is the Patriotic Spirit of Students? (Hakto ŭi aeguk chŏngsin ŭn muŏt)	Pak Ch'ang-gŭn	Sadaebu Secondary School (*Sadaebu Chung*)
The Resolution of Our Students (Uri hakto tŭl ŭi kakko)	Han Yong-t'aek	Hanyang Industrial Secondary school (*Hanyang Kongchung*)
The Path of Our Students (Uri hakto ŭi kalgil)	Hong Sŏng-mi	Kwanggo Secondary School (*Kwanggo Chung*)
Truth and Law (Chilli wa pŏpch'ik)	Yi Sŏng-u	Sudŏk Secondary School (*Sudŏk Chung*)
The Revolution of Students (Hakto ŭi hyŏngmyŏng)	Chŏng Se-yŏl	Kyŏngsin Secondary School (*Kyŏngsin Chung*)
In Every Way, Let Students Learn (Modŭn pangmyŏn esŏ hakto tŭl ŭn paeuja)	Pak Yang-dŏk	Kyŏngsik Women's Secondary School (*Kyŏngsik Yŏja Chung*)

Source: "Junghaksaeng ŭi tongnip koham; Chŏngguk namnyŏ jungdŭng hakgyo ungbyŏn taehoe (중학생의 독립고함; 전국 남녀 중등학교웅변대회)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), October 31, 1947.

As the title itself suggests, the orations were overwhelmingly centered on the theme of "students." In particular, the speakers, as "Chŏson students," focused on what they ought to do at this very moment for the nation. Their speeches emphasized cultivating a sense of national and patriotic spirit befitting Korean students in the process of nation-building and called for self-enlightenment, self-reformation, and resolute determination to fulfill their roles in the nation's founding.

What is especially noteworthy about this oratorical contest is the increasing prominence of themes that highlight intellectual pursuit and scholarly discipline, such as "scholarly spirit" and "true learning," or such as "The Academic Spirit," "Genuine Study," "Let Us Learn," and "In Every Way, Let Students Learn." These topics reflected the broader educational ethos of Seoul National University at the time, which placed particular emphasis on students' academic engagement, an orientation not commonly found in earlier contests. As the Seoul National University sought to suppress student strikes, the chosen speech titles reveal the organizer's attempt to reframe students' responsibilities, urging dedication to scholarly endeavor over political engagement.

This tendency become even clearer when examining both the content of winning speech by


天才여! 이러나거라
拔群에 才媛黃英子孃
全國男女中等懸賞雄辯大會

Hwang Yŏng-ja's photograph and speech text on the *Pu'in Sinmun* (figure 2.6)[289]

It is particularly noteworthy that *Pu'in Sinmun,* in reporting on the winner, not only praised her individual talents but also expanded her achievement to serve as evidence of the excellence of female students as a whole. The paper proclaimed, "Never before in the history of oratory has a woman achieved such an overwhelming victory," and published Hwan Yŏng-ja's speech in full.[290] It was highly unusual for an entire speech to be printed in the press, and the exceptional emphasis placed on Hwang's vitory was clearly related to the fact that she was a female student who had won the first national oratorical contest organized from the Seoul

[289] "Ch'ŏnjaeyŏ! irŏnagŏra; palgun e chaewŏn Hwang Yŏngja-yang, Chŏngguk namnyŏ jungdŭng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe (천재여!이러나거라 발군에 재원 황영자양, 전국남녀중등현상웅변대회)," *Puin Sinbo* (부인신보), November 9, 1947.

[290] "Ch'ŏnjaeyŏ! irŏnagŏra; palgun e chaewŏn Hwang Yŏngja-yang, Chŏngguk namnyŏ jungdŭng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe (천재여!이러나거라 발군에 재원 황영자양, 전국남녀중등현상웅변대회)," Puin Sinbo (부인신보), November 8, 1947.

National University's College of Law, shortly after the institution had gained official recognition as the national university. Hwang Yŏng-ja, a native P'yŏngyang, was advirtised as a model pupil, consistently achieving high academic scores, and advanced to the new term as the top-ranking student. She was celebrated in the press as a "future Korean female orator," with her photograph prominently published alongside the article. [291]

The central theme of Hwan Yŏng-ja's oration was to emphasize that students were the primary agents of national reconstruction and the embodiment of the nation's strength. She urged those students who remained hidden in obscurity to emerge as "geniuses," capable of contributing not only to the future of the Korean nation but also to humanity at large. The rhetoric, however, was strongly chauvinist, at times openly disparaging of other nations.

The first part of the speech began with a sweeping assertion of Korean exceptionalism, portraying the Korean people as no less advanced than any other, endowed with a long history, a rich cultural heritage, and superior technical achievements. Expressions such as "a highly civilized people," "a nation with history," "the hub of East Asia," "cultural genius," "a superior script," "pioneers of modern civilization," and "a world-renowned genius nation" were repeated for emphasis. To substantiate this claim, Hwang listed traditional cultural and technological achievements: Koryŏ metal letterpress printing, celadon ceramics, the rain gauge, the turtle ship, "Chomseongdae Observatory," and the Korean script, "Han'gŭl."

In the second part, she evoked the national pride in the colonial era and athletic victories of Sohn Kijŏng and Nam Sŭngnyong at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, declaring, "In every field, religion, science, national organizations, let us strive to be first in the world," thereby underscoring the "genius" who came, and yet to come. To demonstrate the superiority of the Korean national character, Hwang juxtaposed it with criticism directed at other nations. The Japanese, she argued, were "rash and impetuous," while the Chinese were "sly and sluggish."

[291] Ibid.

She proceeded to enumerate perceived flaws of Mongolians, Burmese, Filipinos, Indias, and Europeans, denigrating them. In contrast, Koreans were cast as the "nation of courteous people in the East" and as "cheerful, optimistic, and progressive people."

The conclusion of the speech stressed that Korea would never accept "trusteeship," but it were capable of achieving "genuine sovereignty." The ideal figures who could realize such independence were identified as "our conscientious and enterprising male and female student youth, free of individualism and selfish calculation." Students, she proclaimed, were "the eyes, hearts and limbs of the nation." Thus, "the pursuit and cultivation of truth within the academy" was presented as inseparable from the great task of establishing a unified government. That was an achievement possible only through the united power of Korea's five million students.[292]

Her speech clearly reflects an effort to articulate the rationale for asserting the legitimacy of Korean sovereignty, a legitimacy that the Japanese Empire had long denied through its racialized discrimination against the Korean people. Moreover, situated in the historical moment of Korea's struggle to establish an independent government, she persistently underscored the principle of anti-trusteeship. She emphasized that Korea was a culturally and historically civilized nation and sought to demonstrate students' potential as future leaders who would carry forward the task of building their own government. Her rhetoric also concludes by stressing the importance of academic effort and student solidarity, and an evident reference to the student strikes taking place at the time.

Pak Sunch'on, the vice-chair of an anti-trusteeship organization called "Independence Promotion Patriotic Women's Association" (*Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Aeguk Puinhoe*) served as a judge at the competition and left commentary on a newspaper. She praised students, describing the audience gathered at the school as the "buds of the nation's flowers yet to bloom," while

[292] "Ch'ŏnjaeyŏ! irŏnagŏra; palgun e chaewŏn Hwang Yŏngja-yang, Chŏngguk namnyŏ jungdŭng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe (천재여!이러나거라 발군에 재원 황영자양, 전국남녀중등현상웅변대회)," *Puin Sinbo* (부인신보), November 9, 1947.

hailing the orators themselves as the country's future "patriots" and "men of virtue." She commended their eloquence, noting that "they carried their speeches with skill and fluency." "The students appeared as fighters of blood ready to seize the sovereignty of this nation, while their pursuit of science, literature, and politics was clearly manifest, giving confidence that they would become the pillars of the nation's will." The speakers were further lauded as "steadfast sons and daughters of integrity."[293]

Pak Sunch'on's remarks as a judge were deeply political, as she did not conceal her critical stance toward the anti-National University Plan protests and student strikes. In sharp contrast to the rebellious connotations of student activism, she recast the contestants as the "guards" who could protect the academy from "the devilish plots that now seek to destroy teachers and incite strikes within the schools."[294]

In sum, the controversy surrounding the creation of Seoul National University revealed how deeply questions of university autonomy, state authority, and student agency were intertwined in the immediate aftermath of the USAMGIK period. Students and faculty mobilized a nationwide strike against what they perceived as an imposed reorganization, only to encounter heightened repression and accusations of leftist subversion. As public sentiment shifted against the strikers, alternative student groups emerged that embraced academic discipline and national duty, providing the state with a counter-model of ideal studenthood.

Within these circumstances, oratorical contests gained new importance as carefully curated arenas for redirecting student enthusiasm from protest activities toward state-approved expressions of patriotism, scholarly dedication, and anti-trusteeship sentiments. Celebrated figures such as Hwang Yŏng-ja were elevated as an embodiment of this paradigm, thereby reinforcing a narrative where academic success was regarded as the appropriate contribution

[293] "Chŏngguk namnyŏ jungdŭng haksaeng ungbyŏn taehoe rŭl matchigo (전국남녀중등학생웅변대회를 맛치고)," *Puin Sinbo* (부인신보), November 5, 1947.
[294] Ibid.

of students to nation-building. Thus, the conflict at Seoul National University not only revealed divergent visions concerning higher education but also contributed to the consolidation of a postcolonial political culture that delineated legitimate student participation through loyalty, discipline, and rhetorical affirmation of the nation.

CHAPTER 3 Female Students and Their Oratory: The Cultural Cold War and South Korean Women's Gendered Political Education

This chapter aims to investigate how oratory manifested as a political act articulating women's issues, particularly among female students. Oratory competitions served both as propagandistic and educational tools to mold students into national subjects. For female students, restricted in their public political expressions, these competitions became significant political spaces where women's issues were articulated, albeit within confines set by organizers and societal consensus. Thus, oratory competitions provided valuable insight into prevailing and sanctioned women's issues and the active roles of female students as both producers and consumers of

nationalistic discourses.

The chapter 3 investigates two primary concerns. First, it analyzes the types of political activities and mobilizations female students engaged in and their self-conceptions as political subjects through articles contributed by students in magazines and newspapers. Concurrently, it examines media portrayals and discursive constructions about female students to explore societal biases they contended with.

Second, it investigates how oratory competitions became a means of political participation for right-wing female students and strategies employed by them to mobilize the broader public. By examining the organizers, judges, related events, and rhetoric of these competitions, it aims to understand how women intellectuals, politicians, educators, writers, and women's movement activists, used these competitions to shape new national female students. Consequently, this research will analyze oratory texts from early post-liberation leaflets published in newspapers and the compilation of student speeches in Pak Pyŏng-gyu's (박병규*) Collection of Student Orations* (*Haksaeng Ungbyŏn Sŏnjip*,1949).

3.1. The Women's Political Movement During the U.S. Military Government Period.

3.1.1. The Right-Wing Women's Association

This section examines how women's political activism after liberation was reshaped through U.S. Military Government reform and the emergence of powerful right-wing women's organizations. Although new legal rights expanded women's formal citizenship, the meaning of liberation was quickly redirected into nation-building projects led by elite female leaders. By tracing the formation of right-wing groups, the chapter analyzes how women became mobilized as actors within a conservative framework. In doing so, it highlights the tension between legal equality, ideological alignment, and the limited transformation of everyday

women's life.

The implementation of gender equality policies by the United States Military Government, under the banner of liberal democracy, represented a revolutionary moment in the history of women's liberation. The legal measures introduced at the time, such as the prohibition of the trafficking of women in May 1946, the establishment of the Bureau for women in September 1946, the granting of suffrage under the Electoral Law of September 1947, and the abolition of the state-licensed prostitution system in November 1947, raised expectations for the advancement of women's rights. Yet, institutional reform didn't necessarily amount to genuine liberation for women.[295]

The legal recognition of women's ability to identify and declare themselves as a political agency was a significant transition from the colonial to the post-liberation period. Women were thus able to engage actively with the theme of recovering and establishing their political identity. Since the consolidation of national identity was regarded as a prior necessity, the agenda of women's liberation was not articulated as an autonomous project in its own right but rather was discussed as part of broader concerns with national identity, modernization, and civilization. [296] The dissemination of women's emancipation often required the use of propagandistic language to make it recognizable and acceptable to the public.

During the U.S. Military Government, women's political participation was notably intense and active, and their influence was increasingly recognized. This period witnessed the emergence of women political leaders and coalitions of women's organizations aiming to

[295] Im Mi-jin임미진, "Haebanggi yŏsŏng ŭi saenghwal kwa seksyuwŏllit'i ŭi chŏngch'ihak: 1945–1950-nyŏn sosŏr ŭl chungsimŭro" (해방기 여성의 생활과 섹슈얼리티의 정치학: 1945-1950년 소설을 중심으로), "Everyday Life and the Politics of Sexuality among Women in the Liberation Period: Focusing on Novels from 1945 to 1950," *Kaesin Ŏmun Yŏn'gu* (개신어문연구) 37 (2013): 123.

[296] Pak P'il-hyŏn박필현, "Kukkajuŭijŏk chentŏ chŏngch'i, mosŏng ŭi homyŏng kwa juch'ehwa ŭi yokmang" (국가주의적 젠더정치, 모성의 호명과 주체화의 욕망), "Political Science of Life and Sexuality of Women in Liberation Period," *Kubo Hakpo* (구보학보) 15 (2016): 252.

consolidate political power. Women's political engagement ranged broadly from institutional involvement through legitimate political parties, social organizations, and women's groups, to revolutionary activities such as demonstrations, leaflet distribution, and armed resistance. Throughout the process of establishing an independent nation-state after liberation, women actively participated in politics according to their convictions.[297]

Among these activities, oratory competitions stood out as a crucial platform through which women, especially female students, publicly articulated the agenda of women's liberation. Female students notably identified themselves as critical agents in the newly emerging nation, thoroughly exploring the potentialities of women's liberation. The speech became one of the crucial tools for expressing students' political opinions and a part of their activism. However, oratory contests simultaneously acted as mechanisms of mobilization, confining women, particularly female students, within prescribed political norms and allowing variation only within controlled discursive frameworks. Nevertheless, within these imposed boundaries, oratory competitions significantly enabled female students to perceive themselves as political subjects capable of self-expression and to conceptualize their existence.

First of all, women's political activism demonstrably increased, often through participation in demonstrations tied to their respective organizations' agendas, including factory strikes, labor disputes, and protests over food shortages. For instance, women's rice ration demonstrations against the U.S. Military Government's mismanagement of the food crisis were as numerous as labor strikes.[298] The protests staged by kisaeng, who lost their livelihoods in the movement

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[297] Cho Kyŏng-wŏn, Yi Pae-yong조경원, 이배용, "Haebang ihu yŏsŏng kyoyuk chŏngch'aek ŭi pyŏnhwa wa yŏsŏng ŭi sahoe chinch'ul yangsang – Migunjŏnggi(1945)~Cheil Konghwaguk sigi(1960)" (해방이후 여성교육정책의 변화와 여성의 사회진출 양상-미군정기(1945)~제1공화국 시기(1960)-), "Changes in Women's Education Policy and Patterns of Women's Social Advancement after Liberation: From the U.S. Military Occupation (1945) to the First Republic (1960)," *Han'guk Kyoyuk Sahak* (한국교육사학) 22, no. 2 (2000): 279.

[298] "Ss'al tallanŭn yŏin busang, honjap irun sich'ŏng punggyŏng(쌀 달라는 여인 부상, 혼잡 이룬 시청풍경)," Seoul Sinmun(서울신문), April 2, 1946., Ss'al tallanŭn yŏin busang, honjap irun sich'ŏng punggyŏng(쌀 달라는

to abolish state-regulated prostitution, received little public attention.[299] Similarly, reports noted women marching through central streets to demand prohibition and the abolition of licensed prostitution, yet such actions were not given significant weight.[300]

Representations of women's collective political mobilization were thus fragmentary, with little attention paid to their specific claims. Women's activism was consistently subjected to a double standard. Political action by women in the streets was regarded as inherently subversive, as evidence of domestic neglect, or dismissed as secondary. Women's uprisings, their roles in revolutionary struggle, and their militant positions were frequently erased from public discourse. While the ideal of women's liberation was widely endorsed, women perceived as politically zealous were met with hostility. By early 1948, as the prospect of separate elections in South Korea came into view, the extension of suffrage to women was highlighted more as a symbolic marker than as a substantive recognition of their political agency. Overall, mass political fervor, particularly when linked to leftist movements, was increasingly subject to surveillance and suppression.[301]

Immediate after the liberation many female leaders claimed the independence of the country. Nonetheless, they soon regained influence, some by joining organizations such as the "Founding Women's Alliance" (FWA*, Gonguk Bunyeo Dongmeng*) on August 17, others by forming new groups altogether. As a coalition of both left-and right-wing women, the group

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여인 부상, 혼잡 이룬 시청풍경), *Seoul Sinmun*(서울신문), April 2, 1946.

[299] "Sŏul kiseng chohap maedal han pŏnssik sinch'e kŏmsa silsi t'onggoe kŏbu kyŏrŭi (서울기생조합 매달 1번씩 신체검사 실시 통고에 거부 결의)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 19, 1946., "Uridŭl ŭl ŭmdok hanŭn kŏsio" 800 kisengdŭl sinch'e kŏmsa silsi e hangŭi(우리들을음독하는것이오 8백 기생들 신체검사 실시에 항의), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 19, 1946. Ryu Chin-hŭi 류진희, "Haebanggi yŏsŏng taejung ŭi pusang kwa yŏsŏng ponggi ŭi chaehyŏn" (해방기 여성대중의 부상과 여성봉기의 재현), "The Rise of Women Masses and the Representation of Women's Uprisings in the Liberation Period," *Yŏsŏng Munhak Yŏn'gu* (여성문학연구) 51 (2020): 206–210.

[300] "Kŭmju kongch'ang p'aeji rŭl chŏlgyu, ŏje chŏljehoesŏ shiga haengjin(금주 공창폐지를 절규 어제 절제회서 시가행진)," *Tonga Ilbo*(동아일보), May 6, 1947.

[301] Ryu Chin-hŭi, "Haebanggi yŏsŏng taejung ŭi pusang kwa yŏsŏng ponggi ŭi chaehyŏn," 206–210.

shared a common commitment to building a "fully independent nation" in which women would be free from oppression and gender equality would be realized. The activities of FWA, however, did not last long.[302] The women activists who had come together to create soon divided: on one side were those who supported the "People's Republic" under leftist leadership, and on the other were those aligned with the "Korean Democratic Party" who instead advocated loyalty to the Provisional Government.[303] After withdrawing en masse from the FWA, right-wing women activists established the "Korean Patriotic Women's Association" (KPWA, *Han'guk Aeguk Puinhoe*) on September 10, 1945, with roughly fifty members. Shortly thereafter, on September 14, some members founded the "Chosŏn Women's National Party" (CWNP *Chosŏn Yŏja Kungmindang*), which would become a key base of support for Syngman Rhee's political camp.[304]

Women's organizations led by prominent female figures who had turned to collaboration in the final years of Japanese rule ostensibly pursued the goal of securing women's rights, but in practice concentrated their efforts on mobilizing women for right-wing political movements. Most of these women's rights activists were Christians, had studied in Japan or the United States, and often came from landlord or wealthy farming families. Many were also connected through fathers or husbands who were right-wing politicians. These backgrounds decisively shaped both the character and the trajectory of the women's rights movement.[305]

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[302] Yang Tong-suk양동숙, "Haebang hu Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Aeguk Puinhoe ŭi chojik kwa hwaldong yŏn'gu" (해방 후 독립촉성애국부인회의 조직과 활동 연구), "A Study of the Organization and Activities of the Patriotic Women's Association for the Promotion of Independence after Liberation," *Han'guk Minjok Undongsa Yŏn'gu* (한국민족운동사연구) 62 (2010): 381.

[303] Chŏng Hae-gu정해구, Nambukhan pundan chŏnggwŏn surip kwajŏng yŏn'gu (남북한 분단정권 수립 과정 연구), PhD diss., Korea University Department of Political Science and International Relations, 1995, 25.

[304] Chosŏn Yŏja Kungmindang, chajil hyangsang tŭng kukka kŏnsŏre hyŏbrŏk(조선여자국민당, 자질향상등 국가건설에 협력), *Maeil Sinbo*(매일신보), September 14, 1945., Yang Tong-suk, , "Haebang hu Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Aeguk Puinhoe ŭi chojik kwa hwaldong yŏn'gu," 382.

[305] Yi Sŭng-hŭi이승희, Han'guk yŏsŏng undongsa yŏn'gu – Migunjŏnggi yŏsŏng undong ŭl chungsimŭro (한국여성운동사연구-미군정기 여성운동을 중심으로-), PhD diss., Ewha Womans University Department of

When the trusteeship became the watershed in the political arena, right-wing women's associations actively participated in the anti-trusteeship movement. As an immediate reaction, the KPWA and CWNP organized several public speeches."[306] On April 5, 1946, the KPWA and the CWNP merged to form the "Independence Promotion Patriotic Women's Association" (*Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Aeguk Puinhoe*). Pak Sŭng-ho was appointed chair, with Hwang Ki-sŏng and Pak Sun-ch'ŏn serving as vice-chairs. The merger of these two organisations represented an extension of right-wing efforts to secure leadership at the provincial level and, through this base, to strengthen their position in confronting the U.S.–Soviet Joint Commission.[307] In 1946, four women, Shin Eui-kyung, Hwang Shin-dŏk, Pak Sŭng-ho, and Park Hyŏ-suk, were appointed by the U.S. Military Government to the newly established "South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly" (*Kwado Ippŏp Wiwŏnhoe*), becoming the first women to hold official legislative office. Despite their historic entry, they faced entrenched sexism. Their initiatives, including proposals for gender quotas and women's rights legislation, were dismissed as 'archaic' and ridiculed. Ultimately, their efforts exposed the persistence of patriarchal stereotypes and the structural limits of women's political participation in a male-dominated system.[308]

Right-wing political actors continued to oppose the trusteeship system and promoted

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Political Science and International Relations, 1991, 48–49.

[306] Yŏja bant'ak kangyŏn (여자반탁강연), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), January 4, 1946., Yŏsŏng kangyŏnhoe, Chungang Puindan-sŏ kaech'oe (여성강연회, 중앙부인단서 개최), *Sin Chosŏnbo* (신조선보), January 15, 1946., Yŏsŏng siguk kangyŏnhoe (여성시국강연회), *Seoul Sinmun* (서울신문), January 17, 1946., Puindŭl taegi ham, siguk yŏnsŏrhoe sŏnghwang (부인들 대기함, 시국연설회성황), *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), October 18, 1946.

[307] Yang Tong-suk양동숙, "Haebang hu Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Aeguk Puinhoe ŭi chojik kwa hwaldong yŏn'gu," 387.

[308] Kim Su-ja김수자, "Namjosŏn Kwado Ippŏb Ŭiwŏn yŏsŏng ŭiwŏn ŭi ippŏp hwaldong (1946–1948): 'Yŏsŏng Ŭiwŏn T'ŭkpyŏl Chwigŭb-an' ŭl chungsimŭro" (남조선과도입법의원 여성의원의 입법 활동(1946-1948): '여성의원 특별취급안'을 중심으로), "On study Women legislator's Acting of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly: on focusing 'the special electoral laws on women legislator','" *Ihwa Sahak Yŏn'gu* (이화사학연구) 53 (2016): 209–236.

women's participation in South Korea's unilateral elections, thereby playing a significant role in the establishment of a separate South Korean government and the consolidation of their political power.[309] In November 1946, several prominent right-wing women's organizations, including the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Military Government in Korea, were formally consolidated into a single body. Eight organizations merged to form the "National Federation of Women's Organizations" **(***Chŏn'guk Yŏsŏng Tanch'e Ch'ongyŏnmaeng*).[310] Through public lectures explaining the National Election Law, they advocated for women's right to vote and emphasized female political participation. Aligned with Syngman Rhee and the "Korea Democratic Party" (*Hanmindang*), they supported the anti-trusteeship movement and strongly endorsed the establishment of a separate South Korean government.[311]

The right-wing women's organizations developed a close relationship with the occupation authorities, receiving institutional support from the U.S. Military Government and expanding their influence accordingly. With the defeat and marginalization of leftist women's organizations, the emancipatory dimension of the women's movement was effectively erased. As a result, only the rights-based discourse of the right-wing women's groups remained institutionally recognized as the legitimate ideological foundation of post-liberation women's activism. Consequently, the orientation of women's liberation was reframed within the institutional and ideological boundaries of liberal democracy, becoming increasingly focused on issues of state-building and the distribution of power within formal political structures. In this context, mid-1940s ROK women's movements centered on institutional participation,

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[309] Chŏn Kyŏng-ok, Yu Sŭng-ran, Kim Ŭn-sil, Sin Hŭi-sŏn전경옥, 유승란, 김은실, 신희선, Han'guk yŏsŏng kŭnhyŏndae-sa 2: 1945–1980 (한국여성근현대사2: 1945-1980), *Han'guk Yŏsŏng Chŏngch'isa Hoe-sa* (한국여성정치사회사2), Sookmyung Women's University Asia Women's Research Institute (숙명여자대학교 아시아여성연구소), 296.

[310] Yi Sŭng-hŭi이승희, *Han'guk hyŏndae yŏsŏng undongsa* (한국현대여성 운동사), (Paeksan Sŏdang 백산서당,1994), 70–71.

[311] Chŏn Kyŏng-ok et.al., *Han'guk Yŏsŏng Chŏngch'isa Hoe-sa,* 299.

particularly through promoting women's education and equal opportunity as essential to nation-building. This resulted in a hierarchical dynamic in which elite women assumed a leading role in “enlightening” and “developing” lower-class women, reinforcing a top-down model of gender advancement.[312]

The first part of the chapter has shown that the post-liberation expansion of women's rights did not translate into substantive social emancipation, but instead facilitated the rise of elite-driven, right-wing women's organizations that aligned themselves with state-building and anti-trusteeship politics. These groups consolidated their influence through umbrella federations, collaboration with U.S. authorities, and the marginalization of left-wing women's activism, thereby defining women's political participation in narrowly institutional and nationalistic terms. While they achieved important legal reforms and secured women's visibility in formal politics, their agendas left the structural needs of ordinary women largely unaddressed. Ultimately, women's political agency in this period became a tool for consolidating a conservative postcolonial order rather than advancing broad-based gender liberation.

3.1.2. School Protests and Political Agency of Female Students

This part of the chapter examines the political agency of female students in the unstable educational landscape of post-liberation Korea. Young Korean women became active participants in school protests, strikes, and broader political movements. By analyzing incidents at institutions, the chapter highlights how female students challenged authority and articulated demands for autonomy and democracy. It also considers how media narratives frequently misirepresented their activism, obscuring the depth of their political engagement.

The educational landscape in southern Korea was marked by considerable instability after the

[312] Ibid.49.

liberation. Following the end of the Pacific War, schools implemented "temporary closures" beginning on August 16, 1945. As part of efforts to envision a new educational framework for a liberated Korea, schools organized "Autonomous Committees" to explore future directions for pedagogical reform.[313] However, regular classes did not resume until early October 1945. This extended interruption in formal education led many students to seek alternative forms of engagement through extracurricular or out-of-school activities.[314] In the summer of 1945, Korea had only one university and approximately twenty public and private professional schools. As of 1943, there were 18 private professional schools established by Koreans, while an additional 9 public and government-run institutions operated under the supervision of the Japanese colonial authorities. Among these institutions, the total number of students enrolled in higher education was 5,504, of whom only 1,225 were women. In terms of educational attainment, merely 0.03% of the Korean population had graduated from a university either domestically or abroad, and only 0.1% had completed a professional school education. Furthermore, the number of students enrolled in universities or professional schools per 10,000 people was fewer than 3 men and fewer than 1 woman.[315] Although the number of female students in southern Korea was steadily increasing at the time, it remained significantly lower than that of male students.

Despite their small numbers, female students actively and consistently participated in street protests and various forms of political action. Many were involved in left- or right-wing youth organizations that emerged after August 15, 1945, and even those not formally affiliated with

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[313] Paeje Paengnyŏnsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe (배재백년사 편찬위원회), *Paeje Paengnyŏnsa (1885–1985)* (배재백년사), (Seoul: Paeje Hakdang, 배재학당), 311.

[314] I Ch'ŏl-sŭng (이철승), *Han'guk haksaeng kŏn'guk undongsa*, 54.

[315] Explain also the fact that These figures reveal that under Japanese colonial rule, access to higher education was not merely limited. It was systematically and thoroughly denied. The data reflect the structural exclusion embedded in colonial education policies, which severely restricted Koreans' opportunities for academic advancement, particularly for women. Kim Kisŏk chŏ김기석, Han'guk kodŭng kyoyuk yŏn'gu (한국고등교육연구), 88, *Kyoyuk Kwahaksa* 교육과학사 (2008): 88–89.

a specific group engaged in street-level politics when circumstances demanded it. Campus unrest during this period included continuous strikes, protests, and demonstrations, and frequent class boycotts. Female students participated in these activities according to their own convictions and ideological orientations, demonstrating political agency in diverse ways. As discussed in Chapter 1, the political roles and symbolic significance of female students involved in the ATUS became even more pronounced during periods of intense repression and hardship.

The "Sookmyung Women's College Expulsion Incident" shows how female students were politically engaged within the educational sphere, and how the publication of left-wing and right-wing politics influenced the framing of female students as a non-political agency. At Sookmyung Women's College, several professors were accused of "inciting leftist ideology" in the classroom. One of the opposing faction's leaders, referred to as "Mr. Lee," was allegedly ridiculed in front of students and called a "dog." In response, the students condemned what they perceived as the misuse of "blackboard freedom" to propagate communism and insult opposition figures. They called for academic freedom, rejected partisan education, and ultimately declared a student strike.[316] Despite the students' clear political consciousness and agency, press coverage framed the incident in gendered, paternalistic terms. Newspaper reports claimed that the professors had "betrayed the trust of naive young women" and described the protest as an expression of "modest feminine virtue" and "proper decorum in the teacher-student relationship," suggesting that the students, as women, had reached their moral limit and acted out of emotional decency rather than political conviction.[317] Following the declaration of the student strike, female students at Sookmyung Women's College submitted formal letters of protest on May 29 and June 1. During this process, an incident occurred in which a student

[316] "Sukmyŏng Yŏjŏn sageon (숙명여전사건)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), June 8, 1946. (1)
[317] Ibid.

directed verbal abuse toward a faculty member. In response, the administration took disciplinary action: two first-year students, Hong Jin-ok and Kim Jae-soon, were expelled from the institution.[318] The right-wing newspaper acts of protest in which students directly confronted school authorities and challenged professors' responsibilities and interpreted their act as emotional overreactions specific to young women. *Dongalilbo* portrayed the incident not as political defiance but as an "emotional outburst by a highly sensitive young woman."[319] However, the student's responsibility was significantly downplayed. Reports from the *Chungang Shinmun* newspapers suggest that female students reacted more aggressively. The female student was involved not only in the physical assault of the teacher, but also in their filing of a false embezzlement accusation against the teacher.[320] This discrepancy highlights the selective framing employed by certain media outlets, which sought to portray female student activism as benign or emotionally driven, thereby masking the more confrontational and legally consequential aspects of their actions.[321]

A similar pattern appeared in media coverage of a collective student strike at Muhak Girls' High School, which was sparked by controversy over a vice principal's appointment. Following the strike, eight students, including one named Yu In-suk, were taken into custody and interrogated at Songdong Police Station. Newspaper accounts described the event in paternalistic terms, lamenting that "it is truly regrettable that, due to the school administration's mismanagement, young women, who should be growing up vigorously in a peaceful academic

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[318] "P'yŏndangdoen hak'wŏn e halaga (편당된 학원에 항거)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), June 8, 1946.

[319] "Sukmyŏng Yŏjŏn sageon (숙명여전사건)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), June 8, 1946. (1)

[320] "Hŏmuhan koso ihu, ŭisim toe nŭn paehu kwangye, Sukjŏn sageon kwa Kim Hongbŏm-ssi tam (허무한 고소이휴, 의심되는 배후관계, 숙전사건과 금홍범씨 담)," *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문), June 14, 1946.

[321] "Sukjŏn sageon chŭngin simmun, toe-hak mach'in yŏhaksaengdŭl ch'uldu (숙전사건 증인심문, 퇴학마친 여학생들 출두)," *Jungoe Sinbo* (중외신보), June 25, 1946., "Sasŏl, Sukjŏn sageon e kwallyŏn haya (사설, 숙전사건에 관련하야)," *Jungoe Sinbo* (중외신보), June 26, 1946.

environment, were driven to stage a walkout and even become entangled with the police."[322]

Although female students had played an autonomous role in organizing and leading the strike, media narratives displaced agency and responsibility onto the school authorities. The girls' actions were depicted as incidental and unintended, as though their political engagement was incompatible with their gendered roles and expected behavior.

Students' political actions and participation frequently led to expulsions, a pattern that drew increased public attention as a critical issue following the 1947 May Day incident. The expulsions came to be seen not only as punitive measures but also as violations of student rights and infringements on institutional autonomy. On May 1, 1947, in commemoration of International Workers' Day, the "Korean Federation of Trade Unions" (*Dehan Dokrib Nodong Chong Yonmeng*) organized a Preparatory Committee for the event. Ceremonies and gatherings were held at Seoul Stadium and Namsan Park as part of the official celebrations.[323] Over 1,000 students in the Seoul area were reported absent from school on that day. It is presumed that a significant number of them attended the gathering at Namsan Park. Several of the students who participated in the event were subsequently arrested and taken into police custody.[324] Police reportedly subjected key groups of student participants to aggressive interrogation, which included acts of physical abuse such as slapping and pulling their hair. Students from Baehwa Girls' Middle School who had taken part in the May Day commemorative event were issued expulsion orders being criminalized.[325]

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[322] "Muhak Ko Yŏmaeng hyu akhwa (무학고여맹휴악화)," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), November 23, 1946.

[323] "Tongja ŭi myŏngjŏl, Meidei kinyŏmsik (동자의 명절, 메이데이 기념식)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), May 1, 1947.

[324] Kim Tong-sŏn (김동선), "Migunjŏnggi Sŏul-si Hakmuguk hwal-dong kwa Meidei siwi haksaeng ch'amyŏ sageon (미군정기 서울시 학무국 활동과 메이데이 시위 학생참여 사건)," *Yŏksawa Kyoyuk* (역사와 교육) 31 (2020).

[325] "Hakdanghan Paehwa Yŏjungsaeng pokkyo t'orok chisihagetta (학당한 배화여중생 복교토록 지시하겠다)," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), May 11, 1947.

In response, novelist and poet Son So-hee contributed an editorial to *Buin Sinmun* titled "Students Are Still Unripe Fruit." She criticized the school's decision to expel students solely for participating in the May Day event, calling it unjust. She expressed concern that schools, which ought to "awaken students to their errors, nourish the eyes of wisdom, and cultivate their character," were instead choosing expulsion as a response. While she acknowledged that expulsion was an excessive punishment, she argued that student involvement in civic movements and demonstrations should be avoided and viewed as a matter requiring guidance and instruction within the school setting.[326]

However, student participation in protests was not universally regarded as wrongful behavior. On May 30, 1947, the "Seoul Journalists' Association" issued an "Open Letter to the Educational Sector," calling for the democratization of educational administration and addressing disciplinary measures against students. The association acknowledged that "students cannot be completely isolated from society" and that "students are seeking and yearning for something beyond their textbooks." It criticized the practice of referring students to prosecutors and imposing punishments such as expulsion, suspension, or disciplinary probation, describing these measures as uneducational and excessively harsh. The letter further emphasized that such actions reflected "undemocratic and reactionary policies."[327]

Seventy students from Baehwa Girls' Middle School held a hunger strike in front of the principal's office from the night of May 29 to June 2, demanding the reinstatement of seven expelled classmates. According to reports, some students even refused meals brought from home by their parents, and some fainted during the sit-in.[328]

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[326] Son So-hŭi (손소희), "Haksaeng ŭn ajik tŏl-ik'ŭn kwasil (학생은 아직 덜익은 과실)," *Puin Sinmun* (부인신문), May 20, 1947.

[327] "Kyoyukgye e ponaenŭn konggaejang (교육계에 보내는 공개장)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), May 30, 1947.

[328] "Paehwa Yŏjungsaengdŭl ŭn pokkyo yogu nongsŏng (배화여중생들은 복교요구농성)," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), June 3, 1947.

Although students' views differed depending on circumstances, the strikes were broadly regarded as a necessary form of protest in defense of a democratic academic community. *Kyunghyang Shinmun* hosted a special student edition of its series, "The People's Voice Appealing to the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission: Mobile Roundtable Discussions." This discussion captured students' views at Ewha Womans University *on* the strict disciplinary measures enforced by the Department of Education and the suppression of student activities. In June 1947, as the "Second U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission" was approaching, students expressed hopes for its success and, above all, anticipated the establishment of a unified democratic government across North and South Korea. University students collectively voiced a desire to appeal to the Commission for a reform of the academic environment. One student, identified as Ms. C, remarked: "Right now, student opinion is not being heard in schools. The next government must be committed to building a truly democratic academic system. In terms of education policy, the state should cover tuition at least through middle school and provide financial assistance to university students so that no talented student is ever denied an education due to lack of funds. Moreover, we need an education policy that prevents incidents like the mass boycott against the "National University Plan," so that students can focus on their studies without fear."[329] She supported publicly funded education and state protection of students' right to study, arguing for a government that would remove the need for protest, such as the boycotts caused by the rushed implementation of the National University Plan. Ms. R added, "Students must be guaranteed autonomy. Teachers who resent students and lack qualifications should step down, and only competent educators should be in schools. The police must never interfere in academic spaces."[330] Ms. A also commented, "As students, we're not obligated to participate in 'May Day,' but even when a few do, punishing them with expulsion or suspension

[329] "Misogongwi e hosohanŭn inmin ŭi sori (10) Haksaeng p'yŏn (미소공위에 호소하는 인민의 소리 (10) 학생편)," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), June 5, 1947.
[330] Ibid.

is far too harsh. A proper government would never allow such repression."[331]

The interview shows that female students felt they lacked autonomy within the academic system and did not regard the existing state as one that suppressed their participation and punished their expression.

In sum, the female students played a far more significant role in post-liberation political activism than contemporary media or authorities acknowledged. Their participation in strikes, labor demonstrations, and school-based protests reflected a clear and deliberate critique of authoritarian educational practices and undemocratic interference by school administration and police. Yet the press often dismissed their actions as emotional or immature, making the confrontational and politically conscious nature of their activism. By tracing their hunger strikes, public petitions, and demands for academic freedom and student rights, the second part of the chapter demonstrated that female students were not peripheral actors but key contributors to the emerging discourse on democratic education and youth political agency.

3.1.3. Female Student's Political Identity Struggle: Between the Ivory Tower and the Street.

This section explores how female students negotiated the conflicting demands of academic achievement, political engagement, and restrictive gender norms. Young students articulated competing visions of what it meant to be an "ideal" female student in a rapidly changing society.

As the preceding cases illustrate, female students were aware that their social reality was closely intertwined with their own lives, and they actively reflected on the actions they should take in balancing social engagement with their academic responsibilities. Some did not hesitate

[331] Ibid.

to resort to confrontational or even violent means to pursue their goals, while others asserted their convictions through hunger strikes.

Despite the considerable political participation of female students during the U.S. Military Government period, they were often treated as incomplete subjects, positioned as distant from autonomous political judgment and action. In the immediate post-liberation years, female students were rarely recognized as political actors in their own right; instead, they were continually cast as peripheral or as mere instruments of mobilization.

The female students had to fight against social norms to gain political agency constantly. The periodical *Saesalim*[332] included a dedicated section titled "The Female Student Page." In its inaugural January issue, a middle school student, Yun Namkyung, and a university student, Kang Jung-im, each contributed an essay titled "The Ideal Female Student Today," expressing their respective views on the ideal image of a female student. These writings are significant because they reflect on popular culture among middle school students at the time, their political participation, and their self-perception as female students. According to Yun, some peers who claimed to be "progressive" were described as frequently gathering to talk about movie stars, recently imported films, translated literature, and boy types.[333] Female students were active cultural consumers, engaging with transnational texts as members of a bilingual generation, and were in the process of shaping their own tastes. At the same time, others dismissed such behavior and instead focused intensively on exam preparation.

Yun's reflection, "if all of them are ideal, then perhaps none of them are truly ideal," suggests that the notion of the "ideal female student" is not singular but composed of a diversity of figures. Calling into question the very act of distinguishing between the ideal and the non-ideal. Yun Nam-kyung writes: "Is it ideal to run around engaging in political activity just because of

[332] Add the feature of the periodical.

[333] (일본문단 나스메 소세키의 '명암'과 가가와 도요히코, '인생독본' 라스키-ㄴ의 호X와 백합')

the national anthem? Is it ideal to stay locked in a room studying all day? Is it ideal to shout about gender equality while having nothing but an empty head? I've had a hard time understanding what 'ideal' really means. If you pile up too many good conditions, it's no longer an ideal but a fantasy. An ideal should be something at least partially achievable. (...) Since I can't figure out what kind of ideal we're talking about, this is all I can say."[334] What is especially noteworthy here is that Yun shows how female students were actively reflecting on how to orient their lives, whether toward political engagement or academic achievement. Furthermore, even as "gender equality" was one of the era's central discourses, the act of "talking about" gender equality was framed by some as drifting between idealism and fantasy, suggesting the contested nature of the discourse itself.

Kang Jung-im, a student in the College of Liberal Arts at Ewha Womans University, also reflected on the lived experiences of Korean women and examined shifts in the lives and aspirations of female students after Liberation from colonial rule. Speaking from the perspective of a student under colonial rule, she asked: "After we developed a budding intellectual awareness and began to take an interest in society, what did we ultimately gain, if not the fundamental falseness of society and a retreat from it?" She noted that "the ideal female student we have experienced was the one who wore the badges of labor service, national language (Japanese) use, and examination excellence tightly across her chest."[335] This referred to the wartime mobilization period, during which girls' education was redirected to cultivate women who would become "imperial subjects who serve the empire," internalizing their duties under the Japanese wartime regime. As discussed in the previous paragraph, the Government-General of Korea sought to expand Korean women's practical obligations to the state and implemented training programs to instill "devotion and service." Students were required to

[334] Kang Chŏng-im (강정임), "Isangjŏgin yŏhaksaeng (이상적인 여학생)," Saesallim (새살림), January 1947, 25.
[335] Ibid., 26

participate in labor corps and mobilization programs during school breaks or even during the academic term, and Japanese had to be used during school hours.[336]

Kang Jung-im emphasized that she was not denying the talents or character of female students recognized during the colonial period. Still, she argued that the discourse on the "ideal female student" created during that era was, in her words, a "sandcastle," lacking a stable foundation and therefore incapable of enduring. This reveals her awareness of her own past participation in colonial mobilization as a female student and her ongoing critical reflection on the very subjectivity constructed through the figure of the "ideal female student." Kang Jung-im recalled that, after Liberation, Korea's academic institutions "could no longer remain isolated from society, and thus all social phenomena were laid bare before us." She wrote, "During the first year after Liberation, the social situation appeared utterly chaotic to us, who had been preoccupied with rediscovering forgotten truths from within the ivory tower, long removed from the outside world." At the same time, Kang distanced herself from those female students who stepped outside the school system to engage in overt political activity. "I saw female students who left the academic world and stood before the masses to deliver sharp criticisms. But that is not the kind of female student we consider ideal. She is no longer a student." With this, she drew a clear boundary between students and those engaged in public political action. Nonetheless, she emphasized that this did not mean female students should be blind to social realities. Rather, she asserted that they should take greater responsibility and have ambition, especially in relation to what was then commonly referred to as the movement for gender equality. She concluded by presenting her image of the ideal female student: one who strives for "academic freedom" and a "democratic academy," but without falling into "chaotic

[336] Pak Hyŏn-ok, Chang Kyusik, Hwang Kuk-sik (박현옥, 장규식, 황국식), "Hwangguk singminhwa chŏngch'aekgi hakgyo kyoyuk ŭi pyŏnjil kwa yŏhaksaeng ŭi jŏnsi tongwŏn (황국식민화 정책기 학교 교육의 변질과 여학생의 전시동원)," *Honam Sahakhoe* (호남사학회), 2024, 152–153.

liberalism," and who faces the new era "with strength, confidence, and a firm step, no less than any man."[337]

While some supported greater social engagement and public activity among female students, others viewed such behavior as a form of unruliness and opposed it. Pak Daeyong, a student in a Women's College of Education, expressed the former view in his article titled "Female Students and Nora." She urged female students to take a more active role in society. Observing Korean culture at the time, she wrote that most women resembled Nora in A Doll's House[338], content to be Helmer's perfect product, proudly confined within the "doll's house."[339] Pak challenged female students: "Are you content to enjoy being caressed as dolls? Do you simply lack the courage to break out of outdated customs?" She criticized the fact that most female students, particularly those in colleges, who were identified as the "intellectual elite," came from privileged backgrounds. Although they "possess their own will and know what truth is," she argued, they refrained from acting because of familial restrictions and fear of social criticism within Korean society. She characterized the female student as a "bridge between eras," acknowledging that she may face misunderstanding and condemnation in the short term, yet called upon her to participate in political life.

"Isn't our nation, Chosŏn, now engaged in a bloody struggle under the banner of building

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[337] Kang Chŏng-im (강정임), "Isangjŏgin yŏhaksaeng (이상적인 여학생)," Saesallim (새살림), January 1947, 26.

[338] For the Influence and Acceptance of Helbers's *A Doll's House* in Korean literature history see Kim Miji (김미지), "Inhyŏng ŭi chip, Nora ŭi suyong pangsik kwa sosŏljŏk pyŏnju yangsang — 1920–30nyŏndae sosŏl kwa p'yongmun e wŏnyongdoen 'Nora' ŭi ŭimiro chungsimŭro (인형의 집, '노라'의 수용 방식과 소설적 변주 양상-1920-30년대 소설과 평문에 원용된 '노라'의 의미를 중심으로)," Han'guk Hyŏndae Munhak Yŏn'gu (한국현대문학연구) 14 (2003). Yi Su-ŭn (이수은), "T'ŭkchip: Pŏnyŏg ŭi Tongasiajŏk kyebo wa munhwajŏk sangsang: Ipsen ŭro toedorabon Tongasia kŭndae kigye; Han'guk kwa Chung-guk esŏ ŭi 'Inhyŏng ŭi chip' suyong kwa Nora (특집 번역의 동아시아적 계보와 문화적 상상: 입센으로 되돌아본 동아시아 근대 기획; 한국과 중국에서의 '인형의집' 수용과 노라)," Minjok Munhak Sahak Yŏn'gu (민족문학사학연구) 58 (2015).

[339] "Haksaeng kwa 'Nora' (학생과 '노라')," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), January 19, 1947.

a democratic state? And yet, are we to look the other way, pretending this fight is a man's affair, something women need not concern themselves with? Can we afford to do that? Female students who bear the responsibility of guiding the women of Korea should be awakened to this reality. They must cast off the life of spiritual subjugation, assume a sense of responsibility, and live as full and dignified human beings. In a democracy, every citizen has the right and the duty to participate in politics. Women, being citizens too, cannot be excluded from that right, nor can they shirk that duty. We must break free from outdated customs, escape the shackles of the old society, and stand tall, as complete human beings."[340]

While she was urgently calling for the political equality and self-realization of women to be part of the national democratic movement, Female students were aware of the social discourses imposed upon their identities, as well as how these narratives contributed to women's marginalization and self-restraint. An anonymous contributor, referred to as "Student P," submitted an essay titled "Housewives and Reading." She criticized persistent attitudes in Korean society, exemplified by remarks such as: "If you have time to read, quietly knit a pair of socks instead," or "What good is reading for a woman? Once she's married, that's the end of it. A woman doesn't need anything more than to work hard, scrub with soap, cook well, and be obedient to her elders. What's the use of books?" She pointed out that many fathers and mothers still spoke this way and asked, "Must women, who are part of the same serious struggle for survival, be so casually dismissed?"[341] She called for respect for women not only as domestic workers but also as contributors to nation-building. P went further, criticizing educated women who ridiculed or withdrew from these issues, stating that such detachment

[340] Ibid.

[341] 가정부인과 독서, P생)," Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), February 9, 1947.

was shameful for anyone claiming to be part of the nation's founding effort. She wrote, "Even now, many of us harbor latent prejudice when we see women who actively participate in society, suspecting that they do so not from strength but out of financial desperation or emotional distress, such as heartbreak." Another significant observation P made was that "once female students leave school with their diplomas, whether from secondary or professional colleges, they tend to grow distant from reading." Her essay ultimately called for the recognition of women's intellectual development and appealed to teachers and older students for "kindness and encouragement so that women can become individuals truly deserving of gender equality." She concluded with a strong claim, "The cultivation of women's intellect enriches the cultural standard of a nation, contributes to its development, and becomes a powerful force in itself."[342] This section has shown that female students were deeply engaged in redefining their roles, challenging colonial legacies, and confronting social norms that constrained women's intellectual and political participation. While their views diverged, some prioritizing activism, others academic discipline, they shared a common desire to claim greater autonomy and to expand the horizons of women's citizenship.

