
A Riot, A Rebellion, A Massacre: Remembering the 1948 Jeju Uprising

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“Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past,” wrote George Orwell.¹ The Jeju Uprising of 1948 and how it is remembered is a clear example of this truism. Any mention of the Jeju Uprising was illegal in South Korea until the early 2000’s. Those who spoke out risked heavy penalties, including jail time and torture. In the year 2000, after nearly fifty years of silence, South Korea’s president, Kim Dae-jung, opened up discussion on the topic of the Jeju Uprising and established Korea’s first Truth and Reconciliation committee. This essay describes how South Korea controlled the official memory of the Jeju Uprising through textbook revision and language. That control, in turn, has fundamentally shaped both memory and history in South Korea.

Methodology

This study assumes that memory is created. It works under the premise that people choose what they commit to memory and what they forget. In terms of the Jeju Uprising, this approach differs from other authors on the topic because it focuses less on placing blame on any of the involved parties, and more on how the experience is remembered and felt by Zainichi Koreans (Koreans living in Japan), North Koreans, and, most importantly for this paper, South Koreans. There have been previous approaches to establishing a narrative history of the Jeju Uprising, but many fall back on trying to establish the so-called victims and aggressors of the event. For example, Bruce Cumings does an excellent job of constructing a narrative of the Jeju Uprising in his book *The Korean War: A History*, but he places blame on the United States and United States controlled South Korean forces.² I aim to avoid the possibility of removing Koreans from Korean history, and will not be focusing on establishing blame. To do this I use a framework for connecting memory to historical studies. This framework is the following: to recognize the difficulties of establishing a clear consensus of the narrative, to recognize that collective memory can be changed, and, after doing this, to find a way to establish a historical narrative with these differing, changing sources.³

Understanding Jeju

Undeniably, the process of getting to an uprising on the scale of Jeju's in 1948 is one that can be linked far back in Korean history.⁴ With that caveat, I will specifically draw from the period of 1900-1945, acknowledging that Jeju’s early history did impact why it chose to rise in armed protest in 1948. The late precolonial Korean period and Korean colonial period (1900–1945) is the most

¹ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949 repr., New York: Everyman's Library Classics, 1987), 260.

² Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2010), 101-147.

³ Patrick H. Hutton, “Memories of Trauma: Problems of Interpretation,” *History and Theory* 43, no. 2 (2004): 250.

⁴ John Merrill “The Cheju-Do Rebellion,” *The Journal of Korean Studies* 2 (1980): 139-197. Merrill argues that the foundation for the Jeju Uprising can be traced as far back as the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392) while Jeju was still an independent tribute state with the name Tamna, and says that Jeju develops a “tradition of rebellion.”

fitting time period from which to understand this event. In the colonial period, the foundations for the ideas and economic circumstances that led to the uprising are most clearly established.

By 1901, Catholicism, Japanese attempts at developing industries, and a new tax office were established on the island of Jeju. These factors spurred the growth of anti-foreign sentiment and helped escalate the descent into poverty for the islanders. The new tax burden on Jeju was nearly 50% on all types of earnings for the islanders. In further efforts to raise money from Jeju, communal lands and government properties were taken and auctioned off. Many of the new Catholic arrivals benefited from the addition of a tax office in the form of jobs and from land auctions. Native islanders associated Catholics with feelings of economic exploitation. These sentiments led to the rise of militia groups on the island. Japanese traders, much like the islanders, were opposed to the Catholics on the island. Both groups had seen their own economic interests undercut by the new Catholic arrivals to Jeju. The Japanese owner of a fish processing company named Kosen Ryujuro was instrumental in aiding these various militia groups. He supplied them with swords and rifles and encouraged the killing of foreign Catholics and converts. Between April and May of 1901, islanders, spurred on by their own grievances and the assistance of the Japanese traders on the island, launched a massive rebellion that ultimately helped reinforce resistance to mainland Korean rule.⁵ This also may have helped establish a willingness on Jeju to absorb ideas from Japan.

Mainland Korea for most of Jeju's history left the island alone. In contrast to mainland Korea, Japanese colonizers were more hands on. The islanders showed noticeably little resistance to Japanese rule. Japan did not look down upon the residents of Jeju with as much disdain as mainland Korea. To the Japanese, the islanders were regarded as naïve and hardworking. The Japanese also encouraged the islanders' separatist tendencies. However, Japan's hands-on approach made Jeju exceedingly poor during the colonial period. It was under the Japanese that the island modernized, but modernization on Jeju was lopsided and primarily for Japanese interests.⁶ The Japanese colonial government built many factories and industries on Jeju, but island residents either did not possess the needed skills or were not being hired for the jobs created by those factories due to a preference for Japanese workers.⁷ The island became heavily militarized during the colonial period, and at one point, there were more Japanese military personnel than islanders. Japanese immigration was also highly encouraged. This means that there was never a shortage of Japanese citizens seeking work. Japanese modernization on the island also resulted in many islanders losing their land, thus contributing to unemployment. Due to the lopsided nature of modernization, many Jeju residents were unable to find work on the island and did not have the means to support themselves. The jobs available to the islanders did not provide enough to offset massive unemployment. This lack of work coupled with overpopulation resulted in massive migration during the colonial period. By 1938, approximately 150,000 people had left the island. Most of the residents went to Japan or Manchuria to find work.⁸ These groups would become a noticeably large source of information since they were never under the threat of punishment for speaking about the Uprising in the same way as South Koreans. The poverty of the colonial period followed Jeju residents into the liberation era. For comparison, in 1945, prior to liberation, Korea had a real wage per-capita income of 103 USD. By December 1947, shortly before the Uprising, this had sunk to around 30 USD.⁹ With Jeju being

⁵ Ibid, 141-145.

⁶ Ibid