3.2. Female Student's Oratorical Contest

3.2.1. Staging Patriotism: Women, Youth, and Politics of Speech of Right-Wing Women's Associations.

This part examines how the right-wing women's organizations during the USAMGIK period in Korea used oratorical contests as staged performances of patriotism and ideological discipline. Through coordinated efforts by parties, newspapers, and women's associations,

[342] Ibid.

these events mobilized young women and students as symbolic actors in the nation-building project. The chapter highlights how speech contests crafted a gendered political culture in which patriotism, anti-communism, and women's education were tightly intertwined.

The earliest oratorical contest for women during the USAMGIK period was initiated with financial support from right-wing parties and newspapers, thereby forming an early nexus among educational figures, prominent intellectuals, and politicians. Just as oratorical contests rapidly shifted to the right in the aftermath of the anti-trusteeship movement, so too did those organized for women, which increasingly came to be initiated chiefly by right-wing women intellectuals.

The "Patriotic Women's League" (*Aeguk Punyŏ Tongmaeng*), founded in January 1946[343] to oppose trusteeship, organized the "Independence Achievement Oratorical Contest" as part of its political mobilization. Participation was limited to youth representatives and students, who were required to submit 20-minute speech outlines for review. The contest offered monetary prizes and was publicized in major newspapers with appeals framing the event as a national survival imperative. By mandating the presence of all applicants on the day of the event, the League ensured both mass attendance and wide visibility, integrating women's activism into the emergent culture of oratory-based political mobilization.[344]

The "Independence Achievement Oratorical Contests," convened on 22 February 1946 under the auspices of the "Patriotic Women's League," illustrate how early post-liberation oratory became a staged ritual of political pedagogy. Chaired by League president Par Ŭn-sang, and preceded by Hon Man-gil, the special lecture "The Way to Denounce Traitors," and the event brought together thirty-six entrants, of whom thirteen were selected to speak. Prizes went to

[343] Aeguk Puinyŏ Tongmaeng kyŏlsŏng (애국부녀동맹결성), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), p. 2, January 9, 1946.

[344] Tongnip chŏnch'wi ungbyŏn taehoe nae 22-il ro yŏnggi(독립전취웅변대회 내 22일로 연기), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보) p. 2, February 18, 1946., Kwanggo, Tongnip chŏnch'wi ungbyŏn taehoe(광고, 독립전취웅변대회), *Chungang Sinmun* (중앙신문) February 16, 1946.

three secondary school students, while a special award was given to the elementary school pupil Kim Yong-hyŏn.[345]

Press coverage placed particular emphasis on the symbolic resonance of youthful participation. *Tong'a Ilbo*, celebrated Kim Yong-hyŏn's address "The Road to Independence" as a display of "innocent patriotic passion from a child's heart." Similarly, the speech of Yangjŏng Middle School student Yi Yong-hwa, though not among the winners, was highlighted for stirring and enthusiastic audience response.[346] Such framing underscored how the contest sought not merely to select prizewinners but to cultivate affective exemplars of patriotic speech, with children and students staged as embodiments of Korea's independent future, under an anti-truesteeship banner.

Women politicians sought to regulate sporadic political action while, at the same time, recognizing the need to cultivate female students as their successors in political subjectivity and to educate them in ways that would sustain and carry forward such engagement. The "Independence Promotion Patriotic Women's Association the Independence Promotion" sought to carry out a women's enlightenment campaign through its own newspapers, *Pu'in Sinbo* and *Kajŏng Sinmun,* designed especially for a female readership. As with the broader oratorical contests involving both male and female students at the time, many newspapers also hosted or sponsored speech contests specifically for women.

Kajŏng Sinmun was published by the same company as *Taedong Sinmun*[347]*, and* was edited

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[345] Tongnip chŏnch'wi ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang(독립전취웅변대회 성황), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), February 23, 1946. Chosŏn Aeguk Puinyŏ Tongmaeng chuch'oe ungbyŏn taehoe taesŏnghwang – chakil Chŏngdong yebaedang-eseo(조선애국부녀동맹주최 웅변대회 대성황-작일 정동예배당에서), *Daedong Sinmun* (대동신문), February 23, 1946.

[346] Tongnip chŏnch'wi ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang (독립전취웅변대회 성황), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), February 23, 1946.

[347] The Daedong Sinmun was founded on November 25, 1945, under the leadership of its publisher Yi Chong-hyŏng, with Hwang Sŏk-u serving as chief editorial writer and Ch'oe Wansik as managing editor. From its inception, the newspaper actively supported the far-right political line. Its publisher, Yi Chong-yŏng, personally authored editorials in which he attacked the political left in language that was often coarse and inflammatory. Kim Min-hwan 김민환*, Han'guk ŏllonsa* (한국언론사), (Nanam Ch'ulp'an 나남출판2002), 332.

by Yi Ch'wisŏng, who served as the head of the propaganda bureau of the *Women's National Party* (여자국민당). The newspaper represented the party's position and consistently expressed unwavering support for Syngman Rhee. It is also crucial to recall that Yi Ch'wisŏng's husband, Yi Chonghyŏng, who held the actual managerial authority over the paper, served as the head of the propaganda bureau of the "National Independence Promotion Association (*Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Kungminhoe*)[348] and actively engaged in political activities strongly supporting Syngman Rhee.[349]

The *Kajŏng Sinmun* took initiatives to engage the public's attention and organized "National Women's Oratorical Contest" on March 31, 1946, at Chŏngdong Church. From the outset, the contest revealed its anti-communist orientation by restricting eligibility to representatives of women's organizations, students, and individuals, explicitly excluding members of the Communist Party and its affiliates. The organizers described the event as an opportunity for "our women, who are socially and politically poised for great progress, to reflect and assert their beliefs," and as a chance to "express the patriotic sincerity of the women's world to thirty million people." Participants were required to submit a written summary of their 20-minute

[348] The National Association for the Promotion of Independence (Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Kungminhoe, 독립촉성국민회; hereafter Independence Promotion Association) was established on February 8, 1946, through the merger of the Central Council for the Promotion of Independence (Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Chungang Hyŏphŭihoe독립촉성중앙협의회; hereafter Central Promotion Council), an organization created by Syngman Rhee, and the Anti-Trusteeship National Mobilization Committee (S'intak T'ongch'i Pant'ae Kungmin Ch'ongdongwŏn Wiwŏnhoe, 신탁통치반대국민총동원위원회; hereafter Anti-Trusteeship Committee), which had been organized by Provisional Government forces during their leadership of the anti-trusteeship campaign. The Independence Promotion Association became the most important nationwide right-wing organization in the process of state formation under the U.S. military occupation. Im Sŏnhwa 임선화, "Migunjŏnggi Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Kungminhoe Chŏnnam chibu ŭi kyŏlsŏng kwa kusŏngwŏn ŭi hwaldong" (미군정기 독립촉성국민회 전남지부의 결성과 구성원의 활동 The Formation of the South Chŏlla Branch of the National Association for the Promotion of Independence during the U.S. Military Government and the Activities of Its Members)," Yŏksahak Yŏn'gu (역사학연구) 68 (2017): 121–145.

[349] Pak Yonggyu 박용규, "Migunjŏnggi yŏsŏng sinmun kwa yŏsŏng undong" (미군정기 여성신문과 여성운동 "Women's Newspapers and the Women's Movement during the U.S. Military Government)," *Han'guk Ŏllon Chŏngbo Hakpo* (한국언론정보학보) 19 (2002): 135.

speeches in advance. Only those whose entries were approved by the selection committee composed of, *Kajŏng Sinmun* and *Taedong Sinmun* editors would be granted the right to speak, with their names posted at the venue on the same day of the event. As a result, all applicants had to prepare their speeches in full beforehand, without knowing if they would be permitted to deliver them. [350]

The oratorical contests were described as one of "warmth and sincerity in a familial atmosphere." Francesca Rhee, Syngman Rhee's wife, gave a congratulatory address, encouraging women "to develop their freedom of debate no less than men." After the event concluded, the editor-in-chief and head judge, Im Yŏng-sin, delivered remarks along with other commentators.[351] The *Kajŏng Sinmun,* however, ceased publication within a year and therefore did not continue to sponsor or organize oratorical contests, leaving the event as a one-time occurrence.

On May 10, 1947, *Yŏsŏn Sinmun*[352] highlighted Yi Yun-suk, the winner of the "National Male and Female Student Oratorical Contest" organized by the "National Student Cultural Research Association" held at the YMCA auditorium. Yi Yun-suk was an eighteen-year-old third-year student at "Tongdŏk Girls' Middle School" who delivered a speech entitled "An Announcement to Korean Female Students" (Chosŏn yŏhaksaeng ege koham). She received the Special Prize from the Ministry of Education.[353] The *Women's Newspaper* published the

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[350] Kwanggo, Chŏngguk yŏja ungbyŏn taehoe (광고, 전국여자웅변대회), Kajŏng Sinmun (가정신문), March 25–28, 1946.. A promotional notice encouraging participation in the oratory contest was published continuously for four days.

[351] Ibid.

[352] The *Ladies Daily* (*Yŏsŏngsinmun*여성신문) was established by Hwang Ki Sŏng (황기성),the president of "Young Women's Christan Association" (YWCA) of Korea and the leader of the Women Branch of "Central Promotion Council (대한촉성중앙협의회)." I Ŭn-sŏn 이은선, "Taehan Tongnip Ch'oksŏng Kungminhoe wa Kidokkyo" (대한독립촉성국민회와 기독교 The National Association for the Promotion of Korean Independence and Christianity)," *Han'guk Kyohoe Sahakji* (한국교회사학지) 46 (2017): 294.

[353] Yi Yunsuk 이윤숙, "Yŏhaksaeng ege koham, Tongdŏk Yŏjung 3-haknyŏn (sang)" (여학생에게 고함, 동덕여중 3학년(상), *Yŏsŏng Sinmun* (여성신문), May 20, 1947.

news under the headline, "Miss Yi Yun-suk Wins First Prize, Defeating Strong Male Competitors," and published an exceptionally full text of Yi's speech over the course of two days.[354]

The structure of Yi's oration is divided into four main stages. In the introduction, she reflected on the lives of women who had endured conditions of servitude during both the Chosŏn dynasty and the period of Japanese imperialism, urging the necessity of women's liberation in the present moment. The second section identified female students as the very agents responsible for resolving the condition of Chosŏn women's enslavement. In this context, she singled out as targets of moral reform "those women who cover themselves in luxury and display" and "those who, chasing vanity, roam the streets late at night." While this language alluded to prostitutes, it also broadly encompassed any women who acted outside socially sanctioned norms of sexuality and attitude in traditional society. Yet these women, too, she insisted, were Chosŏn women, "women who have struggled amid ignorance, poverty, and harsh life," and "pitiful Korean women without education or cultivation." She further invoked "those who spend their lives silently in factories, in the dirt, in the roar of engines," namely, women workers and peasant women, as subjects who must likewise become recipients of "the benefits of culture."[355]

In the third part, she called upon her peers: "If Chosŏn women are to achieve equal rights with men, they must, above all, raise their intellectual level in practical terms while also cultivating sufficient capacity." She emphasized that "we, the students who lead the women of the New Korea, are creating history itself." Female students of Korea, she proclaimed, would become

[354] Kangjŏk namhaksaengdŭl ta mullich'igo t'ŭktŭng e Yi Yunsuk yang, Chŏngguk haksaeng hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang (강적 남학생들 다 물리치고 특등에 이윤숙 양, 전국학생현상웅변대회 성황), *Yŏsŏng Sinmun* (여성신문), May 13, 1947.

[355] Yi Yunsuk 이윤숙, "Yŏhaksaeng ege koham, Tongdŏk Yŏjung 3-haknyŏn (sang)" (여학생에게 고함, 동덕여중 3학년(상)), Yŏsŏng Sinmun (여성신문), May 20, 1947.

the "vanguard of women," the "so-called intelligentsia, the cultured women of Chosŏn, who, with their strength and passion, can revive the illiterate women and the women blinded by vanity." Finally, in her conclusion, Yi attributed women's moral decline to a lack of cultivation. Summarizing her argument, she declared, "The day when they (women) become self-aware will be the day of true liberation for Korean women." Yi closed with an exhortation to her fellow students: "For the liberation of Chosŏn, indeed, for the construction of a truthful democracy, let us press forward with strength, with passion, and with courage."[356]

The content of Yi Yun-suk's oration adopted a highly didactic tone, ultimately urging female students to dedicate themselves to study to "redeem" working-class women and those engaged in prostitution by extending to them the benefits of culture and education. Yet the notion of "democracy" invoked here appears to have been employed in an expansive sense, not as an institutional framework but as a moral ideal. This is because in the context of 1947, democracy was often articulated less as a systematically defined ideology than as a transcendent value, a form of the "highest good."[357]

Tu summarize, the women's oratorical contest became a powerful tool through which right-wing associations shaped youth political participation and cultivated a gendered vision of patriotic citizenship. By elevating young female speakers as embodiments of Korea's democratic future, while excluding leftist voices, these events fused nationalism with moral reform and framed women's enlightenment as essential to the nation's survival. Figures like Yi Yun-suk exemplified this project, articulating a politics that linked women's education, moral uplift, and anti-communist loyalty. Ultimately, these contests reveal how post-liberation right-

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[356] Yi Yunsuk 이윤숙, "Yŏhaksaeng ege koham, Tongdŏk Yŏjung 3-haknyŏn (ha)" (여학생에게 고함, 동덕여중 3학년(하)), *Yŏsŏng Sinmun* (여성신문), May 21, 1947.

[357] Pak Chi-yŏng 박지영, Poksu ŭi 'minjujuŭi' dŭl — Haebanggi inmin (simin), kunjung (taejung) kaenyŏm pŏnyŏk ŭl chungsimŭro" 복수의 '민주주의'들-해방기 인민(시민), 군중(대중) 개념 번역을 중심으로 Plural Democracies — Focused on the translation of concepts of people/citizen and crowd/mass), Daedong Munhwa Yeon'gu no.85 (2014): 56.

wing women's groups sought to define women's agency not through structural liberation but through carefully orchestrated performances of patriotic femininity.

3.2.2. Im Yŏng-sin and Chungang Women's University Oratorical Contests

This part of the chapter examines how Im Yŏng-sin, educator and political activist, used Chung-Ang Women's University as a platform to advance women's higher education and public leadership during the USAMGIK period. By establishing Korean and English oratorical contests for female students, she positioned public speaking as a central tool for cultivating civic consciousness and national responsibility among young women.

Im Yŏng-sin was one of the pioneers who began organizing the Oratorical contest exclusively for female students. "Chung-Ang Women's University's" decision to host both English and Korean oratorical contests was closely tied to the university director's educational philosophy, Im Yeong-sin. "Chung-Ang Women's College" was founded under the Professional School Ordinance, with Article 1 of its charter stating its purpose as providing higher education to women in literature, childcare, and economics. Im Yeong-sin believed that the most effective path to elevating Korean women to a level equal to that of men was through education that would enable them to develop self-awareness. It was on this basis that she established Chung-Ang Women's College.[358] Since assuming the position of principal in 1935 by taking over Chung-Ang Childcare School, which had been facing closure due to financial difficulties, Im

[358] The origins of Chungang University can be traced to the reopening of the Chungang Childcare School, which had closed in 1944 but resumed operations on September 27, 1945; this reopening subsequently led to the establishment of a women's professional college. On September 29, Im Yŏng-sin submitted a formal request to the Director of Education of the Korean Civil Affairs Division of the United States Army Military Government for authorization to establish Chungang Women's Professional School. The institution proceeded to recruit students for its Departments of Literature, Childcare, and Economics, and on October 1 held a combined ceremony marking its opening, matriculation, and commencement of classes. Chungang Taehakkyo Kyosa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe. Chungang Taehakkyo-sa: 1918–1968 (중앙대학교사:1918–1968). (Seoul: Chungang University), 1970.

Yeong-sin had pursued a long-term plan to expand women's education in Korea. Her educational vision emphasized practical instruction suited to social realities, combining both vocational training for public engagement and domestic education for home life.[359] She underscored the importance of women's future responsibilities in Korea, advocating for the cultivation of cooperative, diligent, and creative female citizens. From the late 1930s onward, she consistently emphasized both the "housewife's responsibility to the home" and "the woman's responsibility to society."[360] This dual focus was, in part, a strategic response to the prevailing reality that even women involved in public life were still expected to marry and assume domestic roles.[361] Additionally, her plan to establish departments in commerce or economics at the university reflected her commitment to providing women with higher-level, professional education equivalent to that of men, grounded in both industrial and vocational training.[362]

She was also actively working in the political arena during the Military occupation period. Although Im Yŏng-sin was critical of the U.S. Military Government for provoking Korean resentment through its appointment of collaborators from the Japanese colonial period, she nonetheless maintained a broadly sympathetic stance toward it. She emphasized the importance

[359] "Kaengsaeng ŭi Chungang Poyuk, kyŏngje kwado tul t'ŏ, kyojang chŏngsin ingarŭl pat'ŭn sin'im kyojang Im kyojang ŭi pobudam (갱생의 중앙보육, 경제과도 둘 터, 교장 정신 인가를 받은 신임 교장 임교장의 포부담)," *Chosŏn Chungang Ilbo* (조선중앙일보), June 4, 1932, 5.

[360] "Sŏnghwang ŭi Chinnampo yŏsŏng munje kangyŏn (성황의 진남포 여성문제 강연)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), May 12, 1936, 5. "Kajŏng Puin Hyŏphoe chuch'oe, kajŏng munje kangyŏnhoe (가정부인협회 주최, 가정문제강연회)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), February 2, 1934, 5., "Yŏsŏng munje taegangyŏnhoe, chuch'oe P'yŏngyang Yŏja Kidokkyo Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe (여성문제대강연회, 주최 평양여자기독교청년회)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), June 28, 1934, 3.

[361] Kim Sŏng-ŭn 김성은, "1930-nyŏndae Im Yŏngsin ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyukgwan kwa Chungang Poyuk Hakgyo (1930년대 임영신의 여성교육관과 중앙보육학교Louise Yim's view of woman's education and Chungang kindergarten normal in the 1930's)," *Han'guk Minjok Undongsa Yŏn'gu* (한국민족운동사연구) 71 (2012): 229.

[362] Kim, Seong Eun김성은, 일제시기 김활란의 여성의식과 여성교육론Hellen Kim's thought of women's right and Korean women's education, *Yŏksawa* Kyŏnggye (역사와경계) no. 79 (2011): 213~220.

of the U.S. role, as articulated in the Cairo and Potsdam Declarations, in securing Korea's independence.[363]

Im Yŏng-sin first appeared on the political stage of the liberation period on 12 September 1945, when General Hodge, upon entering southern Korea with the U.S. XXIV Corps under the command of the Tenth Army, convened a meeting with representatives of fifty-one political and cultural organizations. Speaking "on behalf of Korean women," she offered words of gratitude. Soon thereafter, she founded and chaired the unprecedentedly gender-explicit Korea Women's National Party, which held a two-day party congress from 30 May to 1 June 1946.[364] Remarkably, she distinguished herself as one of the earliest and most proactive figures in appealing to the American-centred international community to resolve Korea's problems, demonstrating exceptional skill in this regard. From late 1946 to 1947, Im was dispatched to the United Nations, where she became the only female public figure to appear almost daily, and often on the front page, of the press.[365] At the large-scale farewell event organized by the *Korea Women's National Party,* she had led, commemorative gifts intended for prominent international women, such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Bess Truman, were openly discussed.[366] Amid fervent media coverage, Im increasingly positioned herself and was represented as a

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[363] Kim Sŏng-ŭn 김성은, "1930-nyŏndae Im Yŏngsin ŭi yŏsŏng kyoyukgwan kwa Chungang Poyuk Hakgyo (1930년대 임영신의 여성교육관과 중앙보육학교)," *Han'guk Minjok Undongsa Yŏn'gu* (한국민족운동사연구) 71 (2012): 229.

[364] "Yŏsŏng undong ŭi kŏbo, Yŏja Kungmindang Chŏngguk Taehoe kaemak (여성운동의 거보, 여자국민당전국대회 개막)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), June 1, 1946., "Chŏngguk yŏsŏng taehoe ŭi ŭiŭi (전국여성대회의 의의)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), June 1, 1946.

[365] "Ponsa t'ŭkp'a-wŏn Im Yŏngsin yŏsa Nyuyok UN ch'onghoe ch'amseok (본사특파원 임영신 여사 뉴욕UN총회 참석)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), November 1946.., "Im Yŏngsin ŭi Miso Yanggun ch'ŏlt'oe yogo UN ŭl t'onghae kukche podo kigoe che-si kyŏlchŏng (임영신의 미소양군철퇴요구 UN을 통해 국제보도기구에 제시 결정)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 4, 1946. "Im yŏsa pigongsik ch'amka (임여사 비공식참가)," *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), November 7, 1946.

[366] "Chiphoe Im Yŏngsin t'omi, Yŏja Kungmindang songbyŏlhoe (집회 임영신 도미, 여자국민당 송별회)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), August 10, 1946..

national delegate of South Korea. Her diplomatic achievements were subsequently recognized, leading to her appointment as the first Minister of Commerce and Industry in the inaugural cabinet.[367]

When Synman Rhee arrived in Korea from the U.S. in October, she started to work as his secretary[368], and in November 1945, she petitioned for speakers to be dispatched to the provinces in order to explain the intentions of the U.S. Military Government in rural places. She recalled that "the entire country was being swept up by the tide of Communist propaganda," and she appealed to the Public Information Office to address this situation. A few Koreans were selected as speakers but lacking knowledge of Americans objectives in Korean and uncertain about what to say, they failed to gain ths sympathy of the public. Im uiltimately undertook the taks herself and together with Hwang Hyŏn-suk and Chŏng Chu-sŏng, she visited “every high school” in South korea. She remembered spending more than ten hours on the podium, delivering lectures before audiences of 30,000 to 40,000 people.[369]

Im Yŏng-sin was actively engaged in the branches of the Central Council for the Promotion of Independence (*Tongnip Ch’oksŏng Chungang Hyŏphŭihoe*) and the Anti-Trusteeship General Mobilization Committee (*Pant’ak Ch’ongdongwŏn Wiwŏnhoe*) and in the course of organizing local branches, she undertook a nationwide speaking tour, using her speeches to support the establishment of these branches. As a result of such activities, she was appointed "Deputy Director of the Local Affairs Department" during the organizational restructuring of April 1946.[370]

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[367] Ryu Chin-hŭi 류진희, Haebanggi t’alsikmin juch’e ŭi chentŏ chŏllyak — yŏsŏng sŏsa ŭi ch’angch’ul ŭl chungsimŭro (해방기 탈식민 주체의 젠더전략 — 여성서사의 창출을 중심으로Gender strategy of postcolonial subject in liberation period of Korea (1945-1948)-foused on making women’s narrative), PhD diss., Sŏnggyun’gwan University, Department of East Asian Studies, 2014, 11.

[368] Son Ch’ungmu (손충무), Han’gang ŭn hŭrŭnda (한강은 흐른다), *Tonga Ch’ulp’ansa* (동아출판사), 1972, 384.

[369]Im Yŏngsin 임영신, *Naui sasipnyŏn t’ujŏngsa* (나의 40년 투쟁사), Minjisa (민지사), 2008, 287–289.

[370] I Ŭn-sŏn 이은선, “Taehan Tongnip Ch’oksŏng Kungminhoe wa Kidokkyo (대한독립촉성국민회와

She had been delivering speeches since the colonial period and was a representative figure who recognized both the problem of communication between the U.S. Military Government and the Korean public and the importance of addressing the situation. Her long experience of interaction with the public grew her aim to train female students as future speakers who could emancipate the illiterate women population.

The fact that Im Yeong-sin emphasized the English education was also rooted in her personal experience and political vision, particularly shaped during her time studying in the United States.[371] Her personal relationships formed during her time in the U.S. later proved instrumental during the U.S. military occupation, particularly in securing operational funding for the establishment of Chung-Ang Women's University. Her network facilitated financial support from the Korean American Friendship Fund. Thus, the decision to organize both Korean and English oratorical contests at Chung-Ang Women's University reflected both Im's educational philosophy and the political activities of the time.[372]

On November 15, 1946, the university's English Club held the "First National English Oratorical Contest for Girls' Middle Schools." The contest began at 1:00 PM in the auditorium of "Chung-Ang Women's University." Two student representatives from each of the thirteen

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기독교National Society for the Rapid Realization of Independence and Christianity)," *Han'guk Kyohoe Sahakhoeji* (한국교회사학회지) no. 46 (2017): 296.

[371]As she later recounted, her decision to study abroad was shaped directly by her experience of the March First Movement, which persuaded her that education could function both as a weapon in the struggle for national independence and as a means of resisting Japanese colonial rule. Im Yŏngsin, *Naui sasipnyŏn t'ujŏngsa*, 141~142.

[372] To elevate Chung-Ang Women's Professional School to a four-year university, Im Yeong-sin secured funding and applied to the Education Bureau of the U.S. Military Government on November 12, 1946, requesting the establishment of the Chung-Ang Cultural Institute as a legal foundation. In addition to her personal contributions as the school's principal and founder, $300,000 USD was allocated from the Annie Mernier Pfeiffer Foundation, originally established to support Chung-Ang Childcare School. The Education Bureau instructed the foundation to increase its base capital, and because of further efforts, an additional $1,000,000 USD was secured from the Korean-American Friendship Fund. Ultimately, on April 10, 1947, the U.S. Military Government officially approved the establishment of the Chung-Ang Cultural Foundation. Im Yŏngsin, *Naui sasipnyŏn t'ujŏngsa*, 149-151. About Political, Economic conditions of South Korean Universities under the U.S. Military Government see Yi Chi-wŏn (이지원), Migunjŏnggi Han'guk sarip taehak sŏlhip ŭi sahoejŏk chogŏndŭl — kukka chŏngch'aek kwa chawŏn tongwŏn ŭl chungsimŭro (미군정기 한국 사립대학 설립의 사회적 조건들-국가정책과 자원동원을 중심으로-), Master's thesis, Department of Sociology, Yonsei University, 2017.

participating girls' middle schools in Seoul took part, including Sukmyŏng, Cheil, Sangmyŏng, Paehwa, Tongmyŏng, Tŏksŏng, Chungang, Pungmun, Tongdŏk, Hansŏng, and the Yŏsang.[373]

The contest was judged by four individuals: Mrs. Anderson, wife of the Governor of Gyeonggi Province; the Director of the Maritime Affairs Bureau; Lieutenant General Nelson; and Chung-Ang Women's University lecturer Jong In-seop.[374] The following year, a similar event was held to "encourage English oratory among middle school students." "The Second National English Oratorical Contest for Girls' Middle Schools" took place over two days, on November 7–8, 1947.[375] Participants in the English oratorical contest could choose either to deliver an English recitation or an original speech, both limited to a maximum of five minutes. Notably, eligibility for the contest was restricted to girls' middle schools located south of the 38th parallel. Students were required to submit their school's name, class, full name, and manuscript in advance, no later than November 3rd.[376] In 1948, the first year Chung-Ang Women's University implemented coeducation of men and women,[377] the event was restructured as the "Third National English Oratorical Contest for Boys' and Girls' Middle Schools," now open to both male and female students. While the format changed, the primary objective remained consistent: to encourage interest in and rhetorical skill in English.[378]

Like the English oratorical contests, Korean-language oratorical contests were held annually with the support of newspaper sponsors. In 1947, Chung-Ang Women's University, with

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[373] "Jungdŭng yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe kaemak, Toha sip-sam kaekyo ch'amga (중등영어웅변대회 개막, 도하 13개교 참가)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), November 16, 1946.

[374] Prizes were awarded to four winners: 1-tŭng Hong Chaesuk (Sukmyŏng) 2-tŭng Ch'oe Rosa (Sukmyŏng) 3-tŭng Paek Ŭngok (Tongdŏk) 4-tŭng Yi Jawan (Sangmyŏng).

[375] "Yŏja junghaksaeng yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe (여자중학생 영어웅변대회)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), November 4, 1947.

[376] "Yŏhaksaeng ungbyŏn taehoe Chungang Yŏdae-sŏ chuch'oe (여학생웅변대회 중앙여대서 주최)," *Daehan Ilbo* (대한일보), October 26, 1947.

[377] Chungang Taehakkyo Kyosa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, *Chungang Taehakkyo-sa: 1918–1968*, 156.

[378] "Namnyeo jungdŭng yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe (남녀중등영어웅변대회)," *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), November 7, 1948.

sponsorship from *Minjung Ilbo*, organized the "First National Korean-Language Oratorical Contest for Girls' Middle Schools" over two days, from May 30 to 31, in celebration of the university's elevation to full university status. Eligibility was granted to two students per school from girls' middle schools located south of the 38th parallel. Participants could select a topic of their choice and deliver a speech of no more than 5 minutes. Manuscripts had to be submitted in advance, by May 27.[379] Ten schools from various regions participated, and five students were selected as winners through preliminary and final rounds.[380] The following year, on May 14, 1948, the contest expanded to include 18 schools and was sponsored by *Hansŏng Ilbo*. In this iteration, six students were awarded prizes.[381]

The winning speech titles from the contest held in 1948 were all related to women's issues, or more precisely, related to women and their relations to the nation. First prize went to "Motherhood is Great" (Mosŏng ŭn widaehada), delivered by Ch'oe Hye-suk of Chungang Girls' Middle School. Second prize was awarded to O Yŏngsuk, a second-year student *at* Cheil Girls' Middle School, for her speech "The Women Our Nation Requires" (Uri nara ka yoguhaneun yŏsŏng). Third prize went to "Nation-Building and the Duty of Women" (Kŏn'guk kwa yŏsŏng ŭi immun), presented by Yang Ok-hui, a fourth-year student of Sanggmyŏng Girls' Middle School. The newspaper reported that in the oratorical contest, "the spirit of Korean

[379] "Chungang Yŏdae chuch'oe Ponsa Munhwabu huwŏn, Chŏnsŏn Yŏjunggyo ungbyŏn taehoe, O-wŏl Samsip-il Tonggyo kangdang-sŏ kaech'oe (중앙여대주최 본사문화부후원, 전선여중교웅변대회, 5월 30일 동교강당서 개최)," *Minjung Ilbo* (민중일보), May 14, 1947.

[380] The recipients were: 1st place – Choi Hye-suk (3rd year, Chung-Ang Girls' Middle School); 2nd place – Oh Yeong-suk (2nd year, Jeil Middle School); 3rd place – Yang Ok-hui (4th year, Sangmyŏng Girls' Middle School); 4th place – Jin Tae-ok (1st year, Chung-Ang Girls' Middle School); 5th place – Jo Byeong-ok (3rd year, Donggyeong Middle School of Commerce); 6th place – Park Won-hae (3rd year, Jinju Girls' Middle School). "Chŏngguk Yŏjung ungbyŏn taehoe (전국여중웅변대회)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), June 3, 1947.

[381] The recipients were: 1st place – Choi Hye-suk (3rd year, Chung-Ang Girls' Middle School); 2nd place – Oh Yeong-suk (2nd year, Jeil Middle School); 3rd place – Yanng Ok-hui (4th year, Sangmyeong Girls' Middle School); 4th place – Jin Tae-ok (1st year, Chung-Ang Girls' Middle School); 5th place – Jo Byeong-ok (3rd year, Donggyeong Middle School of Commerce); and 6th place – Park Won-hae (3rd year, Jinju Girls' Middle School). "1-wi nŭn Chungang Yŏjung Ch'oe Hyesuk yang, Ponsa huwŏn Che-ihoe jungdŭng yŏja ungbyŏn taehoe mak naeryŏ (1위는 중앙여중 최혜숙양, 본사후원 제2회 중등여자웅변대회 막 내려)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), May 16, 1948.

women shone brightly, revealing a fervent patriotism."[382] This contest was held in May 1948, shortly after the Republic of Korea's general elections. The press praised the active participation of women in the elections as being greater than at any previous moment and reported that the female middle school and high school students who took part in the oratorical contest would become the backbone of women's society and, in the future, play a central role in the nation.[383]

When newspapers recruited participants for oratorical contests, the stated purpose of the event was "to encourage young female students to express their opinions freely and to cultivate their rhetorical abilities,"and emphasized that, "Although women may be physically weaker, they must devote their whole heart and every capacity of their spirit to building a clean and beautiful New Korea." [384] At the contest held around 1948, shortly after the general elections in South Korea, the message was proclaimed. "Although no female representatives were elected in the recent elections, this is a critical moment to foster women's courage and awaken their political consciousness so that their participation in politics may be realized in the future. For this reason, the significance of this oratorical contest is crucial."[385]

This part of the chapter has shown that Im Yŏng-sin played a pivotal role in redefining women's public agency in early postcolonial Korea by aligning higher education, rhetorical training, and political participation. Her oratorical contests functioned as deliberate interventions to nurture articulate, civically minded women prepared to contribute to national

[382] "1-wi nŭn Chungang Yŏjung Ch'oe Hyesuk yang, Ponsa huwŏn Che-ihoe jungdŭng yŏja ungbyŏn taehoe mak naeryŏ (1위는 중앙여중 최혜숙양, 본사후원 제2회 중등여자웅변대회 막 내려)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), May 16, 1948.

[383] "Che-ihoe Yŏjung ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang (제2회 여중웅변대회 성황)," *Puin Ilbo* (부인일보), May 16, 1948.

[384] "Ponsa huwŏn chŏngguk Yŏjung ungbyŏn taehoe onŭn sip-sa·sip-o yangil Chungang Yŏja Taehak kangdang-sŏ (본사후원 전국여중웅변대회 오는 14·15 양일 중앙여자대학강당서)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), May 5, 1948.

[385] "Ponsa huwŏn Yŏhakto dŭl ŭi saja-hu; jungdŭng yŏja ungbyŏn taehoe onŭl kaemak (본사후원 여학도들의 사자후; 중등여자웅변대회 오늘 개막)," *Hanseong Ilbo* (한성일보), May 14, 1948.

development. Through her international connections and political advocacy, Im framed women's intellectual and linguistic empowerment as essential to Korea's global positioning.

3.2.2.1. Scholars, Mothers, Martyrs: Female Students' Representation of the Three Winners.

This part of the chapter will first analyze the speeches that won prizes in the "Second National Korean-Language Oratorical Contest for Girls' Middle Schools," organized by Chungang Women's University. The issue of subjectivity in oratory is closely tied to the particularity of the competition format. In the process of drafting speeches, mounting the podium, and participating within the framework of a prescribed theme, young speakers could articulate themselves only through a narrative shaped by selection and exclusion. It is likely that the competition's organizers, Im Yŏng-sin herself, along with politicians, educators, writers, and women's activists presumably chose as judges, structured this process of discernment.

Accordingly, analyzing the content and rhetoric of these speeches does not necessarily reveal the unmediated thoughts of the female students. Yet this does not mean that their agency was erased. On the contrary, they became mult-layered oratorical subjects, at once producers, mediators, and disseminators[386] of propagandistic language, as well as its recipients. Within the conditions imposed by the competition, they recognized and reflected upon what would mark them as "model students." As female students speaking on women's issues in public space, they simultaneously inherited and disrupted the genealogy of women's agendas rooted in the colonial period, while also seeking to generate new values of their own.

[386] Lee Ung -ho refers this definition to the Public School Education during the USAMGIK period. "I Ŭng-ho ŭi Migunjŏnggi kungmin kyoyuk chŏngŭi chŏngŭi (This was the definition of Lee Ung-ho about Public School Education during the USAMGIK period). Lee Ung -ho 이응호, *Migunjŏnggi ŭi Han'gŭl undongsa* (미군정기의 한글 운동사), (Sŏngch'ŏngsa 성청사 1974) 224–258.

Ch'oe Hye-suk's "Motherhood is Great," and O Yŏngsuk's speech "The Women Our Nation Requires," and Yang Ok-hŭi's " Nation-Building and the Duty of Women" were also published in the *Collection of Student Orations* (1949). Ch'oe Hye-suk, first, explained that women are not merely figures confined to child-rearing within the household, but mothers who have nurtured great figures and thereby occupied an important place in history. By citing examples such as "Kim Yu-sin, Napoleon, Jeong Mong-ju, and Abraham Lincoln," it is highlighted that each of them had a devoted and remarkable mother behind them. Yet, she criticized contemporary society for disparaging this maternal value and women's roles, arguing that such neglect runs counter to the progress of civilization and history itself. Thus, she insists, elevating women's status and advancing women's education are essential for "rebuilding the nation" and renewing national identity.

Hye-suk then contrasts the situation of women in Korea with that of women in a more advanced society, namely the United States and Japan. She claimed that U.S. women's social status was higher and that Japan had many more schools for women. Noting that Korea's illiteracy rate stood at 73 percent, with more than half of those illiterates being women, she stresses that a nation where women remain uneducated can never become either a truly civilized society or an independent state. Finally, she appeals that when women overcome discrimination, oppression, and social stigma, and pursue learning and self-cultivation to stand shoulder to shoulder with women of the world, the dignity of the nation will be elevated, and a distinctive culture will be created.[387]

The O Yŏngsuk's oration delivered can be divided into three parts. First, she appealed to the suffering endured during the colonial period and then turned to the sorrowful reality that, even after liberation, "beloved fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters" remained divided by the 38th

[387] Ch'oe Hyesuk 최혜숙, "Mosŏng ŭn widaehada (모성은 위대하다)," in Pak Pyŏnggyu ed. (박병규 편*), Haksaeng ungbyŏn sŏnjip* (학생웅변선집), (Seoul Munhwasa 서울문화사, 1949), 87–89.

parallel. True liberation for Korea, she argued, would only come when "the Soviet and American flags disappear" and "only the Taegukgi waves." Second, she emphasized the role of women in building a new Korea. Women, too, must "sweat and shed red blood for the construction of New Korea" and "awaken their spirit to revive the Korean family." Above all, she underscored the centrality of the family, but she also insisted that women had much to contribute to society at large. Leaders and scholars, she urged, must quickly emerge to "expand knowledge so that we may stand shoulder to shoulder with the nations of our dreams." Yet she cautioned that there can be no society that abandons the family. To illustrate this point, she described the reality of impoverished children selling Western cigarettes and newspapers in the street and she criticized those "Korean women who squander money by even selling household goods, wandering about," instead of supporting their homes.

Finally, she returned to the theme that the family, as the foundation of society and the pillar of the nation, must be happy. She highlighted both the role of the "domestic woman who makes the family cheerful and strong" and that of the "woman who takes to the front lines and struggles directly for nation-building." She concluded with an appeal to her audience: "All of you gathered here! Let us together become the bright and vigorous oasis of Korea."[388]

In contrast to Choi Hye-suk's view, Yang Ok-hŭi argued that women were not great merely because they had given birth to sages such as Confucius, the Buddha, or Christ. Instead, she drew attention to women who had themselves achieved remarkable achievements in history. Citing figures such as Joan of Arc, who saved the fate of France, Florence Nightingale, the founder of the Red Cross, and historically named heroines such as Madame Curie, and Helen Keller. she further recalled the vivid patriotism she felt after recently watching the film *The*

[388] On the anthology, the title was slightly different. Instead of "The Women Our Nation Requires" was written in "The Women We Want." There are two possibilities. The editor had made a mistake, or 오영숙decided to change in the last moment when she delivered the speech. O Yŏng-suk 오영숙, "Uriga yoguhaneun yŏsŏng (우리가 요구하는 여성)," in Pak Pyŏng-gyu ed., *Haksaeng ungbyŏn sŏnjip*, 94–97.

Tale of Yu Gwan-sun, the Martyr Maiden. "I clenched my teeth, asking myself why I could not accomplish such a noble task." She stressed that Korea, too, had its heroines and urged, "We women must deeply realize that we are fully capable of great deeds, and advance with determination and vigor."

Second, she emphasized that "Korea is not abandoned to the wretched reality of compatriots shooting at each other under the oppression of the U.S. and Soviet powers, who alternately aid and torment us." In a somewhat contradictory remark, compared to her earlier statement, she stressed that women, "the sun of the family and the womb of the nation," were indispensable for uniting the people. She saw women as capable of harmonizing divided families, "When a father sides with America and a beloved brother sides with the Soviet Union, if I truly carry the Korean spirit in my heart and recognize the perilous destiny of our motherland, could I not draw both of their souls back into Korea?"

She further insisted that "those who are fortunate enough to receive secondary or higher education in Korean society must not indulge in personal happiness and forget Korea," emphasizing the "grave responsibility on women's shoulders." That responsibility, she argued, was "to teach those women who have not had the opportunity to study." To this end, she urged students to "cherish every moment, devote themselves to repeated study, and cultivate patriotic spirit." She asserted that "if Japanese students' study ten hours, we must be resolved and determined to study fifteen," so that Korea, too, might produce "martyr heroines like Yu Gwan-sun" and "great scientists like Madame Curie." She concluded with overtly militaristic rhetoric: "O young women of Korea, who must shoulder the future of our nation! O sun of Korea! Let us join hands, unite in this busy morning, and march forward together in total mobilization!"[389] To sum, all texts framed women's role, education, and family responsibilities as indispensable

[389] Yang Ok-hŭi 양옥희, "Kŏn'guk kwa yŏsŏng ŭi immu (건국과 여성의 임무)," Pak Pyŏng-gyu ed., Haksaeng ungbyŏn sŏnjip 122-126.

for national strength and independence. They combined hero and heroin with modern calls for women's education and participation in public life for the national building process. O Yŏngsuk articulated a maternalist, nationalist vision, while Yang Ok-hui tried to reject the maternalist essentialism. All of them underlined a progressive, educational argument, insisting that women's emancipation through literacy and higher learning was crucial, and they had the responsibility to teach other women. Taken together, their speech contoured female students' participation in public life while emphasizing their role as mothers.

When viewed in continuity with the discourse on "home-front women" under Japanese imperialism, one can see that the hierarchical division between enlightened female leaders, positioned as educators of the ignorant masses, and the broader population of "ordinary women" was directly inherited. In the late fascist period, women's political participation had been conditioned on the acceptance of an "Asian" model of femininity, epitomized by figures such as the "patriotic wife" and the "home-front wife"[390] Similarly, female students are repeating the trope of women as the "pillar of the home" or the "mothers of the nation" represented little substantive departure from these earlier constructions.

3.2.3. Female Students Representation: The 'Studious Patriot' and the 'Girls on the Street.'

This part of the chapter examines how, within the broader Korean women's sociocultural context, public discourse on women was shaped through the press and how Cold War gender politics worked to regulate women's role in the service of the nation. Here, "Cold War gender

[390] Kwŏn Myŏng-a 권명아, "Singminji kyŏnghŏm kwa yŏsŏng ŭi chŏngch'esŏng — P'asijŭm chejeha ŭi munhak, yŏsŏng, kukka — (식민지 경험과 여성의 정체성-파시즘 체제하의 문학, 여성, 국가- Experience of the colonial and subject positioning of women-The literature, women, and the nation under the fascist regime(1930-1945))," *Han'guk Kŭndae Munhak Yŏn'gu* (한국근대문학연구) 6, no. 1 (2005):71-114.

politics" refers to the cultural dynamics produced within the social spaces of the U.S. military occupation, dynamics in which "Americanism" functioned simultaneously as a mechanism for policing women's sexuality and as a normative model that positioned the modern lives of American women as both ideal and exemplary.

During the U.S. Military occupation and after the establishment of the South Korean Government, the ideal of a "modern, cultured woman" was formulated within a "civilizing" framework that sought to elevate women's cultural standards in accordance with American values. U.S. occupation policies that positioned the "realization of gender equality under the principles of democracy" as the apex of this civilizing project contributed directly to rising rates of school enrollment and educational advancement among women.[391] Women were guaranteed equal educational opportunities with men for the first time in Korean history under the Education Act of 1949.[392] During the USAMGIK period, the education of female students increasingly emphasized a scientific and rational womanhood suited to the age of scientific civilization. In practice, however, it did not significantly separate from earlier curricula aimed at producing the modern "wise mother and good wife" (*hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*). At the same time, these programs also reflected a new intention to cultivate "modern" female citizens, women who would participate as workers in the public sphere. [393]

Many of the leading right-wing women's rights activists were Christians, educated in Japan or in the United States, and came from landlord or affluent farming families. Their fathers or

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[391] Yi Sŭng-hŭi이승희, *Han'guk hyŏndae yŏsŏng undongsa,* 174.

[392] Article 96 of the Government Act stipulated that "all citizens have the obligation to enroll the children under their case in school from ages six to twelve," while the supplementary Article 167 specified that compulsory education would egin with school-age children as of June 1, 1950. However, due to the outbreak of the Korean War, the full implemenation of compulsory education was not realized until 1954. Yi Im-ha 이임하, "1950-nyŏndae yŏsŏng kyoyuk esŏ ŭi sŏngch'ab'yŏl kwa hyŏnmo-yangch'ŏ iderollogi" (1950년대 여성교육에서의 성차별과 현모양처 이데올로기), *Tongbanghakchi* (동방학지) 122, 2003.

[393] Kim Yun-gyŏng 김윤경, "'Haebanghu yŏhaksaeng' yŏn'gu" ('해방후 여학생'연구), *P'yŏngmunhak* (비평문학) 47 (2013): 37–62.

husbands were often right-wing politicians. These backgrounds decisively shaped the character and orientation of the post-liberation women's movement.[394] In the immediate post-liberation period, women were understood not only as symbols of the nation but also as newly recognized members of the political community. This dual positioning emerged most clearly in debates over public morality and population policy: women were reimagined, on the one hand, as the cultural sphere that needed protection against the perceived moral disruptions of the U.S. occupation, and on the other, as individuals endowed with equal political rights within the framework of the modern nation-state.[395]

As a result, female intellectuals were assigned a kind of dual mandate. On the one hand, they sought to educate Korean women within a developmentalist discourse to abandon "backward customs" and modernize themselves into women befitting a nation-state. Central to this project was the "scientification" of diet, kitchens, and everyday domestic life.[396] The intelligence and discernment of housewives were said to shape a family's judgments and attitudes, and the women who managed the household economy were portrayed as directly linked to the nation's wise consumption practices.[397]

However, American-style modernization carried an inherently dual character. The Western culture that entered directly with the U.S. occupation brought not only ideals of democracy and modern womanhood but also, in the eyes of contemporary observers, a surge in "students of the street" and the visible presence of women in urban life. The newspaper claimed that

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[394] Yi Sŭng-hŭi이승희, *Han'guk hyŏndae yŏsŏng undongsa*, 176

[395] Ryu Chin-hŭi 류진희, Haebanggi t'alsikmin juch'e ŭi chentŏ chŏllyak — yŏsŏng sŏsa ŭi ch'angch'ul ŭl chungsimŭro. 29.

[396] "Chŏng Ch'ung-yang 정충양, 'Saenghwal kaesŏn ŭn sirhaeng urŏbut'ŏ' (생활개선은 실행으로부터), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), January 15, 1950."

[397] "Yi P'il-sun 이필순, 'Ijung kwasŏ ŭi ch'ŏlp'ye esŏ hŏrye wa hyŏngsik ŭl pŏrigo kŏnjŏnhan saenghwal ŭl haja' (이중과세의 철폐에서 허례와 형식을 버리고 건전한 생활을 하자), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), February 12, 1950."

"American sexual ideology" was disrupting South Korea's moral order.[398] As one editorial put it, "Since liberation, under the pretext of culture and the opportunity to speak a little foreign language, so-called 'intelligent women' have practiced democracy in ways that, together with foreigners, have disturbed our public morals. That is, an undeniable fact recognized by everyone."[399] This critique reveals that the issue was not merely the acquisition of "foreign languages and democracy" as markers of refinement; rather, it demands women's freedom and rights. An entire cultural complex of literature, art, entertainment, and social life and sexuality accompanied the emancipation of women. In this sense, American modernity was experienced simultaneously as an aspirational model and destabilizing force, producing both admiration and moral anxiety.

The new cultural spaces created by American influence, such as jobs for women, theaters with American movies, dance halls, and other leisure venues, produced social practices that deeply unsettled intellectuals who held conservative views of womanhood. Newspaper reports on students frequenting theaters and bars typically mention both male and female students, yet it was the female student whose presence was singled out and rendered hypervisible.[400] Student ethics were applied with force to young women, who were expected to regulate their behavior for the sake of "social moral improvement." In this discourse, the responsibility for safeguarding public virtue fell disproportionately on female students, whose conduct was framed as a barometer of the nation's cultural integrity.[401]

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[398] "Ch'ae Chŏng-kŭn 채정근, 'Yŏsŏng haebang kwa sŏngjilsŏ chaegŏn' (여성해방과 성질서 재건), *Hansŏng Ilbo* (한성일보), January 4, 1947."

[399] "'Chisik yŏsŏng ŭn maengsŏng hara! Han'guk yŏin ŭi kŭngji rŭl wihae' (지식여성은 맹성하라! 한국여인의 긍지를 위해), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 26, 1950."

[400] "Taetŭnghan yŏhaksaeng sulchip esŏ pangt'ang hoyu kyŏngch'al p'unggi" (대등한 여학생 술집에서 방탕호유 경찰풍기), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), April 23, 1947.

[401] "Tonam-dong, Y bu ch'ŏlmorŭnŭn yŏhaksaeng" (돈암동, Y婦 철모르는 여학생), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), June 12, 1949., "Hongsŏng yŏn'gusaeng, yŏhaksaeng ŭi kwigam" (홍성 연구생, 여학생의 귀감), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), July 13, 1949.

The shifting "disposition" of students became a frequent target of criticism in the immediate postliberation period. A student from North Kyŏngsang Province, for example, argued that female students were misled by a "crude interpretation of democracy." Femal students were "losing their sense of self in momentary curiosity", letting their behavior drift like a sail in the wind." She warned that such conduct would tarnish Korea's revered title as "the land of Eastern propriety" and claimed that the moral laxity of female students would directly harm the nation itself. Her concluding remark that "the public expects female students to cultivate their studies properly and become tomorrow's wise mothers and good wives." Her claim reveals with striking clarity the idealized form of womanhood that post-liberation society demanded from young women.[402] Efforts to control the "students of the street" were closely tied to attempts to regulate the rapidly changing cultural tastes, leisure activities, and sexual self determination of young women in the wake of American cultural influence. Female intellectuals sought to regulate women's behaviour in public space and to educate them into possessing "modern refinement and taste." For their own self-development, and to contribute to the nation, women were encouraged to read magazines, cultivate interest in art and music, follow foreign news, and study Korea's indigenous culture. Their practice was framed as essential to the advancement of women's cultural movements. In this discourse, democratic citizenship requires that women understand both domestic and national affairs, and it was through such cultural cultivation, they argued, that Korean women would achieve true emancipation.[403]

The second task of right-wing women was to police communism among students and to contain the collective actions of left-leaning youths who continued to oppose the establishment

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[402] "Kyŏngbuk H.J.-saeng, yŏhaksaeng ege irŏn" (경북 H.J.생. 여학생에게 일언), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), April 6, 1949.

[403] Mo Yun-suk 모윤숙, "Munhwa undong e pujirŏnhaja" (문화운동에 부지런하자), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), January 8, 1950., "Hŏyŏng ŭl pŏrigo saenghwal sujun ŭl ttokparo insikhaja, 'Ttan sŭ wa uri'" (허영을 버리고 생활수준을 똑바로 인식하자, '딴스와 우리'), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), January 22, 1950.

of the South Korean government. As discussed above, practices such as student strikes and distribution of leaflets increasingly came to be represented as symbolic acts of leftist political agitation and, accordingly, as improper behaviors unbecoming of students. After the founding of the Republic of Korea government, students who persisted in anti-unilateral government protests were increasingly arrested for illegal demonstrations, marking a shift from viewing such actions as political expressions to treating them as acts requiring disciplinary control.

On July 29, 1948, many female students were arrested after staging a mass protest march and distributing large quantities of leaflets.[404] The students from Tongdŏk Girls' High School, detained at the Chongno Police Station on charges of instigating an underground general election, were brought before the municipal summary court on the 19th and received penalties ranging from 29 days of detention to fines of 500 won. Around December 1948, numerous female students from Kyŏnggi Girls' Middle School, Paehwa Girls' Middle School, Tongdŏk Girls' Middle School, Women's Medical University, and Che-i Girls' Middle School were again detained by police on suspicion of belonging to "subversive organizations" associated with the left-wing organization "Democratic Youth League" (*Minju Haknyŏn*).[405] At that time, the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs intervened, requesting leniency and stating that it would "guide and reorient" these students so that they would not harbor "dangerous ideas." Bureau Director Pak Sŭng-ho personally visited the Prosecutor's Office, which subsequently issued non-prosecution decisions for several of the students.[406] As these cases illustrate, those who opposed the establishment of the South Korean government were stripped

[404] "Yŏhaksaeng i chudong" (여학생이 주동), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 19, 1948.

[405] "Kŏmsoktoen Tongdŏk kyosaeng kuryu ŭi pŏlgŭm ch'ŏbun" (검속된 동덕교생구류의 벌금처분), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 21, 1948.

[406] "Uriga kyoyang hagetda ododoen yŏhaksaeng songch'ŏng e" (우리가 교양하겠다 오도된 여학생 송청에), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), December 29, 1948. "Songch'ŏngdoen yŏhaksaeng Punyŏguk esŏ kyoyang kiro" (송청된 여학생 부녀국에서 교양키로), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), December 31, 1948.

of their status as legitimate political actors, and any form of resistance that could serve as grounds for continued political dissent was systematically suppressed.[407]

After the Yŏsu–Sunch'ŏn Incident, reports and personal accounts began circulating that described female students wielding bamboo spears or firearms and participating in combat. These stories, regardless of their factual accuracy, fueled a growing discourse that female students needed to be politically "reformed" and "guided." The image of the "schoolgirl carrying a carbine," detached from any verifiable reality, became a potent device for dramatizing the threat and alleged monstrosity of communism.[408]

Poet Pak Chong-hwa, who had visited Yŏsu and Sunch'ŏn to report on conditions in the South, offered a sensationalized portrayal in which an unwary soldier, seduced by a female student's charms, is suddenly killed by a "steadfast communist woman." He wrote:

"The schoolgirls hide carbines beneath their skirts and lure our officers and soldiers with cries of joy, as if celebrating the rebirth of their brothers returning to work. When our men approach unsuspectingly, a sharp pang bursts from beneath their skirts, and the soldier's collapse. Look at this audacious act. These girls are barely eighteen or nineteen years old."[409]

This imagined "schoolgirl guerrilla unit," although far removed from actual events, intensified fears of communism by channeling them through the figure of the female body. In doing so, anti-communism took shape not only as an ideological stance but as a gendered project in

[407] Yi Hye-ryŏng 이혜령, "Tongasia kŭndae maeche, ŏnŏ, kŏmyŏl yŏn'gu ŭi kwichŏk kwa mirae" (동아시아 근대 매체, 언어, 검열 연구의 궤적과 미래), *Taedong Munhak Yŏn'gu* (대동문학연구) 112: 128.

[408] "Yŏsu wanjŏn talhwan sowi Inmin chaep'an-jang Pak kŏmsa" (여수 완전탈환 소위인민재판장 박검사), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), October 29, 1948.

[409] "Kuksi tturyŏt'han uae Kukkun ŭl chaepyŏnsŏng hara, Pak Chong-hwa, Namhaengnok (wan)" (국시 뚜렷한 우애 국군을 재편성하라, 박종화, 남행록(완)), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), November 21, 1948.

which the female body became the symbolic site that communism sought to corrupt and that anti-communism sought to discipline and conquer.[410]

This part of the chapter has observed that the figure of the female students in post-liberation Korea emerged as a densely layered site where modernization, nationalism, and Cold War ideology converged. Although U.S. occupation policies expanded women's access to education and promoted democratic principles, these developments were quickly refracted through preexisting patriarchal norms that continued to cast women primarily as future "wise mothers and good wives." Conservative intellectuals and press amplified this contradiction by scrutinizing female students' public conduct, turning their everyday movements. Female students went to theaters, bars, and protests, but their behavior was considered a barometer of national virtue and a source of moral anxiety.

Often led by elite, foreign-educated Christians, they positioned themselves as arbiters of modern womanhood, enforcing a gendered Cold War discipline that demanded both refinement and ideological loyalty. As anti-communist repression intensified, female student activism was no longer tolerated as civic participation but rebranded as subversive behavior. Sensationalized media portrayals further gendered the anti-communist struggle by staging the female body as a symbolic battleground on which the state's moral and political order had to be defended.

Taken together, these dynamics reveal that the making of "modern Korean womenhood" in the early Cold War was not simply an educational or cultural project but a political one. A process through which the state, the press, and students sought to discipline women into embodying national modernity defined simultaneously by "democratic" rhetoric and anti-communist urgency.

[410] Kim Tŭk-chung 김득중, *'Ppalgaengi'ŭi t'ansaeng* ('빨갱이'의 탄생), Sŏnin (선인), 2009, 439.

3.2.4. The Anthology of Students' Oratory- Girls' Political Agenda for Women's Emancipation

In this chapter, I focus on student oratory contests that most clearly reveal the configurations of Cold War gendered politics examined above. Students not only acted in ways that demonstrated their own conformity to such "Cold War normativity," but also sought to persuade other students to enter into and internalize these same normative frameworks.

The speeches analyzed in this chapter are drawn from an oratory anthology *Collection of Student Orations,* edited by Pak Pyŏng-gyu and published in 1949 by Sŏul Munhwasa. In the preface, Pak writes: "We bear a grave mission to construct a democratic state. For the building of a democratic state, genuine oratory is absolutely indispensable. This is because democracy by its very nature respects and follows the popular will, and without sufficient spokesmen for that will, true democracy cannot exist. Therefore, for us young students who have taken upon our shoulders the task of constructing a democratic state, one of the most urgent and important tasks is the cultivation and refinement of oratorical skill." He thus makes clear his belief that contemporary youth and students represent the popular will, and that their capacity to articulate it constitutes a key index of democracy.[411]

He further explains that his reason for publishing this volume was to provide young students with "supplementary reading material." In other words, he compiled the anthology to help students train in public speaking. As he notes, "From among the manuscripts submitted to several nationwide oratory contests for male and female secondary-school students, I have selected the finest pieces and woven them into a volume that may serve as genuine nourishment for the hearts of students."[412]

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[411] Pak Pyŏng-gyu 박병규 ed. *Haksaeng ungbyŏn sŏnjip* (학생웅변선집), Seoul Munhwasa (서울문화사), 1949, 1.
[412] Ibid.,2.

Many of collected oratories are presented at the oratorical contest hosted by the Faculty of Law at Seoul National University on 2–3 October 1948, Because this anthology consists of speeches delivered by students before 1949, it offers a particularly useful source for examining which discourses were treated in oratorical form at the time and how, through these speeches, the judges sought to shape normative models of studenthood within the academic sphere.

Above all, student speeches most frequently addressed nationalist themes: the joy of liberation from Japanese rule, national independence, unification, and the need for popular unity amid the turmoil of division.

In “What Do I Say?” (*Naneun muŏsŭl malhana*), Cho Haeng-suk declares that “the desire of the entire nation is unification, independence, and a strong and prosperous reconstruction,” and insists that “for the sake of tomorrow’s progress, the burden placed upon young students is great.” She underscores that "students are new protagonists of the nation-state."[413] Likewise, Ch’oe Mae-ja of Ch’unch’ŏn Normal School, in her speech “Joy and Sorrow” (*Kippŭm kwa sŭlp’ŭm*), laments Korea’s divided condition, noting that “in the North and South, capitalist and communist armies face one another, producing an excessive ideological rift within our own people and casting a dark shadow over Korea’s unification and development.” She expresses sincere gratitude to the American and Soviet forces that brought liberation, but warns that, so long as the nation remains divided and “factions and individual interests are pursued,” “the great design of the nation for the next hundred years will be distorted, bringing misfortune upon future generations.”[414]

Yi Chong-yŏl of Kanggyŏng Girls’ Middle School, in her speech “The Sorrow of a Nation without a Country” (*Nara ŏmnŭn minjok ŭi sŏrŭm*), appeals to the audience by recounting the story of her grandfather, who had wandered in Russia and China without ever being recognized

[413] Ibid., 55-60.
[414] Ibid., 144.

as a citizen. Through this narrative, she underscores how wretched life can be for a people without a state. To overcome the long-standing sorrow of the Korean nation, she urges her listeners that "we must, all together, be comrades who cannot but build our own country."[415] Alongside such fundamentally nationalist appeals, she explains the tragedy of a divided nation, insists that it must be reunited, and calls upon youth to join forces toward that end. There also emerged more critical perspectives on the contemporary situation. In particular, An Rida of Chinmyŏng Girls' Middle School, in her speech "There Is Only One Homeland" (*Choguk ŭn hana ppun*), delivered after the establishment of the separate government in the South, expresses joy at the inauguration of a formal government but maintains that only when the 38th parallel is dismantled and North–South unification is realized can Korea truly become an independent state. She argues that American-style democracy and Soviet-style democracy may be sound systems for those countries, but they do not constitute a "national ideology" (*minjokchŏk sasang*) for Koreans, and that their institutions "cannot, without any criticism or modification, be regarded as suitable to the actual circumstances of our country." For this reason, she insists on the absolute necessity of "new criticism and self-awareness."[416]

She further emphasizes that the notion that "unification will be realized only when a civil war breaks out between North and South and one side is defeated" is "an extremely dangerous idea," and that the claim that "we must seek unification only after washing away blood by killing our fellow countrymen" is not an expression of "patriotic conscience." In this sense, as of around 1948, war itself was not yet articulated as a patriotic discourse.

Although some female students, as noted above, addressed more general questions concerning the nation and the people, the overwhelming majority of girls' oratory contests in this period focused on "the woman question" in Korea. As we have seen, the struggle over the National

[415] Ibid., 175-176.
[416] Ibid., 50-53.

University Plan and the ensuing debates over student strikes produced a binary distinction between "delinquent" students who supported walkouts and "model" students who devoted themselves to their studies. Within this framework, female students used the oratory platform above all to convey the message that one must "be faithful to one's studies." In particular, women were portrayed as having been oppressed for a long time, whether during the colonial period or, further back, under the Chosŏn dynasty, and were now called upon to break free from these feudal constraints. In this way, the "modern schoolgirl" was interpellated as a subject who could study on equal terms with male students and contribute equally to the nation.

Pak Wŏn-hae of Boju Girls' Middle School, whose speech "Nation-Building and Women" (*Kŏn'guk kwa yŏsŏng*) was selected in the oratory contest hosted by Chung-ang University, identifies the suppression of "women's strength" under the feudal doctrine of male superiority and female inferiority (*namjon yŏbi*) as one of the reasons Korea fell under colonial rule. She argues that women bear half of the extraordinary task of constructing the nation and emphasizes that, to contribute to national reconstruction, they must first remedy their lack of education. On this basis, she contends that "boycott strikes" and "unprincipled freedom" are incompatible with a student's proper duty and equates such behavior with forgetting women's obligations and pursuing only equal rights with men. Women, she asserts, will "keep pace with the lagging realm of learning and stand in the same line, shoulder to shoulder with men." At the same time, any "antagonism" toward men is strictly repudiated. She cautions women that ostentatiously displaying their knowledge disrupts social peace and therefore urges them to remain modest. [417]

Kim Yŏng-sŏn, a fifth-year student at Chinmyŏng Girls' Middle School, offers a particularly clear example of this tendency in her speech "Let Us Learn and Put It into Practice" (*Paerugo silch'ŏn haja*). She proclaims that students "must calmly observe the realities that appear in

[417] Ibid., 132-135.

everyday life and subject them to accurate criticism." At the same time, she explicitly distances herself from "delinquent students" on the streets and those who devote themselves to political activity. She condemns as improper the behavior of students who, instead of carrying their book bags, "go about with propaganda leaflets tucked under their arms, plastering them on walls here and there"; who "leave only their registration on the school rolls, while roaming about in groups of two or three, dashing from place to place to participate in this or that meeting or organization"; who "drag passersby into dark alleys and beat them to the ground without asking any reason or circumstances"; and who, "with leather satchels under their arms, frequent cinemas or move about in pairs to spend their time in cafés." Here, a clear critique is directed at the so-called "democratization of the academy" movement that emerged in the wake of the National University Plan controversy.

Invoking the slogan of "freedom of research and democratization of the academy," she asks rhetorically, "What are we to make of students who, instead of learning what they are supposed to learn, engage only in somnambulistic battles of theory?" From her perspective, students ought to "conscientiously put into practice true knowledge for the sake of the state, our society, and the nation," and by "firmly maintaining their status as students and faithfully fulfilling their proper duties," they can become both "workers for Korea" and "figures who contribute to the happiness of humanity at large."[418]

These discourses simultaneously affirm and constrain female students' subjectivity. On the one hand, they constantly call upon girls to prove their own agency and capabilities and to recognize themselves as protagonists of the era; on the other hand, they impose clear limits on how they ought to relate to politics. In particular, by reducing scattered political expressions to the category of "study," female students effectively negate the potential for individual students to engage in political reflection and debate.In a time of national crisis, the irresponsible and

[418] Ibid., 78-83

indiscreet behavior of girls who are seen as failing to cooperate in reconstruction is framed as a matter of personal culpability. This personal responsibility extends not only to political activities but also to criticism of students' appearance and vanity, especially their indiscriminate adoption of Western fashions. Ornamenting one's exterior is cast as a failure to concentrate on the opportunities opened up by women's liberation and on one's own growth.

Kim Hyŏn-suk of Sangmyŏng Girls' Middle School, in her speech "The Path of Women" (*Yŏsŏng ŭi kil*), rebukes such morally suspect behavior. She laments that, now that women are said to be liberated, "there are so many who behave in excessively immoderate ways." Drawing attention to the make-up and hairstyles of women walking down the street, she asserts that "from the perspective of us schoolgirls, such things are simply unbearable to look at," thereby marking a distinction between female students and women in the streets. At the same time, she emphasizes that "with the advent of a liberated Korea, women too have been liberated," and that this means women are human beings equal to men and capable of the same work: "in politics, literature, the arts, commerce, and technology, women must not fall behind men but should advance shoulder to shoulder with them."[419]

The oratory by Yŏn Kŭm-hwa, a student at Pungmun Girls' High School, dismisses as base and despicable the debates among students who question the very value of the academy and lament its futility.

"Do we not, these days, often hear it said on the streets, 'The schools are empty air now'?How shameful it is for us, as students, to allow such base words to spread through our society! What do they mean by this? They tell the girl students who cast aside their studies and chase after nothing but foreign fashions; the boy students who make no effort to improve their character, but desire only one fine suit of clothes. When we think of the future of this country, these things

[419]Ibid., 72-73.

make my heart ache."[420]

In this discourse, “students who follow only Western fashions” and “students who make no effort to achieve qualitative improvement” are portrayed as figures so troubling that they pose a threat to the nation’s future. Ae Sin-ja, a fourth-year student at Chei Girls’ Middle School, adopts an even more forceful tone, describing such students as “tools of political intrigue” and “vain and dissolute characters.”

"When there are university students who loiter in bars and teahouses, who, with ambitions far beyond their station as students, serve as mere tools of political intrigue. Are we really to envy them more than the little pupil in some remote village, who, though ragged and hungry, knows brotherly love and filial piety, stands at the top of his class, and cherishes a great resolve to step forward one day for his nation and society? No, we are not! Let us not admire as ‘students’ those university youths in gaudy Western suits, with singed and permed hair and carefully painted faces. Instead, let us admire Yu Gwan-sun, whose body, pure as jade, was pierced and torn into six parts, yet who did not bend, but rose again to cry out for a crushing blow against Japanese imperialism.” [421]

Yu Gwan-sun emerged in this period as the single most frequently invoked female figure whom schoolgirls were urged to emulate. This was closely tied to the broader socio-cultural context of 1947–48, when her name began to be reclaimed more prominently. Yu Gwan-sun came to be elevated as the most important and representative example of a woman who sacrificed and devoted herself for the nation. As discussed earlier, as the left and right competed

[420] Ibid., 156-158.
[421] Ibid., 164-165.

over how to claim the legacy of the March First Movement, various discursive forms emerged to praise heroes who had sacrificed themselves for the "great cause" of the nation and to appropriate their images. It is especially significant that Mo Yun-suk of Ewha Women's College, Yu Gwan-sun's own alma mater, produced the celebratory slogan, "Forever shall shine the daughter of Chosŏn, Yu Gwan-sun." The so-called "Yu Gwan-sun spirit" (Yugwansun chŏngsin) was framed as the embodiment of Korean women's "spirit of martyrdom for the nation" (*sunkuk chŏngsin*) and the expression of "patriotism," and, much like the way male students repeatedly invoked figures such as Yi Sun-sin, Kim Yu-sin, or the Silla hwarang, it was repeatedly recalled through a range of narrative forms. The rise in women's historical significance took shape along two axes. One was the mode exemplified by Yu Gwan-sun, in which female figures from the past were summoned as normative models for modern women. This paralleled the discursive and narrative conventions of modern hero-making, which sought to create, circulate, and disseminate a national redeemer who could condense the people's yearning for freedom and independence. In a way analogous to the construction of the Jeanne d'Arc narrative, this project aimed to give form to a "national republican hero."[422]

If one axis centered on heroes who symbolized the nation and the state, the other was oriented toward figures who could demonstrate women's capacity for modern development. In arguing for a shift in temporal consciousness appropriate to the modern age, advocates emphasized that women were equal to men and therefore entitled to the same academic rights and opportunities; accordingly, scientists and other prominent individuals were presented as exemplary models. As discussed earlier, Yang Ok-hŭi's "The Task of Women in Nation-Building" (Kŏn'guk kwa yŏsŏng ŭi immu) cites figures such as "Nightingale, founder of the Red Cross; Madame Curie, who achieved great public merit; Helen Keller; and Yu Gwan-sun" as examples intended to

[422] Pak Chi-hyang et al. (박지향 외), Yŏngung mandŭlgi: sinhwa wa yŏksa ŭi kallimkil (영웅만들기-신화와 역사의 갈림길), Hyumanit'ŭs (휴머니트스), 2005, 170–73.

encourage students by insisting that "we women, too, are fully capable of accomplishing great things."[423]

This chapter has shown that the student oratory contests of the late 1940s were not marginal extracurricular events, but key arenas in which post-liberation Korea's nation-building project and Cold War gender norms were articulated, rehearsed, and naturalized. The 1949 *Collection of Student Orations*, compiled explicitly to train young people in public speaking as a precondition for "true democracy," condensed a wide array of speeches from nationwide contests into a seemingly neutral anthology. Yet, as we have seen, the volume did far more than cultivate rhetorical technique: it offered a script for what it meant to be a "proper" student and citizen in a divided, postcolonial, and rapidly polarizing society.

On the nationalist plane, students were consistently positioned as the "new protagonists" tasked with carrying the burden of Korea's future. Their speeches revolved around liberation from Japanese rule, the sorrow of division, the imperative of unification, and the urgency of national reconstruction. Some orators simply echoed official narratives, urging unity and sacrifice; others, more critically, questioned the uncritical importation of "American-style" or "Soviet-style" democracy and insisted on the need for "new criticism and self-awareness" grounded in Korea's own circumstances. In this sense, student oratory served as a space where young speakers could both internalize and, to some extent, interrogate the ideological templates being imposed on them.

At the same time, the anthology makes clear that female students were interpellated through a distinct, heavily moralized gendered discourse. While girls' speeches affirmed women's equality and their right to education, this promise was tightly circumscribed. A prevailing theme was a notable crackdown on women's customs and everyday practices. Female students and women more broadly were criticized for "wandering the streets," frequenting cafés and

[423] Pak Pyŏng-gyu, ed. *Haksaeng ungbyŏn sŏnjip* 122-126.

cinemas, indulging in make-up and Western fashions, and supposedly neglecting their duties. Such behaviors were framed as evidence of vanity and moral decay, and responsibility for these failings was individualized: every woman was addressed as a “cog” in the national machinery, whose personal discipline or laxity would either support or undermine the nation's reconstruction.

This moral panic around public behavior was closely linked to contemporary anxieties about political disorder. In the shadow of the National University Plan controversy, politically active students, especially those involved in “alliance strikes” protests, were condemned as delinquent, self-indulgent, or mere tools of “political intrigue.” The image of the “bad student” encompassed both the activist who distributed leaflets and the student who snuck into movie theaters, cafés, and bars, smoked Western cigarettes in school uniform, or paired off romantically. By contrast, the “good” student, and especially the “good” schoolgirl, was imagined as studious, modest, and apolitical: someone who rejected strikes, shunned frivolity, and accepted the discipline of study as her primary mode of national service. In this way, the oratory platform translated structural political conflicts into questions of personal morality and self-control, channeling the crisis of the post-liberation order into the regulation of youthful conduct.

The discourse on girls’ education was thus fundamentally double-edged. On one hand, speeches repeatedly stressed that national progress and the building of a strong state depended on women’s education. Girls were told that, as students and future citizens, they were indispensable “cornerstones” of the nation, fully capable of great achievements in politics, literature, the arts, commerce, and science, just like men. On the other hand, the same speeches warned against antagonism toward men, against overt political engagement, and against visible displays of knowledge or ambition that might “disturb social peace.” The path of the “modern schoolgirl” was defined as one of disciplined study, modest comportment, and service to the

family and nation, rather than of independent political subjectivity.

The construction of role models crystallized these tensions. Yu Gwan-sun was elevated as the quintessential female patriot, a Korean Jeanne d'Arc whose "spirit" encapsulated martyrdom, self-sacrifice, and unwavering national devotion. Alongside her, figures such as Florence Nightingale, Madame Curie, and Helen Keller were cited to demonstrate that women could attain intellectual and public distinction. Together, these examples authorized female aspiration but only within a framework that bound achievement to patriotic sacrifice, moral virtue, and non-confrontational femininity.

Taken as a whole, then, the student oratory contests reveal how post-liberation Korea's emerging Cold War order was inscribed onto youthful bodies and voices. They celebrated youth as the future heroines of national reconstruction and, in the case of young women, as newly educated and ostensibly liberated subjects. Yet they also worked to delimit the forms of speech and action deemed legitimate for students by discrediting activism, pathologizing Westernized modernity, and translating the demands of nation-building into calls for individual self-discipline. In this way, the oratory platform functioned simultaneously as a stage for youthful aspiration and as a disciplinary apparatus that aligned student subjectivity with the gendered, nationalist, and anti-communist norms of the early Cold War Korean state.

CHAPTER4. The Foundation of ROK, and the Korean War Oratorical Contest

4.1. The Cultural Cold War Politics of the Office of Civil Information and the English Oratorical Contest

In the first part of the chapter, I will explain the role of the Office of Civil Information in South Korea, its purpose, and how it began organizing English oratorical contests as part of U.S. information program activities. Then, I will examine how the political issues are directly connected to the contests' given titles.

The Office of Civil Information (OCI), United States Army Force in Korea, was established by U.S. Army Force in Korea (USAFIK) General Order No.10 dated May 30, 1947, as a special staff section reporting directly to Lieutenant General John E. Hodge.[424] The OCI was divided into two parts: an administrative division with seven sections and a production division with

[424] Pak Suhyŏn, *Haebang ŭi Konggan, Chŏmnyŏng ŭi Sigan*, P'urun Yŏksa, 111.

eleven sections.[425] The significant expansion of the OCI from October 15, 1947, through March 15, 1948, involved establishing and strengthening branch offices and their subsidiary Information Centers. As early as September 12, 1947, the Busan Information Center opened its doors to the public and became the model for future establishments.[426] The creation of these branches was a top priority to ensure direct, widespread communication with the people of South Korea, especially in rural areas.[427] In total, they operated in eleven Information Centers in Cheju, Ch'ŏngju, Chŏnju, Ch'unch'ŏn, Inch'ŏn, Kaesŏng, Kwangju, Taegu, Taejŏn, Busan and Seoul.[428]

When OCI started its operations, their objectives were, first, to create goodwill on the part of the Korean people towards the American occupying forces; Second, to develop a wide understanding and acceptance of American foreign policy and the American system of life; third, to create a basic friendliness between the government and people of two nations so that heritage of goodwill remain when American organization strength departs. Also, they had to engage with counterpropaganda, emphasizing that the OCI information message was always factually correct, and they did a campaign to stress the excellence of the American system in contrast to others.[429] OCI's operations were divided into eight categories: World of Mouth Campaign, Mobile Education Train, Library, Research and Analysis, publication of "Farmer

[425] The Administrative Division consists of Fiscal, Personnel, Supply, Branch Supply, Files, research section, and Production Division comprising Publication, Visuals, Press, Film, Radio, Field Operations, Mobile Education Train, Distribution, Speakers, Adult Education, and Culture&Special Events Sections., RG 407 Records of the Adjutant Generals' Office, 1905-1981, Series: Administrative Services Division, Operation Branch, Foreign Area Reports, 1945-54, 18. Military Government Korea, Office of Civil Information, Report on the History and Growth of the Offic of Civil Information, 10 November 1947, 17 (Hereafter "Report Activities")
[426] "OCI report," 29
[427] "OCI report," 39
[428] To maintain consistency with the McCune Reishauer romanization system used in this text, all Korean terms have been romanized accordingly, even when indirectly referencing source material originally using the Revised Romanization. I made exceptions for internationally established Romanizations such as 'Seoul' and 'Busan.' "OCI report," 3
[429] "Relations with Koreans,"14

Weekly," "World News," and "Culture and Customs," Radio, Motion Pictures, and Visual displays. [430]

On November 14, 1947, the United States proposed the creation of a "temporary UN commission on Korea" to implement elections in both zones of Korea and to create a "national assembly."[431] The Commanding General of USAFIK, in March 1948, communicated to OCI the urgency and immediacy of the important task, which they must perform not only in publicizing the May 10 elections but also in convincing the people to vote and in instructing them in the mechanical process. [432] The OCI aimed to educate the Korean populace in "establishing a viable, sovereign, democratic Korea."[433] Until May 1948, OCI focused on disseminating information about the Constitutional Assembly election and highlighting the value of democracy. The OCI focused the fieldwork on election publicity. The mobile motion-picture program featured the documentary "The People Vote." During fieldwork, OCI disseminated large-scale displays of news sheets, handbills, posters, and their daily newspapers, "World News" and "Farmer Weekly," focusing on election arguments. Mainly, they were carried on the ground by U.S. army patrols, picked from Korean organizations, and distributed by airdrop. [434] Visual Sections created panels featuring election information, education, American art, television, sea transportation, and other content to exhibit at the provincial branches.[435] All managers agreed that the OCI had done significant work, and they were proud of their work in every province.[436] As Caldwell later underlined, they "made vote millions of

[430] "Relations with Koreans," 22~33.
[431] Jongsoo Lee, *The Partition of Korea After World War II A Global History*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 116~117.
[432] "OCI report," 38.
[433] "Relations with Koreans," p.4., The Office of Civil Information, Headquarters United States Army Forces in Korea APO 235, Reports of the History and Growth of the Office of Civil Information USAFIK, 10, RG 332, United States Army Forces in Korea, XXIV Corps, G-2 Historical Section, Records Regarding USAMGIK, U.S.-U.S.S.R. Relations in Korea and Korean Political Affairs, 1945~1948, Box 42. (Hereafter, "Relations with Koreans.")
[434] "Relations with Koreans," 17
[435] "OCI report," 47~48.
[436] McAlpin, the Chief of the Magazine Section, praised their work pompously, saying, "No one can take from you the credit for having made possible Korea's successful election through the dissemination of information.

people who had never voted before or even witnessed an election."[437]

As part of the 'world-of-mouth' program in the field, OCI hired, on November 8, 1947, fifty-one agents indoctrinated in the American message in Seoul and sent out to speak formally and informally to the Korean people, particularly in rural areas.[438] They estimated that 122,00 people had been directly reached by these agents, who also attempted to get other individuals to continue the 'world-of-mouth' program.[439] A central Speakers Section carried speakers; the main subject was the superiority of democracy over communism. Especially during the election campaign in Korea, more than 130 speakers were involved in word-of-mouth campaigns to mobilize voters, reaching at least 260,000 people.[440] The basis for the creation of the section was the fact that communist propaganda in South Korea was essentially a word-of-mouth proposition. It was felt that this campaign of rumor-spreading and vilification of the United States could be effectively countered only by a program featuring speakers who tell the American story. However, United States International Information and Educational Exchange (USIE)[441] thought the word-of-mouth campaign would become less important as literacy in Korea increased. Until that time and during the next critical year, they planned to continue a world-of-mouth campaign to counteract communist propaganda from North Korea.[442]

After a year of trial, OCI Branch managers wanted to reform the whole Speaker's program. Branch managers of Taejŏn, Taegu, Inch'ŏn, Kwangju, and Busan agreed that the present administration is falling. Speakers were too young, poorly trained, and often didn't follow the

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That was an OCI job, and you are OCI." RG 407 Records of the Adjutant Generals' Office, 1905-1981, Series: Administrative Services Division, Operation Branch, Foreign Area Reports, 1945-54, 18. Military Government Korea, Office of Civil Information "2nd Branch Managers Meeting OCI 10-11 June 1948," 17 (Hereafter "Branch Managers Meeting")

[437] John Caldwell, *The Korea Story*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company (1952) 38, 56.

[438] "Relations with Koreans," 16.

[439] "Relations with Koreans" 16.

[440] "United States Information and Education Program For Korea," 7, "Relations with Koreans," 16. "OCI report," 47.

[441] From 1949, the overall structure of the State Department's overseas information became known as the United States International Information and Educational Exchange Program (USIE). See Nicholas John Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 47.

[442] "United States Information and Education Program for Korea" 23.

instructions. Also, despite the number of people they hired, only a few were of any value. According to Robert Speer, the Branch manager of Taejon, they were a "waste of time and money." Also, they wanted to decentralize the Speakers to give them more control and authority to recommend any changes. John Newman, the Branch manager of Busan, said they could indoctrinate the Speakers if they were furnished with the materials, and the entire present group of Speakers should be discharged and new ones selected. [443] Their opinions were accepted, and on June 30, the Speaker Section was abolished and decentralized; each branch Information Center took on five speakers to cover the surrounding rural areas.[444] They continued a world-of-mouth campaign to counteract communist propaganda from North Korea.[445]

The speaker program was a covert program organzed to disseminate information to the public, however, it was a mission hardly traceable and manage the speakers. However, the student English oratorical contests were an overt initiative created by the Korean USIS operation, which was orchestrated by branch staff, evolved, and persisted. John Calwell, the branch manager of Chunchŏn Information Center, took the initiative of the contest. The position of the Information Center in Chunchŏn was disadvantaged of its hight, being in the side of a Mountain a thousand feet from the city's center in a Shinto shrine. The symbolosm of the Shinto shrine, together with Korean's memeories of the colonial period when they had been compelled to participate in its rites, made visitors hesitant to enter the site.[446] To attraact as many people as possible they carried variety of activities such as athletic games, country fair with industrial agricultural exhibits and English oratorical contest.[447] One of the first events attracted 500

[443] "Branch Managers Meeting," 9~10.
[444] "United States Information and Education Program for Korea," 1.
[445] "United States Information and Education Program for Korea" 23.
[446] Korean people hesitated to come up to the mountain for the fatigue and because of the memories of the colonial period when they were forced to worship the shrine. "To bring them (town people) up the long flight of steps to the shrine," Information Center carried out many activities. John Caldwell, *The Korea Story*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company (1952),11~12. About Shinto shrine policy during the colonial period, see Ryu, Dae Young. "Missionaries and Imperial Cult: Politics of the Shinto Shrine Rites Controversy in Colonial Korea." Diplomatic History 40, no. 4 (2016): 606–34.
[447] John Caldwell, *The Korea Story*, Chicago: Henry Regnery Company (1952): 51.

audience and 30 finalist middle school students.[448] As the oratorical contest was altready practiced nationwide, and as observed in chapter 1 in 1947 the oratorical contests started to be institutionalized in each regional school. Moreover, most contest theme started to be curtailed into the anti-communist rhetorics.[449]

After the success in Chunchŏn, the Information Centers in other regions started to recruit students and organize regional and national oratorical contests. The first regional OCI English oratorical contest for middle school was organized in Busan on June 26, 1947, in collaboration with the "College of Humanities of Busan University" and financed by the "Busan Educational Affair Section." OCI explicitly decided the argument for the students, and at that time, the speech title was “US-Soviet Joint Commission.” The argument directed students to talk about the U.S.-Soviet Joint Commission sessions and reassumed the meeting again on May 21, 1947, to negotiate in forming the provisional Korean Government.[450] The competition was held mainly in regions where the Information Center was built, with one student from each school allowed to participate. Students who wanted to participate had to submit a seven-minute English manuscript in advance with a recommendation letter from their school principal.[451] In addition, the contest advertisement specifically mentioned “young people who will go abroad.” [452] The reference to students intending to study abroad was by no means incidental, for at the

[448] “OCI report,” 61.

[449] “Panggong Sasang Sŏnjŏn Kyemong Ungbyŏn Taehoe (반공 사상 선전 계몽 웅변대회)” *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 21, 1949; “Panggong Ungbyŏn Taehoe (반공 웅변대회)” *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), April 25, 1949; “Chungdŭnggyo Taehang Ungbyŏn Taehoe (중등교 대학 웅변대회)” *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), June 17, 1949; “Namnyŏ Chungdŭng Haksaeng Ungbyŏn Taehoe rŭl Kaech’oe (남녀 중등 학생 웅변대회를 개최)” *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), October 15, 1949; “Pankong Sasang Kangjo Ungbyŏn (반공 사상 강조 웅변)” *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), October 12, 1949.

[450] Jongsoo Lee, *The Partition of Korea After World War II A Global History*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 91.

[451] “Kongbowŏn-eseo Yŏngŏ Ungbyŏn Taehoe (공보원에서 영어 웅변대회),” *Chungch'ŏng Maeil* (충청매일), November 8, 1949.

[452] “Kongbowŏn Chuch'oe, Ponsa Huwŏn Yŏngŏ Ungbyŏn Taehoe (공보원 주최, 본사 후원 영어 웅변대회)” *Honam Sinmun* (호남신문), November 21, 1949.

time discussions were already under way withing the United States Information and Education Service (USIE) converning educational support programs for Korea.[453]

The newspaper announcement did not always specify the judges, but a Korean judge and Information Center personnel likely assisted and participated in selecting students. For instance, Paek Nak-jun, a former member of the Korean Education Commission, and Mrs. Fletcher, the Seoul Information Center staff, were judges for the Chŏllanam-do regional contest.[454] Five students were selected from the preliminary round, and 5,000 won was given to the two first-place winners, 3000 won to two winnters of second place, and 1000 won to two winners of the third place[455] which was quite an unconventional amount compared to the first prize of 1000 won in the Korean Oratorical Contest.

When the Republic of Korea was established after the election, the contest argument changed. On December 10 to 11, 1948, Information Centers arranged a national English oratorical contest for middle school and for university students. They hosted a regional competition and, on December 24, a national final, assigning the title of the speech "The Democratic Lifestyle (민주주의적 생활법)."[456]

During 1949, Turman and his major advisors increasingly came to view South Korea as not just a bulwark against further expansionism but also a test case of containment in Asia.[457] Truman's "Point Four programs" altered the aim of OCI operations in Korea. On November 23, 1949, the National Security Council (NSC) approved 20/4, refining the objectives of U.S.

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[453] The concreate agreement to support overseas students, however were concluded only later with the sining of the Fulbright Agreement taking place on 28 April 1950. "United States Information and Education Program for Korea," 17.

[454] "Panggong Sasang Sŏnjŏn Kyemong Ungbyŏn Taehoe (반공 사상 선전 계몽 웅변대회)," *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 21, 1949.

[455] "Yŏngŏ Ungbyŏn Taehoe; Kongbowŏn Chuch'oe-ro Kaech'oe (영어 웅변대회; 공보원 주최로 개최)" *Tonggwang Sinmun* (동광신문), April 21, 1949.

[456] "Munhwa Sosik," 11.25.1948, *Tong-a Ilbo.,* "Namnyŏ Chŏnmundaehaksaeng Yŏngŏ Ungbyŏn Daehoe," 11.25.1948. *Han'seong Ilbo*,. "Haksaeng Yŏngŏ Ungbyŏn Daehoe, Migongbowŏn Chuchwi," *Susang Kyŏngjŏ Sinmun*, 11.26.1948.

[457] James I. Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade,* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985): 176.

Cold War policy as "To reduce the power and influence of the U.S.S.R to limits where it will no longer constitute a threat to peace, national independence and stability of the world family of nations."[458]

American policymakers thought that without extensive American help, the ROK could never attain the level of economic self-sufficiency requisite for genuine political independence. Assuming the withdrawal of USAFIK, the reorientation of financial assistance in Korea was being discussed, and the NSC defined U.S. policy objectives in April 1948 to assist Korean people in establishing a solid economy and educational system as essential bases of an independent and democratic state.[459] On August 25, Truman instructed the Army Department to transfer its responsibilities to the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) on January 1, 1949. Paul G. Hoffman, the director of ECA, began to gather personnel and organize an aid mission in South Korea.[460] ECA personnel started operating under John Joseph Muccio, Ambassador of the United States, to implement a three-year technical and economic aid program for recovery and self-sufficient growth.[461] Through the agreement with ECA, in addition to the usual information and education responsibilities, 25 OCI staff performed publicizing and explaining ECA activities in Korea.[462] The Department's information staff also assumed responsibility for disseminating ECA material.[463] While they started to use printed material distribution to the local Korean newspapers, publication of periodicals, "Weekly News

[458] Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, National Security Affairs, Volume II, Part 1, S/S–NSC files, lot 63 D 351, NSC 142, "Memorandum to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary (Lay), Washington, 02.06.1953," https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d43, accessed March 24, 2025.
[459] "Executive Secretariat Files: NSC 8/2, Report by the National Security Council to the President 1, Washington, March 22, 1949," FRUS, 1949, The Far East and Australasia, Volume VII, Part 2, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1949v07p2/d209, accessed March 24, 2025.
[460] James I. Matray, *The Reluctant Crusade,* 176~177.
[461] Ambassador Muccio was responsible for carrying out U.S. policy in Korea through three organizations: the American Mission in Korea (AMIK), the local agency of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), and a service organization called the Joint Administrative Services (JAS). JAS was a civilian organization designed to relieve other AMIK elements of housekeeping duties. Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisor in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History United States Army, 1998): 45.
[462] "United States Information and Education Program For Korea," 18.
[463] RG 59, General Records of Department of State, 1756-1999, Records Relating to International Information Activities, 1938-53, Proposed Information and Educational Exchange Program for Korea, 11.19, 1948.

Letter"[464] Information Centers started to apply NSC (20/4) vision also to the student oratorical contest. As the On May 15, 1949, the Jŏnranamdo Information Center organized the third regional student English oratorical contest, settling three different agendas that reflected the USIS's changed propagation goals: "The Republic of Korea Looks Ahead," "The Progress of Korean Woman," "The Mission of ECA in Korea." With the same titles, Taejŏn Information Center launched a competitoon Final of North and South Ch'unch'ŏng Province contest where students who had been selected in the preliminary contest compteted. As judging committee was Lieutanant colonel of 2nd division and an ECA advior with the Lee Chol won, the director of the Bureau of Public Information.[465] The regional branch of Ministry of Education and Korean newspaper companies fianced, with the aim of "prividing a new stimulus for the study of English and to offer students an opportunity to present the outcomes of their scholarly efforts." [466] Similarly, the competition organized on December 13, 1949, for nationwide university students entitled "The Historical Relation between Korea and the U.S." and "The Democratic Life."[467] Before the Korean War's outbreak, the USIS changed an oratorical contest title to "United Nations and World Peace" and "Korea's Mission as a Defensive Bastion in the

[464] RG 59 General Records of the Department of State, 1756-1999, Records Relating to International Information Activities, 1938-53, Far East Area (POS/F) 1948, Box 152, Highlights of Monthly Reports USIS Activities in Korea for March 1949, 2.

[465] "Hong il-chŏm I Yang-do ipsŏn; Yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang" (홍일점 이양도 입선; 영어웅변대회 성황) *Ch'ungch'ŏng Maeil* (충청매일), November 29, 1949.The appoinment of figures from the ECA or military advisers to serve as judges was connected to personnel transfers within the OCI. The affiliation of OCI personnel was changed to the United States Embassy of ROK. Ambassador Muccio was responsible for carrying out U.S. policy in Korea through three organizations: the American Mission in Korea (AMIK), the local agency of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), and a service organization called the Joint Administrative Services (JAS). JAS was a civilian organization designed to relieve other AMIK elements of housekeeping duties. Robert K. Sawyer, *Military Advisor in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War,* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History United States Army, 1998): 45

[466] "Kongbowŏn eseo Yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe" (공보원에서 영어 웅변대회), *Ch'ungch'ŏng Maeil* (충청매일), November 8, 1949.

[467] "Namnyŏ chŏnmun taehaksaeng yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe," *Chosŏn Ilbo*, 11.27.1948. "Yŏngŏ ungbyŏn taehoe; Kongbowŏn chujero kaech'oe" (영어 웅변대회; 공보원 주최로 개최), *Tonggwang Sinmun* (동광신문), April 21, 1949, 2.

Far East,"[468] indicating tensions growing in the Far East, and the political sensibilities had already reached a stage of being publicly articulated in concrete terms.

To sum up, OCI tried to apply the "Speakers" program as part of the 'world-of-mouth' campaign, indoctrinating citizens with the American message in Seoul and sending out to speak formally and informally in rural areas, but it didn't have great success. However, English oratorical contests had a great response and were framed as cultural exchanges. English oratorical contests started to serve as tools of psychological warfare to propagate "democracy" and suffrage for the establishment of the Korean Government. The English oratorical contest argument changed over time to align with the crucial agenda of USIS, reflecting shifts in the State Department's foreign policy toward Korea and, ultimately, the intensification of the Cold War.

4.2. The Unification of Student Groups and Rise of Anti-Communist Oratorical Contest

4.2.1. The Foundation of "Korean Youth Corps" and "Student Defense Corps."

This section examines how, in the wake of the 1948 Yŏ-Sun Incident, the South Korean state reorganized youth and student politics into a centralized, anti-communist system. It focuses on the creation of the Korean Youth Corps (KYC) and the Student Defense Corps (SDC), as well as the expansion of anti-communist oratorical campaigns, to show how students were turned into disciplined instruments of state ideology.

Scholars have demonstrated that the signifier most central to the early Korean Cold War, "democracy," did not, in fact, guarantee freedom of speech in the public sphere. Democracy, as the "emblem of the postwar era," and the people, imagined as its subjects, could not be

[468] "Chungdŭng Namnyŏ Yŏngŏ Ungbyŏn Taehoe Kaech'oe", *Tongkwang Sinmun* 11. 04.1950,

openly repudiated by political elites. Instead, in the process of institutionalizing popular sovereignty and democratization, elites sought, in various ways, to discipline and subsume the people within their own political agendas. As part of this effort, popular sovereignty was curtailed by restricting it to the right to vote, while mechanisms such as "the will of the people" were deployed to exclude and separate the populace from everyday political processes, effectively reducing them to objects of governance and mobilization.[469] In particular, the right-wing camp concentrated on equating liberal democracy with anti-communism, thereby clothing democracy in a seemingly persuasive slogan and symbolism that made the public sphere appear to be freely constituted, even as it was tightly circumscribed.

The very concept of "democracy" itself became a contested terrain in moments of acute political crisis. The "Daegu People's Uprising," the "Jeju 4.3 Incident," and the "Yŏsu–Sunchŏn Rebellion" marked instances when the "people" emerged as a "crowd" and sought to voice their own opinions. Sit-ins by factory workers and peasants, strikes by soldiers, student boycotts, and the political mobilization of women were all subjected to strict repression. Sovereign authority, in turn, did not recognize the "people" as political subjects or bearers of sovereignty, but rather defined them as objects to be thoroughly controlled and managed. Accordingly, the production and regulation of "public opinion," ostensibly originating from the people, was considered the prerogative of the elite. [470] This sensibility was reinforced by the covert and overt psychological warfare and opinion-management operations undertaken by the unified student groups.

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[469] Im Chong-myŏng 임종명, "Haebang chikhu inmin munjesŏng kwa ellit ŭi inmin sunch'i" (해방 직후 인민 문제성과 엘리트의 인민 순치 People-Related Problems and Elite Disciplining of the Masses Immediately After Liberation). *Tongbanghakchi* (동방학지) 168 (2014): 63.

[470] Pak Chi-yŏng. "Poksu ŭi 'minjujuŭi' dŭl—Haebanggi inmin (simin), kunjung (taejung) kaenyŏm pŏnyŏk ŭl chungsim ŭro" (복수의 '민주주의'들 — 해방기 인민(시민), 군중(대중) 개념 번역을 중심으로 Plural Democracies: Conceptual Translation of People/Citizen and Crowd/Mass in the Liberation Period). *Taedong Munhwa Yŏn'gu* (대동문화연구) 85 (2014): 49–90.

Following opposition to the single election and single assembly system, the "Yŏ-Sun Incident" broke out on October 19, 1948, roughly six months after the Jeju April 3 Uprising.[471] On October 28, 1948, the Ministry of National Defense issued its seventh public statement, declaring that not only ordinary citizens of Yŏsu but also female students and even elementary school children had joined the insurgent forces, attributing this to the rebels' agitation. Student participation in the "Yŏ-Sun Incident" occurred when various student alliances and labor unions voluntarily organized units of the "People's Volunteer Army." These groups sought to expose pro-Japanese collaborators, police officers, and right-wing organizations that had supported Japanese imperialism. During these operations, students often played auxiliary roles, aiding or guiding the 14th Regiment.[472]

However, the individual circumstances of student involvement were ultimately disregarded. In effect, the "Yŏ-Sun Incident" became a catalyst for the intensification of the anti-communist regime. In the aftermath of the Yŏ-Sun *Incident*, the Ministry of Education, which had already been conducting ideological investigations of the nation's 50,000 educators since the founding of the government, launched a sweeping purge of the educational sector. Minister of Education Ahn Ho-sang, shortly after assuming office, completed investigations into the ideological leanings of approximately 51,000 teachers, of whom some 5,000 were designated for expulsion. The purge of left-leaning educators was carried out nationwide, with ideological screenings conducted through inquiries involving principals, students, public opinion, and police

[471] The 4.3. Incident originated from the Police Firing on March 1, 1947. The Jeju South Korea Labor Party Guerillas started armed uprising against the exclusive election in the South, the oppression of the Soebuk Young Men's Association (Sŏbuk Ch'ŏngnyŏndan서북청년단) on April 3, 1949. It resulted in significant numbers of civilians being killed during the conflict between guerilla forces and the Search Teams. See The "Jeju 4.3 Incident Inversitation Report" Jeju 4.3. Peace Foundation, 2014., The Yŏsun revolt broke out on October 19, 1948 when soldiers of the 14th Regiment refused to be dispatch to Cheju Island to participate in the subjugation of the Cheju Insurgency asserting that the regiment should not be mobilized for a fratricidal battle. Kim Ye Jin, *Translation, national ideology and the Cold War in the Republic of Korea (1949-1950)*, PhD dissertation, SOAS University of London, 2017, 61.

[472] Kim Dŭk-chung김득중, Yŏsun sagŏn kwa Yi Sŭng-man ŭi panggong ch'eje ŭi kuch'uk (여순사건과 이승만의 반공체제의 구축). PhD diss., Sŏnggyun'gwan University (성균관대학교), 2004, 214–216.

background checks.[473] Ultimately, communist ideology was deemed both anti-national and anti-state, and thus individuals who adhered to it could no longer be regarded as part of the "nation" as defined by the Syngman Rhee government.[474]

After the "Yŏ-Sun Incident," Syngman Rhee declared his intention "to unite all youth organizations in order to advance a national movement, to select outstanding youth, and to organize a civil militia."[475] Within the National Assembly, proposals were also put forth to "dissolve all domestic youth organizations and reorganize them into a patriotic corps of young men who would undergo military training."[476] In this way, the National Assembly sought both the dissolution of existing youth groups and the establishment of a unified right-wing organization through which youth would be subjected to military training. Furthermore, it resolved to disband paramilitary associations and, instead, to establish national defense units and a "National Defense Youth League" centered on youth organizations. The goal of these measures was the creation of anti-communist quasi-military structures.[477]

On November 17, 1948, President Syngman Rhee held a meeting with representatives from ten major youth organizations, including the "Korean National Youth League (*Chosŏn Minjok Ch'ŏngnyŏndan*)," the "Daedong Youth Corps" (*Taedong Ch'ŏngnyŏndan*), and the "Northwest Youth Association" (*Sŏbuk Ch'ŏngnyŏnhoe*). At this meeting, it was decided to form a "Preparatory Committee for the Organization of a Civil Militia." Among these groups, five

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[473] An Ho-sang. "Munkyobu changgwan, kyoyukgye chwayik sukch'ŏng e taehaye kija wa mundap (안호상, 문교부장관, 교육계 좌익 숙청에 대해 기자와 문답)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 12, 1949.

[474] Kim Sang-hun. "Haebang chikhu panggong kyoyuk kwa kuksa kyogwasŏ esŏ sahoejuŭi kwallyŏn sŏsul sakche (해방 직후 반공 교육과 국사교과서에서 사회주의 관련 서술 삭제)," *Yŏksa Yŏn'gu* (역사연구) 35 (2018): 402–403.

[475] "O Manminbyŏng chojik (오만민병 조직)," *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), October 30, 1948..

[476] "Chehŏn Kukhoe che 1 hoe (imshihwe) che 98 ch'a ponhoeŭi hoeŭirok (제헌국회 제1회(임시회) 제98차 본회의 회의록)" (November 8, 1948), 1–18, Kukhoe Hoeŭirok Siseut'em (국회회의록시스템), https://record.assembly.go.kr/assembly/mnts/minutes/search.do (accessed November 9, 2025).

[477] Kim Haeng-sŏn 김행선, *Haebang chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn undongsa* (해방정국 청년운동사), Sŏnin (선인), 2004, 207.

organizations the "Dedong Youth Corps," the "Northwest Youth Association, " the "Youth League of Korea" (*Ch'ŏngnyŏn Chosŏn Ch'ongtongmaeng*), the "Korean Independence Youth Corps" (*Taehan Tongnip Ch'ŏngnyŏndan*), and the "National Association Youth Corps" (*Kungminhoe Ch'ŏngnyŏndan*), took the lead in establishing the "National Youth Integration Preparatory Committee" (*Chŏngguk Ch'ŏngnyŏn T'onghaphoe*).

Under president Rhee's initiative, the a nationwide student association was organized, and on January 30, it was officially announced that the organization would be renamed the "Korean Youth Corps (KYC, *Dehanchŏngnyŏndan*)," and on December 19, a formal inauguration rally was scheduled to be held at Seoul Stadium.[478] Thereby Syngman Rhee consolidated his personal ruling base by relying on right-wing youth and students who had been the greatest source of strength for his political power.[479] Although the KYC required its members to pledge loyalty to President Syngman Rhee, a feature that gave the organization a personalistic character, it simulateously functioned as an auxiliary arm of the politc, severing as a quasi-police force and mass-mobilization strike unit. At the same time, it possessed the characteristics of a paramilitary organization. The Corps instituted and attached an officer system, under which, in consultation with Army Headquarters, selected members were trained at the Army Infantry School. Of these trainees, 250 from the first cohort and more than 470 from the second were commissioned as Army second lieutenants and took charge of providing military training to

[478]"Taehan Ch'ŏngnyŏndan chunbi pusŏ kyŏljŏng (대한청년단 준비부서 결정)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), December 1, 1948. "Chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn tanche hapdong kyŏlsŏng taehwe (전국청년단체 합동결성대회)," Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), December 5, 1948. Fujii Takeshi (藤井たけし). *P'asijŭm kwa che sam segye sai esŏ* (파시즘과 제3세계 사이에서), (Yŏksabi p'yŏngsa 역사비평사 2012), 214.

[479] Yu Sang-su유상수, "Han'guk Chŏnjaeng chŏnhu Yi Sŭng-man ŭi sajŏk t'ongch'i kiban hyŏngsŏng kwa pyŏnhwa (한국전쟁 전후 이승만의 사적통치기반 형성과 변화)," *Yŏksahak Yŏn'gu* (역사학연구) 82 (2021): 283.

youth members. This system later developed into the "National Defence Corps" (*Kungmin Bangwigun*).[480]

The primary goal of the KYC was to eliminate communists and achieve national reunification. Syngman Rhee appointed the leaders of youth organizations and figures who had long exercised influence over the youth movement as advisory committee members. These advisors directed the activities of national cadres and ordinary members systematically, while those who had completed military training were assigned to local branches.[481]

If the KYC was a coalition form of diverse Korean Youth Associations, the "Student Defense Corps (SDC, *Hakdo Hogukdan*) was a school-based paramilitary structure in the name of defending schools and their neighborhoods, and in the name of national defense. Presidential Decree No. 186, entitled Regulations of the "Student Defense Corps" of the Republic of Korea, stipulated that "any attempt to organize a student group outside the SDC must receive the approval of the Minister of Education"[482] The SDC was rapidly institutionalized through a cooperative relentless drive of related authorities such as Departments of Education and National Defense. In April 1949 ROK Department of Education officially inagurated the SDC in a clearly tiered command hierarchy so that all secondary schools and colleges across the country were ordered to be supervised through SDC.[483] Students were obliged to participate in

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[480] Sŏ Jung-sŏk (서중석), Han'guk hyŏndae minjok yŏn'gu 2 (한국현대민족연구2), Yŏksa Pip'yŏng 역사비평, 1999) 256–257.

[481] Ha Yu-sik, "Yi Sŭng-man chŏnggwŏn ch'o'gi chŏngch'i kiban yŏn'gu: Taehan Ch'ŏngnyŏndan ŭl chungsim ŭro" (이승만 정권 초기 정치기반 연구—대한청년단을 중심으로—), *Chiyŏk kwa Yŏksa* (지역과 역사) 3 (1999): 213–214.

[482] "Haksaeng undong e sinchich'im: Hogukdae kyŏlsŏng ŭl kyegiro" (학생운동에 신지침: 호국대 결성을 계기로), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), April 22, 1949, 2.

[483] Authority flowed from Central SDC to the Metropolitan Seoul and provincial organizations, then to the city and country branches, and finally to the individual school unites. Two exceptions qualified this structure: university-level SDC unites reported directly to the Central SDC, and withing Seoul, all school-level SDC unis were placed under the direct supervision of the capital organization, bypassing intermediary levels. Im Chongmyŏng, "The Korean National Defense Student Defense Corps and the Manufacturing of Warrior-type Students in Its Incipient Days," *International Journal of Korean History*, Vol.17 No.1 (2012): 149.

collective military trainings and mass rallies such as anti-Communist demonstrations and welcoming of foreign dignities such as United Nation Commission for Korea.[484]

In establishing the SDC Minister of Education Ahn Ho-sang's foremost consideration was the purge of all "impure" and "reactionary" elements that sought to undermine educational institutions, thereby seeking to foster national unity. That is to say, the organization was designed both to eliminate subversive forces within schools and to maintain surveillance over students while instilling anti-communist ideology.[485] As a result, communism was officially defined as both anti-national and anti-state, and individuals who embraced socialist and communist ideology were effectively excluded from the very notion of the "nation" as articulated by the Syngman Rhee government.[486]

4.2.2. Anti-Communist Oratorical Contest after the "Yŏ-Sun Incident"

The KYC came to encompass a vast organizational structure, boasting over two million regular members and extending down to the smallest village units. It established ten provincial branches, thirty-six city branches, sixteen district branches, and 132 county branches, as well as twelve special workplace branches in major enterprises and 4,320 township and neighborhood branches.[487] Since regional branches enabled local members to host events, the KYC organized oratorical contests that became especially prominent in the provinces in 1949.

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[484] . Im Chongmyŏng, "The Korean National Defense Student Defense Corps and the Manufacturing of Warrior-type Students in Its Incipient Days,"152-153.

[485] "Taet'ongnyŏngnyŏng che 186 ho, Taehan Min'guk Hakto Hogukdan kyujŏng (대통령령 제186호, 대한민국학도호국단 규정)," *Kwanbo* (관보) 185 (September 28, 1949), in *Charyo Taehan Min'guksa* (자료대한민국사) vol. 14, National Institute of Korean History Database, https://db.history.go.kr/contemp/level.do#none (accessed September 14, 2025).

[486] Yŏn Chŏng-ŭn, "Kamsi esŏ tongwŏn ŭro, tongwŏn esŏ kyuyul ro: 1950nyŏndae Hakto Hogukdan ŭl chungsim ŭro" (감시에서 동원으로, 동원에서 규율로 -1950년대 학도호국단을 중심으로-), *Yŏksa Yŏn'gu* (역사연구) 14 (2004): 199–253.

[487] Chŏn Kap-saeng 전갑생, "Han'guk Chŏnjaeng chŏnhu Taehan Ch'ŏngnyŏndan ŭi chibang chojik kwa

Not only oratorical contest adopts explicitly anti-communism as their central theme, in a manner even more overt and uncompromising than other organizations. On May 11–12, 1949, the Central Headquarters of the KYC, with support from the Ministry of Home Affairs, government agencies, and local newspapers, convened the "National Youth and Student Oratorical Contest" at the Seoul Christian Hall. The event was organized to commemorate the first anniversary of the founding elections of the Republic of Korea. The stated aim of the contest was “to inspire the morale of the youth, who serve as the bulwark of the nation at this critical juncture when the long-cherished national aspiration of Korean reunification must be urgently pursued, to inherit the distinguished legacy of the martyrs who sacrificed themselves for the country, and to contribute to the enlightenment and cultural leadership of the people.”[488]

Participants were instructed to select their speech topics freely from among four proposed themes: First, “to inherit the bloodline of the martyrs and to inspire the spirit of safeguarding the nation through a spirit of sacrifice.” Second, “to express the national outcry for readiness in the face of grave crisis and to prepare the people for extraordinary mobilization.” Third, “to transcend factionalism, achieve great unity, and promote the realization of national reunification through the recovery of northern territory.” As last, "to emphasize the complete eradication of communist elements who, having forgotten fraternal bonds, commit acts of murder, arson, and looting.”

Eligibility was limited to male and female students of middle school age or older, as well as general youth, provided they were registered members of the KYC. The first round of selection was based on manuscript screening, with submissions required by April 21. Contestants who

hwaltong” (한국전쟁 전후 대한청년단의 지방조직과 활동), *Genocide Yŏn’gu* (제노사이드 연구) 4 (2008): 22.

[488] “5.10 ungbyŏn taehwe, t’aeban yŏhaksaengi tangsŏn” (5.10웅변대회, 태반 여학생이 당선), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), May 18, 1949, 2.

passed this stage were allowed up to ten minutes for their speeches.[489] It was particularly noted that the majority of prize winners were female students. The recipient of the first prize received a certificate of commendation personally conferred by the President; subsequent prizes were awarded by the Speaker of National Assembly, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Home Affairs respectively.[490]

A distinctive feature of this period was the organization of several anti-communist student oratorical contest in Jeollanam-do Province. The frequent organization of oratorical contests across Jeollanam-do regions appears to have been intended as a means of controlling public opinion in the aftermath of the "Yŏ-Sun Incident." After the outburst of the insurrection residents were in an extremely precarious situation, as in 1949 many farmers who had suffered severe economic hardship following the incident migrated to Gwangju in search of a more stable livelihood. According to the April records of the Gwangju municipal registry, migrants were required to register their new place of residence as a temporary domicile upon relocation.[491] In April alone, there were 1,764 registrations, representing a total of 8,820 individuals.[492] By May, an additional 1,215 registrations were recorded, accounting for 6,750 people. These figures indicate that within the span of just one month, the population of the city increased by approximately 5,000 residents.[493]

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[489] "Minjok chŏlgyu ŭi hoki: Chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto ungbyŏn taehwe" (민족절규의 호기; 전국청년학도웅변대회), *Yŏnhap Sinmun* (연합신문), April 21, 1949, 4.

[490] "5.10 ungbyŏn taehwe, t'aeban yŏhaksaengi tangsŏn" (5.10웅변대회, 태반 여학생이 당선), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), May 18, 1949, 2.

[491] "'Kiryujin' denoted a place of residence distinct from one's original domicile (ponjŏkchi); upon migration, individuals were mandated to register their presence within the administrative district of their new locality.", "Yusuk kyejesu silsi!(유숙계제수실시!), " *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), June 5, 1949, 2.

[492] "Tosiro moyŏdŭn nongmindŭl kyŏkchŭng; pandowa saenghwal puran-ŭro" (도시로 모여든 농민들 격증 반도와 생활불안으로), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), June 19, 1949, 2.

[493] 이농자 늘다. 재화피해 도시로, 동아일보, 1949.06.19.

The Jeonnam Provincial Branch of the KYC held a "Youth Oratorical Contest for Men and Women" at the Gwangju Theater on March 3, 1949, in order to commemorate the March First Independence Movement. The speeches were required to focus on "inspiring and promoting the fervent patriotism and indomitable spirit of young men and women, the heirs of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for national liberation."[494] Such contests explicitly "othered" communists while incorporating "patriots" into the national community, soliciting the participation of the "patriotic young men and women."[495]

The Gwangju district decided to organize an oratorical contest "at this moment, when the desperate struggles of local communist agitators, beginning with the rebellion incident, have inflicted grievous sacrifices upon many nationalist compatriots"; it would host an oratorical contest to "solidify anti-communist ideology in Gwangju and pursue the long-cherished national desire for reunification."[496] As planned, the contest was held on March 30, 1949, at the Dongbang Theater in Gwangju before an audience of several thousand people.[497]

The event was conducted on a grand scale, with the attendance of General Won Yong-dŏk, commander of the 5th Division of the Korean Armed Forces, as well as the mayor of Gwangju, both of whom offered encouragement to the "patriotic students."[498] According to reports in the

[494] "3.1 kinyŏm ungbyŏn taehwe Hanch'ŏng Chŏnnam-do tanbu chuch'oe" (3.1기념 웅변대회 한청 전남도단부 주최), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), March 1, 1949, 2

[495] "Ch'ŏngsonyŏn ungbyŏn taehwe; Kwangju-bu chuch'oe-ro Pumin'gwan-esŏ" (청소년 웅변대회; 광주부 주최로 부민관에서), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), March 23, 1949

[496] "3.1 kinyŏm ungbyŏn taehwe Hanch'ŏng Chŏnnam-do tanbu chuch'oe" (3.1기념 웅변대회 한청 전남도단부 주최), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), March 1, 1949, 2

[497] "Ch'ŏngsonyŏn ungbyŏn taehwe, Kwangju-bu chuch'oe-ro Pumin'gwan-esŏ" (청소년 웅변대회, 광주부 주최로 부민관에서), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), March 23, 1949, 2

[498] "Pangong ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang, iltŭng-en Kwangnong Chŏng Un-hong kun" (반공 웅변대회 성황, 1등엔 광농 정운홍 군), Tonggwang Sinmun (동광신문), March 31, 1949, 2

Donggwang Newspaper, approximately 3,000 people attended the event, which was described as a resounding success.[499]

<Table 4.1>. “March First Commemoration Youth Oratorical Contest,” hosted by the Jeonnam Provincial Branch of the "Korean Youth Corps" (March 3, 1949)

Prize	**Speech Title**	**Winner's Name and Affiliation**
1st Prize	“Hear, O Youth” (Ch’ŏngnyŏndŭl-i-yŏ tŭrŏra)	Kim Yŏn-sŏk Gwangju Agricultural Middle School
2nd Prize	“There Is Only One Path” (Kal kil-ŭn hanada)	Chŏng Un-cho Gwangju Agricultural Middle School
3rd Prize	“The Roar of Ye Myŏng-gi” (Yemyŏnggi-ŭi sajahu)	Yun Chang-ha Gwangju Teachers’ Training Middle School
3rd Prize	“Let Us Become Warriors Who Live by the Spirit of Patriotic Sacrifice” (Sunguk chŏngsin-e sal su it-nŭn yongsaga toeja)	Kim Yang-su Gwangju Teachers’ Training Middle School
4th Prize	“The Uplift of National Spirit” (Minjok chŏngsin-ŭi angyang)	Ch’oe Ŭn-hye Jeonnam Girls’ Middle School

*Source: “3.1 kinyŏm ungbyŏn taehwe iltŭng ŭn Kwanggong ŭi Kim Yŏn-sŏk” (3.1 기념 웅변대회 1 등은 광공의 김연석), *Honam Sinmun* (호남신문), March 5, 1949, 2.

[499] “Panggong ungbyŏn taehwe; to chuch'oe-ro kaech'oe” (방공 웅변대회; 도 주최로 개최), Tonggwang Sinmun (동광신문), April 7, 1949, 2

<Table 4.2>. "Anti-Communist Oratorical Contest," hosted by the "Gwangju-bu "(Region of Gwangju)," (March 30–31, 1949)

Prize	**Speech Title**	**Winner's Name and Affiliation**
1st Prize	"The True Unity of Thirty Million" (Chinjŏnghan samch'ŏnman-ŭi tanggyŏl)	Jŏng Un-hong, Gwangju Agricultural Middle School
2nd Prize	"Korean Reunification Through Love" (Nambuk t'ongil-ŭn sarang-ŭro)	Kim Hyŏn-ja, Sup'ia Middle School
3rd Prize	"Let Us Unite Through the Spirit of the Nation" (Kyŏrehon-ŭro tanggyŏlhaja)	Mun Kŭn-sŏng,Gwangju Middle School
4th Prize	"The X of Patriotic Spirit" (Aeguk chŏngsin-ŭi X-jang)	Kim Chŏng-sun, Gwangju Girl's Middle School
5th Prize	"National Liberation Lies in Anti-Communism's Realization" (Choguk kwangbok-ŭn panggong ilhyŏn-e itta)	Kim Yang-sul Gwangju Teachers' Training Middle School

* "Pang'gong ungbyŏn taehwe: Iltŭng ŭn Chŏng Un-hong kun" (방공웅변대회; 1 등은 정운홍군), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), April 1, 1949, 2. (The invisible words are signed X)

Also, the Public Information Department of Jeollanam-do likewise organized the "Jeollanam-do Anti-Communist Oratorical Contest" on April 15, with the stated purpose of "promoting and establishing anti-communist awareness" and advancing "the cause of Korean reunification, the

long-cherished wish of the nation."[500] For this contest, twenty-six speakers who had been selected in preliminary anti-communist oratorical contests held in each region were scheduled to participate.[501] The provincial-level contest was also held at the Gwangju Theater, where Director Park Jong-o of the Public Information Department delivered the opening address, followed by greetings from the provincial Bureau of Internal Affairs before the speeches commenced. Ultimately, twelve regional representatives were given the opportunity to present their speeches, of whom five were awarded prizes.[502]

On July 16, 1949, the Jeollanam-do branch of the "Student Defense Corps" held preliminary contests at the county level for the "Middle School Anti-Communist, Anti-Soviet Oratorical Contest," selecting twenty representatives. On July 25, the provincial-level contest, the "Jeonnam Middle School Anti-Communist, Anti-Soviet Oratorical Contest," was convened in Gwangju. The event, attended by the Director of the Bureau of Academic Affairs and other officials, took place at the Dongbang Theater, where awards were presented to a total of five students.[503]

<Table 4.3>. "Jeonnam Middle School Anti-Communist, Anti-Soviet Oratorical Contest" (July 25, 1949 Gwangju)

Rank	Speech Title	Speaker and Affiliation

[500] "Panggong ungbyŏn taehwe Chŏnnam-do kongbogwa-esŏ kaech'oe" (방공웅변대회 전남도 공보과에서 개최), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), April 7, 1949, 2.

[501] "Panggong ungbyŏn taehwe; to chuch'oe-ro kaech'oe" (방공 웅변대회; 도주최로 개최), Tonggwang Sinmun (동광신문), April 7, 1949, 2.

[502] "Pangong ungbyŏn taehwe; iltŭng-e Kim Ki-un kun; to chuch'oe" (반공 웅변대회;1등에 김기운군; 도 주최), Tonggwang Sinmun (동광신문), April 16, 1949.

[503] "Pangong sasang-ŭl koch'wi; haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe kaech'oe" (반공 사상을 고취; 학생 웅변대회 개최), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), July 29, 1949, 2

1st Prize	"The Path Forward for Students" (Hakto-ŭi nagal-kil)	Kim Sŏng-sim, Sunch'ŏn Women's Seconary School
2nd Prize	"The Cry of an Unknown Poet" (Han mumyŏng siin-ŭi purŭjijŭm)	Ch'oe Yŏng-ch'ŏl, Mokp'o Secondary School
3rd Prize	"Let Us Advance Bearing the Banner of Northern Expedition and Reunification" (Naagaja pukchin t'ongil-ŭi kipparŭl tŭlgo)	Kim Chŏng-ja, Sup'ia Secondary School
4th Prize	"The Helmsman Who Sets A float the Ship of National Reunification" (Minjok t'ongil-ŭi paerŭl ttŭiuneun sagong husu)	Kim Kil-han, Sunch'ŏn Women's University
5th Prize	"I Cry Out for Student-Soldiers' Patriotism" (Hakto-gun aeguk-e purŭjinnora)	Kim Ch'un-sŏn, Taegu Teacher Training College

*Source: "Panggong hakto ungbyŏn taehwe; iltŭng-ŭn Sunnyŏ Kim Sŏng-sim yang" (방공 학도 웅변대회; 1 등은 순녀 김성심양), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), July 24, 1949.

At Mokpo Public Middle School in Jeollanam-do, the seventh anniversary of the school's founding was commemorated with an oratorical contest held among local middle and elementary school students. The event was intended to emphasize the "promotion of patriotic spirit among students" and the "rejection of anti-national ideology." Students wishing to participate were required to submit recommendations from their principals to the disciplinary office of Mokpo Middle School. Owing to the limited size of the venue, attendance was restricted to no more than seventy middle school students and thirty elementary school students.[504] On this occasion, the school auditorium hosted the "First Oratorical Contest of Male and Female Elementary and Middle School Students of Mokpo," in which twenty-eight

[504] "Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe; Mokchung chuch'oe-ro 20-il-e" (학생 웅변대회; 목중 주최로 20일에), Tonggwang Sinmun (동광신문), April 13, 1949, 2.

students gave speeches under the stated theme of "rejecting anti-national and anti-state ideologies and advancing the eternal development of the nation." Among the prize winners in the middle school division, several were designated to represent Mokpo at the National Oratorical Contest for Middle School Students, organized by the KYC's central headquarters, scheduled for May 5–6.[505] Also Goksŏng, a region in Jeollanam-do, held an anti-communist oratorical contest on May 8, 1949, at Jungang Elementary School in the county seat; manuscripts were accepted until the day before at the county office.[506] In Jinju, the local branch of the "Student Defense Corps" organized a regional student oratorical contest at the Pyeongsan Theater, where five prize winners were selected.[507]

In fact, the contests sometimes were not limited only to students but also invited adults to speak, such as the "Denunciation of Communism Oratorical Contest," was also organized under the joint sponsorship of the Gyeongsangnam-do Federation of the National Guidance League, the Busan District Prosecutors' Office, the Gyeongsangnam-do Police Bureau, and local daily newspapers. The contest, held on December 4, 1949, was advertised with the stated purpose of "eradicating communism, which commits heinous acts such as the destruction of the nation and the people, killings, arson, and looting, and of promoting the patriotic and national spirit of love for country and compatriots." The event took place in the auditorium of Nam-il Elementary School. Speakers were men and women between the ages of twenty and forty, and each participant was allotted a generous speaking time of fifteen minutes.[508]

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[505] "Kyŏnggi-wa ungbyŏn taehwe; Mokchung kaegyoin haengsa tach'ae" (경기와 웅변대회; 목중 개교일 행사 다채), Honam Sinmun (호남신문), April 26, 1949.

[506] "Kakchi sosik; Koksŏng panggong ungbyŏn taehwe" (각지 소식; 곡성 방공웅변대회), *Honam Sinmun* (호남신문), May 8, 1949, 2.

[507] "Chibangnan; Hakto hoguk-tan; ungbyŏn taehwe sŏngdae" (지방란; 학도호국단; 웅변대회 성대), *Chayuminbo (*자유민보), October 15, 1949, 2.

[508] "Kwanggo: Kongsanjuŭi sŏngt'o ungbyŏn taehwe" (광고; 공산주의 성토웅변대회), *Chayu Minbo* (자유민보), December 1, 1949, 1.

In sum, the formation of the KYC and SDC, coupled with nationwide anti-communist oratorical campaigns, marked a decisive turn toward the militarization and politicization of youth in post-incident South Korea. Youth and students were reorganized into hierarchically managed bodies tasked with defending the state, both ideologically and, in principle, militarily. Through school-based training and public speech contests that celebrated patriotic sacrifice and denounced communism, the regime sought not only to prevent another Yŏ-Sun but also to embed anti-communist nationalism into everyday educational practice.

4.3. The Korean War and Oratorical Contest for Propaganda

4.3.1. Wartime Student Education and Mobilization

This section examines how the Korean War transformed students from ordinary pupils into a mobilized wartime resource and key targets of ideological reeducation. It traces both the coercive structures of "voluntary" enlistment and reserve training, and the ways in which schools became central sites for anti-communist, nationalist, and pro-American indoctrination.

After the outbreak of the Korean War, the Ministry of Education and the Seoul municipal government ordered schools to remain open and continue classes, while ensuring that SDC members were prepared for immediate mobilization should an order be issued. On June 26, the Ministry of Education instructed all elementary schools in the city, as well as the first- and second-year classes of middle schools, to temporarily suspend operations. Meanwhile, third-year middle school students and all university students were ordered to remain in a state of readiness and to prepare for mobilization.[509] Pre-war conscription applied to men eligible for

[509] Hŏ Ŭn 허은, Miguk ŭi hegemoni wa Han'guk minjokchuŭi: Naengjŏn sidae (1945–1965) munhwajŏk kyŏnggye ŭi kuch'uk kwa kyunyŏl ŭi tongban (미국의 헤게모니와 한국 민족주의: 냉전시대(1945–1965)

active duty, targeting those who reached the age of twenty between September 1 of one year and August 31 of the following year. However, following the outbreak of war, the government was compelled to expand mobilization to include reservists and members of the national defense militia. A representative example of such recruitment was the "Student Volunteer Army" (*Hakto Ŭiyonggun*). The first mobilization took place on June 29, 1950, when, under the sponsorship of the Ministry of National Defense's Bureau of Political Education, an emergency student battalion consisting of two platoons was organized and dispatched to participate in the Battle of Noryangjin.[510] Compulsory conscription led to growing public discontent because it lacked institutional and procedural legitimacy. By mid-August 1950, draft notices were even issued to students still enrolled in school. In such cases, students were required to submit deferment applications to the local military recruitment command to obtain a postponement of conscription. However, without possession of a wartime student identification card, individuals could not be officially recognized as students.[511] After DPRK forces occupied Seoul, the "Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly" issued a wartime mobilization order that applied to all citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six. Under this directive, recruitment for volunteer forces was carried out.[512] The "Seoul Democratic Student League" (*Seoul-si Minju Haksaeng Yŏnmaeng*) organized mass rallies, including the "Enthusiastic Students' Assembly" for secondary school and university students and the "Student Rally for the Expulsion of American Imperialists," to systematically mobilize

문화적 경계의 구축과 균열의 동반) (Seoul: Koryŏ Taehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 2008), 19–20.

[510] Yun Siwŏn 윤시원, "Han'guk chingbyŏngje ŭi chedohwa wa kungmin kaebyŏngchuŭi ŭi pyosanghwa 1945–1964" ("한국 징병제의 제도화와 국민 개병주의의 표상화 1945–1964"), PhD diss., Sŏnggyun'gwan Taehakkyo Sahakkwa, 2004, 92–97.

[511] An Kyŏng-sik 안경식, "Han'guk Chŏnjaenggi Taehanminguk haksaeng ŭi sam" ("한국전쟁기 대한민국 학생의 삶"), Kyoyuk sasang yŏn'gu (교육사상연구) 24, no. 2 (2010): 71–103.

[512] Chŏng Pyŏng-jun 정병준, "Pukhan ŭi Namhan chŏmnyŏnggi 'ŭiyonggun' tongwŏn kwa unyong: Ŭiyonggun myŏngbu, poro simmun chosŏ rŭl chungsim ŭro" (북한의 남한 점령기 '의용군' 동원과 운용: 의용군명부, 포로심문조서를 중심으로), Ihwa sahak yŏn'gu (이화사학연구) 46 (2013): 2.

students. Through speeches, they elicited consent while simultaneously creating a coercive atmosphere in which refusal was not possible, ultimately compelling students to resolve to join the volunteer forces.[513] According to a teacher's recollection at Seoul Muhak Girls' Middle School, student enlistment in the volunteer forces was nominally voluntary but, in reality, amounted to forced conscription. Students were summoned to school under the pretext of attending cultural lectures, after which propaganda sessions were conducted using newspapers of the People's Republic, such as *Haebang Ilbo* and *Chosŏn Inminbo,* as teaching materials. These sessions then shifted to mass rallies, where an atmosphere of fear was created to secure unanimous approval, followed immediately by street demonstrations.[514] Whether by choice or by coercion, students found themselves in circumstances where they could not avoid being compelled to join the armed forces under whichever side held occupation.

Meanwhile, beginning in October 1949, the Central SDC had already provided military training to students. A total of 450,000 students from 947 middle schools and higher education institutions nationwide were organized and trained, intended to serve as reserve forces capable of being mobilized to the national defense front in times of emergency. However, in the early stages of the war, amidst rapid retreats, they were unable to continue systematic activities. Nevertheless, this corps became the institutional and ideological foundation of the Student Volunteer Army. The number of students who took part in the Student Volunteer Army is recorded as 275,200. Until the promulgation of the school reinstatement order for student combatants on February 28, 1951, many students had been attached to the Army, Navy, Air Force, and United Nations forces, actively participating in combat.[515]

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[513] Kim Sang-hun 김상훈, "Han'guk Chŏnjaenggi Sŏul ŭi haksaeng kwa hakkyo" (한국전쟁기 서울의 학생과 학교), Sŏul kwa yŏksa (서울과 역사) 102 (2019): 125.

[514] Muhak yuksimnyŏn p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 무학육십년편찬위원회, *Muhak yuksimnyŏnsa* (무학육십년사) (2000), 101–103. An Kyŏng-sik, "Han'guk Chŏnjaenggi Taehanminguk haksaeng ŭi sam," 75-102.

[515] Kwŏn Cha-gyŏng 권자경, "Han'guk Chŏnjaeng chŏnhu pokku wa chawŏn tongwŏn" (한국전쟁 전후복구와 자원동원), *Han'guk Kŏbŏnŏnsŭ Hakhoe-bo* (한국거버넌스학회보) 18, no. 2 (2011): 283.

In early 1951, anticipating a protracted war, the Ministry of Education established its offices in the provisional capital of Busan. On February 16, 1951, it issued the Outline of Special Educational Measures under Wartime Conditions, which ordered the resumption of school education.[516] The Ministry of Education instructed schools at all levels to "overcome difficulties such as the lack of classrooms and facilities, and continue lessons by selecting appropriate sites such as forests, riversides, or open squares." Beginning around January 1951, open-air classes, shelter-tent classrooms, and refugee schools were formally established. However, in most cases, even securing a site was difficult, and schools had to rent private storage sheds or family homes. Refugee schools, moreover, had often already yielded their facilities to the military or to medical institutions, making it virtually impossible to secure proper environments for learning. Under these conditions, students frequently engaged in activities outside the regular curriculum. They were mobilized to write letters to soldiers at the front, attend lectures on the national situation, perform in entertainment programs for the troops, participate in welcoming ceremonies for military personnel, dig air-raid shelters, and engage in street-level propaganda campaigns.[517] In the case of girls, middle and high school students, they were mobilized for activities such as performances for soldiers, presenting congratulatory floral tributes at joint weddings of wounded soldiers and police officers, making cleaning rags to be supplied to military units during the winter, assisting in washing cabbage for kimchi preparation, and volunteering in the production and repair of military uniforms.[518]

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[516] Munkyosa sipnyŏnsa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 문교 40년사 편찬위원회, *Munkyosa 40-nyŏnsa* (문교 40년사) (1988), 138.

[517] An Kyŏng-sik 안경식, "6.25 Chŏnjaenggi ŭi Han'guk kyoyuk" (6.25 전쟁기의 한국 교육), *Pon'jil kwa hyŏnsang* (본질과 현상) 20 (2010): 70–71.

[518] Chu Hyŏn-hŭi 주현희, "Han'guk Chŏnjaenggi Pusan ŭi chungdŭng hakkyo yŏhaksaeng kyoyuk koch'al: Piran hakkyo ŭi kwaoe hwaltong ŭl chungsim ŭro" (한국전쟁기 부산의 중등학교 여학생 교육 고찰 – 피란학교의 과외활동을 중심으로 –), *Inmunhak yŏn'gu* (인문학연구) 63 (2022): 673.

Under wartime conditions, education was implemented centrally, resulting in the immediate and comprehensive enforcement of anti-communist education. Alongside anti communism and anti-North Korean sentiment, pro-American orientation, Christian ideology, nationalism, and totalitarian modes of thought were intertwined. All wartime textbooks were thoroughly constructed from an anti communist standpoint, designed to instill deep hostility and hatred toward North Korea.[519] A standardized "theoretical" framework of anti-communism was formulated and disseminated, while the "practical" environment of anti-communist education, carried out within schools and classrooms, promoted the habitual internalization of anti-communism among students.[520]

The Ministry of Education published three types of wartime curricula: the *Wartime Learning Guidance Manual, Wartime Life* for elementary schools, and the *Wartime Reader* for secondary schools, to teach children about the war. Education during this period was required to "contribute to the total war effort in a manner suited to wartime education," and thus more than 58 percent of the curriculum was war-related. Children of this era adopted a dichotomous worldview that divided the world into the democratic and communist worlds. They formed negative perceptions of the North Korean Communist Party and communism, which were held responsible for starting the war and causing widespread suffering, while at the same time internalizing positive perceptions of the United States and the United Nations as just and affluent powers providing military and material assistance.[521]

In sum, wartime Korea turned students into both soldiers and symbols. Under the guise of "volunteer" enlistment, large numbers of youth were drawn into combat and support roles,

[519] An Na 안나, 1950-nyŏndae tonghwa, adong sosŏl yŏn'gu: Pangongjuŭi rŭl chungsim ŭro (1950년대 동화.아동소설 연구 – 반공주의를 중심으로 –) (PhD diss., Sŏngsin Yŏja Taehakkyo, 2006), 157-159.

[520] Kim Mun-hŭi 김문희, "6.25 Chŏnjaenggi chŏnsi kyogwasŏ 'Chŏnsi saenghwal' yŏn'gu" (6.25 전쟁기 전시 교과서 '전시생활' 연구), Master's thesis, Sŏgang Taehakkyo Kyoyuk Taehagwŏn, 2017, 59–60.

[521] Ibid., 59–60.

while those who remained in school encountered a curriculum and school life saturated with anti-communist and pro-U.S. messages. Makeshift classrooms, refugee schools, and constant participation in war-related tasks blurred the line between education and mobilization, embedding a sharply polarized worldview in which North Korea and communism were cast as absolute enemies and the United States and UN as saviors. This fusion of coercive mobilization and ideological schooling laid the foundation for postwar patterns of student militarization and Cold War consciousness.

4.3.1. Anti-Communist Oratorical Contest During the Korean War

This section analyzes how student oratorical contests functioned as a key instrument of ideological mobilization during the Korean War. Organized by government, military, educational, and media institutions, these events promoted anti-communism, national defense, and patriotic sacrifice, while framing public speaking as both a civic duty and a form of psychological warfare.

Although it was difficult for schools or private organizations to assemble oratorical contests under the prevailing circumstances, several types of student contests were nevertheless held during this period. Most of these contests were intended to inspire and encourage students in their roles amid wartime.[522]

One of the earliest oratorical contests organized after the outbreak of the war took place in November 1950. At the "Women's Volunteer Army Training Center," the Ministry of National Defense and the Bureau of Political Education jointly sponsored a women's oratorical contest to boost the morale of female soldiers.[523] Following the recapture of Seoul, the Seoul City

[522] "Yŏja ŭiyonggun ungbyŏn taehwe" (여자의용군 웅변대회), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), November 4, 1950.
[523] Ibid.

Women's Bureau organized a Women's Prize Oratorical Contest on November 29, at which a woman named Yun Pyŏngsuk from Sŏdaemun District won first prize with her speech entitled *The Resolve of Women under Wartime Conditions*.[524]

In March 1951, to commemorate the "March First Independence Movement" and to reaffirm the "determination for the anti-communist struggle," the Ministry of Education organized a commemorative event in Busan. Alongside cultural performances, plays, patriotic music concerts, and exhibitions, an oratorical contest was also held.[525] To "foster the fighting spirit of students and contribute to the war of exterminating communism" under wartime conditions, Dongguk University, with the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education and the Office of Public Information, hosted the "Fourth National Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Secondary School Students." This event was organized as part of the "National Rally of Boys and Girls to Cultivate Anti-Communist Ideology. [526] With the sponsorship of the Central Election Countermeasures Committee, the Central Headquarters of the National Association organized the "National Rally of Male and Female Secondary School Students for the Overcoming of the June 25 Incident and the Aviation Campaign," holding the contest at the Busan Theater for both university and secondary school students. The organizers limited the number of speakers to twelve, and the panel of judges consisted of An Hosang, Hwang Sŏngsu, Yi Hwal, Pak Chonghwa, and Pak Sanggil.[527]

The Central SDC also hosted an oratorical contest for secondary school students from June 28 to 30 at the Tong'a Theater in the provisional capital of Busan, and the city of Busan

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[524] "Yŏja hyŏnsang ungbyŏn taehwe, Ilttŭng dangsŏn Yun Pyŏng-suk-ssi" (여자현상웅변대회, 일등당선 윤병숙씨), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 3, 1950.

[525] "Dachaeroun Samil haengsa"(다채로운 삼일행사), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), May 24, 1951.

[526] "Chŏngguk namnyŏ chungdŭng hakkyo haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe kaech'oe" (전국남녀중등학교 학생웅변대회 개최), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), June 12, 1951. "Chŏngjŏn unwi yo un ilsso myŏlgong e saeroun kyŏrŭi" (정전운위요운일소 멸공에 새로운 결의), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), June 16, 1951.

[527] "Hanggong ŭisaeng ungbyŏn taehwe" (항공의생 웅변대회), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), June 18, 1951.

organized a separate oratorical contest for elementary school children.[528] In February 1952, the College of Law at Seoul National University also continued its annual contest, the "Fourth National Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Secondary School Students," instructing participants to address in their speeches “the constructive aspects that clarify the duties and future path of Korean students at present.” **[529]** The panel of judges consisted of Kim Sŏn’gi, Kim Tuhŏn, Yi Hayun, Mo Yunsuk, and Kim Ongju.[530] Yi Kibung, Director of the Bureau of Political Education, emphasized in his closing remarks that students should strive to ensure that their speeches conformed to the standards of student oratory, delivering them in such a way as to “ignite a burning love of the fatherland in the hearts of listeners.” Three winning students were awarded the Director’s Prize of the Ministry of National Defense Bureau of Political Education, along with monetary gifts.[531]

Student oratorical contests were occasionally held in other regions. In February 1952, the "Second Student Oratorical Contest" was organized at Jangmok Elementary School on Gŏje Island under the title "Save Our School."[532] In Tŏng’yŏng, exploiting the 427th anniversary of "Yi Sun-sin’s birth." "Yeongnam Oratorical Contest for Male and Female Middle and High School Students" was organized with the sponsorship of several newspapers, under the themes of “Victory in the War of Eradicating Communism, National Reunification, and the Cultivation of National Spirit.”[533] Tŏng’yŏng had particularly symbolic significance as the birthplace of Yi

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[528] “Tolmatnŭn minjok sunan ŭi nal naeril ŭn Yugi-o” (돌맛는 민족수난의 날 내일은 육이오),*Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), June 24, 1951

[529] “Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe pŏptaechuch’oe sahoe” (학생웅변대회 법대주최 사회), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), January 31, 1952.

[530] “Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang” (학생웅변대회 성황),*Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*(경향신문), May 2, 1952.

[531] “Suwŏn haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe” (수원학생웅변대회),*Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), June 19, 1952.

[532] “Changmok kongmin chunghak ungbyŏn taehwe sŏnghwang” (장목공민중학웅변대회성황) *Masan Ilbo* (마산일보), February 21, 1952.

[533] "Chungmugong tanseng kinyŏm ungbyŏn taehwe" (충무공탄생기념웅변대회), *Masŏn Ilbo* (마산일보), April 13, 1952.

Sun-sin, the military general known for his victories against the Japanese navy during the 16th century. During this period in school, the contents and narrative strategies of the schoolbook actively promoted national consciousness through the construction of heroic discourse. The anti-communism and anti-Japanese sentiment were placed on equal footing, employing an exclusionary logic that equated North Korea with a foreign or alien people. Yi Sun-sin was deified as a model of national loyalty.[534] Accordingly, the oratorical contests held in honor of Yi Sun-sin during the war period must be understood within the broader context of wartime education and ideological mobilization.

The Ministry of National Defense also convened a joint Army, Navy, and Air Force oratorical contest in Busan. The Naval Command at Chinhae selected twenty students with talent in oratory through a preliminary contest, from which three, Chŏng Yunho, Chang Sundŏk, and Kim Kap'yong, were chosen to advance to the joint competition.[535]

The Law Newspaper organized a "National Youth and Student Oratorical Contest" on August 15, under the themes of "Spiritual Armament for the Eradication of Communism" and "The Need for a New Resolution among the People." The prize list at the event demonstrates the involvement of the Ministry of Justice, the Masan branch of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the president of the Law Newspaper, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the mayor of Masan, and the Masan Police Chief. These organizations represented the legal community and the administrative apparatus that had relocated to Masan during wartime. Sponsorship was provided by the *Masan Daily*, the *Masan Journalists' Association*, and the YMCA. For nearly a week, advertisements were placed daily in newspapers to recruit participants.[536] Also, the

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[534] "Pak Hyŏng-jun · Min Pyŏng-uk, 박형준, 민병욱, "1950-nyŏndae pangong kyogwasŏ ŭi sŏsur chŏllyak yŏn'gu" (1950년대 반공교과서의 서술 전략 연구), Han'guk Minjok Munhwa (한국민족문화) 33 (2009): 269–287.

[535] "Habdong ungbyŏn taehwe e Chinhae sŏ se myŏng sŏnch'ul" (합동웅변대회에 진해서 세 명 선출), *Masan Ilbo* (마산일보), June 19, 1952.

[536] "Chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto ungbyŏn taehwe" (전국청년학도 웅변대회), *Masan Ilbo* (마산일보), August

Masan office of the United States Information Service (USIS) organized an English oratorical contest. Marking the first anniversary of its establishment, the Masan USIS hosted an oratorical contest for middle and high school students across the province.[537]

In addition, the "Seoul District Military Manpower Command" organized an oratorical contest on February 23 to promote military welfare and conscription ideology. Eleven speakers participated, with students from Chonghap Middle School, Sŏngbuk Middle School, and Tongbu Chonghap Middle School selected as winners.[538] On June 24, the Command hosted another event, the "Youth Oratorical Contest for the Eradication of Communism and National Reunification," where prizes were awarded to three student speakers.[539]

As seen from the titles, the oratorical contests held during the war were, in most cases, centered on themes of anti-communism and the eradication of communism, as well as on instilling in students a sense of duty toward national defense. They mainly involved secondary school students or even younger.

The *Introduction to Oratory* (Ungbyŏn Immunsŏ), published in 1953 by the "Modern Oratory Research Association," offers important clues about how oratory was taught to young people during the wartime period. Notably, the text repeatedly addresses the youth as "comrades (*jegun*)." The first notable feature of the book is its invocation of patriotic and cosmopolitan sentiments. It urges the "comrades" to remember that "cultivating one's oratorical skill is for the glory of the nation and, ultimately, for the happiness of the world." As for the nature and

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2, 1952. "Chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto ungbyŏn taehwe" (전국청년학도 웅변대회), *Masan Ilbo* (마산일보), August 3, 1952. "Chŏngguk ch'ŏngnyŏn hakto ungbyŏn taehwe" (전국청년학도 웅변대회), *Masan Ilbo* (마산일보), August 9, 1952.

[537] "Pyŏngmu ungbyŏn taehwe esŏ Tongjung Chŏng-gun i tangsŏn" (병무 웅변대회에서 동중 정군이 당선), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), February 26, 1952.

[538] "Pyŏngmu ungbyŏn taehwe esŏ Tongjung Chŏng-gun i tangsŏn" (병무 웅변대회에서 동중 정군이 당선), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), February 26, 1952.

[539] "Myŏlgong t'ongil ungbyŏn taehwe 'Kijung' Ŏm-gun i usŭng" (멸공통일 웅변대회 '기중' 엄군이 우승), *P'yŏnghwa Sinmun* (평화신문), September 22, 1952.

power of oratory itself, it explains that "in short, oratory may be described as an atomic bomb that detonates from the tip of your tongue." Such a metaphor reveals that oratory was understood and taught as part of psychological warfare and propaganda education. The text further defines true oratory as "speech in which ones stake one's entire life upon a single utterance," insisting that with such conviction, "one could not help but move and captivate the hearts of tens of thousands of listeners." Thus, the art of persuasion is framed as the essential quality of oratory.[540]

Second, the book introduces figures associated with liberal and nationalistic symbolism as exemplary models of oratory. It highlights speeches by Patrick Henry, a key historical figure in the American independence movement. Andrew Carnegie, a representative of the American industrial spirit, and Robert Burns, a poet, became involved in the Scottish cultural revival and nationalist movements.[541]

Third, the text identifies speeches intended to persuade citizens or inspire soldiers during national crises as crucial models. It cites Hannibal's "Address to His Soldiers," Brutus's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Lend Me Your Ears," Napoleon's "Address to the Army at the Beginning of the Italian Campaign," and a Korean youth's anti communist speech delivered by a refugee from the North as paradigmatic examples.[542]

Finally, *Introduction to Oratory* is the first Korean-language instructional text to teach anti-communist oratory explicitly. The book provides detailed guidance on how to compose a manuscript for speeches "on the eradication of communism." The author insists that effective anti-communist speeches must be concrete, cautioning that "above all, one must not lapse into abstraction." He stresses that "the audience will only be moved and persuaded when the speaker

[540] Hyŏndae ungbyŏnsul yŏn'guhoe 현대웅변술연구회, *Ungbyŏn inmun* (웅변입문), Samsŏng-sa (삼성사), 1953, 7–16.
[541] About Patrick Henry and his speech see Beeman, Richard R. "The Democratic Faith of Patrick Henry." The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 95, no. 3 (1987): 301–16. About Robert Burns see Josephine Dougal, Robert Burns and the Re-Making of National Memory in Contemporary Scotland, Authorship 1.2. (2012): 1-14.
[542] Hyŏndae ungbyŏnsul yŏn'guhoe, *Ungbyŏn inmun*, 30-26.

explains, through specific examples, why communism is evil, what atrocities the enemy has committed, and what misfortunes would befall us should this land become communist." Moreover, speakers are advised to use examples "not commonly heard," thereby maintaining novelty and rhetorical impact.[543]

A book titled *The Proclamation of Bullet Tongue* (Sŏlt'an ŭi Pogo), published in 1955, includes a speech that had won an oratorical contest organized by the "Troop Information and Education (*Chŏnghun'guk*)" during the wartime period. Compiled by Min Pyŏng-sŏk, a twenty-two-year-old, the volume is an anthology of speeches or letters that he considered significant. In the preface, Min explains that he decided to collect his seniors' orations so that readers might "renew their oath of loyalty to justice, to the nation, and to the state."[544]

One such piece, titled *Return from Mount Chiri!* (Chirisane-sŏ toraora!), was originally a broadcast text written by a nineteen-year-old soldier while serving in the Army Unit 501's Chiri District Bureau of Political Education (*Chŏnghun P'ahyŏndae*). The script is believed to have been composed as a propaganda message intended to persuade partisans hiding in the mountains to surrender and return. The speech opens by condemning the guerrillas who raided villages in the Chiri Mountains, accusing them of worsening the peasants' hunger and urging repentance before the moral conscience of the nation. It then incites doubt toward superiors who demand loyalty to Russia, Stalin, and communism, emphasizing that the partisans' weapons are turned against their own compatriots, the workers and peasants they should protect. Portrying the guerillas as native students and humble laborers exploited by Slavic powers, the speaker calls them "pitiful comrades" and insists that communism has never prevailed in history, citing property confiscations, political purges, and the exploitation of youth under Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Kim Il-sung. Finally, invoking the national spirit of the "Hwarang," the orator

[543] Ibid.91-92.

[544] Min Pyŏng-sik 민병식, *Sŏlt'an ŭi pogo* (설탄의 포고), Taehan Chŏnsi Kungmin Munhwasa (대한전시국민문화사), 1955.3-4.

appeals for their return, warning that refusal to surrender will condemn them to a life of cold, hunger, and despair.[545]

The content of the speech closely resembled the leaflets and psychological broadcast materials mass-produced by the U.S. Information Service in Korea and the Ministry of National Defense's Bureau of Political Education. Among these, the most common theme was "encouraging defection," which emphasized promises of humane treatment, patriotic duty, the futility of comrades' death, ignorance, the overwhelming superiority of Allied power and weaponry, and the disruption of supply lines.[546] Similarly, the oration *Return from Mount Chiri!* Targeted the partisans, urging their surrender through appeals to national consciousness, critique to Soviet imperialism and ideological insincerity, and the evocation of fear of hunger and cold.

One of the most important commentaries during the wartime period is “Impressions of the Student Oratorical Contest” (*Haksaeng Ungbyŏn Taehoe Kamsanggi*), written under the pen name Mo Wŏlch’ŏn by the writer Mo Kiyun, regarding the contest hosted by the College of Law in Seoul in February 1952. While his essay was a personal review of the event, it nonetheless provides valuable insight into the content of wartime oratorical contests and the attitudes of student participants. Mo Kiyun was the younger brother of Mo Yunsuk, a female politician aligned with Syngman Rhee, and it is presumed that he, too, had taken refuge in the provisional capital of Busan following the outbreak of the Korean War. Having served as a judge at the oratorical contest held at the Tong’a Theater on February 18–19, 1952, he later published his reflections on the experience.

First, he pointed out that the students’ speeches were monotonous and formulaic. While he acknowledged the suffering and misfortune experienced by students during wartime, he

[545] Ibid. 30-36.

[546] Yi Im-ha 이임하, *Chŏgŭl ppira ro mudŏra: Han’guk Chŏnjaenggi Miguk ŭi simnijŏn* (적을 삐라로 묻어라–한국전쟁기 미국의 심리전), Ch’ŏlsu wa Yŏnghŭi (철수와 영희), 2012.80-81.

criticized the way in which their speeches dwelled on present despair and devastation rather than their own futures, lacking a forward-looking perspective. He even went so far as to openly exhort the students to strengthen their fighting spirit, declaring: "We must possess the courage to stand boldly despite the ruins and aim at the enemy, and to charge into enemy lines while holding the corpse of a fallen brother or comrade." Furthermore, he emphasized that much of the content of the students' speeches consisted largely of grievances and complaints against society. Students condemned corrupt officials and opportunists, criticized the extravagance of so-called "Macao gentlemen" or "velvet-clad ladies" who flaunted luxury even during wartime, and lamented the abusive exchanges between male and female students. While conceding that such dissatisfaction with contemporary social conditions was understandable, he stressed that "grievances and complaints should not become the substance of oratory."[547]

Second, he raised the issue of expression. He noted that too many predicates and slogans were repeated, observing that not a single speaker failed to use phrases such as "Let us advance," "Forward, forward," "Let us make a general charge," "Let us awaken," "Let us achieve national reunification," "Let us defeat the enemy," "Students must study," or "Let us plant the Taegeuk flag on Mount Paektu." He expressed his desire to hear students speak concretely about what they should do and how they should act in the rear areas or within the schools.[548]

Third, he addressed problems of pronunciation and vocal delivery. He noted that students' articulation was often unclear and that they shouted excessively, making their speeches difficult to understand at many points. In addition, he criticized the improper use of regional dialects. Interestingly, he even observed that students frequently failed to distinguish between the very similar diphthongs ae (ㅐ) and e (ㅔ), suggesting that Korean language teachers needed to

[547] "Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe kamsanggi (1)" (학생웅변대회 감상기 (상)), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 5, 1952.
[548] Ibid.

make greater efforts in this area. In terms of intonation, “pitch, length, and speed control” were often inappropriate. He emphasized that oratory should not be confused with theatrical performance, criticizing students who delivered even cheerful or progressive content in weeping tones. Because the setting was a public square with a large audience, he insisted that orators must embody discussion, proposal, command, compromise, agitation, and denunciation, all supported by the proper adjustment of tone, persuasion, energy, and passion.

Fourth, he pointed to the use of inappropriate and obscure terms, citing examples such as "sabisabi"[549], "yanggalbo"(derogatory slang for American military base prostitute), "In my humble capacity, I venture to utter a few words, deeming his matter to be one of profound and lamentable concern to the state"(*Ponin ch’aje-e ilŏn-ŭl, ilguk-ka ŭi uryŏ chisahada*.), all expressions not in common usage in the national language. He argued that on the podium, speakers should always employ refined vocabulary and the language of the people.

Finally, he critiqued the gestures and comportment of the student orators. Mo Kiyun observed that some students adopted gestures like those of mourners grieving over a bleak future or of marketplace vendors quarreling with one another. He rejected behaviors such as pounding desks or raising arms repeatedly, as if in calisthenics, insisting that gestures are not for display but should emerge only when words alone cannot convey surging emotion, thereby reinforcing and heightening the impact of the speech. He stressed that students’ oratory ought to be natural, composed, and spirited. Yet many performers, he remarked, raised their hands as if to strike the desk, hesitated awkwardly, and ended up making the audience laugh with their clumsiness, showing feeble or lifeless performance.[550]

[549] The term likely alludes to the Japanese colloqual expression “さびさび” (sabi-sabi). This research haven't understand the meaning of the term.

[550] “Haksaeng ungbyŏn taehwe kamsanggi (2)” (학생웅변대회 감상기 (하)), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 6, 1952.

Mo Kiyun's editorial highlights several features of students' attitudes as revealed through oratorical contests, their patterns of language use, and the rhetorical comportment expected of them. First, when participating in these contests, students did not speak exclusively in the standard language; many were refugees from different regions who employed a variety of dialects, while others used unrefined speech drawn from everyday life. Some students, lacking formal training, were unable to modulate their emphasis or employ effective gestures essential to persuasive delivery, focusing instead on "shouting" to leave a strong impression on the crowd. Students also tended to reproduce the fixed expressions prescribed by the contest themes. Phrases such as "Students must study" and "Let us plant the Taegeuk flag on Mount Paektu" had already long been clichés of student oratory since the period of the U.S. military government. Yet even within these repetitive thematic frameworks, students drew upon their lived realities to identify social issues in need of critique. For such students, what was demanded by wartime oratory was clear: a militarized and future-oriented image of the student. In addition to describing student attitudes, Mo provided significant insight into the atmosphere among the audience. On the day of the contest, the audience became so excessively agitated by the students' speeches that the police had to be dispatched. As he recalled:

"I do not fail to understand the difficulties faced by the organizers, who had no way to control a crowd repeatedly erupting in commotion. Yet it was a grave shortcoming that what should have been a forum for intellectual debate and training of the mind within the academy became more disorderly than a theater performance or a music concert, forcing a police intervention to suppress the uproar. Whether the contest was suspended or continued, nothing could be heard in such conditions. The responsibility lay partly with the students themselves, who failed to maintain composure and discipline, but also with the organizers, who, had they anticipated and

prevented the audience's inability to restrain itself, might have rendered the event far more effective."[551]

To sum up, during the Korean War, student oratorical contests became a prominent instrument of state-led ideological mobilization. Organized across governmental, military, educational, and media institutions, these events sought to raise morale, instill patriotism, and advance anti-communist doctrine. Mainly aimed at youth, the contests emphasized national defense and unity, requiring participants to present tightly focused, persuasive anti-communist arguments. Instructional books framed public speaking as a form of psychological warfare, calling it "atomic bomb of tongue," and "bullet tongue," encouraging the use of vivid examples and national heroes to strengthen rhetorical impact. Contemporary commentary nonetheless criticized the speeches for their formulaic structure, pessimistic tone, and frequent delivery shortcomings. Overall, these contests served as a crucial mechanism for wartime ideological education and the shaping of loyal, militant citizenry.

4.4. Syngman Rhee's Political Instability and Nationwide Mobilizations

4.4.1.The End of the Korean War and "Northward Reunification" Movements

This section examines how Syngman Rhee deployed anti-armistice and anti-communist rhetoric as strategic political tools during the final stages of the Korean War. It analyzes how mass mobilization against the armistice, calls for "northward reunification," and appeals to global anti-communism were used to extract concessions from the United States and to consolidate the legitimacy of his regime at home.

[551] Ibid.

One of the principal commitments of the Eisenhower administration during its presidential campaign was to bring the Korean War to a dignified resolution. However, the "National Security Council" (NSC) under Eisenhower projected that continuing the conflict along the Pyongyang–Wŏnsan line would incur substantial costs. Ultimately, Eisenhower aimed to curtail the significant military and foreign aid expenditures inherited from the Truman administration and to address the budget deficit; within this framework, an armistice was deemed the most economically feasible resolution.[552]

As the Eisenhower administration moved to resume the armistice negotiations, it concluded that Syngman Rhee's opposition stemmed from two factors.[553] First, the proposed armistice would not achieve Korean unification, and second, there was fear that the United States might abandon Korea. The United States focused particularly on the latter, interpreting Rhee's insistence on concluding a U.S.–ROK Mutual Defense Treaty as rooted in his concern that the United States might otherwise desert Korea. Syngman Rhee launched an extreme offensive by opposing the armistice negotiations, demanding the restoration of operational command, calling for a unilateral northward advance, and ordering the release of anti-communist prisoners of war. In return for tacitly acquiescing to the armistice negotiations, however, he demanded the conclusion of a "U.S.–ROK Mutual Defense Treaty" and the provision of military aid.[554]

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[552] Song Jae-gyŏng 송재경, Isŭngman ŭi Hanmi tongmaeng kusang kwa Taemi oegyŏ chŏn'gae (1948–1960) (이승만의 한미동맹 구상과 대미외교 전개 (1948~1960)), PhD diss., Sŏul Taehakkyo Taehagwŏn Kuksahakkwa (서울대학교 대학원 국사학과), 2023, 98–99.

[553] "Memorandum by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Johnson) to the Secretary of State" (1953.4.8.) FRUS1952-1954 vol.15 part.1 doc.451; "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs (Young)"(1953.4.8.) doc. 452;"The Ambassador in Korea (Briggs) to the Department of State" (1953.4.14.) doc.458; "The Ambassador in Korea (Briggs) to the Department of State" (1953.4.15.) doc. 460

[554] Jung Byung Joon정병준, "Han'guk Chŏnjaeng hyujŏn hoedam kwa chŏnhu cheje ŭi sŏngnip (한국전쟁 휴전회담과 전후체제의 성립Korean War Truce Talk and Establishment of Post-War Structure)" *Han'guk Munhwa Yŏn'gu* (한국문화연구) 36(2019) : 245-288

The Rhee administration's anti-armistice campaign began around June 1951, when Jacob Malik, the Soviet representative to the United Nations, proposed that the United Nations initiate armistice negotiations. However, as the talks dragged on and stalled over prisoner exchanges, the movement naturally subsided. It was only later, when General Mark Clark, Commander of the United Nations Forces, proposed on February 22, 1953, an exchange of wounded prisoners of war, and when the communist side quickly responded on March 28 by accepting the proposal and calling for the resumption of armistice negotiations, that the campaign was fully reactivated.[555]

Mass demonstrations opposing the armistice began with the "Seoul Citizens' Rally Against the Armistice" on April 6, 1953, and soon spread nationwide. These demonstrations reached their peak by April 24, mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people across the country, including at the "Student Mass Rally for Unification through a Northern Advance."[556]

Although the heightened domestic atmosphere and political rhetoric made it appear as if Synman Rhee wished to resume the war, he had no actual intention of doing so. His true position is revealed in a confidential memorandum he delivered to U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon, which was later disclosed during a meeting of the U.S. National Security Council on December 15, 1953. In this memorandum, Rhee expressed that by maintaining an uncompromising stance toward the communists and refusing to cease hostile actions against them, he sought to avoid weakening the United States' negotiating position at the conference table. Members of the U.S. Cabinet generally agreed with this approach.[557] The U.S.

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[555] Hong Sŏng-nyul 홍석률, "Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn ŭi pukchin t'ongillon kwa naengjŏn oegyŏ chŏngch'aek: 'Marching North Campaign' and Foreign Policy of Cold War in the Regime of Syngman Rhee" (이승만 정권의 북진통일론과 냉전외교정책), *Han'guksa Yŏn'guhoe* (한국사연구회) 85 (1994): 146.

[556] O Cheyŏn 오제연, "Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn'gi 3.1 Undong ŭi chŏngchijŏk sohwan kwa kyŏnghap" (이승만 정권기 3.1운동의 정치적 소환과 경합), *Han'guksa Yŏn'gu* (한국사연구) 183 (2018): 364–365.

[557] Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Korea, vol. 15, pt. 2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), 1662, "Memorandum of Discussion at the 175th Meeting of the National Security Council,

government's position was not to restrain Rhee's rhetoric on a "Northward Reunification," but rather to avoid responding to any unilateral actions he might take beyond American control. As long as Rhee's behavior did not threaten the United States' strategic interest, such as military control over the Korean Peninsula, the U.S. government was largely indifferent to his effort to heighten inter-Korean tensions or to consolidate his authoritarian regime.[558]

Mass mobilization under the banner of anti-communism and "Northward Reunification" served as an ideological instrument to maintain the Syngman Rhee administration's political system. Rhee consistently emphasized the legitimacy of these two principles whenever the opportunity arose, framing his argument around three central themes: the urgent necessity of anti-communism, opposition to conciliatory or negotiation, and an unwavering commitment to unification through a northern advance.[559] It also operated as an effective instrument for controlling diverse political forces and the masses within Rhee's own political sphere. Moreover, it served as a central slogan through which the regime sought to imprint upon the public the legitimacy of its rule.[560]

Through the mobilizations, hostility and hatred toward the North were maximized, thereby rendering any form of dialogue or exchange with it impossible and further consolidating the permanence of national division.[561] Anti-communist and anti-North Korean rhetoric was

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Tuesday, December 15, 1953."

[558] Hong Sŏng-nyul 홍석률, "Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn ŭi pukchin t'ongillon kwa naengjŏn oegyŏ chŏngch'aek: (이승만 정권의 북진통일론과 냉전외교정책 'Marching North Campaign' and Foreign Policy of Cold War in the Regime of Syngman Rhee)", *Han'guksa Yŏn'guhoe* (한국사연구회) 85 (1994): 150.

[559] Chŏn Han-ung 전한웅, "Isŭngman kwŏllyŏk changak kwajŏng e kwanhan yŏn'gu: Taechung tongwon mit pangong iderollogi yŏkhal ŭl chungsim ŭro" (이승만 권력 장악 과정에 관한 연구: 대중동원 및 반공 이데올로기 역할을 중심으로), Han'guk kwa Kukchesahoe (한국과 국제사회) 5, no. 2 (2021): 16.

[560] Sŏ Jung-sŏk서중석, "Isŭngman Taejŏngnyŏng ŭi panil undong kwa Han'guk minjokchuŭi(이승만대통령의 반일운동과 한국민족주의 President Syngman Rhee's Anti-Japanese Movement and Korean Nationalism), *Inmun Kwahak* (인문과학) 30, (2000): 313.

[561] Sŏ Chung-sŏk 서중석, *Cho Pong-am kwa 1950-nyŏndae* (조봉암과 1950년대), Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa (역사비평사), 2008. ebook, https://www.krpia.co.kr/viewer?plctId=PLCT00004863&tabNodeId=NODE03882486&affectType=product-

combined with commemorations of the "March First Independence Movement," equating the struggle of the patriotic martyrs against Japanese colonialism with the contemporary call to fight against the “North Korean puppet regime” and the “international communist camp” to recover lost territory and rescue compatriots. Thus, the March First Movement was invoked to generate broad nationalist support for the northward unification campaign. Moreover, this discourse of unification through a northern advance was linked to Syngman Rhee’s assertion that Korea’s struggle was “not solely for our independence and our security, but rather a fight against communism, the enemy of all the world’s democratic nations.”[562] Thus, Rhee sought to frame Korea’s anti-communist struggle as standing at the very forefront of global security.[563]

4.4.2. "Northward Reunification" Oratorical Contest

Although "Northward Reunification" never materialized as a concrete policy, it endured as a powerful political slogan until 1959. The discourse endured as a political slogan until 1959. Orations promoting "Northward Reunification" consistently condemned the very notion of armistice negotiations, centering on themes intended to militarize students and to arouse their fighting spirit. Several oratorical anthologies have been published during this period, such as *The Proclamation of Bullet Tongue* (1955), introduced before, *A Selection of Korean and English Student Orations* (1955), *An Anthology of Modern Youth Orations* (1956), and A *Collection of Selected Youth and Student Orations* (1959), which include texts related to the

main. Accessed October 18, 2025.

[562] Syngman Rhee, “Samilch’ŏl 31-chunyŏn kinyŏmsa(삼일절 31주년 기념사)” March 1, 1950. https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index.jsp (accessed October 10, 2025).

[563] O Cheyŏn 오제연, “Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn’gi 3.1 Undong ŭi chŏngchijŏk sohwan kwa kyŏnghap” (이승만 정권기 3.1운동의 정치적 소환과 경합), Han’guksa Yŏn’gu (한국사연구) 183 (2018): 364–365.

"Northward Reunification." These oratories served as performative expressions of Cold War nationalism, employing the idiom of speechmaking to mobilize emotion, discipline, and loyalty. This part of the chapter, therefore, examines four representative orations that take the "Northward Reunification" as their central theme, analyzing how they reframed political ideology into pedagogical rhetoric and ritualized performance.

Sin Sŭng-hwan, a student from Chung-Ang University, authored an oration titled *What More Is There Than to Die?* (Chukki pakk'e tŏharya). In his speech, he addressed his fellow students as "Hwarang," invoking the valorous youth of Silla, and lamented that despite their sacrifices, they had been to face a "bitter armistice" without accomplishing "the supreme national mandate of unifying North and South Korea." He deplored that the nation now stood at the threshold of "an ideological and psychological battle sharper than any war of arms." Contrasting the sacrifice of U.S. generals such as Van Fleet and allied soldiers who were wounded or killed at the front, with the corruption of high officials who avoided military service through wealth and privilege, Shin's tone turns to indignation.

He underscored that the North continued to prepare for renewed aggression, building up its forces and actively producing atomic and hydrogen bombs. In such circumstances, he declares, the Korean nation stood at a crossroads between freedom and enslavement, life and death. The only ones capable of morally and spiritually rejuvenating the nation were the students, those who bore "the destiny of the fatherland" upon their shoulders.

He concludes that the salvation of the endangered nation depended on these young students, who, with strong bodies and devoted youth, must stand at the forefront of the anti-communist struggle to save the nation. His oration culminated in a defiant vow, asking rhetorically, "What more is there than to die," a call for youth to dedicate their lives to shaping both history and the nation's future.[564]

[564] *Kugŏ Yŏngŏ Haksaeng ungbyŏn sŏnjip* (국어영어 학생웅변선집), Sŏul Munhwasa (서울문화사), 1955, 41–

Yŏ Chŏng-hyŏn, a student from Korea University, delivered a speech titled *For the Fatherland of Tomorrow* (Naeil ŭi choguk ŭl wihayŏ), in which he forcefully argued that an armistice without unification was something that the Korean people could never accept. He asserted that a "humiliating truce was established under the coercive pressure of powerful nations." Yŏ warned that North Korea continued to exploit political conferences for intrigue and propaganda while transporting arms for reconstruction and reviving its industrial technology with aid from the Kremlin.

To overcome this situation, he called upon the Korean people to rescue war victims, rebuild the devastated land, and renew their determination toward national defense and security. In this context, he emphasized that the duty of university students was to strengthen their academic capabilities and devote themselves to scientific study, for intellectual cultivation and technical training were, in his view, the very means by which the nation could be resurrected from its ruins.[565]

Paek Su-hyŏn, a student from the Methodist Theological College, delivered an oration titled *Unification through Northern Advance Is Our Duty* (Pukchin t'ongil ŭn uri ŭi ŭimu). In his speech, Paek warned that unless the youth fulfilled their ardent wish for national unification and anti-communist struggle, "the spirit of our fallen patriots would harden into statues of stone, embittered and unavenged." He thus exhorted the audience to "defend the nation as sons and daughters of the Republic of Korea." For him, the realization of unification would not come from "the power of the United Nations or the material aid it provides," but through the sacrifices of "true patriots," namely, the youth themselves.

Although he presented no concrete means of achieving unification, Peak's rhetoric is infused with a fervent, quasi-poetic idealism. He promised that "the burning tears of love for the nation

46.
[565]Ibid., 47-51.

will melt the 38th parallel," and that "the courage, spirit, and indomitable resolve of the youth, their strong arms and legs will achieve unification." His language is highly figurative and emotional, expressing not a strategic plan but a symbolic faith in collective will. The only vaguely practical proposal he makes is the need to "encourage and expand organizations such as the Anti-Communist Northern Advance Unification Alliance," thereby "cultivating the united strength necessary to accomplish the sacred task of northern unification."

Peak's speech ultimately returns, like those of his contemporaries, to the themes of the student's role as learner and moral subject. He insists that intellectual diligence, unity, and self-reliance are the most significant forces capable of defeating communism. Calling upon the youth to "devote their loyalty to the nation even to the point of breaking their bodies to pieces," he urges them to "march in step with the newly formed National Assembly and advance toward national unification."[566]

At the "Nationwide men's and women's university oratorical contest" hosted by Shinhŭng University on October 12, 1958, Pak Il-du, a first-year student in the College of Political Economy, won the grand prize for his speech titled *Unification Must Advance Northward* (T'ongil ŭn pukchin hara). His oration is notable for its unusually violent rhetoric toward communism and its overt expression of loyalty to President Syngman Rhee. Citing the 1956 Hungarian uprising, the division of Berlin, the China's Policy in Tibet, Pak warned that the world was in grave danger under communist aggression. He praised Rhee as "our sun and the global pioneer of anti-communism," urging all to uphold the president's vision of "Northward Reunification."

Pak proposed three steps toward such unification: first, inheriting the spirit of unity embodied by the patriots of the March First Movement; second, rebuilding the war-ravaged nation and revitalizing production to resolve livelihood issues and strengthen the economy; and third,

[566] 청년웅변연구회 편, 현대청년웅변선집, 공동문화사,1956. 175-179.

reinforcing national defense through military expansion, including the acquisition of a large army and nuclear weapons. He grounded the legitimacy of military and economic aid from the United Nations and the United States in Korea's own cultural and historical traditions. He justified the necessity of unification by asserting that the Korean people, their history, and culture constituted a single, indivisible entity.

Pak concluded with a call for global peace and freedom through total eradication of communism, declaring, "Let us eliminate, overthrow, indeed, obliterate the communist elements from the face of the earth." He ended by exhorting that "when President Rhee's command for northern advance is given," Korean youth must be prepared to enter the army without hesitation.[567]

The overtly propagandistic tone of the oration delivered by Pak Il-du must be understood in relation to the political character of the host institution, Shinhŭng University, at the time. In 1954, the university dean appointed two Government party politicians, including Yi Ik-hŭng and Cho Kyŏng-gyu, to the board of directors. This political alignment influenced the university's ideological orientation and public activities. Yi Ik-hŭng had served as the thirteenth Minister of Home Affairs, credited for his role in securing the controversial 1952 constitutional amendment, and later gained notoriety as one of the principal conspirators in the 1956 assassination attempt of Vice President Chang Myŏn.[568]

The oratories centered on the theme of "Northward Unification" shared several defining characteristics. First, they offered detailed depictions of the tragedy of the Korean War and emphasized the sacrifice of youth, asserting that the complete unification of the two Koreas

[567] Haksaeng ungbyŏn ipsŏn sŏnjip (학생웅변입선선집), *Suhŏmsa* (수험사), 1959, 66–70.

[568] Yi Hye-gyŏng 이혜경 Lee Kyehyung, "Haebang ihu Sinhŭng Mugwan hakkyo puhŭng undong kwa Sinhŭng taehak sŏllip (해방 이후 신흥무관학교 부흥운동과 신흥대학 설립A Study on Reconstruction Exercise of Sinheung Military Academy and Establishment of Sinheung University after the Liberation)," *Han'guk hak nonch'ong* (한국학논총) 45 (2016): 29–55.

was necessary to ensure that such sacrifices would not be rendered meaningless. Second, they grounded this mission in the continuity of nationalist tradition and collective spirit, invoking the legacy of the "Hwarang" in Silla, as an archetype of loyalty and valor, and the patriots of the March First Movement, and the student soldiers who fought in the Korean War as models to be inherited and emulated. It shows the militarization of youth subjectivity, in which sacrifice and patriotism were demanded.

Third, the speeches stressed the need for national reconstruction through military strengthening, economic prosperity, and spiritual fortification, arguing that students must dedicate themselves to study while also remaining prepared to take up arms whenever the nation requires. Fourth, they framed the threat of North Korea and communism as not merely confined to the Korean Peninsula but as a danger to the entire world, asserting that "Northward Unification" was essential to achieving global peace. Finally, the orators emphasized that to overcome the present crisis and achieve unification, students must cultivate intellectual rigor, pursue technical training, and actively contribute to national reconstruction. Knowledge of and scientific discipline were framed as tools of national salvation, transforming intellectual labor into an act of patriotic devotion.

Taken together, these recurring themes reveal that the "Northward Unification" oratory contests operated as ideological propaganda, seeking to construct a model of Cold War students. By fusing nationalist tradition with anti-communist militancy, the speeches transformed mourning and loss into moral imperatives for national reconstruction. The student, positioned at once as patriot, intellectual, soldier, and moral exemplar, was imagined as the agent through whom the divided nation could be spiritually redeemed and historically completed. In this way, students were interpellated into the state's project of moral discipline, patriotic devotion, anti-communist propaganda and developmental modernity.

CHAPTER 5 The United States and the Republic of Korea's Youth Cold War Cultural Diplomacy

5.1. The International Youth Forum and the Global Cultural Cold War: The New York Herald Tribune "The World We Want."

This chapter will examine Korean students' participation in the New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum and its potential implications for understanding Korea's position within the broader Cold War context and its engagement with global youth movements.

Amidst global pressure, U.S. war violence needed a corrective antidote. The child, once again, offered a proper location through which to navigate and narrate the U.S. intentions in Asia.[569] Sharon Stephens has urged against viewing childhood as universal, instead viewing it as a contested site that operates differently across time to meet specific political needs. She has used critical approaches to childhood to reveal how the state utilized children for global disciplining and moralizing purposes.[570]

In the context of the Cold War, speech contests became commodities in the post-colonial youth's construction of benevolent Korean political parties. Placing Americans with Korean youth in the context of family produced the right kind of Cold War script, one that configured

[569] Susie Woo, Framed by War-Korean Children and Women at the Crossroads of US Empire, (New York University Press 2019), 11.
[570] Stephens, Sharon, "The 'Cultural Fallout' of Chernobyl Radiation in Norwegian Sami Regions: Implications for Children." in *Children and the Politics of Culture*, ed. Sharon Stephens (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 292–318.

U.S.-South Korean relations in the framework of care and kin, not violence and force.[571] These representations also came with new ways for Americans to participate in a transnational project. No longer on the sidelines waiting to see how U.S. expansion would affect the national polity, as was the case at the turn of the century, average Americans were given ample opportunities to participate in Korea by extending their familiar domestic roles across the Pacific.[572]

Viktoria Grieve, in her research on Cold War culture and U.S. child policy, highlighted that the Youth Forum was an effective form of anti-communist cultural politics aimed at youth. During the postwar period, the United States sought to educate students as anti-communist agents, aligning with the nation's broader Cold War objectives. This effort coincided with the rise of the Baby Boomer generation, a time when children and youth were emerging as critical social actors. The U.S. government's educational policies, cultural content, and Cold War rhetoric heavily influenced this generation. As the first generation raised with television, the Youth Forum leveraged mass media, being broadcast via radio and TV, to widely publicize the image of American students as leaders of the liberal camp opposing communism. It also highlighted their solidarity with students from around the world. This event became a significant Cold War cultural phenomenon, representing America's global anti-communist agenda targeting youth.

5.1.1. Campaign of Truth and the War of Words.

The United States' foreign propaganda policy was evident in the perspective of Johnstone, the Director of the Office of Educational Exchange. It aimed to promote the superiority of the American way of life and democracy while fostering goodwill toward the United States within

[571] Briggs, Laura, "Mother, Child, Race, Nation: The Visual Iconography of Rescue and the Politics of Transnational and Transracial Adoption." *Gender and History* 15, no. 2 (August 2003): 179– 200.
[572] Susie Woo, Framed by War: Korean Children and Women at the Crossroads of US Empire (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 12.

the liberal camp as a countermeasure against aggressive totalitarianism and communism. President Truman directed the Secretary of State to strengthen national propaganda and enhance its effectiveness, creating a policy initiative named the “Campaign of Truth.” This initiative reflected the U.S. commitment to projecting its ideological and cultural dominance during the Cold War era.[573]

The discussions within the Senate Committee on propaganda in the early 1950s reveal the sense of urgency the United States felt regarding the Soviet Union’s success in persuading neighboring countries. Deputy Secretary of State Dean Acheson argued that Soviet propaganda aimed to “distort and discredit the aims and essence of American life and foreign policy,” utilizing methods of “forgery, distortion, suppression, and deception.” Senator H. Alexander Smith further emphasized that Soviet propaganda was juxtaposed with its portrayal as the “champion of oppressed peoples,” positioning itself as an adversary to the dominance of other great powers. These statements reflect the United States’ heightened awareness of the global ideological competition and its efforts to counter the Soviet Union’s influence during the Cold War. John Foster Dulles, then Special Advisor to the Secretary of State, argued that communist leaders were attempting to persuade global audiences that they represented "nations advocating peace," while portraying the United States as a "nation advocating war." The discourse that the Soviet Union was winning the "war of words" was widely acknowledged among U.S. senators. This perception implicitly legitimized the need for the United States to intensify its propaganda efforts, reinforcing the urgency of its ideological counteroffensive during the Cold War.[574]

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[573] Program Planning, A PRS Study Area of World Concern: Priority of Target Areas, Target Groups, and Most Effective Media, April 7, 1950, RRIIA, Lot 53D47, Box 1. Jang Yong-min 장영민, “Jeongbu surip ihu (1948–1950) Miguk-ui seonjeon jeongchaek (정부 수립 이후(1948–1950) 미국의 선전정책On the U.S. Propaganda Policies toward Korea(1948-1950)),” *Hanguk Geunhyeondaesa Yeongu* (한국근현대사연구) 31 (2004): 282.

[574] U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Expanded International Information and Education Program, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 1950, S. Rept. 243, 39, quoted in Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War, 1945–1955* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 94–96.

The discourse that the Soviet Union achieved rhetorical success in its propaganda efforts was further reinforced by the Soviet-led "World Federation of Democratic Youth Festivals." Starting in 1947, these festivals were held in locations such as Prague (1947), Budapest (1949), and Berlin (1951). They served as attempts to promote and export Soviet cultural values and concepts through popular culture, showcasing youth power and the aspiration for peace. These festivals were heavily publicized as symbols of the Soviet Union's commitment to global solidarity and cultural diplomacy. While the U.S. State Department dismissed these events as part of a "Moscow Front," the United States also pursued competitive initiatives to attract global youth, emphasizing its own democratic values. This rivalry led to a series of projects aimed at fostering youth alliances and projecting ideological superiority on the international stage, reflecting the broader cultural and political contest of the Cold War.[575]

Meanwhile, this period marked the intersection of the rising public discourse on children's rights in postwar America and the development of Cold War cultural education. Children were expected to have the freedom to pursue their individual talents and interests, thereby growing into responsible citizens. At the same time, they were to be prepared to confront the uncertainties of a world threatened by nuclear weapons and the spread of communism. This dual emphasis reflected the broader societal goal of shaping children as both autonomous individuals and active participants in the ideological battles of the Cold War.[576] At the heart of Cold War-era initiatives, characterized by imagery and narratives of "Cold War warriors," potential victims of nuclear war, future atomic scientists, and United Nation's ambassadors, were American children. By the end of 1952, 88% of elementary and middle schools across the United States had implemented civil defense programs. The Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), aiming to foster public awareness of the communist threat without

[575] Pia Koivunen, *Performing Peace and Friendship: The World Youth Festivals and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy,* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2023), 7-10.
[576] Marilyn Irvin Holt, *Cold War Kids: Politics and Childhood in Postwar America, 1945–1960* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 24–25.

inciting widespread panic, promoted preparedness for nuclear war through short films, radio programs, news articles, posters, and pamphlets. It is also notable that this generation, known as the Baby Boomers, was the first postwar generation to grow up with television, making them uniquely susceptible to the influence of visual media in shaping cultural and political perceptions during the Cold War.[577]

The Youth Forum, a key focus of this chapter, also relied heavily on CBS television broadcasting as a critical medium. It aimed to promote "American values" such as liberalism, individualism, and anti-communism by providing opportunities for students who resonated with these values or were interested in American culture and academics to engage in exchanges and interactions. Through its program, the forum not only encouraged the dissemination of American intellectual and cultural practices but also positioned U.S. government agencies and American private organizations involved in the initiative as "patrons" of culture and scholarship. International exchanges enhanced the perception of the United States as a leader in cultural and intellectual endeavors.[578]

The Herald Tribune Forum was a program initiated in 1930 by Helen Rogers Reid, the president and editor-in-chief of the New York Herald Tribune. The forum was held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York and broadcast nationwide via the N.B.C. radio network. It brought together prominent figures from business, politics, and the military to discuss key political issues of the time. The Youth Forum adapted this concept, extending it to a younger audience while maintaining its focus on dialogue and intellectual exchange.[579] Following World War II, similar events were organized by the New York Daily Mirror and the New York

[577] Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 71–72.

[578] Choe Jin-seok discusses the scholarly support provided to intellectuals, but Cold War cultural initiatives targeting young students likewise carried similar aims.Choe Jin-seok,최진석, "Hanguk munhwa naengjeon yeongu-ui hyeonhwanggwa gwaje (한국 문화냉전 연구의 현황과 과제), *Inmun Gwahak* (인문과학) 89 (2023): 48.

[579] Richard Kluger, *The Paper: The Life and Death of The New York Herlad Tribune*, New York: Knopf, 1986.

Times Youth Forum, positioning youth as new agents of change and using these platforms as tools to promote world peace. The Youth Forum itself, held from 1949 to 1951, was modeled after a program initiated by the British Daily Mail, reflecting a broader trend of leveraging youth for cultural diplomacy in the postwar era.[580]

The New York Herald Tribune under Helen Rogers Reid cultivated overlapping publics through gender, internationalism, and youth. Reid's leadership not only expanded the paper's readership by promoting female journalists and launching the Women's Conference on Current Problems in 1930 but also built global networks through the celebrated Forum for Current Problems (1935–1955), which featured figures from Eleanor Roosevelt to Jawaharlal Nehru. Even as the main Forum declined, the High School Forum and journalism awards extended this civic engagement to younger generations, positioning the Tribune as a platform that addressed women, international elites, and youth as publics-in-the-making.[581]

The New York Herald Tribune Forum for High school students began in 1946 as a forum for American students, and the following year it developed into an international exchange program. Its aim was educational and internationalist, within the context of Cold War anxieties pitting American democracy against Soviet communism. Just a year later, in 1947, the Forum became international, inviting selected students from Central and South America and Canada. In 1948 and 1949, the focus was on Europe. In 1950 and 1952, they asked students from Asia and the Middle East, and by 1953, the Forum expanded to include students "all over the world." Delegates came from countries that were either U.S. allies or candidates for a closer political relationship within the American sphere of influence. Forum officials consulted annually with the State Department on country selection to ensure it "coincides with the national interest." [582]

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[580] Moving Image Archive, "Filming the World We Want (Part 1)," June 25, 2020, blogs.libraries.indiana.edu/filmarch/2020/06/25/filming-the-world-we-want-part-1, accessed November 25, 2023.
[581] Catherine Bishop, *The World We Want: The New York Herald Tribune World Youth Fourm*, (Australian Scholarly Publishing 2025) 34-36, ebook.
[582] Ibid., 22, 33.

The New York Herald Youth Forum was commonly translated in Korea as "World High School Debate Competition (hereafter Youth Forum)" session, which invited student representatives from approximately 30 countries and included a two-and-a-half-month exchange program in the United States. During their stay, the selected Korean students lived with diverse host families mainly in the New York and New Jersey areas for two to three weeks. Korean delegates toured American high schools in the designated area, attended classes with American students, and gave presentations about their home countries. Additionally, they participated in school inspections and exhibitions and were required to write and submit essays to the New York Herald Tribune. The best essay writers were chosen to represent the forum and appear on television, further showcasing their experiences and insights.[583]

Outstanding students, selected based on their English speeches, participated in televised debates broadcast by CBS. These debates covered topics such as “Differences Between Schools in America and Our Country” and “How to Address the Threat of Communism,” highlighting cultural distinctions and contemporary political issues. On the final day, participants attended the grand finale at the Astoria Hotel in New York, where they shared their visions on the theme “The World We Want,” concluding the event in a meaningful and symbolic manner. After completing the debate program, participants occasionally had opportunities to meet U.S. presidents, such as Eisenhower or Kennedy. In some cases, the program also included travel to

[583] Most often it was translated as the “World Student Debate,” but it was also rendered as the “World Student Discussion Forum” hosted by the New York Herald Tribune or as the “International High School Student Debate.” “Han’guk haksaeng-do mudae chinch’ul, segye t’oron taehweseo 2-myŏng ch’och’ŏng” (한국학생도 무대 진출, 세계토론대회서 2명 초청), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), November 1, 1951., “Hullyunghan Yŏngŏ! Segye haksaeng t’oron-e I Yang sŏnch’ul” (훌륭한 영어! 세계학생토론에 이양 선출), *Chayu Sinmun* (자유신문), November 3, 1951., Indiana University Bloomington. Omeka RSS. n.d. Available at: https://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/IULMIA/exhibits/show/the-world-we-want. Accessed November 13, 2023.

other countries, including the United Kingdom, East Berlin, France, Canada, and Ghana, further broadening the cultural and diplomatic scope of the experience.[584]

5.1.2. Selection of Korean Youth Delegates and Media Representation

During the Syngman Rhee administration, a total of nine Korean representatives participated in the New York Herald Youth Forum, starting with Yi Chŏng-hwa, the second daughter of popular novelist Yi Kwang-su. Subsequent representatives included Kim Chin-t'ae, Paek Nak-ch'ŏng, Pak Hŭi-jun, Yi Yŏng-ku, Ch'oe Sang-mi, Sŏ Esther, Pak Chŏng-sim, and Yi Ŭn-suk. Their participation exemplified Korea's engagement in Cold War cultural diplomacy, with the Rhee government leveraging these youth representatives to project an image of alignment with the U.S. and liberal democratic values on the international stage.[585]

Korean Students participating in the Youth Forum were selected through joint meetings between representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Korea and the Ministry of Education. In the case of Yi Jeong-hwa, the first Korean student representative, she was selected by Marcus W. Scherbacher, a U.S. Information Service staff member. The first "Selection Examination" was held at 10 a.m. on November 10, 1951, in the office of the Minister of Education.[586] English proficiency was considered the most essential criterion in the student delegate selection process.

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[584] "Kak chungdŭng hakkyo-rŭl sunhoeko" (각중등학교를 순회코), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), February 16, 1952., "Ssau-nŭn wi mosŭp-ŭl sogaehal-t'ŏ" (싸우는 위 모습을 소개할터), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 31, 1953.

[585] In the competition, typically one main representative was selected, but alternates were occasionally chosen as deputy representatives. According to the Ministry of Education, for the student debate held after the May 16 Coup in 1961, in addition to Yi Ch'ang-ho (a second-year student at Seoul High School), deputy representatives included Pak Sun-ja (19, a third-year student at Ewha Girls' High School) and Song Chu-hŭi (17, a second-year student at Kyŏnggi High School). "I Ch'ang-ho kun sŏnbal" (이창호군 선발), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), July 13, 1961.

[586] Marcus W. Scherbacher, who was working as a deputy director at the U.S. Information Service as ECA worker at the time, later served as a cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Korea. After serving in Korea for 12 years, he was awarded an honorary doctorate in literature and an honorary Seoul citizenship certificate by Seoul National University. "Syubaka-ssi-ege" (슈바카씨에게), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), June 11, 1958. "Han'guk-sŏdo ch'amga" (한국서도 참가), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 27, 1956.

In 1956, a student was praised for "speaking English as well as the British." However, proficiency in English was not the only factor considered. Students were likely evaluated on their knowledge of political issues, public speaking abilities, and attitude.[587] The Ministry of Education required candidates to submit English essays and undergo interviews over two days, selecting 2–3 candidates to attend the event, from which one representative was chosen. The Ministry received English-written texts from students nationwide, followed by interviews to make final selections.[588]

<Table5.1>. Korean Student Delegates for the New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum (1952-1960).

Student Name, Age	**High School**	**Participation Year**
Yi Jŏnghwa (18)	Ihwa Women High School	1952
Kim Jint'ae (19)	Kyŏnggi High School	1953
Pek Gnakch'ŏng (19)	Kyŏnggi High School	1954
Pak hŭijun (19)	Kyŏng-dong High School	1955
Yi Yŏnggu (19)	Kyŏnggi High School	1956
Ch'oe Sangmi (19)	Ihwa Women's High School	1957

[587] "Han'guk-sŏdo ch'amga" (한국서도 참가), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 27, 1956. "Han'guk haksaeng ch'och'ŏng" (한국학생초청), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), September 17, 1952.

[588] "Han'guk-sŏdo ch'amga" (한국서도 참가), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 27, 1956.

Sŏ Esther (19)	Ihwa Women's High School	1958
Pak chŏngshim (19)	Ihwa Women's High School	1959
Yi ŭnsuk (19)	Kyŏngbuk Woment Hight School	1960

Source: “Kak Chungdŭng Hakkyo-rŭl Sunhoeko.” Kyŏnghyang Sinmun, February 16, 1952. “Kyŏnggi Kim-gun Pageon.” Chosŏn Ilbo, October 30, 1953. “Paek Nak-ch’ŏng-gun-ŭl Pageon!” Kyŏnghyang Sinmun, October 1, 1954. “Segye Haksaeng T’oronhoe-e Kyŏngdong-ko ŭi Pak-gun Pageon.” Chosŏn Ilbo, December 13, 1955. “Kigo Yi-gun Tangsŏn.” Chosŏn Ilbo, September 4, 1956. “Segye Namnyŏ Kokyoseng T’orondaehhoe-e Pageon Ch’oe-nyang ŏje Ch’ulp’al.” Tong-A Ilbo, December 24, 1957. “Kokyoseng T’orondaehhoe-e Ihwa ŭi Sŏ-nyang-ŭl Pageon.” Chosŏn Ilbo, December 5, 1958. “Ihwa Yŏgo Pak Chŏng-sim-nyang-i Chamga.” Chosŏn Ilbo, December 24, 1959. “Segye Haksaeng T’orondaehhoe Taep’yo Pak Chŏng-sim-nyang Miguk-eso-ŭi Hanguk Ch’um.” Chosŏn Ilbo, March 18, 1960.

Although the program was officially conducted as a “national selection,” most participants came from high schools in Seoul. For example, except for Yi Eun-suk, who was from North Gyŏngsang Province, most participants were from Seoul-based high schools. Also, the postwar disparities in English education between regions influenced students' English abilities, and the affluent families who could attend these elite schools and pursue English education also played a role in their selection.

Reports on the debate competition typically included the names and ages of the selected students, their brief aspirations, and details of their travel schedule to the United States. Newspapers often featured identification photos or pictures taken during the debate events. Follow-up articles sometimes included participants' reflections on their experiences.[589]

[589] “Kak chungdŭng hakkyo-rŭl sunhoeko” (각중등학교를 순회코), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), February 16, 1952.

The first participant, Yi Jŏng-hwa, had parts of a letter she sent during the event published in a newspaper. Similarly, Baek Nak-chŏng serialized his reflections in *Kyunghyang Shinmun* after participating in the Forum, in which he wrote a diary entitled "My Participation in the World High School Debate Competition." The essay provided a brief overview of his overall schedule, personal impressions, and the topics he addressed during the competition.[590]

The students who attended this debate competition were often described as "appealing Korea's reality" or "competing" with other student representatives from around the world. Actually, the Youth Forum was closer to a roundtable discussion, where representatives from various countries shared their opinions, rather than a formal competition with winners. Nevertheless, when Yi Jeong-hwa returned to Korea after completing the 1952 program, reports exaggerated her achievements, stating that she had “represented Korea at the World Student Oratory Competition, defeating over 30 representatives from around the world to achieve the highest score.” Her return was described as a “triumphant homecoming.”[591] Such reports continued in the announcements for the selection of the following year’s participants, effectively establishing it as a widely accepted fact that Yi Jeong-hwa had "won" the Youth Forum. Despite the forum not being a competitive event in the strict sense, this portrayal became ingrained in the public narrative.[592]

Similarly, reports on Yi Yŏng-gu highlighted Shygnman Rhee's visit to his high school to praise him, emphasizing both his extensive promotion of Korea abroad and the nationalist framing of his achievements. The reports applauded his speech, "We oppose coexistence (with communism) and proclaim to the world that Korea is a culturally advanced nation, for widely

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[590] “Segye kogyo-saeng t’oron taehwe ch’amga-gi” (세계고교생 토론대회 참가기), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 23, 1955., “Segye kogyo-saeng t’oron taehwe ch’amga-gi” (세계고교생 토론대회 참가기), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 24, 1955.

[591] “Ch’oe-gojŏm hoektŭk” (최고점 획득), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 20, 1952.

[592] “Han’guk haksaeng ch’och’ŏng” (한국학생초청), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), September 17, 1952.

spreading the honor and glory of the Korean people to the world." It was also reported that he had an audience with U.S. President Eisenhower and successfully promoted Korea's situation at various high schools across the United States, achieving significant success.[593]

"Nataly's mother and Yi Jŏng-hwa"(figure 5.1.)[594]

An article that reproduces the contents of a letter from Yi Jŏng-hwa provides valuable insight into how students were prepared for this program. She wrote that on March 22, 1952, she would participate in a debate with 25 student representatives from 17 countries in front of an audience of 4,000 high school students in New York. Leading up to the discussion, Yi toured high schools, delivering speeches about Korea's situation, appearing on radio and television, and actively serving as a student diplomat. Yi was assigned to various high schools for set periods, where she studied and received exceptional debate guidance from designated teachers. All

[593] "I Yŏng-gu kun inkyŏn ilil I Taet'ongnyŏng i" (이영구군인견 일일이대통령 이), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), May 2, 1957.

[594] "Kak chungdŭng hakkyo-rŭl sunhoeko" (각중등학교를 순회코), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), February 15, 1952.

transportation, including planes, ships, and trains, was provided free of charge by Pan-American transport companies. At the same time, accommodations were arranged with the families of prominent school patrons, where she prepared for the debates. Her daily schedule was so busy that her day often did not end until after midnight, leaving her to sleep only after 12 a.m.[595]

<Table 5-2>. "Yi Jŏng-hwa's New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum Schedule."

Dates	**Host Family, Visted High school**	**Travel Schedule**
January 12	Nataly's Home-Rugherfort High school	Arrived and began activities.
January 13-16	Muah's Home, Hempstead Highschool	Continued school visits and preparation.
January 17-February 9	Cummin's Home, Mudwood Highschool	Extended stay for debate preparation.
February 9-22	Travel to Canada (UN Canada Branch inviation)	Participated in events hosted by the UN's Canadian branch.
Febuary 24-March 21	Pringle's Home, Heywood Highschool-Bushwick High school.	Concluded school visits and preparation before the main event.
March 22	-	Speech in the Astoria Hotel

Source: 각중등학교를 순회코, 경향신문, 1952.02.16

[595] "Kak chungdŭng hakkyo-rŭl sunhoeko" (각중등학교를 순회코), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), February 16, 1952.

When Yi arrived in New York, she was warmly welcomed into the home of "Nataly," a student from Rutherford High School. To her surprise, Natalie's family had already prepared maps of Korea, history books, documents about Korea's president, and even a photo of Yi Jeong-hwa herself. They demonstrated remarkable knowledge about Korea.[596]

Yi Jeong-hwa's experience suggests essential issues regarding this program. First, each participant was assigned a teacher who provided debate guidance, and they attended schools and received training within tightly packed schedules that extended late into the evening. This implies that the Youth Forum educated the students in accordance with the debate formats and content it had in mind. Second, the host families selected to accommodate the participants were provided with support to gather and study all relevant information about the visiting students' country in advance, thereby creating a systematically organized environment to welcome the students. Furthermore, the debates were often arranged without specific titles, allowing participants to engage in discussions and facilitating their debate practice.

5.1.3. U.S.-Led Global Peace Initiative: Yi Jŏng-hwa and Saito Kayoko, The Friendship of Two Asian Female Students Representing a New Northeast Asian Order.

Why, at this specific moment, when invitations had thus far been concentrated on European delegates, were Korean and Japanese students' representatives included? To address this question, the chapter first examines the historical background of shifting diplomatic relations among Korea, the United States, and Japan, as well as the broader transformation of the Cold War order. I will discuss the diplomatic context in which the Forum was organized, and how the Korean War, the San Francisco Peace Treaty, and the Korea-Japan Treaty show each country's diplomatic will. Second, I will analyze Jŏng-hwa and Kayoko's speeches to

[596] Ibid.

understand how the United States's cultural Cold War utilized the two Asian girls' friendship narrative for its domestic Cold War education.

Against the background of the intensifying Cold War, particularly with the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, the peace terms with Japan changed to reflect the United States' new strategic interests, the principal drafter of the San Francesco Peace Treaty. Specifically, Japan and the Philippines, soon to be the most important US allies in East Asia, had to be secured for the non-communist West, whereas the communist states were to be contained.[597]

The Franco-Italian Peace Treaty shaped the World War II international order in the Asia-Pacific, establishing security arrangements, and fully reflected the strategic interests and policy priorities of the United States.[598] By accepting Washington's terms, Japan regained independence and sovereignty under U.S. protection. The alternative favored by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru's critics, disarmed neutrality and an inclusive peace treaty, would have delayed sovereignty and prolonged U.S. occupation. Despite some reservations, the government and most of the Japanese populace welcomed the 1951 treaties and the ensuing restoration of sovereignty. The peace treaty itself was non-punitive and generous to Japan, and Japan has established itself as a democratic, prosperous, and peaceful nation.[599] In his address at the War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco, which was broadcast and televised, President Truman emphasized that the signing of the treaty would strengthen peace and international justice, while restoring Japan's independence and binding it to other free nations through ties of mutual friendship and responsibility.[600]

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[597] Hara, Kimie, "The San Francisco Peace Treaty and Frontier Problems in the Regional Order in East Asia: A Sixty-Year Perspective,"*Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 10, no. 17-1 (2012): 3.
[598] Edited by Kimie Hara, The San Francisco System and Its Legacies, Routledge, i.
[599] Dower, John W. "The San Francisco System: Past, Present, Future in U.S.–Japan–China Relations." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 12, no. 8-2 (2014): 4.
[600] Truman, Harry S. "Address in San Francisco at the Opening of the Conference on the Japanese Peace Treaty." September 4, 1951. The American Presidency Project. Accessed September 11, 2025. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-san-francisco-the-opening-the-conference-the-japanese-peace-treaty?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

Meanwhile, Communist China, Nationalist China, and both South and North Korea were excluded from the treaties when they were signed. Viewed from the perspective of the separate peace, the San Francisco settlement thus laid the groundwork for an exclusionary system that detached Japan from its closest neighbors.[601] The "peace treaty" with Japan was necessitated by the outbreak of "war" in Korea. No other country in the Asia-Pacific found itself situated in such a paradoxical position within the Francisco System. The Cold War, which has been referred to as the "long peace," was a time of war against both external and internal enemies: the DPRK in the north and anti-system movements.[602]

In October 1951, under U.S. mediation, Korea and Japan held preliminary talks, leading to the first Korea-Japan Conference in February 1952. Korea advanced eight categories of claims premised on the illegality of colonial rule, while sovereignty over adjacent seas, the "Peace Line," and the fisheries dispute also proved contentious. On these issues, however, Korea, Japan, and the United States maintained fundamentally divergent positions.[603] The sole point of agreement among Japan, Korea, and the United States was their shared hostility to communism. As talks stalled over Japan's reluctance, Korean Ambassador Yang Yoch'an urged cooperation between Korea and Japan "for their mutual interest in the struggle against communism."[604] Synman Rhee, who had already reinforced an anti-communist legal and

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[601] John W. Dower, "The San Francisco System: Past, Present, Future in U.S.–Japan–China Relations," 3., Regarding Korea's exclusion for the San Francisco Peace Treaty see Chŏng, Pyŏng-jun 정병준, "Han'guk ŭi Saenp'uransisŭk'o p'yŏnghwa hoedam ch'amga munje wa paeje kwajŏng (한국의 샌프란시스코평화회담 참가문제와 배제과정 Participation Issue of Korea to the San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan)," *Han'guk Tongnip Undongsa Yŏn'gu* (한국독립운동사연구) 36, no. 3 (Fall 2020): 1–42.

[602] Kim, Dong-Choon김동춘, "The San Francisco Peace Treaty and 'Korea'," *The San Francisco System and Its Legacies: Continuation, Transformation, and Historical Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific,* edited by Kimie Hara, 97-114, New York: Routledge, 2015.

[603] Pak Chin-hŭi 박진희, "Miguk Kukmubu chaeoe kongwan munso (RG 84) wa Hanil hoedam(미국 국무부 재외공관문서(RG 84)와 한일회담 The Understanding of United States on Korea-Japan Talk Based on Declassified documents of Diplomatic missions of the State Department), Sahak Yŏn'gu (사학연구), 115, (2014) : 423-462.

[604] "Wŏsingtŏnŭro ttŏnaneun Yang taesaui insamal (워싱턴으로 떠나는 양 대사의 인사말)," December 5, 1951, Hanil hoehwam oegyo munseo (Yebihwoeham bonhoeŭi hoeirok) (Diplomatic Documents of the Korea–Japan

political framework domestically, emphasized the Korean War as a product of global geopolitical upheaval and articulated Korea's mission to defend liberal ideals on the international stage.[605]

Under these circumstances, Jŏng-hwa arrived in the United States and started her journey at Rutherford High School. After three months of scheduling, on the final day at the Astoria Hotel, student representatives worldwide delivered speeches under the central theme, "The World We Want." However, not all student representatives participated actively in the final speeches. After the two-and-a-half-month program, some only observed the speeches of other representatives without taking the stage themselves. Among the Korean representatives, Yi Jŏng-hwa, Baek Nak-cheong, and Choi Sang-mi participated in the final day's event, though their reasons for doing so varied. In Yi Jŏng-hwa's case, her participation was organized in line with the clear directorial intent to pair her with a Japanese student representative to deliver a message that reflected the geopolitical significance of the moment. On the day Yi participated, speeches were also delivered by representatives such as Saito Kayoko (Japan), Purificacion Valera (Philippines), Hameeda Akhun (Pakistan), Mawan Sadaat (Syria), and Hussein Gafar (Egypt). Helen Hiett Waller, the moderator of the speech, introduced two delegates, highlighting that it was the first time they had invited representatives from Japan and Korea.[606]

Talks (Minutes of the Preparatory Main Session), Accessed: September 15. 2025. http://contents.nahf.or.kr.

[605] Gongboch'ŏ, "Gongboch'ŏ 'Kukche-yonhapil-e cheyŏha-yŏ'(국제 연합일에 제하여)" October 24, 1951. The Republic of Korea Presidential Archives, Accessed September 11, 2025. https://www.pa.go.kr/research/contents/speech/index.jsp.

[606] Youth Forum 306.256.–2. 35mm film reel, National Archives, copied by Richard Hall, October 2022. YouTube video, 10:38. Posted by Nerds Make Media, March 21, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Haha2h5JcmM.

Yi Jŏng-hwa speaking in the World Astoria Hotel (1952) (figure 5.2)

Yi Jŏng-hwa and Saito Kayoko opened the session, taking turns to deliver their speeches from the podium. In her remarks, Yi Jŏng-hwa addressed three key points under the theme of "The World We Want." First, she shared her personal experiences regarding the possibilities of reconciliation and friendship with Japan. Second, she conveyed the devastation and dangers that communism had brought to Korea. Finally, she emphasized the United Nations' role in the Korean War, reiterating the importance of collective global security.

> **Jŏng-hwa:** "I tried my best to show Kayoko that we Koreans had not forgotten. The bitter memory of Japanese aggression and the policy of Japanization had been useless. But her third word was this. We Japanese feel very sorry. Please forgive us. Then, at our meeting in Toronto, she said Japan is no longer a warlike country. We Japanese today are among the most peace-loving people in the world. Today, Kayoko, whom I hated most, has become my best friend. Never before have I had such a friend as Kayoko. And I really like to use Japanese with her now. I think one way I can complete my mission as a delegate from Korea is to tell my friends, the

students at home, what Kayoko told me so often about the Japanese people's desire for peace and friendliness in the world. Through this experience with Kayoko that I have told you about, I have realized what a terrible threat to peace the misunderstanding of others can be. One of the principal methods through which we can attend to the world we want is understanding others. I understand that is this the main reason why Americans brought us to the United States and the Herald Tribune welcomed us. ”[607]

Starting the speech, Yi described the gradual friendship she developed with Kayoko through the Youth Forum, despite initial animosities rooted in national tensions. She recounted how Japan's colonial rule had been so harsh that it left Korean households with "only a single kitchen knife." Although she was proficient in Japanese, "so much so that she even dreamed in the language," her feelings of resentment from Japan's policy of eradicating the Korean language initially made her reluctant to engage with Kayoko. When Kayoko asked if she could speak Japanese, Yi chose not to respond. However, during their time together in the United States, they had opportunities to talk and understand each other, which Yi explained became a meaningful experience in genuinely understanding the concept of peace. Jŏng-hwa's expression of friendship culminated in a narrative completed when Kayoko took the podium and stated once again that Japan was deeply remorseful and reflective of its past actions.

Kayoko: "The friendship of Jŏng Hwa Lee from Korea and the friendship of the other delegates who suffered under the Japanese have given me great hope. Whenever I hear or read of the past cruelty or bad acts of the Japanese militarist which I have never known until the end of the war, my heart aches. I know many many Japanese who are reflecting, reflecting deeply about their past deeds and feeling very sorry for the unfairly treated people. Before I came to the United States, I visited a man whom is a friend of my father's and is regarded as a famous historian in

[607] Ibid.

Japan. After he had congratulated me on this wonderful opportunity, he says to me very seriously I wish you one thing especially on this occasion. Please be modest enough before the other delegates of Asia and the Americans so that you may represent the newborn Japan our friendly feeling towards the others unwillingness to help others talk with them cordially, because we have common problems in Asia and we must help each other. This is also my mind."[608]

Kayoko speaking in the World Astoria Hotel (1952) (figure 5.3)

Alongside her expression of remorse for Japan's past actions, Kayoko testified to the possibility of forming friendships with students from former colonial territories once ruled by Imperial Japan. She further expressed the new Japan's willingness to contribute to addressing "common issues" in Asia. However, this notion of "commonality" was reappropriated from the earlier goal of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which had positioned the West as the adversary, to now constructing global peace with communism as the shared enemy. When Kayoko started to talk about their enemy, Waller, intentionally arranged the order of speeches

[608] Ibid.

to allow them to flow naturally into Jŏng's experience of the communist regime and the Korean War.

> **"Kayoko:** Yes, that disordered the society. Besides such actually being actually working a communism there are some who are especially among the students and teachers who admit that communism is theoretically good.
>
> **Waller:** And how about Korea Jŏng?
>
> **Jŏng Hwa:** Well, as I spent under the communist regime for several months and have experienced the miserable life of refugees, I'm capable of describing what all the Koreans have experienced. In all Korea, there is scarcely a family that remains intact. Our industries and cities have been ruined our factories bound our founder devastated our cattle driven off and our tools were destroyed or stolen. A large percentage of the population now consists of refugees and displaced persons, who are almost entirely dependent on relief supplies so generously contributed by friends in many nations. But through this miserable experience we made two great discoveries poor and uneducated people. We will always be attracted by communism that pretends to liberate the poor and appses the western democracy. Even if those people get your message about western democracy they could hardly understand what you say. We discovered a second thing that is the collective security of the United Nations. We realize that we are not alone in defending our country and fighting against the communism but all three nations in the world are helping U.S. This experience turned our nationalist demand that had been built up through the former chinese and Japanese occupation to the United nations and the collective free world. Now we realize that without a help of others we cannot secure our own peace and freedom. Only when we could help each other in case of need could sympathize with the fears that others have and could reach a truer understanding will reach the true peaceful world that all the nations wish to achieve."

The two students alternated in presenting solutions to international tensions and concluded by expressing gratitude to the sponsors and the Herald Tribune organizers. They emphasized how

this American-led global initiative for youth created the possibility of peaceful coexistence. Kayoko delivered a message of "deep remorse for Japan's past actions" and expressed Japan's willingness to contribute to the "common Asian problem" of communism. Jŏng Hwa, by describing most people attracted to communism as "poor" and "undeducated," managed to justify and underscore the importance of international aid and how much it could bring "peace and freedom."

Considering that this took place shortly after the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in September 1951, which officially ended the state of war between Japan and the Allied Powers and marked the transition to peaceful relations, the event reflected the United States' active mediation of relations between Japan, a key Cold War ally and military base, and Korea, still embroiled in the Korean War.[609] The speeches crafted for this peace initiative were designed to convey the mediation to students.

The content and arrangement of the speeches, along with selective reporting, reveal how political tensions and discourses were mediated through the youth participants, assigning distinct roles to the United States, Korea, and Japan. The audience at the debate consisted mainly of high school students and their teachers from New York and nearby areas, as well as host families who had housed the international students.[610] Thus, the event was not merely a platform for Yi Jeong-hwa and Kayoko to deliver their messages to their respective nations but rather a carefully orchestrated performance for the audience. The speeches were designed as a narrative device, portraying a resolution in which the Korean and Japanese students reconciled and forged a genuine friendship to combat the threat of communism jointly.

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[609] Chŏng, Pyŏng-jun 정병준, "Han'guk ŭi Saenp'uransisŭk'o p'yŏnghwa hoedam ch'amga munje wa paeje kwajŏng,

[610] World Youth Forum. "History." n.d. Accessed November 23, 2023. https://catherinebishop.wixsite.com/history/world-youth-forum.

This depiction highlighted McCarthyism not merely as a domestic phenomenon but as an international one, demonstrating its applicability on a global scale. By presenting the Cold War politics of the United States through the voices of the world's youth, the event reinforced American citizens' sense of pride in and responsibility for their role in global peace and anti-communist efforts.

At this moment, the coerced reconciliation and linkage between Korea and Japan, under the umbrella of U.S. hegemonic planning in Asia, was already becoming apparent. Yet, this episode was dismissed as trivial, treated merely as a minor incident involving "youth" and thus quickly faded into the background. The intellectuals of Sasanggye, who had previously traced the root cause of Korea's underdevelopment to national division and advocated for a self-reliant theory of reunification, would later begin to articulate more pointed critiques of the United States. It was only after the Korea-Japan normalization talks that they recognized the United States as the true force behind the negotiations and that U.S. foreign policy in East Asia had always been centered on Japan.[611] While Japan settled securely under the military and economic umbrella extended by the United States in Asia, Korea was left to define its own position in reaction to this bilateral dynamic and to chart its course accordingly. This asymmetrical relationship diverted Korea's outward gaze and led to the demand for and imagination of "Asia" in ways distinct from the Japanese experience.[612]

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[611] Park Youngkyun 박영균, "한국 현대 지성사의 존재론적 조건과 탈식민주의 비판: 냉전-분단체제에서 탈식민화로서 지성사 (Ontological Conditions of Korean Contemporary Intellectual History and Critique of Postcolonialism: Intellectual History as Decolonization in the Cold War-Divided System)," *T'ongil Inmunhak* (통일인문학) 93 (2023) : 32.

[612] Kim Yerim 김예림, " Naengjŏn-gi Asia sangsang kwa panggong chŏngch'esŏng ŭi wisanghak – Haebang~Han'guk chŏnjaeng-hu (1945~1955) Asia simsang jiri-rŭl chungsim ŭro(냉전기 아시아 상상과 반공 정체성의 위상학 - 해방~한국전쟁후(1945~1955) 아시아 심상지리를 중심으로 The Transformation of Asian Regionalism and the Construction of Anti-Communist Identity)," *Sanghur Hakbo* (상허학보)20, (2007): 320.

After completing the Youth Forum, Jŏng-hwa returned to the ROK. *Kyunghyang Shinmun* published accounts of Yi Jeong-hwa's experiences. It is noteworthy, however, how it selectively conveyed her statements made during the speech.

> In the political discussion titled "The World We Want," I spoke about Japan's aggression and com(xxx the invasion. (...) "They seemed quite interested in how Americans view their own country and worked hard to leave a good impression. For my part, I also made every effort to express gratitude to the United States for its active and selfless support of our nation."[613]

Jŏng-hwa briefly introduces her remarks, but the summary of her speech in the Korean newspaper, which focuses solely on Japanese aggression and the communist invasion, does not fully encompass her presentation. The newspaper or Yi intentionally omitted any mention of reconciliation or friendship with the Japanese representative, as the idea of "world peace through friendship with Japanese students" lacked credibility among the Korean populace.

"Miss Yang speaking about war-torn Korea at Hampstead High School." (figure 5.4)[614]

[613] The word "Communism" was censored in this article. "I Yang segye ungbyŏn taehwe-e tanyŏwasŏ" (이양 세계웅변대회에 다녀와서), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 22, 1952.
[614] Ibid.

Two delegates' speeches were delivered in carefully constructed narratives to show the reconciliation between ROK and Japan, which accommodated them for cooperation against a communist attack. At the same time, their friendship and alliance were presented as possible thanks to the Youth Forum and the invitation of two delegates from Asian countries. In this regard, the U.S. assistance was described as the mediator that made possible their friendship, as much as their efforts given to the countries for peace-making initiatives. Also, the image of female students' duty and the representation of peace-making followed the gendered education and the symbols of the U.S. domestic cultural Cold War grammar, configuring Jŏng-hwa and Kayoko as world peace-making subjects. The role of Yi Jeong-hwa in 1952 was particularly significant, as the Korean War was still ongoing. She was tasked with serving as both a witness to the communist invasion and an advocate for Korea's political position. Her speech was paired with the Japanese delegate, Saito Kayoko.

5.2. "How do We Meet the Communist Threat?" The Vanguard Anti-Communist Korean Students Delegates.

The debate occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Korean armistice, when U.S. Cold War priorities-especially opposition to China's admission to the UN-were shifting. Kim Chin t'ae', Pak Heejun, and Yi Yŏngku spoke as witnesses to the continuing communist threat. At the same time, the inclusion of neutral states such as India and Norway, alongside allies like the Philippines and Korea, staged a constraining national perspective. This section first outlines the Eisenhower administration's diplomatic response to China's admission to the United Nations. Then it considers the broader political context in which these debates unfold. It then examines how, by 1954, the United States sought to shape public opinion of the People's

Republic of China (PRC) through cultural Cold War strategies targeting children and youth. Second, it turns to the psychological warfare conducted within Korea against Chinese Communist forces and explores how Syngman Rhee's northern advance unification campaigns and mass mobilization effort were articulated from the perspective of Kim Chin-t'ae. His uncompromising stance, voiced as a youth delegate, carried significant persuasive force in reinforcing the Eisenhower administration's message of communist threat to the American public.

5.2.1. Eisenhower's Domestic Cultural Cold War Strategy and Morals of International Students

U.S. policy toward the PRC during the Eisenhower years focused on containing Chinese Communist aggression, opposing Beijing's seating in the United Nations, strengthening U.S. commitment to Formosa, and maintaining non-recognition. For the U.S., the question of United Nations authority was directly tied to the legitimacy of the Korean War.[615] As Dulles stated at the close of the Geneva Conference, the Korean War was "a conflict waged to affirm the principle of collective security under the United Nations." [616] The recognition of the UN's 'authority' regarding the Korean issue became a primary diplomatic concern for Washington, intricately connected to what U.S. policymakers deemed "the most significant single issue facing the United States in the United Nations" at that time.[617] The matter of Chinese representation, namely, blocking the PRC admission and safeguarding Formosa's seat. The

[615] The Acting Secretary of State to the United States Delegation" (1954.6.1.), Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954. The Geneva Conference, Volume XVI, 334-335.
[616] Jaw-ling Joanne Chang, *United States-China Normalization an Evaluation of Foreign Policy Decision Making,* copublished by Monograph Series in World Affairs, University of Denver and Occasional Papers/Reprint Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, Inc., 1986, 22.
[617] "The United States Representative at the United Nations (Lodge) to the Department of State", Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954. United Nations Affairs, Volume III, p.670.

Truman administration initially adopted a 'neutral' policy, asserting that it would adhere to the Security Council's majority opinion on Chinese entry. The outbreak of the Korean War and China's intervention catalyzed a significant movement to exclude China from the UN. By early 1953, the Eisenhower administration was resolutely opposed to Chinese admittance, fearing that its entry would accelerate the spread of communism across Asia.[618][619]

It is notable that during Eisenhower's administration, both the strategic emphasis on and the investment in psychological warfare increased markedly compared to the preceding period. Eisenhower's address in San Francisco during the presidential campaign demonstrated interest in propaganda, brainwashing, and various techniques of mind control that had emerged during the preceding decades. International developments coinciding with Eisenhower's presidency further accentuated the ideological, political, and symbolic dimensions of the Cold War. After Stalin's death, Eisenhower and many of his advisors viewed the challenge of peaceful coexistence as representing a "new type of Cold War," as a war of persuasion that would be won or lost on the plain of public opinion.[620] As both the president and the Secretary of State were convinced that the administration had to make every possible effort to shape public opinion in support of its goals, they sought to present the government's case to the American people in an effective and convincing way. Through speeches, press conferences, and radio and television appearances, the administration spokesman educated and informed Americans to build sufficient public support for the government's decisions. In mid-1953, the media and legislators opposed admitting Communist China to the UN, and the public opposition to seating Chinese Communists in the UN paralleled leadership opinion.[621]

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[618] "Memorandum by the United Nations Adviser, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs (Bacon)," May 25, 1953, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, United Nations Affairs, vol. 3, 638–39.

[619] About the U.S's international relations towards United Nations see Ryu Ki-hyŏn 류기현, 1953–1971nyŏn Yun ŭi Hanband o punan kwalli kujo ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chŏn'gae (The Formation and Development of the UN's Korea Division-Management Structure, 1953–1971). PhD diss., Seoul National University, 2024, 63–66.

[620] Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War Eisenhowers's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad*, University Press of Kansas, (2006): 46.

[621] Maria Oliva, Eisenhower and American Public opinon on China, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan2018), 53.,

In fact, there had been significant changes in American public opinion towards the PRC since 1949. In December 1950, a poll indicated that 81 percent of respondents blamed the Soviet Union for Chinese intervention in the Korean War, perceiving the PRC as a Soviet puppet. The American image of an aggressive and expansionist China was further reinforced by the Formosa Strait crisis in 1958 and the Sino-Indian War in 1962. The American public supported the government's policy of nonrecognition,[622] and by 1953, four out of five Americans favoured American aid for a Chinese Nationalist attack on the mainland. Such hostility towards the PRC included public support for the policy of non-recognition, denial of a UN seat, and the administration's submission that all trade with Beijing should be stopped.[623]

Assuming that after the Korean War, China would strengthen its involvement in Indochina, Dulles warned in September 1953 that a "second aggression could not occur without grave consequences which might not be confined to Indochina," a warning he repeated at a press conference at the end of the year. At numerous press conferences during the first Formosa Strait crisis, 1954, the U.S. President, Vice-President, and Secretary of State all hinted at the possible use of atomic weapons.[624] The imminence of nuclear war was a constant thought in the minds of Cold War youngsters, and fear undoubtedly increased among both children and adults

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[622] Poll results provided by The Roper Public Opinion Research Center. All data are from American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup). Percentages of respondents answering are shown. Data source: Robert Newman, Recognition of Communist China? (NewYork: Macmillan Company, 1961): 15., cited from Jaw-ling Joanne Chang, United States-China Normalization an Evaluation of Foreign Policy Decision Making, copublished by Monograph Series in World Affairs, University of Denver and Occasional Papers/Reprint Series in Contemporary Asian Studies, Inc., 1986, 121.

[623] RG 59, Public Opinion Studies, Public Attitudes on US Policy Towards China, Boxes 12, 27. 33, NA; Kusnitz, Public Opinion, esp.chs.4 and 5. cited from Rosemary Foot, The Practice of Power-U.S. Relations with China since 1949-, Oxford Clarendon Press (1995): 88.

[624] Jan H. Kalicki, Vie Pattern of Sino-American Crises (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 82; Richard K. Betts, Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1987), 59-62; He Di, The Evolution of the People's Republic of China's Policy Toward the Offshore Islands', in Warren 1 . Cohen and Akira Iriye, eds.. The Great Pozoers in East Asia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 144 ; Zhang, Deterrence and Strategic Culture,213-15., Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power,* 170.

following Secretary of State Dulles's announcement of the Eisenhower administration's defense strategy of "massive retaliation."[625]

Meanwhile, the Eisenhower administration made efforts to direct Americans' attention to the decolonizing world. He recognized that most Americans did not feel the same bond to the people of the periphery that they felt to Europeans, with whom they shared myriad ties of history and culture. To counter this view, U.S. policymakers tried to educate Americans about the bonds already tying them to the decolonizing world and urged them to recognize that differences in language, religion, history, and race could be bridged. [626]

In addition to warning children about the dangers of communism, the social studies curriculum increasingly emphasized respect for diverse religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. These new objectives in American education reflected major postwar shifts. On the international level, calls for global cooperation in conflict mediation and nuclear regulation, combined with the U.S. need to secure allies in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, encouraged greater attention to foreign culture. Domestically, wartime mobilization and refugee flows had disrupted regionalism, rendering American high schools far more heterogeneous than before.[627] That was also the aim of the New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum: to educate American high school students in world citizenship.

5.2.2. Anti-communist Vanguard Student delegated from ROK, Chin-t'ae, Heejun, Yŏngku

Although Chin-t'ae, Hŭi-jun, Yŏngku, and appeared in different panels and spoke to different interlocutors, their statements exhibit a shared ideological formation shaped by Korea's

[625] Ann Marie Kordas, The Politics of Childhood in Cold War America, (New York, Routledge, 2016)134.
[626] Christina Klein, Cold War Orientalism-Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961, Berkely: University of California Press,
[627] Ann Marie Kordas, *The Politics of Childhood in Cold War America*, 107-108.

wartime experience, the Korean Government, and U.S.-led Cold War Youth education on communism. All three articulate an absolutist anti-communist and imagine the United States as the indispensable guarantor of Korean survival and global freedom.

Kim Chin-t'ae, selected on 8 October 1953 through a joint meeting of representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Korea and the Ministry of Education, was chosen as the Korean delegate to the Eighth Youth Forum.[628] Introduced by Wallar, Kim was originally from P'yŏngyang and had fled first to Beijing, then to Pusan and Seoul, after escaping religious persecution of Christians in DPRK. As one of the pastors who had defected in search of freedom from communist oppression, Kim occupied a symbolically charged position at Forum. Wallar further noted that during his visit to Rochelle High School, Kim inspired students to raise $180 to support a Korean orphan for a year and to collect gifts to send to Korea.[629]

Mentioning it, she made sure to show that American students were engaged in humanitarian aid to support disaster relief efforts after the Korean War. That was one of the national campaigns that encouraged U.S. children to provide humanitarian assistance to Korean War orphans. In the year following the Korean War, U.S. aid organizations produced and circulated images of the Korean waif that figured average Americans as the presumed savior of these children. These campaigns have given Americans a way to enact international cosmopolitanism, an opportunity to materially connect with nonwhite peoples of the Third World, to cross divides of nation, race, and class.[630] The US-led attempt at understanding the causes of Third World social and political change went far beyond simple apologetics and the construction of global hierarchies. At its best, "developmentalism" was plainly intended as a wake-up call for America

[628] "Kyŏnggi Kim-kun pagyŏn" (경기김군파견), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), October 30, 1953.
[629] 1954 Debate on Communism Part 2: Teenagers from Philippines (Johnny Antillon), Korea, India, Norway." YouTube video, posted by Mental Health Treatment, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GF_oZGUJoG4. accessed July 11, 2025.
[630] Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism*, 13-14, 150-51, Susie Woo, *Framed by War*, 64.

to take the global problems of hunger and social dislocation seriously and employ its enormous resources to improve the world's condition.[631]

Within the program, Kim participated in the debate session under the theme "How do we meet Communist Threat," alongside Vangala Jayaram of India, Johnny Antalon of the Philippines, and Gunnar Aslan of Norway. The discussion ranged across four major issues: communist aggression, Korea's future, the admission of Communist China to the United Nations, and the idea of an Asian Federation, with additional questions raised concerning Japan's rearmament. The Youth Forum program was organized from January to February of 1954, in anticipation of the Geneva Conference in March. The U.S. administration had already begun an intense public campaign to allay domestic fears. At the time, 8 out of 10 Americans surveyed still approved of the administration's firm position against establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC and admitting it into the UN. These questions were a central issue of the public, which guaranteed the popularity of the program.[632]

Kim Jin-tae spoke with urgency, representing a country torn apart by war against communism. For him, communist aggression had to be met by force, not by negotiation or compromise, because Korea had already paid in blood for its freedom. He insisted that the division of Korea is artificial and intolerable, describing it as a death sentence for the Korean people since the South cannot survive without the industry of the North. In his view, unification could only come through armed struggle or firm resistance, since communists will never voluntarily accept elections or plebiscites. His rhetoric was the most militant and urgent, as his discourse was shaped right after the Korean War. For him, communist aggression was not an abstraction but

[631] Odd Arne Westa, *The Global Cold War,* 34-45.

[632] Bachrack, Stanley, The Committee of One Million, "China Lobby" Politics (New York:Columbia University Press, 1976), 83–102; Publications Relating to the Committee of One Million Against the Admission of Red China to the United Nations, 1954–1966, Tamiment Library, New York University, NY (hereafter Tamiment Library, NYU); "Public Opinion's Reaction to State Department's Information Campaign on Geneva Conference", March 15, 1954, DOS, AI568J, box 1, NAII. Cited from. Maria Oliva, Einshower and American Public Opinion on China, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

a lived catastrophe, and he was sure that it had to be met exclusively by force. He described Korea's division as an "intolerable" and "artificial" wound.

On Red China's admission to the UN, Jin Tae was uncompromising. He argued that a nation whose hands are still dripping with Korean blood cannot be admitted to the United Nations. Toward Japan, he is more cautious, admitting the possibility of cooperation if it serves the free world's cause, yet still doubting whether Japan is morally qualified to rearm. His tone is passionate and absolute, grounded in the conviction that freedom, once lost, can never be traded for food or security again.

Pak Hŭi-jun, the delegate of 1955, participated in two sessions of discussions. In one of them, Mrs. Wallar asked, "How can the United Nations be made more effective?"[633] Johanne Holtz from South Africa responded that the organization was providing aid and educational assistance to underdeveloped countries such as India. Hŭi-jun agreed that such aid constituted an important dimension of the UN's mission. Yet, as a "Korean boy," he considered something else to be far more critical: the UN, he insisted, must contribute to the unification of Korea. At this point, Joanne asked, "By force?" to which Hŭi-jun replied that it must, if necessary, be so.

However, Hŭi-jun's argument soon became internally inconsistent. Although he asserted that Korea's unification was both imperative and a "great task," and that force might be justified to achieve it, he also acknowledged that such action could precipitate a third world war. He further noted that Koreans hate war. Nevertheless, he maintained that the two Koreas could not remain divided indefinitely.

Hŭi-jun's interventions were framed through gratitude and moral admiration toward the United States. His worldview reflected the combined effects of U.S. Information programs, missionary presence, and the material experiences of wartime relief. For him, the United States

[633] Mental Health Treatment, "1956 High school exchange students - Norway, Korea, India, UK. Subject: The United Nations," Youtube Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNzF6LgmM7A, accessed July 15, 2025.

embodied generosity, Christianity, and modernity. His insistence that the UN must unify Korea, "even by force," was grounded not in strategic analysis but in a moral conviction that communism is incompatible with peace and that the U.S.-centered international order is inherently benevolent.

I Yŏngku was a student delegate of 1956, and he participated in a discussion with delegates from West Germany, South Africa, and Yugoslavia on the theme, “What does communism the term itself, mean to you?”[634] At that session, Mirka of Yugolsavia was the sole representative from socialisty country. She found herself at a distinct disadvantage, compelled to defend the legitimacy of her country's socialist system against the skepticism and idological hostility of nearly all other student delegates.

Among the group, Yŏngku's position was the most explicitly pro-capitalist and strongly anti-communist, and this became unmistakably clear when he and Mirak debated directly. When Mirka asked whether he did not regard it as unjust that one hundred people should work for the benefit of a single capitalist, Yŏngku replied that capital benefited both workers and capitalists and questioned why a violent revolution would be necessary. For Yŏngku, capitalism and democracy were virtually synonymous; rather than distinguishing the two analytically, he repeated the formulations of anti-communist propaganda that framed them as inseparable. Citing the recent crisis in Hungary, he argued that communism governed only through coercion. He further claimed that democracy and communism were locked in a global struggle in which only one, freedom over totalitarianism, could ultimately survive.

Mirka countered by criticizing the monopolistic ownership exercised by capitalists, noting that workers' rights had always been secured through bloody struggle, and that the hard-won gains of the previous forty to fifty years were the result of sustained protest and negotiations.

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[634] Archived Reels, *1957 Youth Forum: Communism: Countries - Korea, Germany, South Africa, and Yugoslavia*," YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgRr_zXdctI, accessed July 14, 2025

As moderator, Mrs. Wallar attempted to frame the discussion so that each viewpoint could be articulated fully. When she asked what grounded their respective certainties, Yŏngku categorically rejected the possibility of coexistence. He argued that Communism was inherently committed to communizing all capitalist nations and would, sooner or later, overturn democratic systems. Yŏngku reiterated that Korea's division was proof that communism rejected coexistence, saying that half of Korea lived in freedom and the other in slavery.

As Mirka and Young-gu's debate became increasingly repetitive, Wallar turned to Norbert, the delegate from West Germany, another divided nation, and asked whether he believed capitalism and communism could coexist. Norbert replied by noting the large number of people who had recently fled East Germany and added, "And as far as I know, the people don't feel too well over there." He continued: "I am sure that in eastern Germany the Russians don't exactly practice the ideas of communism, but at least it is called a communist state." He explained that although Eastern Germans could technically vote, they could do so only for a single party. Salaries were low, and overall living conditions were markedly inferior.

Given the structured nature of the dialogue, it is evident that by 1956, the Youth Forum continued to stage the notion that life under "communism" was inherently miserable. The dynamics of this session were shaped largely by the irreconcilable exchange between Mirka and Yŏngku', occasional questions from Susan of South Africa about whether the coexistence of two ideologies is possible, and Nobert's interventions that reinforced Yŏngku's position. Notably, both Yŏngku and Nobert drew upon their own experiences of living in divided nations: Nobert spoke about the large number of migrants crossing into West Germany, while Yŏngku referred to the North Korean and Chinese prisoners of war who refused repatriation after the Korean War. Throughout the discussion, Mirka found herself increasingly cornered, and her position appeared overwhelmingly disadvantaged.

Yŏngku articulated a more doctrinaire and confrontational anti-communism. He naturalized a strict ideological division between freedom and totalitarianism, repeatedly rejecting the possibility of coexistence. His argument derived authority from personal wartime experience and from Korea's national division, which he interprets as empirical proof of communism's hostility to democracy. Yŏngku thought capitalism and democracy were inherently superior, communism was inherently coercive, and the global conflict between them permitted no middle ground.

The debate of Hee-jun, Young-gu, and Jin-tae across the various sessions of the Youth Forum revealed how postwar South Korean youth came to embody a distinctive Cold War ideological subjectivity. They were delegates who represented the wartime trauma, anti-communist education, and the success of U.S. public diplomacy and international aid. All their arguments consistently reproduced the same foundational binaries that structured early Cold War discourse. For all three, communism was not simply a competing political system but a totalizing threat to national survival, moral order, and individual form.

As their experience of the Korean War became both a personal and collective reference point, their testimonies were mobilized to legitimize uncompromising anti-communist stances. In this sense, their rhetoric not only reflected but helped stage the ideological work of the U.S.-led Free World during the moment when the United States sought global support for containing communism and preventing diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China.

CHAPTER 6 The Nationalization of Oratory in the Post-Korean War Era

6.1. The Strategy of the Trans-Asian Anti-Communism: The Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference of APACL in 1956.

This part of the chapter analyzes the Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference, which opened a four-day meeting in Seoul on October 15, sponsored by the Korean Chapter of the Asian People's Anti-Communist League (APACL) as a result of the APACL meeting in Manila in March 1956.[635] In October of 1956, to resolve a more practical and organized anti-communist youth movement, the South Korean APACL organizing committee convened the student delegates of Free China, Vietnam, and Hong Kong for a student conference in Seoul.[636] This meeting sought to promote international cultural exchange among youth in a more systematic and coordinated manner, and concrete strategies for anti-communist machinery.[637] The meeting was integral to South Korea's overarching goal of positionofing itself as a leader in the anti-communist movement in Asia and to laying the foundation for a collective defense structure in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, it functioned as a mechanism to incorporate youth into the anti-communist political sphere and to establish Korean youth as diplomatic agents with leadership roles in the region. However, the youth conference's operation, the organizer's objectives, the participating youth delegates, and the agenda items weren't particularly new or developed into an international student movement. In essence, the APACL's invitation of student representatives served to bring together domestic and international anti-communists in Korea and to showcase the country as a model of anti-communism. Syngman Rhee refused to

[635] Telegram, Oct.16.1956. RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, 1788-1964, Korea, Seoul Embassy, General Records, 1953-55, Series, 310 Asian Peoples Anti-Communist League (APACL), 1956-58 /Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State.

[636] "Kong-ssŭrŭl susŏk taepyoro" (공씨를 수석 대표로), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 29, 1956.

[637] "Myŏlgong sasang ŭl koch'wi" (멸공사상을 고취), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), October 7, 1956.

compromise with other nations on matters relating to Japan and, even at events hosted in Korea, devoted his energies primarily to “entertaining” visiting delegates.

His diplomacy, therefore, was less a pursuit of practical gains or long-term continuity than a form of performance diplomacy, in which spectacle and display were privileged over substantive negotiation. In this sense, the APACL youth gatherings were not venues that generated concrete achievements, but exercises in symbolic politics, serving as instruments of domestic propaganda aimed at sustaining the Rhee regime and as extensions of its broader strategy of youth mobilization.

6.1.1. The Rhee Administration’s Conception of a Pacific Alliance and the Founding of the Asian Peoples’ Anti-Communist League (APACL)

Prior to the establishment of the Republic of Korea’s government, Syngman Rhee consistently and forcefully advocated anti-communism, while expressing pro-American, pro-capitalist, Provisional Government positions. During the First Republic of the Republic of Korea (August 1948–April 1960), the Rhee administration persistently institutionalized political and cultural mechanisms grounded in anti-communism, among which the founding of the Asian Peoples’ Anti-Communist League (APACL) was a central initiative.

Following the Korean War, the Rhee government emphasized anti-communism as a core component of national identity and sought to transform Seoul into a central hub of Cold War-era international networks through the Korean branch of the APACL. Domestically, Rhee pursued the consolidation and reorganization of anti-communist organizations in Seoul, while also using transnational anti-communist institutions as conduits for fostering personal and organizational exchanges with anti-communists across the “free world.” In parallel, he aimed to equate “Free Asia” with the “Free World,” thereby constructing a Cold War cosmopolitan

identity that shared the culture and ideology of the Cold War order.[638]

In fact, the conception of a pan-Asian anti-communist alliance originated with the president of the Philippines. In early 1949, President Elpidio Quirino asserted that, following the announcement of the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) under U.S. leadership on 18 March 1949, a similar Pacific alliance should be formed in Asia. However, due to the United States' indifference and opposition, even Quirino, the original proponent of the idea, ultimately abandoned the initiative.[639]

The founding of the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League (APACL) in 1954 traced its origins to the August 1949 meeting between Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek in Jinhae, Korea. Seeking to overcome the disadvantageous position of the Nationalists in the Chinese Civil War, Chiang solicited South Korea's support and became actively involved in the establishment of a pan-Asian anti-communist alliance. At the "Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist Conference," the Republic of China proposed the creation of permanent APACL organs in member states and regions. These permanent bodies were subsequently organized into a system in which they would participate regularly in APACL conferences.[640]

Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek's initial vision was for a military alliance; however, this was realized in a different form. In June 1954, thirty-three delegates from South Korea, the Republic of China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, and the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa) convened in Jinhae, Korea, resolved to establish the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League (APACL), and designated this gathering as the First APACL Conference.[641] Although the APACL was nominally a civilian organization, it was founded

[638] I Wŏn-kŭn, "Naengjŏn'gi Han'guk ŭi Taeman kwa ŭi Pangong Yŏndae (1950~70nyŏndae): Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng, Segye Pangong Yŏnmaeng, <Chayu ŭi Nal>." *Inmun Kwahak Yŏn'gu* 51, (2025): 416.
[639] Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus, "Defending the West: Occidentalism and the Formation of NATO." *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 11 (3), (2003): 223–52.
[640] I Wŏn-kŭn, "Naengjŏn'gi Han'guk ŭi Taeman kwa ŭi Pangong Yŏndae (1950~70nyŏndae): Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng, Segye Pangong Yŏnmaeng, <Chayu ŭi Nal>," 423-424.
[641] "Tongnam'a Pangong Taehoe (동남아 반공 대회)" *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), May 10, 1945.

under the initiative of national governments and operated under governmental guidance. The delegations attending the conference were composed of politicians, government officials, and prominent social figures from each participating country.[642]

Choi Young-ho explains that, from a diplomatic perspective, one reason the Rhee administration urgently sought to promote diplomatic exchanges with states in East Asia was the growing prominence of statements by neutral countries, such as India, on the Korean question in the international arena, which in turn prompted South Korea's anti-communist foreign policy. India played a leading role in the Non-Aligned Movement in the Asian region, and this development encouraged political neutrality among certain Asian states.[643] Secondly, the neutral character of the Geneva Conference also served as a major factor driving Rhee's pursuit of anti-communist diplomacy. Pursuant to the Korean Armistice Agreement and the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, a political conference on the unification of the Korean Peninsula was convened in Geneva on April 26, 1954. Nevertheless, the Western and Communist blocs failed to narrow their differences over the interpretation of the United Nations' involvement in the Korean War and the timetable for its withdrawal, and the conference collapsed in less than two months.[644] Ultimately, as a means of overcoming the vulnerability of its external relations as a fledgling state, South Korea sought to devise strategies to elevate its position in international politics. In the post–Korean War context, in which the Republic of Korea was compelled to rely even more heavily on the United States, the Rhee administration moved to further concretize its long-standing proposal for a Pacific alliance.[645]

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[642] Wang En-mei, "Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng ŭi Chudo'gwŏn ŭl Tullŏssan Han'guk kwa Chunghwaminkuk ŭi Kaldeung kwa Taerip (1953–1956)." *Asea Yŏn'gu* 56 (3), (2013): 160–97.
[643] Ch'oe, Yŏng-ho, "Isŭngman Chŏngbu ŭi T'aep'yŏngyang Tongmaeng Kusang kwa Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng Kyŏlsŏng." *Kukche Chŏngch'i Nonch'ong* 39 (2) (1999): 169–70.
[644] Ra, J. Y., The Politics of Conference: The Political Conference on Korea in Geneva, 26 April-15 June 1954. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34 (3), (1999): 399-416.
[645] Ch'oe, Yŏng-ho. 1999. "Isŭngman Chŏngbu ŭi T'aep'yŏngyang Tongmaeng Kusang kwa Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng Kyŏlsŏng." *Kukche Chŏngch'i Nonch'ong* 39 (2): 169~170.

Rhee sought to make the APACL the central core of an anti-communist crusade. The League's resolutions and charter faithfully reflected his anti-communist ideology and clearly articulated the organization's identity. The resolution set forth 10 action programs for combating communism, while the charter, which stipulated the organization's purposes and functions, outlined 9 provisions. In addition to the declaration in Chapter 1, Article 1, to "struggle against communism by all possible means and methods," the charter emphasized in Chapter 1, Article 8, the importance of securing military power to counter communism. It is also called, in Chapter 1, Article 6, for the "circulation of cultural materials to disseminate anti-communist thought throughout the world" and for the conduct of psychological warfare against communists.[646] However, all 25 articles, divided into 4 chapters, adopted very vague, abstract anti-communist resolutions without establishing a more specific direction for each state's organizations.[647] Contrary to the APACL's ambitious beginnings, such as forming organizations to implement specific campaigns or devising strategies to recruit member states, they were not effectively realized. The Republic of China established a general assembly and committees, convened several meetings, and prepared to host the APACL conference in Taipei, but the event was ultimately canceled in October.

There were three main reasons that accounted for the unsuccessful APACL meeting. First, although it was agreed that each member state or region would establish a permanent APACL organization, only the Republic of China, South Korea, Okinawa, Hong Kong, and Macao did so; the other members failed to create such bodies. [648] Second, the South Korean side actively

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[646] Cho Mu-hyŏng 조무형, "Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng (APACL) ŭi ch'angsŏl kwa chwajŏl: Yŏkhal iron ŭl t'onghan Han–Mi kaldŭng ŭi kaenyŏmhwa" (아시아 민족 반공 연맹(APACL)의 창설과 좌절: 역할 이론을 통한 한–미 갈등의 개념화), Segye Chŏngch'i (세계정치) 10, no. 29(2) (2008): 197–202.

[647] Ch'oe Yŏng-ho 최영호, "Isŭngman chŏngbu ŭi T'aep'yŏngyang tongmaeng kusang kwa Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng kyŏlsŏng" (이승만 정부의 태평양 동맹 구상과 아시아 민족 반공 연맹 결성), Kukche Chŏngch'i Nonch'ong (국제정치논총) 39, no. 2 (1999): 179.

[648] Wang En-mei, "Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng ŭi chudo'gwŏn ŭl tullŏssan Han'guk kwa Chunghwaminkuk

opposed Japan's admission as a member state and insisted that the admission of any new members be contingent on the "unanimous" approval of the existing members.[649] Third, considerable time was consumed in exchanging opinions among member states and regions on the issue of the next conference and in dispatching personnel for related consultations.[650]

6.1.2. The Program of the First Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference and the Nationalist Spectacle

Two students participated in the "Second Asian Students Conference," held in Baguio City, Philippines, from December 26, 1954, to January 3, 1955. Kim Hong-rak (23) from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Cho Kang-ok (26) from the College of Medicine participated in discussions on "the role of Asian youth"[651] at the conference. Students from four countries, Philippines, China, Vietnam, and South Korea, took the lead in deciding to convene an inaugural meeting in Taipei in July 1956 for the establishment of the "Asian Youth League."[652] An "Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference" was ultimately scheduled to be held in Seoul in October. Delegates from South Korea, the Republic of China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macao, and the Ryukyu Islands were to participate. The preparatory committee, elected by the Korean branch of the Asian Anti-Communist League, consisted of four members: Chairman Chung In-hwan (Hankuk University of Foreign Studies),

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ŭi kaldŭng kwa taerip (1953–1956)" (아시아 민족 반공 연맹의 주도권을 둘러싼 한국과 중화민국의 갈등과 대립 (1953–1956)), Asea Yŏn'gu (아세아연구) 56, no. 3 (2013): 176–177.

[649] Yang Joonseok 양준석, "Young Chul Cho, Subaltern South Korea's Anti-Communist Asian Cooperation in the Mid-1950s," Asian Perspective 44, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 255–277.

[650] Wang En-mei, "Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng ŭi chudo'gwŏn ŭl tullŏssan Han'guk kwa Chunghwaminkuk ŭi kaldŭng kwa taerip (1953–1956)," 177.

[651] "Tongnam'a haksaeng taehwe taep'yo 2-myŏng p'agyŏn" (동남아 학생대회 대표 2명 파견), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 21, 1955, 3.

[652] *"Asea haksaeng toronhoe, taep'yo 18-il-e kwikuk" (아세아 학생 토론회, 대표 18 일에 귀국), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), January 20, 1956, 1.*

Vice-Chairmen Chung Byung-tae (Korea University) and Lee Yong-no (Yonsei University), and Kim Chun-ju (Ewha Womans University).[653]

Yi Tŏk-ha, head of the propaganda department of the Korean Asian Anti-Communist Youth League, published an editorial in conjunction with the opening of the Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference, in which he set out his expectations for the event. He argued that the freedom-loving nations of Asia could neither compromise nor coexist with "Communist imperialism," and that they must demand the outlawing of communist parties so that they would no longer be able to continue their activities of aggression and subversion. He expressed the hope that the youth and student delegates gathered from various countries would discuss the urgent tasks before them, forge new bonds and friendships, and devise innovative strategies for the anti-communist struggle. Yi also hinted at a quiet sense of pride that, as Korea had never hosted an international gathering of this kind, it now occupied a leading position following the Jinhae conference. In addition to the formal meetings, he anticipated that, according to the planned schedule, the delegates would visit industrial facilities, schools, and scenic and historic sites, and encounter ordinary citizens, thereby engaging in a mutual comparison between their own countries and Korea. Emphasizing the need to reshape international perceptions of Korea as a newly independent state, he called upon not only youth and students but the entire nation to prepare to welcome the guests.[654]

The originally planned participation of eight countries was reduced to five due to the absence of the Philippines, the Ryukyu Islands, and Thailand. The Republic of China sent a fourteen-member delegation.[655] The conference, which opened on the 15th, was held in the auditorium of Seoul Women's Teachers College. The opening ceremony featured a performance by the

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[653] "Chunbi wiwŏn ŭl sŏnch'ul" (준비위원을 선출), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), September 7, 1956.

[654] "Asea pangong ch'ŏngnyŏn" (아세아반공청년), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), October 15, 1956.

[655] *"Chayu Chungguk taep'yo toch'ak" (자유 중국 대표 도착), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), October 14, 1956.*

Navy band and was attended by National Assembly Speaker Lee, Minister of Education Choi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho, officials of the "Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League," and numerous other distinguished guests. The opening session, chaired by Korea's chief delegate Kim Chi-sŏn, included a welcome address by the Minister of Education, congratulatory remarks by the National Assembly Speaker and Acting Foreign Minister, as well as a congratulatory address from Wang Tong-yuan, the Chinese ambassador to Korea. Subsequently, the APACL Secretary-General, Hwang Sŏng-su, delivered the opening address. The conference determined its rules of procedure, adopted agenda items such as "the duties of students within the anti-communist camp," and concluded the first day with speeches by the delegates from each country. On that day, the Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference was organized into five specialized committees: (1) Organization, (2) Propaganda and Guidance, (3) Cultural Exchange, (4) Research Activities, and (5) Women's Committee.[656]

On the second day, the 16th, participants of the Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference paid a courtesy visit to the National Assembly in the morning. They continued the conference in the Yonsei University, where the Women's Committee of the Asian Anti-Communist Youth Conference convened in a meeting room on the second floor. South Korean delegate Lee Yeon-suk was elected chair of the committee. That day's discussions focused primarily on a broad agenda concerning the promotion of women's rights. The Vietnamese delegate expressed support for the Korean representative's proposals, adding that these measures should not remain merely as resolutions but should be communicated to the respective governments of each participating country with the aim of concrete

[656] South Korea was represented by Kim Chi-sŏn along with sixteen other delegates. The Chinese delegation was led by Cheng Sen-ying and included thirteen additional members. Vietnam was represented by Ta Ka-phan and five others, while Hong Kong sent Wu Yung-chien and five additional delegates "Sagaeguk taep'yo ch'amkari Aju ch'ŏngnyŏn haksaeng taehwe" (사개국 대표 참가리 아주청년학생대회), *Tong'a Ilbo*, October 16, 1956. "Aju pangong haksaeng taehwe kaemak, hakto ŭi immudŭng ne angŏn ch'aet'aek" (아주반공학생대회 개막, 학도의 임무 등 네 안건 채택), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), October 16, 1956.

implementation.[657] Afterward, at the invitation of the Ministry of Education, the delegates held a roundtable discussion at the Government-General Building. During the meeting, the Vice Minister of Education remarked that the youth and students of Asia must stand firmly united on the anti-communist front. In response, the chief delegate from Hong Kong stated that "through this conference, our youth have achieved the solid unity of the anti-communist front." Following the discussion, the participants watched approximately one hour of newsreel footage at the Government-General Auditorium depicting United Nations forces counterattacking during the Korean War.[658]

On the 17th, the final session was held once again in the auditorium of Seoul Women's Teachers College, where the closing plenary meeting convened to present reports on the decisions made by each committee. After issuing a declaration opposing pro-communism and communist sympathies, the delegates adopted a statement expressing their shared anti-communist determination to achieve the unification of Korea and Vietnam and the recovery of the Chinese mainland by the Republic of China. They also resolved to send a message to the youth of Japan, urging them to "awaken from pro-communist policies."[659] On the 17th, the final session was held once again in the auditorium of Seoul Women's Teachers College, where the closing plenary meeting convened to present reports on the decisions made by each committee. After issuing a declaration opposing pro-communism and communist sympathies,

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[657] Lee proposed that women should: 1)Enjoy equal status in family life; 2)Have their rights to property management safeguarded in the professional sphere of society; 3)Share equal rights with men in development projects for underdeveloped regions; 4)Fully enjoy the civil rights stipulated in Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in matters of marriage; 5)Secure their position regarding ownership rights in legal matters; 6) Establish the political, economic, and social status of women in Asia; 7)Urge their respective governments to ensure equal educational opportunities; 8) Cooperate with UNESCO and other institutions to promote educational advancement; 9) Recommend to their governments that women's status be ensured in all governmental and public affairs. *"Chojik · yŏsŏng punwi rŭl kaech'oe" (조직·여성분위를 개최), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), October 17, 1956.*

[658] "Pangong chŏnsŏn e k'utke tangyŏl, pangong haksaeng chwadamhwe" (반공전선에 굳게 단결, 반공학생좌담회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), October 18, 1956, 3.

[659] "Myŏl'gong ŭl ŏmsukhi sŏnsŏ, Aju pangong ch'ŏngnyŏn haksaeng taehwe p'yemak" (멸공을 엄숙히 선서, 아주반공청년학생대회 폐막), *P'yŏnghwa Sinmun* (평화신문), October 18, 1956, 3.

the delegates adopted a statement expressing their shared anti-communist determination to achieve the unification of Korea and Vietnam and the recovery of the Chinese mainland by the Republic of China. They also resolved to send a message to the youth of Japan, urging them to "awaken from pro-communist policies." The delegates resolved to establish the Anti-Communist Asian Youth and Student Organization as a subsidiary body of the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League (APACL). The organizational committee adopted the provision that "the Anti-Communist Asian Youth and Student Organization shall be set up as a single institution under the APACL." The women's committee decided to "plan and provide educational materials in various fields in order to enhance women's knowledge," while the cultural exchange committee resolved to "promote all programs aimed at fostering friendly cooperation among students and youth on the basis of a shared love of freedom." These and other matters discussed in the committees the previous day were formally adopted.[660]

When the APACL Conference's official meeting had finished, the Korean preparation committee concentrated on preparing more consequential activities. The delegates spend seven more days in Korea participating in roundtable discussions; visits to an army training camp, the National Cemetery, the President, industrial districts, and provincial historical sites; attendance at anti-communist rallies hosted by the Student National Defense Corps; and screenings of newsreels, rather than in the formal conference schedule of the APACL.[661] In essence, the APACL's invitation of student representatives served to bring together domestic

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[660] *"Il ŭi ch'insŏjŏk haengdong kyut'an" (일의 친서적 행동 규탄), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), October 18, 1956, 3.*

[661] "Sanŏp puhŭng silchŏng chŏngch'wi, pangong ch'ŏngnyŏn haksaeng taep'yo" (산업 부흥 실정 정취, 반공청년학생대표), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), October 19, 1956, 3.*Chosŏn Ilbo*. 1956. *"Kukkun mosŭp sogae pangong ch'ŏngnyŏn taep'yodŭlge" (국군 모습 소개 반공청년대표들께), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), October 18, 1956. "Aju hakto kyŏlsok ŭl chŏlgyu" (아주 학도 결속을 절규), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), October 21, 1956. "Yuggun sagwan hakkyo sich'al, pangong ch'ŏngnyŏn haksaeng taep'yo" (육군 사관 학교 시찰, 반공청년학생대표), Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), October 24, 1956, 3.*

and international anti-communists in Korea and to showcase the country as a model of anti-communism. By showing participants the city of Seoul, with visible traces of wartime destruction, the organizers sought to convey the tangible damage inflicted by communism. Secondly, through exposure to cultural heritage, they aimed to underscore that South Korea represented the legitimate regime upholding the historical continuity of the Korean Peninsula, while also presenting the country as one prepared, both militarily and economically, to confront communist forces.[662]

On the final day of the Asian Anti-Communist Youth and Student Conference, a political editorial in the Tonga Ilbo set out the author's views on "why youth must be anti-communist." He argued that, in the realm of practical politics, people speak of "peaceful coexistence," "relaxation of tensions," and "compromise," but insisted that "to pierce through the fence of so-called 'realistic' foreign policy and carry action through in practice is a privilege reserved to youth," thus underscoring the role of students as actors situated outside the confines of conventional politics. He further emphasized that young people living under communist regimes, not only in Asia but across the entire world, are devoting themselves to revolutionary movements in the service of "dictatorial politics," and that, in response, the most urgent task for the present struggle is to unite such youth forces on a global scale in order to strengthen their capacity.[663]

The Third Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist Conference in 1957 was held in March in Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam. To promote cultural exchange and friendship among the member

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[662] I Wŏn-kŭn 이원근, "Sŏul, naengjŏn ŭi kukche pangong toshi: Asia Minjok Pangong Yŏnmaeng, Segye Pangong Yŏnmaeng, Han'guk Pangong Yŏnmaeng ŭl chungsim ŭro (1950–1970nyŏndae)" (서울, 냉전의 국제 반공도시: 아시아민족반공연맹, 세계반공연맹, 한국반공연맹을 중심으로 (1950~1970년대)), *Seul kwa Yŏksa* (서울과 역사) (2025), 119

[663] "Chŏn segye ŭi chinbojŏk ch'ŏngnyŏn ŭn kyŏrhap hara" (전 세계의 진보적 청년은 결합하라), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), October 17, 1956.

states of the APACL, Korea resolved to send a goodwill mission to Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Macao, and Free China to introduce Korean culture and arts. This delegation was to comprise leading figures from the domestic cultural and artistic world and, in its first iteration, was organized around a troupe of Korean traditional folk dancers and a symphony orchestra. The conference thus served as a venue in which anti-communism provided the overarching framework for "people's diplomacy," with priority given to fostering goodwill and cultural exchange and strengthening bonds among Asian nations.[664]

After 1956, APACL steadily expanded its membership by rotating the venue of its annual meetings: South Vietnam in 1957 and Thailand in 1958. Among these, the Fifth APACL Conference, held in Korea in June 1959, was the largest international meeting convened since the establishment of the Republic of Korea, both in terms of scale and number of participants.[665]

However, even as these events continued to be held, there is no evidence that the grand objective of building a pan-Asian anti-communist student movement was ever realized in practice, nor that sustained cultural activities or exchanges followed. The student conference so elaborately prepared in 1956, for example, amounted, in retrospect, to little more than abstract discussions of anti-communism and of how an East Asian anti-communist student organization might be structured; beyond this, no further concrete activities can be traced in the surviving records.

Why, then, were such large-scale events centered on anti-communist student organizations deemed necessary in the first place? As noted above, inviting representatives from Asian countries could serve as a diplomatic instrument. ROK offered an opportunity to display

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[664] "Chŏlmŭn him ŭi kyŏlsok" (젊은힘의 결속), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 9, 1957, 4.

[665] Narita Chihiro 나리타 치히로, trans. Im Kyŏng-hwa 임경화, Okinawa panhwan kwa Tongasia naengjŏn ch'eje (오키나와 반환과 동아시아 냉전체제), *Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an* (소명출판), 2022, 114.

postwar reconstruction in Korea after the Korean War and to foreshadow the role the country aspired to play as an anti-communist state. Yet what the Rhee regime required was more than student organizations as tools of foreign policy; it sought, in addition, to incorporate another student organization into its own political base.

The U.S. Embassy document suggests that APACL youth could be mobilized in favour of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election. According to Kim Chae-ho, Chief of the Korean Branch's Public Relations Department, the ROK Government has, in recent months, come to use the APACL less as an instrument of international policy and more as a vehicle in its anti-subversive campaign at home. Kim noted that one example of this shift in emphasis is commemorating the ROK's tenth anniversary in August and depicting the horror of life in North Korea. A more recent example, Kim says, is the APACL's plan to establish a training institute in Seoul to teach young people from the provinces how to arouse the populace to the danger of Communist subversion. Kim said that this plan has not yet been worked out in detail, but has been approved in principle by the ROK Government. [666]

The U.S. Embassy was worried because "a reported shift in the APACL's functions suggested the possibility that the organization is in the process of being transformed into another Liberal Party front group which could play a role in the political battles leading to the 1960 Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections." Kim Chae-ho denied that accusation and insisted that the APACL will remain above politics. He also maintains that there is no connection whatever between the proposed young people's anti-Communist training center and an anti-Communist youth group which is reportedly being formed to support the liberals in the 1960s. The Embassy will continue to report on the APACL periodically, paying particular attention to the implications of its shifting role."[667]

[666] National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, 1788–1964, Korea: Seoul Embassy, Classified General Records, 1952–63, Series.
[667] Ibid.

However, the testimonies of the Australian observer Mr. Liebman's conversation with the Embassy suggest that "Anti-Communist Asian Youth and Student Organization" was an organization to showcase Korea's anti-communism through student mobilization. When the U.S. Embassy personnel interrogated Mr. Liebman when he visited Korea in for the "Fifth Conference of the APACL" in 1959. He first gave his general impressions of political conditions in Korea. He said that "the political atmosphere was extremely bad, and the economic situation was not healthy." "Most Liberal Party Assembly members seem more concerned with getting rich quickly than with the serious business of government, and perhaps worst of it, a clique has formed around the President intent on erecting a power structure which will preserve this group's domination." Mr. Liebman briefly referred to his experiences at the APACL Conference, noting that the Turkish, Australian, and Vietnamese delegates were particularly forceful and popular at the Conference and, presumably, influential in their homelands. Liebman also remarked that the quality of the delegates was rather uneven, and some were apparently neither influential nor conscientious, such as the representatives from Singapore and the Philippines.[668]

He said that most of the delegates found themselves at odds with the ROK delegates on Japan because they felt that great effort should be made to bring Japan into any anti-Communist alliance in Asia if such an alliance were to be effective in the long run. Mr. Liebman also stressed that the Korean Government went to great and at times excessive efforts to win and dine and generally entertain the foreign delegates to the APCAL convention. Liebman said that he and other delegates felt, for example, that turning out Korean schoolchildren at rural railroad stations at three o'clock in the morning to welcome the APACL delegates' special train was going a bit too far. [669]

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[668] Ibid.

[669] National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, RG 84 Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, 1788-1964 ; Record Group, Korea, Seoul Embassy, Classified General Records, 1952-63; Series.

In sum, South Korea's postwar anti-communist diplomacy through APACL and youth student conferences was far more successful in performance than in institution-building. These gatherings enabled the Rhee regime to stage Korea as a frontline, exemplary anti-communist state, to display reconstruction and "modernity" to foreign delegates, and to mobilize domestic youth as a loyal political base. Yet behind the spectacle, efforts to forge a durable pan-Asian anti-communist front remained thin: resolutions were vague, cooperation was limited to a small circle of states, and there was little sustained organizational follow-through.

Over time, APACL and its youth events became increasingly entangled with the Liberal Party's domestic agenda, serving as extensions of state propaganda and tools for electoral legitimation. U.S. observers' worries that APACL was drifting into partisan usage underscore this instrumentalization. Thus, the history of these conferences reveals a Cold War strategy in which anti-communist youth diplomacy functioned less as a vehicle for genuine international solidarity than as a hybrid apparatus of symbolic diplomacy, Syngman Rhee regime consolidation, and controlled youth politics.

6.2. The Fragility of Syngman Rhee Government and Oratorical Contests

6.2.1. Syngman Rhee's Government's Police Power Structure

From the mid-1950s onward, it is particularly significant that local police stations across the country began organizing student oratory contests. The fact that the police assumed responsibility for the regional oratorical contest was closely connected to the broader collusive relationship between the Syngman Rhee regime and the police apparatus. Accordingly, before examining the contest and characteristics of the oratory contest held throughout South Korea in the 1950s, it is first necessary to consider the structure of police power under the Rhee government.

Syngman Rhee, a former anti-imperialist leader, sought to preserve an extralegal authority capable of disciplining civil society by repeatedly producing new "ant-system" elements. He did so by deploying anti-communist rhetoric to justify and sustain the government's coercive reach.[670] The Rhee Syngman government remained in power for twelve years, from 1948 to 1960. Following the establishment of the government by the Constitutional National Assembly, it amended the constitution three times, employing illegal and extra-constitutional methods to secure long-term rule and enabling President Rhee to be elected to three four-year terms. Existing scholarship generally explains the political character of the Rhee regime by dividing it into three periods corresponding to these constitutional revisions: the first period (July 1948-August 1952), during which Rhee was elected through indirect election by the Constitutional Assembly, the second period (August 1952-August 1956), following the so-called "abridged constitutional amendment" that introduced direct presidential election and was passed by a standing vote; and the third period (August 1956-April 1960), after the amendment abolishing the ban on a third presidential term, under which Rhee was once again elected.[671] To construct this long regime structure, Syngman Rhee, as we have seen in the previous chapters, relied on private governing bodies and youth organizations. The bureaucratic apparatus in particular, performed three key functions. It secured the financial resources necessary to facilitate governance, and it operated as a repressive mechanism to crush challenges from civil society and opposition forces. Also, it sustained the regime by propagating and managing its claims to

[670] Hŏ Ŭn 허은, *Miguk ŭi hegemoni wa Han'guk minjokchuŭi: Naengjŏn sidae (1945–1965) munhwajŏk kyŏnggye ŭi kuch'uk kwa kyunyŏl ŭi tongba*n (미국의 헤게모니와 한국 민족주의: 냉전시대(1945–1965) 문화적 경계의 구축과 균열의 동반), (Koryŏdaehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 2008), 19–20.

[671] Kim Kŭn-se 김근세, Pak Chi-suk 박지숙, Chang Samuŏl 장사무엘, "Isŭngman haengjŏngbu pawŏ ellit'ŭ ŭi kusŏng kwa pyŏnhwa (이승만 행정부 파워엘리트의 구성과 변화)," *Han'guk Haengjŏng Yŏn'gu* (한국행정연구) 33, no. 4 (2024): 10.

legitimacy. Within this, maintaining Rhee's grip on power and enabling political regression by leading the organization of fraudulent elections.[672]

In particular, the police were the core organization sustaining the Syngman Rhee government's power. If youth organizations functioned as a mass base supporting Syngman Rhee's regime, the police constituted another pillar: they provided the juridical framework and legitimation for state violence. After liberation, police surveillance activities were formally defined as the suppression of "multiple illegal acts that disturb the maintenance of public security and order" and the management of "permissions for demonstrations such as assemblies organized by political parties and social groups." Such activities closely resembled those of the "high police" (kōtō keisatsu) under Japanese colonial rule, which were tasked with "administrative measures to defend the very existence of the state by monitoring and cracking down on assemblies, political associations, and secret societies."[673] Moreover, by provoking their loyalty to the new regime, police officers sought to obtain de facto immunity for their collaborationist past, and in this way, the police became a core state apparatus buttressing the Syngman Rhee government.[674]

From 1948 onward, once the police were deployed in operations to suppress leftist insurgent forces, they quickly acquired a notorious reputation as a byword for human rights violations. The police surveillance division, in particular, functioned as a quintessential police organ within the police and as a key perpetrator of abuses. After the establishment of the ROK and

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[672] Kim Yung Mung 김영명, "Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn ŭi hŭngmang kwa kŭ chŏngch'isa chŏk ŭimi (이승만 정권의 흥망과 그 정치사적 의미 The Characteristics and Demise of the Rhee Regime)," Han'guk *Chŏngch'ihakhoe-bo* (한국정치학회보) 25, no. 1 (1991): 106.

[673] I Yun-jŏng 이윤정, Han'guk Chŏnjaenggi chiyŏksahoe wa kyŏngch'al hwaltong—Chŏllabukdo Kimjegun ŭl sareryoro (한국전쟁기 지역사회와 경찰활동–전라북도 김제군을 사례로–), PhD diss., Sŏngsin Yŏja Taehakkyo Sahakkwa, 160–161.

[674] Sin Ch'ang-hun 신창훈, "Che 2 Konghwaguk chŏnhu kyŏngch'al chungnip'hwa kusang yŏn'gu (제2공화국 전후 경찰중립화 구상 연구)," *Sarim* (사림) 64 (2018): 192.

the enactment of the Local Autonomy Act, the public security bureau of each city and province became auxiliary organs of the respective mayors and provincial governors, and the mayor of Seoul and the provincial governors assumed control over the regional police headquarters. Subsequently, the Rhee administration absorbed local police organizations into the Ministry of Home Affairs, thereby completing a highly centralized policing structure.[675]

Until the outbreak of the Korean War, local police stations retained, in fundamental terms, the same functional character they had under Japanese colonial rule. They continued to carry out security operations such as patrol and guard duty, criminal investigation and economic policing, as well as local intelligence gathering and surveillance, thereby maintaining a close and continuous relationship with residents in their jurisdictions. After the war began, the number of officers assigned to the surveillance (*sachal*) division increased to the point that they outnumbered those in the criminal investigation unit. The case of the southern area, Kimje, shows that even during the Korean War, the surveillance section scrutinized residents in areas recaptured from the People's Army one by one and issued "innocent civilian certificates" (*yangmin chŭng*) only to those deemed free of any record of collaboration. The police's inspection of citizens has become more intense and severe.[676]

Moreover, after Syngman Rhee and the Liberal Party confirmed the shifting tides of popular sentiment in the 1956 presidential and vice-presidential elections, they further strengthened the far-right anti-communist system and the power of the police.[677] First, police authority was consolidated into a unitary chain of command running from the president to the minister of home affairs, then to the director of the National Police Bureau or the provincial governor, and finally to local police chiefs. This structure allowed the regime to deploy the police freely in

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[675] Kang Hye-gyŏng 강혜경, Han'guk kyŏngch'al ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa sŏnggyŏk (1945–1953) (한국경찰의 형성과 성격 (1945–1953)) PhD diss., Sookmyŏng Women's University, 2002, 110–112.

[676] I Yun-jŏng 이윤정, Han'guk Chŏnjaenggi chiyŏksahoe wa kyŏngch'al hwaltong, 181-182.

[677] Sŏ, Chung-sŏk. *Chobongam kwa 1950-nyŏndae (sang)* (Cho Bong-am and the 1950s, Part I), Seoul: Yŏksabi P'yŏngsa, 1999.149.

accordance with its own political objectives. Second, the police constituted the most extensive, nationwide organizational body in Korea at the time. As of December 1956, there were 166 police stations, 1,444 local substations (*chisŏ*), 487 police boxes (*p'ach'ulso*), and 36 branch offices across the country.[678]

The detrimental consequences of the militarization of the police manifested themselves in the form of political surveillance and interference in elections. By the mid-1950s, debates over revising the Government Organization Act had progressed to the point where the idea of "police neutrality" was explicitly raised. The core aim of this neutrality proposal was to block, at the root, the government and ruling party's use of the police for political surveillance and electoral intervention.[679]

The police also assumed responsibility for providing anti-communist education to citizens. The case of the "surveillance division (*sachal-kye*)" of the Kŭmsan Police Station shows that its primary task was counterespionage, and it reported that it "designated specific zones for counterespionage guidance and instructed the relevant officers to concentrate on counterespionage education and propaganda by combining neighborhood residents' meetings (*kungmin bansanghoe*) with enlightenment roundtables or civil–police discussion sessions (min–kyŏng chwadamhwe). In addition, counterespionage units were organized in each workplace within the jurisdiction to establish a counterespionage posture, prevent in advance the subversive activities of enemy elements, and at the same time concentrate on their detection and arrest. The station has formulated a practical plan to carry out substantive activities by conducting public lectures and mock drills to heighten counterespionage consciousness."

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[678] I, Yun-jŏng. *Han'guk kyŏngch'alsa: Kŭnhyŏndae p'yŏn* (한국경찰사:근현대편), (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'an 서울 소명출판), 2015, 222.

[679] Sŏ, Chung-sŏk. Isŭngman ŭi chŏngchi iderollogi (이승만의 정치이데올로기) Seoul: Yŏksabi P'yŏngsa, 2005, 274.

Among the specific methods listed, item 8 states that "instruction is also conducted through events held regularly or as needed."[680]

In sum, the Korean police inherited the functions of the "high police" (kōtō keisatsu) of the Japanese colonial period and, even after the establishment of the Republic of Korea, retained a quasi-paramilitary character as an organ under the Ministry of Home Affairs, particularly in the aftermath of the Korean War. Grounded in the imperatives of maintaining public order, civil defense, and counterespionage, the police were employed as a key instrument of governance by the Rhee Syngman administration. Through the operation of the National Security Law, they possessed the authority to monitor citizens' everyday lives in minute detail, and, having been effectively privatized as the regime's security force, they even intervened in election campaigns to safeguard Rhee's hold on power.

6.2.2. Police Station Based Oratorical Contests

In the mid- to late 1950s, oratorical contests had become firmly established as components of national public ceremonies and were held continuously not only in Seoul but across the entire country. There were dozens of different types of contests organized to mark state-designated commemorative days alone: the president Syngman Rhee's birthday, anti-communism and civil defense campaigns, memorials for the outbreak of the Korean War, school foundation anniversaries conducted under the auspices of Student Defense Corps, drives to promote South Korea's admission to the United Nations, traffic safety week and fire prevention campaigns,

[680]Lee Yun-jeong,이윤정, "Kŭmsan kyŏngch'alsŏ han kyŏngchalgwan ŭi kyoyang subu wa kyoyang charyojip (1955–56) ŭl t'onghae pon sach'al hwaltong (금산경찰서 한 경찰관의 『교양수부』와 『교양자료집』(1955~56년)을 통해 본 사찰 활동 Political Serveillance Activity through Practice Diary and Practice Workbook(1955-56) of a Police Officer at the GeumSan Police Station)," *Han'guk Kŭnhyŏndaesa Yŏn'gu* (한국근현대사연구) no.93(2020) : 217.

the promotion of “love of the forest” (*aerim sasang*), human rights week, child welfare week, women’s enlightenment, national frugality campaigns, and education week, among others. In addition, universities regularly hosted oratorical contests for middle- and high-school as well as university students, while the Army Headquarters organized speech events in connection with military commemorations; English-language oratorical contests were also held on a continuing basis.

One of the most striking features of postwar oratorical contests is, first, that newspapers began to carry brief reports on minor events held in connection with national ceremonies across a wide range of localities. At the same time, the themes of these contests became largely standardized: although the topic was always formally announced as “free,” in practice, students delivered speeches of such similar content that neither their titles nor their arguments were deemed worth mentioning in press coverage. With occasional exceptions in which a speaker’s title was reported, most accounts listed only the names of prizewinners, along with their schools and grade levels. The reason for this shift is that, after the Korean War, oratorical contests no longer functioned primarily as vehicles for articulating the political positions or opinions of students and organizations. Instead, they were incorporated into state-designated national events as one component of ceremonies organized by local authorities, or used to boost morale within schools, communities, and the military.

<Table. 6.1.> Regional Oratorical Contest in March (1955)

Region	**Organization**	**Place**	**Description**	**Awardees**
Samch’ŏk	Samch’ŏk Chigu Journalist Associations	Samch’ŏk Theater	Oratory contest for elementary and middle school students	1st Kim Suk-cha (Bukpyeong Elementary), 2nd Kŭm Mae-ja (Dogae Elementary), 3rd O Yong-ho (Songjeong Elementary)

Yŏngwŏl	Yŏngwŏl	–	Cleanliness-spirit promotion oratory contest for elementary, middle & high schools	1st Yi Ki-yŏng (Bongnae Elementary), Ko Sŏn-ja(Yeongwol Middle); 2nd Han Ki-yŏng (Yeongwol Elementary), Kim Yong-t'ae (Yeongwol Technical High School); 3rd Pak Hŭi-sŏ (Yeongwol Elementary), Hong Chu-yŏng (Yeongwol Middle)
Changsŏng	Changsŏng	Ilil Cultural Hall	March First Spirit Promotion Oratory Contest	Group awards: 1st Changsŏng Elementary, 2nd Ch'ŏram Elementary, 3rd tie – Hwangji Elementary
Yangyang	Yangyang Police Station	Yangyang Theater	Boys' and girls' clean-spirit oratory contest	1st Yi Hwi-ja (Cheonjin Elementary)
Chunch'ŏn	Chunch'ŏn Police Station	Chunch'ŏn Theater	Clean-mind promotion oratory contest	1st Hong Chŏng-ja, 2nd Sŏng Chŏng-ja, 3rd Pak Hoe-yŏn (all Elementary Division)
Chunch'ŏn	Kangwŏn-do	Chunch'ŏn Middle School Auditorium	Recovered Regions Student Enlightenment Unit – orator selection contest	1st Min Ŭn-kyo (Bongui Elementary), 2nd Hong Chŏng-ja (Chunchu Elementary)
Kimch'ŏn	Kimch'ŏn Police Station (Security&Investigation Divisions)	Kimch'ŏn Theater	Reforestation-ideal promotion & anti-luxury-goods oratory contest	1st Cho Yŏng-ja (Girls' Middle School, 3rd yr), 2nd Kang Sŏk-hŭi (Geungneung Middle School, 3rd yr), 3rd Kim So-sion (Middle School)

Source: "Ungbyŏn ipsangja kyŏljŏng: Samch'ŏk ŭi chung-kogyo" (웅변입상자결정: 삼척의 중고교), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 12, 1955. "Chibang moim" (지방모임), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), March 16, 1955. "Naegojang moim" (내고장모임), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 16, 1955, 3. "Ch'ŏngso ungbyŏn taehoe kaech'oe" (청소웅변대회개최), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 19, 1955. "Ch'ŏngso kwannyŏm ŭl angyang—Ungbyŏn taehoe rŭl kaech'oe" (청소관념을 앙양—웅변대회를 개최), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), April 2, 1955. "Nokhwa sasang ŭl angyang—Chunggosaeng ungbyŏn taehoe" (녹화사상을 앙양

중고생웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, April 9, 1955. “Hakto kyemongban sŏn’bal” (학도계몽반선발), *Chosŏn Ilbo*, April 3, 1955.

<Table 6.2> Regional Oratorical Contest in April (1956)

Region	Organization	Place	Description	Awardees
Kangwŏn	Kangwŏn Police Station	Kangwon Theater	Traffic Safety Inter-School Speech Contest	1st Pak Yŏng-su (Wonjung Middle, 2nd yr) • 2nd Chŏng Sang-il (Wongo High, 2nd yr) • 3rd Kim Sun-hŭi (Girls’ Commercial High, 3rd yr)
Yangyang	Yangyang Police Station	–	Traffic Accident Prevention Speech Contest for county middle & high schools	1st Pak Ch’ŏl (Yangyang Middle) 2nd Kwŏn Sun-je(Sokcho Middle)
Inch’ŏn	Kyŏnggi-do Police Bureau	Songdo High School Auditorium (Incheon)	Student Traffic-Safety Speech Contest	1st Han Chong-t’u (Incheon Middle) prize ₩20,000 • 2nd Ku Cha-gŏl (Suwon High) ₩15,000 • 3rd Kwŏn Myŏng-ja (Incheon Girls’ High) – ₩10,000
Sangju	Sangju Police Station	Sangju Theater	Inter-school Traffic-Safety Speech Contest	Middle Division: 1st Chi Ch’an-ung (Sangju Middle) 2nd Sŏ Sam-jŏng (Yongun Middle) 3rd Kim Mun-ja (Girls’ Middle)
Kimch’ŏn	Kimch’ŏn Police (Security Division)	Kimch’ŏn Girls’ High School Auditorium	Traffic-Accident Prevention & Reforestation-Spirit Speech Contest	Traffic Division: 1st Yi Yŏng-ja (Kimch’ŏn Girls’ Middle) 2nd Kim Cho (Sion Middle) 3rd Chang Pu nam (Kŭmneung Middle) Reforestation Division: 1st Ch’oe Sun-hyŏn (Kimch’ŏn Girls’ High) • 2nd Sŏngŭi Girls’ High • 3rd Ha Chu-ho & Paek Nam-hae (Kŭmgo High)
Andong	Andong Police Station	Andong Munhwa Theater	County Middle & High School Traffic-Safety Week Speech Contest	1st Yi Ch’ang-ho (Andong Middle, 3rd yr) • 2nd Pak Kyŏng-ja (Girls’ Middle) • 3rd Sin Kuk-ki (Byeong Middle)
Kyŏngju	Kyŏngju Police Station	Kyŏngju Theater	Spring Traffic-Safety Week speech contest + parade to educate citizens	–

Sŏngju	Sŏngju Police Station	Rear Courtyard of Sŏngju Police Station	Inter-school Speech Contest (local middle & high schools)	1st Kŭm Chong-jin (Sŏnggwang High, 3rd yr) and 3 additional winners

Source: "Yun Min-yong kun (윤민용군) i iltŭng—Kyot'ong kangjo ungbyŏn taehoe (교통강조웅변대회)," Kyŏnghyang Sinmun (경향신문), April 15, 1956; "Kyot'ong anjŏn ungbyŏn taehoe (교통안전웅변대회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 18, 1956; "Ungbyŏnhoe (웅변회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 20, 1956; "Ungbyŏn taehoe (웅변대회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 21, 1956; "Kyot'ong anjŏn ungbyŏn taehoe (교통안전웅변대회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 21, 1956; "Ungbyŏn taehoe (웅변대회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 22, 1956; "Kyot'ong anjŏn ungbyŏn taehoe (교통안전웅변대회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 22, 1956; "Kyot'ong anjŏn haengsa sŏngdae (교통안전행사성대)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 24, 1956; "Kyot'ong anjŏn ungbyŏn taehoe (교통안전웅변대회)," Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), April 26, 1956.

<Table 6.3> Regional Oratorical Contest in August and November (1957)

Region	Organization	Place	Description	Awardees
Yŏsu	Yŏsu Police Station	Yŏsu Elementary School Auditorium	Oratory, essay, slogan, and poster contest	One middle-school student awarded
Yangp'yŏng	Yangp'yŏng Police Station	Yangp'yŏng County Office Meeting Room	Anti-espionage oratory contest for students of all school levels	Elementary, middle, and high divisions 1st, 2nd, 3rd places each
Pupyŏng	Pupyŏng Police Station	–	Anti-espionage & public-cleanliness promotion oratory contest	–
Kŭmsan	Kŭmsan Police Station	Insam Hall	Anti-espionage oratory contest with about 40 participants	–
Munkyŏng	Munkyŏng Police Station	Public Assembly Hall	Anti-espionage Week oratory contest	Elementary, middle, general, junior high, and high school divisions

Source: Pangchŏp chugan haengsa sŏnggwang (방첩주간행사성황), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), August 3, 1957; Pangchŏp ungbyŏn taehoe kaech'oe (방첩웅변대회개최), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), August 4, 1957; Hakto pangong ungbyŏn taehoe (학도반공웅변대회), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), August 4, 1957; Pangchŏp ch'ŏngso chugan ungbyŏn (방첩청소주간웅변), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), November 3, 1957; Kŭmsan pangchŏp ungbyŏn taehoe (금산방첩웅변대회), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), November 3, 1957; Yuk kwanggu saryŏngbu-sŏ pangchŏp

ungbyŏn taehoe (육관구사령부서 방첩웅변대회), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), November 4, 1957; Pangchŏp ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnggwang (방첩웅변대회성황), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), November 4, 1957.;Pangch'ŏp chugan haengsa" (방첩주간행사), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), November 8, 1957; "T'oeji chŭngsan kyŏngjinhoe" (퇴비증산경진회), Chosŏn Ilbo (조선일보), November 30, 1957.

As can be seen in the following four tables, oratorical contests in the mid- to late 1950s were largely directed by the police. Their themes were differentiated into issues such as cleanliness, traffic safety, frugality, and counterespionage. Examination of the prizewinners shows that monetary awards were at times included. What is particularly striking is that the age of participants has become noticeably lower: whereas earlier contests mainly targeted middle- and high-school students, it is now easy to find competitions that select elementary school pupils.

In this way, whenever the police wished to disseminate particular messages within a locality, they used oratorical contests to have students convey those themes. For residents who gathered to listen, the contests became the quickest and most convenient means of communicating the intended campaign.

I will focus on the March First Movement commemorative contests for which the contents of the speeches can be examined through surviving oratorical manuscripts. Although oratorical events were formally tied to quite different themes, the speeches delivered within them converged overwhelmingly on a single message: anti-communism.

"The March 1st Movement Day" was one of the major national events held annually at the beginning of each year and was organized on a nationwide scale. Although the organizing bodies varied by region, national commemoration days were generally sponsored by local educational offices, educational associations, county-level administrations, or school-based "Student Patriotic Corps." Beginning in 1955, reports indicated an increase in the number of such events across various regions, noting that localities such as Muju, Hapchŏn, Ponghwa, Koch'ang, Yŏju, Chinni, P'yŏngt'aek, Yŏngdŏk, Togye, and Samch'ŏk held 3.1

commemorative oratorical contests primarily for elementary and secondary school students.[681] A similar pattern continued in 1956, with student speech contests held in places such as Yŏju, Kwangju, Kongju, Kwangsan, and Ich'ŏn to commemorate the March First movement.[682]

In 1953, the March First commemoration day was closely linked to the Syngman Rhee government's active promotion of the "Northward Unification Campaign." The government deliberated a proposal concerning standards for unification events in a Cabinet meeting, which approved a title of national ceremony as the "March First Commemoration and National Rally for Unification through Advancing Northward"(Samilchŏl kinyŏmsik mit pukchin t'ongil minjok taehoe), to be celebrated nationwide by both public officials and citizens. On the evening of February 28, the day before March First, people were mobilized to rekindle the spirit of the March First Movement and to demonstrate to the world the nation's impassioned cry for unification through the northward advance."[683]

The themes of the oratorical contests shifted in accordance with the campaign. The "Seoul District Army Headquarters" announced that it would hold a commemorative oratorical contest at the city auditorium in celebration of "March First Movement Day," "to renew the resolve for

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[681] "Nae kojang moim" (내고장 모임), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), Februrary 22, 1955., "3.1-chŏl ungbyŏn taehoe" (3.1절 웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), Februrary, 27.1955., "Chibang moim" (지방 모임), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March, 02.1955.

[682] "Chibang moim" (지방모임), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보),), March, 04.1955. "Chibang moim" (지방 모임), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 04.1955. "Yŏnhap hakyehoe rŭl kaech'oe, ungbyŏn ipsŏnja to kyŏljŏng" (연합학예회를 개최, 웅변입선자도 결정), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March, 05.1955. "Chibang moim" (지방 모임), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 06.1955. "Chibang moim" (지방모임), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 09.1955. "Pak Chong-myŏng kun i usŭng Samilchŏl kinyŏm ungbyŏn" (박종명군이 우승 삼일절 기념 웅변), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March, 09.1955. "Chibang moim" (지방 모임), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 10.1955. "Ungbyŏn ipsangja kyŏljŏng, Samch'ŏg ŭi chungkogyo" (웅변 입상자 결정, 삼척의 중고교), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March, 12.1955.

[683] "Samilchŏl haengsa kyŏljŏng" (삼일절 행사결정), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), February, 09.1953.

unification through a northward advance," and began soliciting speech manuscripts for the event.[684]

When newspapers reported a series of events commemorating March First, they framed the spirit and rhetoric of the "Northward Unification Campaign" as inherently nationalistic and as an expression of democratic citizenship. Two campaigns were portrayed as occasions "to renew the resolve for unification cherished by the nation inheriting the patriotic spirit of the sublime martyrs."[685] A prevailing discourse emerged asserting that "to reaffirm that democracy itself embodies the spirit of March First, and to devote oneself to the construction of democracy, is the only sure path to achieving unification through the northward advance with the least sacrifice and in the shortest possible time." The media rhetoric equated the proper commemoration of March First with a reaffirmation of democratic faith and patriotic mobilization.[686]

On March 1st, 1953, a large-scale national ceremony was held at Ch'ungmuro Square in central Seoul. Amid a massive crowd, the event was attended by the vice minister of Health and National Defense, the British and French envoys. The proceedings included a national ritual, choral performances, and an address by the mayor of the capital, speeches by provincial governors, and remarks by the United Nations' representative from the Philippines. Following the reading of the national declaration, resolutions addressed to President Rhee, the President of the United States, and the United Nations General Assembly, people started marching in a street parade led by a military band.[687] As citizens marched, they shouted slogans such as “Let us inherit the spirit of March First” and “Northward! Unification! March Forward with the

[684] “Samil kyŏngch’uk ungbyŏn taehoe, Sŏul chigu pyŏngsabu sŏ” (삼일경축웅변대회, 서울 지구병사부서), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), February, 20.1953.

[685] “Kŏrukh’an sŏnyŏl ŭi yujigyeseung” (거룩한 선열의 유지계승), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 02.1953.

[686] “Samil chŏngsin ŭn minjujuŭi” (삼일정신은 민주주의), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 01.1953.

[687] “Kŏrukh’an sŏnyŏl ŭi yujigyeseung” (거룩한 선열의 유지계승), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), March, 02.1953.

March First Spirit!" Divided into groups, the demonstrators proceeded through Sŏdaemun Intersection, Independence Gate, City Hall Plaza, and the main streets of Ŭlchi-ro and Chongno, before passing through T'apgol Park as part of the commemorative procession.[688]

In 1954, the government and the Seoul Metropolitan Government jointly organized a "National Rally for Northward Unification" in conjunction with the commemoration of the March First Movement. Alongside concerts, floral parades, and various sporting events, a women's oratory contest was held. Beginning in this period, women's oratorical contests aimed at "elevating the March First spirit" were held annually, sponsored either by the Women's Affairs Section or the Social Affairs Section of the Seoul municipal administration. Participants were drawn mainly from housewives and members of women's organizations, and the finalists selected through preliminary rounds delivered the main speeches.[689]

In that year's contest, Yi Hang-bok won first prize with the speech "The Mothers of Korea" (*Taehan ŭi ŏmŏni*), second prize went to Yi Pyŏng-suk for "National Reconstruction and Korean Women" (*Kukt'o chaegŏn kwa Han'guk yŏsŏng*), and third prize to Pak Kyŏng-wŏn for "War and Women" (*Chŏnjaeng kwa yŏsŏng*). In 1955, a similar women's oratory contest was held, this time with suggested topics announced in advance. These included: "Let Us Complete National Unification through the March First Spirit," "National Reconstruction and the Mission of Women," "The Path of the Democratic Woman," "The Resolve of Women in the Postwar Era," and "The Mission of Women in the Reconstruction of Family Ethics."[690]

The pattern changed little by 1957. In that year's "Women's Oratory Contest for the Elevation of the March First Spirit," again organized by the Seoul Women's Affairs Section, the winning

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[688] "Pyesikhu siga haengjin" (폐식후 시가행진), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March, 03.1953.

[689] "Onŭl 35hoe Samilchŏl" (오늘 35회 삼일절), *Tong'a Ilbo* (동아일보), March 1, 1954., "Yŏsŏng ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang, ilsi konggan-sŏ kaech'oe" (여성웅변대회 성황, 일시공간서 개최), Tong'a Ilbo(동아일보), March 23, 1954.

[690] "Yŏsŏng ungbyŏn taehoe" (여성웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 20, 1955.

titles were: first prize, Kim Ok-tae's "Elevation of the March First Spirit" (*Sam-il chŏngsin angyang*); second prize, Kim Ŭn-jin's "The Path of the Democratic Woman" *(Minju yŏsŏng ŭi chillo*); and third prize, Chŏng Yŏng-ok's speech, also entitled "The Path of the Democratic Woman."[691] In effect, these March First oratory contests were less concerned with the March First Movement as a historical event than with using its "tradition" to frame how women should serve the state in the present, making women's national service the central thematic focus.

In 1957, the "March First Commemorative Oratorical Contest" was, once again, closely linked to anti-communist themes. That year, the "March First Commemorative Men's and Women's University Student Oratorical Contest," organized by the Seoul headquarters of the National Association (*Kukminhoe*), was held together with a welcome rally and report meeting for Chŏng T'ae-gun, a student originally from North Korea who had participated in the Hungarian anti-communist uprising and then came to the Republic of Korea.[692]

In the same year, the "Samil Spirit Student Comrades Association," with support from the Samil Spirit Promotion Association, various social organizations, and Kyŏnghyang Sinmun, sponsored a nationwide oratorical contest for middle-school, high-school, and university students. The organizers solicited speeches primarily on the theme of "promoting the Kimi March First spirit and fostering a national ethos of anti-Japanese and anti-communist thought."[693]

From 1953 onward, the Yŏngdŭngp'o Press Corps annually organized a "March First Day Celebration Nationwide Boys' and Girls' High School Oratorical Contest" at the Yŏngbo Theater in Seoul. After several years of regular contests, by 1958 the event was even broadcast

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[691] "Ilttŭng-en Kim-yang" (1등엔 김양), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 19, 1957.

[692] "Chŏng-gun hwan'yŏng pogo taehoe 14-il sirip kŭkchang sŏ" (정군환영보고대회 14일 시립극장서), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 10, 1957.

[693] "Samil chŏngsin paryang kangyŏn, ungbyŏn taehoe" (삼일정신 발양 강연,웅변대회), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 22, 1957.

nationwide through the Central Broadcasting Station, underscoring its status as a national spectacle rather than a merely local ceremony.[694]

In the contest held over three days in 1953 at the Yŏngdŭngp'o Theater, thirty-six students from across the country delivered speeches. Among them, the third-place winner in the women's division, Ch'oe Kui-sun of Tŏksŏng Girls' High School, gave an address entitled "Let Us Inherit the March First Spirit" (*Sam-il chŏngsin ŭl kesŭnghaja*), which was later included in *Selected Contemporary Youth Orations* (Hyŏndae ch'ŏngnyŏn ungbyŏn sŏnjip) published in 1956.[695]

A closer reading of her speech shows that Ch'oe begins by asserting that the Republic of Korea, founded on the legacy of the progenitor Tan'gun, is a "bright candle of Asia," and that Koreans are a people endowed with the "genius" of Koguryŏ and Silla. After enumerating the excellence of the forebears, she offers a vivid description of how, thirty-five years earlier, the martyrs of the nation had appealed to international justice in launching the independence movement. Ch'oe claims that the "whole world marveled" at the popular uprising under colonial rule and suggests that this appeal to justice "moved the Japanese emperor and his retainers to tears of remorse and compelled the great powers to raise the white flag," thereby implying a direct causal link between the March First Movement and the end of the war.

In the second part of the speech, she connects the March First Movement to the struggle against communism. With the retreat of the Japanese empire, she argues, "red imperialism" has come to threaten the lives of the nation's people even more brutally, staining the rivers and

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694 "Yŏngdŭngp'o kijadan chuch'oe, haksaeng ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang" (영등포기자단 주최, 학생웅변대회 성황), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 27, 1954.″Ungbyŏn k'ongk'ul taehoe kijadan chuch'oe ro" (웅변콩쿨대회 기자단 주최로), *Tonga Ilbo* (동아일보), March 2, 1955.″Yŏngdŭngp'o kijadan chuch'oe, namnyŏ chunggo ungbyŏn taehoe" (영등포기자단 주최, 남녀중고웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 5, 1957.″Chung-gogyosaeng ungbyŏn taehoe" (중고교생웅변대회), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), February 9, 1948.

695 "Yŏngdŭngp'o kijadang chuch'oe haksaeng ungbyŏn taehoe sŏnghwang" (영등포기자당주최 학생웅변대회 성황), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 27, 1954.

mountains with blood and corpses. Yet, she insists, the "bloodline of the March First spirit" continues to run through the thirty million people of Korea, and the intelligence of the populace together with the loyalty of the national armed forces is presented as a reenactment of the March First spirit that has borne fruit in the present. On this basis, she claims that Koreans now bear the responsibility, by inheriting this spirit, to rise bravely and complete the task of North–South unification. Addressing the students, she calls upon them to mobilize and, invoking God's protection, the teachings of the martyrs in their graves, and the support of the "democratic friendly powers," exhorts them to drive the "communist bandits" from Korean soil and press forward to accomplish the great work of unification.[696]

In 1957, at the tenth "National Oratorical Contest for the Elevation of the March First Spirit," held at the Yŏngbo Theater and sponsored by the Yŏngdŭngp'o Daily Newspaper Reporters' Corps, the first prize (the Minister of Education Award) went to Yun Min-yong, a second-year student at Kyŏnggi Chuksan Commercial High School, for his speech "Let Us Live Rightly" (*Olbaro salja*). The Yun's speech content, too, is closer to a call for "northward unification" and generalized social criticism than to a reflection on the March First Movement itself. Yun laments that four years have passed since the armistice was concluded, during which the nation has striven for unification but has still failed to achieve its goal. As "comrades sharing the same bloodline," he deplores the sorrow of having experienced "civil strife among kin" and seeing the entire land turned into a sea of blood "due to the unlawful southern invasion by the treacherous Kim Il-sŏng clique, who call that barbarous Soviet Union their homeland." He denounces individualism and calls for the purging of "corrupt officials" and "profiteers" blinded by luxury, vanity, and hedonism. Only by eliminating such elements first, he argues, can the nation attain "the extermination of communism and unification," and he urges his

[696] *Hyŏndae ch'ŏngnyŏn ungbyŏn sŏnjip* (현대 청년웅변선집). Kongdong Munhwasa (공동문화사), 1956, 35-39.

audience to “unite firmly in patriotism and fellow feeling so as to succeed in northward unification.”[697] In effect, apart from a brief opening reference to the March First Movement as an expression of national spirit, the speech is scarcely distinguishable in content from standard northward-unification rhetoric.

6.3. The Rise of Criticism and Doubt toward Student Mobilization

Third part of the chapter examines the growing contestation of state-directed student mobilization in South Korea from the mid-1950s, focusing on parades, rallies, and oratorical contests. By tracing legal disputes, press criticism, and educational debates, it shows how practices once celebrated as patriotic and educational came to be recast as politically exploitative, socially disruptive, and ethically problematic.

Beyond critiques of the oratorical contests themselves, concerns emerged by the mid-1950s about the frequent mobilization of students and the excessive number of such public events. There was a public challenge to the issue of student mobilization that eventually developed into a legal controversy. The incident arose in connection with journalist Ch’oe Sŏk-ch’ae of the *Tong-a Ilbo, who* published an article criticizing the excessive mobilization of students for the event.

On September 13, 1955, Ch'oe Sŏk-ch’ae, the chief editor of the *Taegu Maeil Sinmun,* was accused of violating the National Security Law and labeled as spreading "North Korean propaganda" for publishing an editorial titled "Do Not Use Students as Tools." During his trial, when questioned by the presiding judge about his reason for writing the piece, Ch'oe explained that he had criticized the authorities for forcing students to stand for four hours in extreme heat

[697] Chŏng Nae-hwa 정내화, Ungbyŏn kanghwa (웅변강화), Suhŏmsa (수험사), 1965, 231-233.

to welcome Ambassador Im Pyŏng-jik, who was visiting Daegu from the United Nations mission.[698]

The following year, however, the Taegu High Court in its appellate ruling, determined that "the defendant's editorial bore nor connection to the broadcasts propagated by the North Korean puppet regime, nor the defendant have any awareness that his words might be exploited by such propaganda." The court further stated that "even if the editorial referred to the campaign to expel the hostile observation commission, and even if that campaign was a nationwide movement, a journalist's criticism of the methods, such as the mobilziation of young students, constitues a legitimate form of professional commentary."[699]

The Supreme Court, while upholding this decision, issued a special instruction designating the case as an important precedent in defining the limits of freedom of the press. In response, an editorial in the *Tong-a Ilbo* questioned whether it should truly require a Supreme Court ruling to determine that a newspaper's argument did not violate the National Security Law. Ch'oe Sŏk-ch'ae was simply stating that students should not be mobilized indiscriminately for rallies. The paper suggested that "any legal expert, including the Attorney General, should be able to discern through conscience and reason."[700]

This case thus marked both judicial acknowledgment of legitimate criticism of student mobilization and a broader challenge to the Rhee administration's practice of suppressing dissent, in which any criticism of government policy could be subject to surveillance, censorship, and prosecution under the pretext of national security.

The growing discontent over the repeated mobilization of students gradually began to surface in the press. In February 1956, an editorial exposed several instances in which students had

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[698] "Sasŏl naeyong ŭl simmun" (사설내용을 심문), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 10, 1955.

[699] "Hoengsŏl susŏl" (횡설수설), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), January 31, 1956.

[700] "Hyujit'ong," (휴지통), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), February 1, 1956.

been used as instruments of public display. At Kyŏngju Girls' Middle School, for example, students were mobilized to welcome Principal Hwang P'il-yŏn, who had just returned from an educational observation trip to the United States. Despite the school vacation, the entire student body was summoned to gather in front of the bus station and made to stand in formation from 9 a.m. for two hours in the cold, leaving the students shivering as they awaited the returning principal.[701]

In 1956, as the presidential and vice-presidential elections approached, the issue of student participation in politics became a subject of repeated public debate. In March, a statement published in the *Tong-a Ilbo* sharply criticized President Syngman Rhee for exploiting student mobilization in connection with his bid for re-election. After publicly declaring that he would not seek another term, Rhee later hinted that he might "reconsider if strongly urged by the will of the people." The statement denounced this as a manipulation of public sentiment, arguing that he was "forcing the waste of the nation's time, energy, and resources in the name of orchestrating public opinion." It further asserted that this was a calculated campaign strategy, identical to the one employed in Pusan four years earlier. He designed to preserve his public image both domestically and internationally. The statement condemned the use of underage students, who lacked the right to vote, as well as the mobilization of even ox-carts, to stage scenes suggesting nationwide support for Rhee. Such orchestrated demonstrations, it argued, amounted to political propaganda serving a single individual while exerting psychological pressure on the public through mass mobilization.[702]

Across the country, citizens, students, laborers, farmers, war veterans, and members of women's associations were mobilized to participate in demonstrations demanding "Dr.Rhee's re-nomination" and, as seen previously, to write blood pledges.[703] An editorial in the *Chŏson*

[701] Ibid.

[702] "Sŏngmyŏngsŏ" (성명서), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 14, 1956.

[703] "Tongwŏn inwŏn 121 man yŏ" (동원인원 121만여), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 14, 1956.

Ilbo criticized these actions, starting that the will of the people was being exploited for the expansion of certain political factions, that the opinions of a few groups could not be falsely presented as public sentiment, and that it was deeply questionable whether sending young students into the street was truly "a proper way to lead the Republic toward democracy."[704] One National Assembly member even condemned reports that a teacher had led middle school students to write blood pledges, calling it an unforgivable act.[705]

The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education released a statement expressing opposing positions on students' political participation. The Ministry of Justice declared that there was no legal basis for punishing students who engaged in election-related activities. In contrast, Minister of Education Yi Sŏn-gŭn announced that while the exercise of voting rights was legitimate, direct involvement of students in political parties or political activities could not be tolerated and would be subject to regulation. Minister Yi asserted that "student involvement in politics cannot be ignored from an educational standpoint and constitutes a departure from the student's proper status." However, *Tong-a Ilbo* questioned the ministers' position, asking what standard of "educational standpoint" the Ministry of Education was invoking. If such a stance was justified in the name of education, the article asked, "how should the frequent practice of 'student mobilization," past and present and possibly future, be understood from the same educational standpoint?" The editorial also sharply pointed out the contradiction that Minister Yi Sŏn-gŭn simultaneously served as vice-chairman of the "Liberal Party's Central Election Countermeasures Committee" for the presidential and vice-presidential campaign.[706]

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[704] "Min'guk ŭi chŏngch'ik pyŏngp'ae nŭn ŏdi issnŭn'ga?" (민국의 정치적 병폐는 어디있는가?), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), March 21, 1956.

[705] "Minŭi undong chinsang kyumyŏng" (민의운동진상 규명), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), March 28, 1956.

[706] "Yŏjŏk" (여적), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun* (경향신문), April 10, 1956.

Minister of Education Yi Sŏn-gŭn, in fact, sought to mobilize students only when politically expedient while suppressing any independent or autonomous forms of student political action. On April 26, he convened principals, faculty members, and university students at the auditorium of "Iri Girls' High School" in North Chŏlla Province and delivered an openly partisan speech in support of the ruling party. During his address, Yi reportedly declared, "Those who shout that life is unbearable should pack their bags and be expelled to Japan or north of the 38th parallel." His remarks provoked public outrage among attendees and students from Chŏnbuk National University, who had been mobilized to attend the lecture, and they walked out in protest midway through the event. One student told reporters, "It is shivering to think that we young students must be educated under policies set by such a man."[707]

One of the key issues to emerge at the first nationwide conference exclusively for women's high school principals was the call to "actively discontinue all forms of student mobilization for ceremonial purposes." The problem of student mobilization had thus become a matter of serious concern, one discussed by school principals and also by officials from the Ministry of Education and supervisors of education at city and provincial levels to attend the meeting.[708]

In 1956, the North Ch'ungch'ŏng Provincial Board of Education formally petitioned the Ministry of Education to prohibit the mobilization of students for large-scale national events organized under ministerial directives. The petition stated that although such commemorative ceremonies, national rallies, and other mass events appeared to yield certain public effect, they had become sources of complaint and criticism among both students and the public when judged from an educational standpoint and in light of the event's stated purposes. It further pointed out that, in some cases, these rallies merely used students to fill seats and serve as decorative venues, thereby disrupting regular classes and leading students to harbor resentment

[707] "I Munkyobu changgwan chibang yusese pogŏn" (이문교부장관 지방유세서 폭언), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), April 30, 1956.

[708] "Haksaeng taewoe tongwŏn ŭl chungji" (학생대외동원을 중지), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), May 27, 1956.

toward adults, society, and even the government itself. According to its findings, schools in the province participated in 14 different types of public events in 1954 alone, with more than 20 instances of student mobilization recorded throughout the year.[709]

Conversely, there were also cases in which schools, under the pretext of participating in activities sponsored by the Ministry of Education, solicited or misappropriated funds to finance such events. Around November 1956, the Ministry issued a warning against schools that deliberately exaggerated the scale of "special extracurricular activities" or financed them through school funds, thereby abusing their educational purpose. These activities included sport days, academic and artistic exhibitions, theatrical performances, oratorical contests, and field trips. The Ministry instructed the Mayor of Seoul and provincial governors to ensure that schools did not exploit such events to raise money beyond the bounds of legitimate educational activity. According to the report, some schools distributed admission tickets to students and compelled them to sell them by quota. In other instances, schools levied excessive fees from students or even mobilized them to presell tickets for school events, sending them to government offices or into the street to plead with passersby to purchase tickets.[710]

An essay titled "National Reforestation and the Youth Movement" pointed out that, under the current circumstances, it was impossible for a genuine youth political movement to take place. The editorial criticized political parties and social organizations for exploiting youth movements to bolster their own power, noting that this had often distorted the true purpose of such movements. It further observed that independent and autonomous youth organizations had, in effect, been dismantled under government control.[711]

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[709] "Haksaeng tongwŏn nŏmu chatta" (학생 동원 너무 잦다), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), August 19, 1956.

[710] "Hakyehoe tŭng akyong malla" (학예회등 악용 말라), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), November 12, 1956.,″Haksaeng ege piyong chŏn'gan ŭn pulga" (학생에게 비용전가는 불가), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), December 11, 1956.

[711] "Sasŏl" (사설), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), April 6, 1956.

An editorial published in 1957 exposed corruption among school administrators in connection with various cultural and performance events. It criticized the practice whereby "children's cultural organizations or youth groups, under the pretext of celebrating national holidays such as March First Independence Movement Day, and August 15, the "Liberation Day," engage in self-promotional, broker-like activities that turn all children in the path of learning into mere tools." The article urged reform, pointing out that "in music, dance, and oratorical contests alike, students continue to appear as puppets out of adult institutions." It also warned of growing public concern that such competitions, driven by a "spirit of rivalry for prizes in the name of school honor," had a corrupting influence, reducing children to instruments of institutional prestige, and called for the elimination of all such impure and exploitative practices in the educational sphere.[712]

Concerns were also raised about how frequent student mobilizations caused traffic disruptions and public inconvenience. An article highlighted the irony that events meant to promote traffic safety instead resulted in prolonged congestion. It noted that "whatever the occasion, it has become customary in our society for students to take to the streets in parades," and warned that "if, on the grounds of convention, students continue to be deployed at every event of national or social significance, they will have little time left for actual study." The piece further criticized such mobilizations, attributing them to the organizer's sense of "self-satisfaction," adding that this had only "increased public dissatisfaction toward the events themselves."[713]

An editorial in the *Tonga-a Ilbo* expressed a similar concern, observing that "since Liberation, we have witnessed countless public street parades, and at nearly every event, students from various schools have been mobilized to participate." The article specifically criticized the "Anti-Communist Youth and Student Rally," noting that its street demonstration "brought tram

[712] "Hakkyo sŏnchŏn kwa sangŏphwa uryŏ" (학교선전과 상업화우려), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), August 1, 1957.
[713] "Kyot'ong anjŏn kwa kajang haengnyŏl" (교통안전과 가장행렬), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), April 21, 1956.

and automobile traffic throughout the city to a complete halt, causing great inconvenience to people in their daily life." While acknowledging that such activities might be unavoidable when they serve national or social purposes, the editorial argued that street demonstrations should be limited to truly important and unavoidable occasions and that efforts should be made to minimize their disruptive impact.[714]

As the forgoing discussion has shown, by the mid-to late 1950s the issues of student mobilization had become a visible topic of public debate in the press. First, commentators pointed out that students were being summoned far too frequently to participate in large-scale national events, to the detriment of their studies. Although both officials and educators repeatedly emphasized the need for students to focus on learning, in practice they were compelled to take part in numerous ceremonies and rallies driven by the private interest of the Ministry of Education or indiviadual school administrators. Second, the instrumentalization of students for political propaganda was widedly criticized. In particular, during 1956 presidential and vice-presidential election period, student were selectively mobilzed by the Liberal Party, revealing that Minister of Education Yi Sŏn-gŭn sought to regulate student participation not to protect education but to control and exploit it in support of Rhee Syngman's re-election campaign. Third, newspaper reports raise concerns that student parades and public mobilizations were disrupting the daily lives of citizens, causing traffic congestion and inconvenience, thereby exposing the broader social costs of such practices.

Oratorical contests, held regularly as events for moral cultivation and educational purposes, had also become instruments through which the state and local governments disseminated officially designated themes, encouraging the participation of students and residents nationwide. During the period when concerns about student mobilization were gaining prominence, critical voices also began to emerge regarding the oratorical contests themselves.

[714] "Siga haengnyŏr ŭi hoengdan" (시가행렬의 횡단), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), October 29, 1956.

In the *Tong-a Ilbo's* reader contribution section, an essay by a student who frequently participated in oratorical contests was published, in which the student openly exposed injustices and structural problems inherent in the speech competitions.

> "As a student who has participated several times in oratorical contests, what I have felt most keenly is that freedom of speech is by no means fully guaranteed in Korea. At every competition, we encounter either invisible or open forms of repression, and whenever we witness such things, the patriotic passion with which we had resolved to speak out shatters, often turning into anger. To cite a few examples: if we truly have the right to express our opinions freely, what is wrong with calling rain 'rain' and poetry 'poetry,' whether the target is a civil official or a police officer? Nevertheless, in most contests held today (particularly those organized by government authorities), contestants are denied participation if their manuscripts criticize governmental injustice or the corruption of officials. In some places, participants are even pressured to revise their manuscripts under circumstances that defy description. And yet, among the judges, there are those who say, 'It would have been better if you had been a bit bolder.' To whom, then, are we supposed to appeal our grievances?"
>
> — Fro "Sangdo-dong" Ch'ŏngho.[715]

According to the Student's testimony, there was clear and open repression surrounding the oratorical contests. He confessed that it was through these contests that he came to realize the absence of genuine freedom of speech in Korea. Manuscripts written by students, especially those criticizing government illegality or corruption, were either disqualified from entry or subjected to forced revisions, a situation that was particularly severe in contests organized by government authorities. The student argued that if freedom of expression truly existed, one should naturally be allowed to "denounce governmental wrongdoing" and "criticize corrupt officials," yet such speech was systematically excluded from participation. He therefore

[715] "Ungbyŏn hakto ŭi pyŏn" (웅변학도의 변), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), July 12, 1955.

questioned how, under such constraints, participants could possibly write the "bolder" manuscripts that judges so often demanded.

Because the organizers and judges of the contest sought primarily to create the appearance that students were speaking freely, it was exceedingly rare for any cases of censorship to be publicly exposed. Most oratorical contests reported only the names of prize winners, while manuscripts that failed to pass preliminary screening left no trace in the public record.

There were also instances in which oratorical contests were deliberately organized to award prizes to preselected winners. On July 23, 1955, a contest held in the main conference hall in the Kyŏngbuk Provincial Government Office in Taegu drew public criticism when, even after two months had passed, no award ceremony had been held. A journalist reported that the contest results had been unilaterally revised by a single judge and, moreover, that only the child of an official from one of the participating institutions had ultimately received an award.[716] In other words, the oratorical contest itself had been exploited as a one-time event designed solely to confer recognition upon predetermined individuals.

Similar instances of corruption in oratorical contests are also documented in *A Dialogue on Oratory* (*Ungbyŏn Kanghwa*), a speech training manual published in 1965 by the middle school teacher Chŏng Nae-hwa. The book recounts that during an anti-North Korean repatriation oratorical contest held in Kyŏnggi Province, one judge disqualified a contestant solely to ensure that his own relative would win the prize. In other cases, organizers unfairly arranged the order of speakers to disadvantage certain participants or arbitrarily redistributed judges' scores. He also reports that during a contest organized by the "Yŏngdŭngp'o Daily Press Association" on April 13, 1960, the organizers ignored the judge's scores altogether and assigned ranking at their own discretion. Chŏng also noted that in some university-hosted contests, favoritism was

[716] "Sisang ŏmnŭn ungbyŏn taehoe" (시상없는 웅변대회), *Tong-a Ilbo* (동아일보), October 7, 1955.

common, and students tended to support acquaintances or juniors from their universities. There was even a running joke that "a few drinks could buy the championship trophy."[717]

Oratorical contests organized by schools, associations, and local institutions across the country mostly shared similar objectives, with little variation in topics or content prescribed by organizers and judges. As a result, the speeches presented at these contests tended to be remarkably uniform.

In 1957, one judge publicly criticized this lack of originality and urged students to cultivate greater creativity. Describing himself as someone who served several times a year as a judge for nationwide middle and high school oratorical contests hosted by universities, he explained that he had recently begun declining such invitations due to what he called the "mannerism" that had come to characterize these events. Although students were typically allowed to choose their own topics, he observed that "even when the titles differ, the content is nearly identical, and it was exhausting to sit through he speeches and distinguish their relative merits." Reflecting on why the speeches were so formulaic and devoid of realistic or compelling appeals, he attributed the problem to inadequate instruction in oratory within secondary schools. Students, he noted, merely memorized and recited prewritten manuscripts, sometimes not even of their own composition. The student produced a mechanical performance that left him feeling "almost insulted to serve as a judge." He went on to lament that such contests turned students into "propaganda agents" and argued that, given the formative mission of youth, education should instead "foster in them a degree of cultural and political creativity many times greater than our own." Drawing a parallel to ancient Greece, where culture and politics flourished through the art of argumentation, he called for renewed effort to cultivate the "powers of reasoning and debate" among young people.[718]

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[717] Chŏng Nae-hwa정내화, *Ungbyŏn kanghwa* (웅변강화), (Changwonsa 1965), 117.

[718] "Ungbyŏn podanŭn pyŏnron, Yu Sang-musang" (웅변보다는 변론, 유상무상), *Kyŏnghyang Sinmun*

The observation that students' oratorical manuscripts were largely identical was valid, and the critique that such contests turned students into "propaganda agents" was indeed perceptive. However, the judge's call for greater "creativity" among students failed to address the deeper structural problems inherent in the contests themselves. As a student's essay published in 1955 had already revealed, even when students submitted their own original speeches, those manuscripts underwent multiple layers of selection by teachers, local preliminary committees, organizers, and judges before reaching the final stage. Under such circumstances, to attribute the lack of originality to inadequate speech instruction in school was to overlook the systemic corruption of the very process through which speeches were approved and awarded. In effect, the judge's remark demonstrated that he had not yet reflected critically on the structural inequities embedded in the institutional framework of the oratorical contest itself.

However, there were also articles claiming that the content of student oratory contests often carried socially critical messages, exposing injustice through well-crafted speeches. One writer listened to an oratory contest held at the Seoul City Hall under the sponsorship of the Ministry of National Defense to commemorate the Korean War. He confessed, "When children, from their own perspective, delved into the adult world and spoke of the emptiness of society filled with boastful pretense, I could not help but feel my face grow hot with shame." He admitted that, since it was a nationwide competition, "teachers must have revised and polished the speeches a great deal," and that gestures and intonation were carefully rehearsed. The writer described the scene vividly: students speaking with fluid eloquence, striking the desk with their small fists, and eliciting a burst of applause. He acknowledged that "perhaps those young students seemed too precocious, or perhaps, their practice was simply too meticulous." Yet, while recognizing that their oratory was the product of "education and preparation," he insisted that the contrast between the luxurious city streets and the suffering of the poor, as depicted in

(경향신문), October 6, 1957.

the speeches, reflected undeniable realities. As an adult, he felt a deep sense of shame listening to those young voices."[719]

This chapter has demonstrated that, by the mid-to-late 1950s, state-led student mobilization in South Korea underwent a fundamental reevaluation. Practices initially legitimized as forms of civic education and patriotic participation, such as mass rallies, public parades, and oratorical contests, became the object of sustained critique from journalists, educators, citizens, and, increasingly, the courts. Legal cases affirmed the legitimacy of criticizing these mobilizations, while press investigations revealed censorship, favoritism, and prearranged outcomes that emptied oratorical contests of their pedagogical and deliberative claims.

At the same time, the educational and social costs of constant mobilization became impossible to ignore. The classes' hours were disrupted, students expressed resentment at their compulsory participation, and public life was repeatedly inconvenienced by traffic congestion and crowded demonstrations. These developments led school officials and local education boards to call for limits on non-educational mobilization, reframing students not as endlessly available resources for political spectacle but as subjects whose schooling and well-being required protection.

6.4. The April Revolt and Student Activism in the Oratorical Contest

This section examines how the April 19, 1960, Revolution transformed students from marginal political actors into emblematic agents of democratic change in South Korea. It traces the trajectory from election fraud and state violence to mass student protests and regime collapse,

[719] "P'allyŏn tongan e muŏs ŭl haettŏn'ga" (팔년동안에 무엇을 했던가), *Chosŏn Ilbo* (조선일보), June 26, 1958.

and then turns to post-revolution oratory contests to show how April 19 was commemorated, interpreted, and contested through student speech.

The fraudulent election held on 15 March 1960 triggered student demonstrations across the country, which ultimately brought an end to the long-standing Rhee Syngman administration. The Fourth National Assembly elections of May 1958 had already revealed a significant shift in public opinion: although the ruling Liberal Party, Rhee's party, secured just over 50 percent of the total vote, the Democratic Party candidates received around 40 percent, leaving only a narrow margin between the two. This outcome undermined the Liberal Party's confidence in its prospects for the 1960 presidential election. Having paved the way for Rhee's potential lifetime rule through the 1954 "Four-Four-Five" constitutional amendment, the Liberal Party regime concluded that it had little chance of winning the presidential and vice-presidential elections scheduled for 15 March 1960 by normal means. As a result, it began carefully organizing electoral fraud as early as one year before the vote. However, the Liberal Party had already relied on administrative intervention and the mobilization of violence in the 1956 and 1958 elections and thus had virtually no prospect of a legitimate electoral victory.[720]

On 28 February 1960, high school student demonstrations in the Taegu area marked the beginning of open resistance to blatant electoral fraud. To prevent students from attending a campaign rally for the Democratic Party's vice-presidential candidate, Chang Myŏn, the

[720] Pae Kyu-sŏng 배규성, "Taegu 2.28 minju undong: chiyŏkjŏk ŭimi wa kyesŭng" (대구 2.28 민주운동: 지역적 의미와 계승), *Kukche Chŏngchi Yŏn'gu* (국제정치연구) 14, no. 1 (2011): 101–24.

authorities ordered schools to hold classes on Sunday. Students, interpreting this as both a violation of academic freedom and a politically motivated measure, responded by launching large-scale protests. In the lead-up to the 15 March 1960 election, cases of kidnapping, assault, and bribery targeting Democratic Party-appointed election officials and observers became widespread. Democratic observers were frequently denied entry to polling stations, beaten, or forcibly expelled. Protests against electoral fraud broke out in many parts of South Korea, but resistance was particularly intense in Masan, where students and citizens gathered in front of City Hall, police substations, and other key locations.[721]

The Rhee government ordered troops to fire on demonstrators in front of the "Kyŏngmu-dae" (the presidential residence), resulting in a large-scale bloodshed. Consequently, the focus of the uprising shifted from the issue of electoral fraud to holding the government and the incumbent ruler accountable for the merciless use of violence against citizens. On 23 April, Chang Myŏn, the Democratic Party leader, resigned from the vice presidency and issued a statement calling for President Rhee's resignation. In Masan, elderly women took to the streets demanding his departure; in Seoul, the university faculty issued a statement urging his removal from office; and students and citizens continued to stage demonstrations, repeatedly chanting slogans for Rhee's resignation. On 26 April, the crowds assembled in Seoul called for a re-election to remedy the fraudulent 15 March ballot, for Rhee's resignation, and for the punishment of those

[721] O Che-yŏn 오제연, "4wol hyŏngmyŏng kwa haksaeng" (4월 혁명과 학생), in *4wol hyŏngmyŏng ŭi chuch'edŭl* (4월 혁명의 주체들), Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa (역사비평사), 2021, 47.

responsible within the police. That morning, President Rhee Syngman finally issued a statement announcing that he would step down.[722]

On 11 April, the body of Kim Chu-yŏl, who had gone missing during the first Masan uprising, was discovered in the waters off Masan. This discovery triggered a second Masan uprising, which escalated into an even larger wave of demonstrations. The Rhee regime branded the Masan protests as a "riot" carried out by "mobsters," seeking to delegitimize the movement. During the subsequent April 19 mass protests in Seoul, Kwangju, and Pusan, not only students but also urban poor residents, workers, shoeshine boys, service employees, ragpickers and street vagrants, sellers, and many other ordinary citizens joined the demonstrations condemning the fraudulent election.[723]

These "student demonstration incidents" were later designated the "April Revolution" (Sail hyŏngmyŏng) in the pages of the journal Sasanggye. In particular, the editor-in-chief, Chang Chun-ha, asked how university students, figures who had appeared politically inert throughout the 1950s, had come to constitute the agents of revolution. He explained this by arguing that, because of their "purity," students had been powerless in the face of an unjust reality, but when the opportunity arose, they resisted without relinquishing that purity; on this basis, he identified

[722] Hong Sŏk-ryul (홍석률), "4wŏl hyŏngmyŏng kwa Isŭngman chŏnggwŏn ŭi pungoe kwajŏng: minju hangjaeng kwa Minjudang, Miguk, Hangukgun ŭi taeeung" (4월혁명과 이승만 정권의 붕괴 과정 -민주항쟁과 민주당, 미국, 한국군의 대응-), Yŏksa Munhwa Yŏn'gu (역사문화연구), no. 36 (2010): 147–49.

[723] O Che-yŏn (오제연), "4.19 hyŏngmyŏng chŏnhu tosi pinmin" (4.19혁명 전후 도시빈민), in Han'guk hyŏndae saenghwal munhwasa 1960nyŏndae: kŭndaehwa wa kundaehwa (한국현대 생활문화사 1960년대-근대화와 군대화), Ch'angbi (창비), 2016, 40–41.

"students" as the leading force of the revolution. Another contributor, Ko Pyŏng-ik, also restricted the subject of the movement to "students," even as he sought to describe the development of events in an ostensibly objective manner. At the same time, Sasanggye placed particular emphasis on the role of intellectuals in the April Revolution, arguing that its foundation lay in an intellectual revolution that was not tied to any political party.[724]

April 19 defined students as the agents who had brought about the "birth of the true citizen" and as "watchdogs of power." They began to represent themselves as "fighters for civil liberty who courageously exposed accumulated corruption and injustice," as "standard-bearers in the struggle against communism," and as the vanguard destined to lead a new revolutionary era. In the 1960s, university students emerged as key sources of information for the press, actively participating as witnesses and contributors. They also became producers of discourse through campus media such as university newspapers. In the years around April 19 and throughout the early 1960s, these student newspapers increasingly came to function as "public squares of truth and freedom."[725]

Even after the April 19 Revolution, oratory contests continued to be held. Whereas up to that point they had largely functioned as loyalist events in praise of President Syngman Rhee, they

[724] Yun Sang-hyŏn (윤상현), "4wol hyŏngmyŏng ŭi chayujuŭijŏk chŏnyu: Tonga Ilbo wa Sasanggye pigyo rŭl chungsimŭro" (4월 혁명의 자유주의적 전유, 동아일보와 사상계 비교를 중심으로), in 4wol hyŏngmyŏng ŭi chuch'edŭl (4월 혁명의 주체들), *Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa* (㈜역사비평사), 2021, 333–37.

[725] Im Yu-gyŏng 임유경, *Taehak kwa kwangjang ŭi t'ansaeng* (대학과 광장의 탄생), in *Han'guk hyŏndae saenghwal munhwasa 1960nyŏndae* (한국현대 생활문화사 1960년대), (Changbi 창비), 2016, 59-60.

now began to feature speeches that actively criticized Rhee and foregrounded the meaning of April 19.

In the Second National Boys' and Girls' High School Oratory Contest for the Elevation of Public Morality (Che 2hoe toŭi angyang chŏngguk namnyŏ kodŭng hakkyo taehang ungbyŏn taehoe), organized by the Political Science Society of Tongguk University, the winning speech, titled "Stone" (Tol), opens by commemorating No Hŭi-du, a fellow student in the Faculty of Law at Tongguk University who had been killed during the April 19 Revolution.

April 19 is thereby added to the long sequence of "national" struggles that students had accumulated over time. Holding up a stone taken from the Students' Tower at the thirtieth-anniversary ceremony of the Kwangju Student Independence Movement, the speaker enumerates the history that this stone is said to traverse: it evokes the battles of the 1871, "The United States expedition to Korea" and Western Disturbance and the defense of Haengju; it becomes the stone hurled at Japanese imperialism when cries of independence rang out; and, finally, it becomes the stone thrown at the police, "henchmen of a traitorous, dictatorial regime" when fighting against the nation's betrayers. He criticizes "Dr. Rhee Syngman," who fled the country in haste, by arguing that he was compelled to leave because he had "cast away, like a worn-out rag, the national integrity that ought to have been as firm as a stone." Before April 19, he recalls, the status of students had "fallen to a level lower than the price of rotten clams in Namdaemun Market": they were playthings for the police and, he laments, worth less than the dogs guarding the gates of Liberal Party politicians.

Now, however, he proclaims that through demonstrations, students have regained their dignity and recovered their freedom, and that April 19 has become the very bedrock of democracy. He calls upon his audience to transform "the stone that is kicked about underfoot" into a "foundation stone" (chuch'ut tol) that forms "the enduring basis of the nation, the elevation of public morality, and an ethic of action." By deploying "stone" as an extended metaphor, the speech reaffirms the legitimacy of the student movement, encouraging students by insisting that April 19 concretely carries forward the democratic tradition. What is particularly notable is that, even as he openly exposes the corruption, incompetence, and violence of the Rhee regime and its politicians, he treats "public morality" (toŭi) as a normative framework distinct from, and not contaminated by, the previous government, thereby separating the ethical ideal from the discredited political order. [726]

Kim Chŏng-suk, a second-year student at Seoul Girls' Commercial High School, received the Speaker of the House of Representatives Award for her speech "Thought" (*Saenggak*) at the Fourth National Boys' and Girls' High School Oratory Contest for the Elevation of Public Morality, hosted by Sŏnggyun'gwan University. Although the latter part of her manuscript, delivered on 16 November 1960, is missing, the opening section similarly takes April 19 as a crucial benchmark for student action. After enumerating the seriousness of the recent rise in juvenile crime, she admonishes her audience to "honor the will of our comrades who fell in April and recognize that the shortest path to national unification lies solely in an independent

[726] Chŏng, Nae-hwa, ed. Ungbyŏn kanghwa, Changwŏnsa, 1965., 159-162.

economy." Reiterating a theme that had persisted since the liberation period, she urges students once again to "refrain from leaving the ivory tower to wander the streets," and sternly warns that drinking coffee in cafés or smoking Western cigarettes undermines the national economy; for the sake of economic reconstruction, she insists, students must exercise self-restraint. [727]

Thus, although Kim Chŏng-suk embraces April 19 as a key "spirit of the age" and as the basis for a new student identity, her sense of "unification," her conviction that citizens must reduce consumption and practice frugality for the sake of the national economy, and her argument that students should remain within the ivory tower all reproduce discourses already familiar from earlier period orations. The figure of the student produced by the April 19 Revolution is, once again, absorbed into the normative framework of the "model student." Moreover, the rhetorical patterns of student oratory that had been repeatedly employed since the USAMGIK period continued to be reproduced almost unchanged. Once again, students were urged not to take to the streets; whereas in the immediate post-liberation period such admonitions had been justified by condemning the indiscriminate adoption of Western culture, they were now reinforced with the additional claim that remaining within the school and refraining from such behavior was a duty owed to the "national economy."

In the Fourth National Boys' and Girls' High School Oratory Contest hosted by Kyung Hee University, the speech "Mind" (Maeum) by An Chong-u, a third-year high school student who received both the University President's Award and the Prime Minister's Award, likewise sets

[727] Ibid.,177-183.

out the attitude that students ought to adopt in the Second Republic, said to have been built on the "spirit of April 19." She describes "April 19" as "a foundation stone and concrete, a lamp for the heart and a path forward," and argues that, for the sake of tomorrow's construction, one must be faithful to the present. As in many earlier speeches, this fidelity ultimately resolves into the statement: "We must study diligently."

She introduces Yi Hui-in, a young woman physicist, then conducting research at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory of the University of California, and praises her as an example of the outstanding "national prestige" that Korean women can attain. Yet she goes on to insist that, "before students noisily rise up over political movements and social problems, students must first study hard, learn, and conduct research." Only in this way, she contends, can they "devote the whole of our hearts to the construction of the Second Republic."[728]

As we have seen, An Chong-u's speech also takes "April 19" as a key point of reference, but it simultaneously effaces the revolutionary character of April 19. Rather than endorsing student movements, political participation, or concrete collective action, it seeks to discipline them, returning once more to the conventional claim that "students ought to contribute to the nation by studying conscientiously."

In an oratorical contest held in Pagoda Park in the 1960s, organized by the Korean Oratorical Association, Kwŏn Sun-dong, a third-year student at Seoul Chungang Middle School, received the Prime Minister's Award for his speech titled "Indignation" (*Punt'ong*). He begins by

[728] Ibid., 207-209.

emphasizing that, not long after the establishment of the Republic of Korea, he had already heard foreign accusations that it had become a "police state." He argues that it is an indisputable fact that the previous government, having nurtured gangsters and violent groups under police protection, turned the country into a state ruled by violence, and that under the pressure of dictatorship even freedom of the press did not exist. At the same time, he criticizes the politicians of the newly formed Second Republic, noting that they are divided into "old guard" and "younger faction," endlessly consumed by power struggles and offering no effective measures for the unemployed failings that, he insists, are eroding public trust. He warns that the students who made the April 19 Revolution are constantly watching these politicians and that, should another dictatorship emerge, "blood greater than that of April 19 will be shed."

Yet even as he underscores the possibility that "another April 19" could occur at any time, his argument becomes self-contradictory. He laments that a "demonstration craze" (*demo param*) has taken hold and that too many kinds of demonstrations are now taking place. He even dismisses what he calls "maids' demonstrations" (*sikmo demo*), claiming that the protest marches erupting across the country constitute a desecration of the April 19 Revolution.[729]

In short, while he affirms the legitimacy and effectiveness of student demonstrations against clearly fraudulent elections, he refuses to extend that recognition to other groups' struggles and rights. By branding such movements as a "profanation of April 19," he effectively narrows the

[729] Ibid. 248-252.

sphere of legitimate political action to students alone and recenters the role of political protest exclusively on the figure of the student.

To sum, in the wake of April 19, students were recast as the "pure" subjects of democratic revolution. They were watchdogs of power, and symbols of civic courage, and both journalistic narratives and oratorical performance constructed their new political identity. Post-revolution contests no longer praised Syngman Rhee but instead memorialized fallen students, condemned dictatorship, and elevated April 19 as a foundational moment for Korean democracy. Yet these same speeches frequently sought to recontain student subjectivity, urging renewed devotion to study, economic reconstruction, and "public morality," and treating non-student protests as illegitimate or even as a desecration of April 19. The legacy of the revolution thus remained ambivalent: it secured student activism a central place in narratives of democratization, even as it became a resource for reasserting the ideal of the disciplined, apolitical "model student" and for narrowing the boundaries of legitimate protest.

CHAPTER7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this dissertation has demonstrated that student oratorical contests emerged as significant instruments of Cold War propaganda, shaped by and reflecting the distinctive rhetorical features of each historical moment between 1945 and 1960. Taken together, the historical dimensions revealed that oratorical contests cannot be understood merely as exercises in rhetoric or education. They functioned as a cultural methodology of the Cold War in South Korea, transforming students into symbolic representatives of the “anti-communist state,” projecting the nation’s ideological commitments onto domestic and international stages, and codifying acceptable political expression through coordinated performance. In this sense, the oratorical contest was not only a pedagogical or extracurricular practice but also a performative apparatus through which Cold War ideologies were embodied, gendered, and integrated as everyday forms of political representation.

Chapter 1 traced how forms of street oratory and public debate were first introduced to the Korean populace at the end of the nineteenth century, beginning with the All-People's Congress and the Paejae School. These traditions of organized mass gatherings continued into the colonial period, where oratorical contests developed as vehicles for popular enlightenment and as expressions of the anti-Japanese movement. However, during the Pacific War, such contests were transformed into propaganda tools, serving the empire's wartime needs by promoting conscription, the ideology of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, anti-Soviet sentiment, and anti-Western messages.

In the immediate aftermath of liberation in late 1945, oratorical contests took the form less of competitions on a set topic than of mass rallies where participants freely expressed their joy at liberation, often resembling denunciation meetings. The impromptu speeches demanding rights and recognition emerged in an intensely vocal public sphere. Thus, a key question became how youth were imagined as new agents in the project of nation-building, and how parties and organizations sought to realize their own agendas through them. Yet the expansion of speech was tightly entangled with new forms of control. The language, literacy, and terminology under U.S. military governance became instruments of policing ideological boundaries and reordering hierarchies. The multilingual landscape and newly coined ideological vocabulary expose both the promise of the "national language" project. The public sphere operated as a contested field in which competing actors sought to determine who could speak for the nation and in what terms. In fact, the left-wing collective speech organization "Chŏson Current Affairs Oratorical Association" emerged as the earliest youth body that promoted "speech warfare." However, they began to loosen their grip on the speech platform as the anti-trusteeship movement consolidated power among right-wing students.

Chapter 2 explored how the oratorical contest emerged as a crucial medium through which right-wing students translated institutional conflict into nationalistic emotion and propaganda.

The “Anti-Trusteeship National Union of Students” rapidly reshaped the nationalistic argument through counterstatements that framed pro-trusteeship forces as "traitorous conspirations." The oratorical contest was sustained by dense linkage between party politics, the press, and the oratorical stage. The same pattern extended beyond March First to Liberation Day, where right-wing coalitions like the National Student Federation staged oratorical contests, appropriated historical memory, shaped public opinion, and installed student speakers as living emblems of a renewed, anti-communist nation. The controversy surrounding the establishment of Seoul National University created circumstances and oratorical contests that gained new importance as carefully curated arenas for redirecting student enthusiasm from protest activities toward state-approved expressions of patriotism and scholarly dedication.

Chapter 3 examined the emergence of female students' political activism and oratorical contest. Despite the considerable political participation of female students during the U.S. Military Government period, they were often treated as incomplete subjects, positioned as distant from autonomous political judgment and action. In the immediate post-liberation years, female students were rarely recognized as political actors in their own right; instead, they were continually cast as peripheral or as mere instruments of mobilization.

Female students were subsumed within sexual hierarchies but could exploit them during the oratories. The ambivalence can be understood in two respects. First, oratorical contests constituted one of the few moments in which female students could voice women’s issues in public space. Female students were able to present themselves as crucial subjects of the nascent nation, articulating the possibilities of women’s emancipation in a direct and public manner.

The oratorical contests also functioned to discipline women, particularly female students, by confining them within prescribed political norms and limiting their speech to predetermined topics. Female student oratory was mobilized to denounce those who deviated from Cold War gender norms, publicly vilifying women who did not conform to the figures of the “mother” or

the “studious schoolgirl.” In this sense, the very act of enunciating these normative representations became a strategy of mass mobilization.

Within this context, the oratorical contest involved more than academic training. It also encompassed instruction in what kind of women they ought to become, how they should participate in politics, and what attitudes they were expected to adopt. Oratorical contests offered a stage on which women could appear in public and speak, seemingly rupturing existing norms of gender and publicity. Yet these events simultaneously harnessed women’s gendered performance for political ends, making them appear to embody the ideal female subject of the new nation.

Participation in oratorical contests lent women’s political speech an aura of legitimacy, as if it had been publicly ratified as opinion. However, the stylized language of these contests fused the rhetoric of “democracy” and developmentalism with traditional gender politics. In doing so, they normalized fragmented political voices, ritualized politics itself, and foreclosed alternative possibilities for student speech. Within such coordinated frameworks, the ideal images and symbols of women were reduced to a limited set of heroic archetypes.

Chapter 4 discovered how, during the USAMGIK period, English oratorical contests were organized as part of the United States' Information operations. These contests were designed to advance the objectives of government-sponsored programs aimed at shaping public opinion. A key point highlighted in the chapter is that the titles of the English oratorical contests were continuously revised in response to significant historical events in Korea and the evolving needs of USIS's information operations. The contests aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the United States while disseminating and reinforcing the concepts of democracy and political freedom as essential components of a democratic society. At the same time, these events served as venues for audience engagement and the collection of public information. Their success was linked to the individual appeal of participating in what was perceived as the

frontlines of intelligence and ideological struggle. Ultimately, the contests reflected not simply a desire for modernity and globalism, but rather a phenomenon in which representations of the contemporary and avant-garde were increasingly reframed through an American-centered ideological lens.

This chapter has also shown how, after the Yŏ-Sun Incident, the youth mobilization formed a tightly controlled apparatus of anti-communist vanguards. Republic of Korea re-drew the boundaries of legitimate political identity, excluding communists and suspected sympathizers from the national community and marking schools as sites where ideological reliability was to be continuously monitored and enforced. Korean Youth Corps and the Student Defense Corps, as a nationwide, quasi-military youth organization, held oratorical contests at national, provincial, and school levels. These contests trained middle and high school students to articulate state-approved narratives of patriotism, national unity, anti-communism, and eventual reunification. Public opinion was thus shaped not only through coercion and purges, but also through repeated, staged performances in which young speakers publicly rehearsed the language of national unity and state-centered anti-communism. By embedding anti-communist nationalism.

The analysis of the oratories during the Korean War shows how young speakers delivered tightly focused anti-communist, patriotic appeals, with manuals describing oratory as a "bullet tongue" or an "atomic bomb of the tongue" in psychological warfare. Even if contemporary critics faulted these speeches as clichéd, pessimistic, and poorly delivered, the contests nonetheless functioned as a key wartime apparatus for producing loyal, militarized citizens and embedding anti-communism in everyday educational practice.

Also, when the Korean War concluded with an armistice, Rhee's anti-armistice stance was less a genuine willingness to restart full-scale war than a calculated bid to turn popular sentiment into diplomatic leverage and domestic power. By tying his consent to an armistice

to a U.S.–ROK Mutual Defense Treaty and expanded military aid, he sought to secure South Korea's position and entrench his own authority. Mass anti-armistice rallies and anti-communist slogans helped discipline internal politics, shut down opposition and inter-Korean dialogue, and deepen division, while casting Korea as the frontline of a global anti-communist struggle, which allowed Rhee to align himself with U.S. strategy and legitimize continued authoritarian rule at home.

The analysis of student oratorical contests in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 shows how the oratorical contest can function as psychological warfare. First, gathering students in one place energized them while prompting a reconsideration of the aims and character of the student movement. By assembling students from regional organizations and allowing them to witness firsthand the spectacle of a unified federation and the grandeur of the event, these contests fostered a heightened sense of belonging among participants. Second, the selection in "contest" form encouraged ideological expression in student speech. The contests served to select winners, thereby canonizing students' ideology. This process played a crucial role in reevaluating and systematizing the political goals of student organizations, which were continually being reconfigured in various federative forms during the post-liberation period.

Third, the contests served as mechanisms of surveillance and discipline. Through the selection of speech manuscripts and the awarding of certificates, student activities were monitored. At the same time, by issuing awards in the name of political figures and organizations, the events officially ascribed roles and identities to students within the nation, legitimizing and sustaining certain behaviors and attitudes. Fourth, these contests functioned as strategic tools for competing over the legitimacy and representational authority of national leadership and ideology. Especially, by drawing in student-based audiences connected to the image of the "student," the events broadcast political agendas through the voices of student participants. In doing so, they promoted discourses authorized and constructed by political figures, presenting

them as the consensus of an emerging national subject. It was particularly significant in an era of low public literacy, when such political messages could not be effectively disseminated through print media and had to be conveyed directly through the spoken word to shape public opinion.

All oratorical contests show how the purpose and function of oratory could be realized only insofar as it was articulated within sanctioned venues, organized by approved institutions, endorsed by sponsoring agencies, and legitimized through judges who selected the winners. Yet what made oratory distinctive was that its language did not appear to be monopolized by power; rather, it was staged in such a way as to seem generated from below. This effect was produced through the interplay of the orator as performer, the audience as participants, and the institutional form of the "contest" itself.

Chapter 5 examined the speeches of the Korean student delegates and their performance within a carefully constructed narrative that emphasized reconciliation among Asian countries, framing their relationship as one of necessary cooperation against the communist threat. Their friendship and alliance were presented as achievements made possible through the Youth Forum, reinforced by the invitation of additional delegates from other Asian countries. Within this narrative, U.S. assistance was portrayed as the indispensable mediator that enabled such reconciliation, while also underscoring America's broader contributions to international peace-making initiatives. Moreover, the portrayal of a global "student's duty" and the representation of peace-making responsibilities drew heavily on the gendered education and symbolic grammar of the U.S. domestic cultural Cold War, positioning international student delegates as agents of world peace. In this framework, the role of Korean students became particularly symbolic: they served as living proof that America's struggle against communism had saved and nurtured the youth of a vulnerable nation. Thus, Korean delegates were tasked not only

with bearing witness to communist aggression but also with actively advocating for Korea's political position on the international stage.

Chapter 6 showed that South Korean postwar anti-communism diplomacy rested less on building a truly international youth movement than on staging one. Through APACL and a series of youth and student conferences, the Rhee regime sought to position Korea as the vanguard of Asian anti-communism, showcase its "development," and mobilize young people as disciplined supporters of the Liberal Party at home. Yet vague agendas, regional frictions, and minimal institutional follow-through meant that these initiatives produced little durable cooperation or organizational depth. Instead, they functioned primarily as political theater and propaganda, carefully choreographed spectacles that impressed foreign visitors, reassured domestic audiences, and folded anti-communism into the everyday experience of Korean youth, while prompting even U.S. observers to question how far APACL had become an extension of Rhee's domestic power project rather than a genuine Pan-Asian front.

The chapter has demonstrated how oratorical contests were increasingly standardized and repetitive, organized in police stations across regions as part of the government's broader propaganda projects. They became central components of events such as the March First Movement commemoration, campaigns against the armistice in the name of "Northward reunification," Liberation Day celebrations, moral education drives, national reforestation campaigns, Traffic Safety Week, and anti-communist youth rallies. Rhee strategically mobilized students to legitimize his authoritarian rule, making it appear as though the themes of student oratory and their collective presence embodied genuine popular support. However, by 1956, criticism began to surface against the excessive state-orchestrated mobilization of students. Events such as rallies, parades, and oratorical contests were increasingly unmasked by reporters, educators, ordinary citizens, and even judges as tightly managed performances,

marked by censorship, favoritism, and scripted results that drained them of any genuine educational or deliberative value.

In the aftermath of April 19, students were recast as the exemplary subjects of democratic revolution through both press narratives and oratorical performances that codified their new political identity. Post-revolution speech contests no longer celebrated Syngman Rhee; instead, they commemorated slain students, denounced dictatorship, and enshrined April 19 as a founding moment of Korean democracy. At the same time, these very speeches worked to rein in student agency, calling for renewed dedication to study, economic rebuilding, and "public morality," and dismissing non-student protests as improper or even as a betrayal of April 19. The legacy of the revolution was therefore double-edged: it anchored student activism at the heart of democratization discourse, even as it was used to restore the ideal of the disciplined, ostensibly apolitical "model student" and to narrow the scope of legitimate protest.

In conclusion, student oratorical contests in Korea acquired the status of national and international symbols, functioning as voices of "anti-communist youth" representation. Student oratory operated merely as the dissemination of coordinated South Korean Cold War ideology, and it came to function as a living testimony. The oratorical contests were formed of patterned narratives, formulaic slogans, and the embodied performance of voice, gesture, and gaze.

The anti-communist event was organized for almost a century, yet it has been considered a history that has been brought to a conclusion. In the Republic of Korea, the Cold War persists, and the anti-communist rhetorical practices of the later years remain further subjects of research.

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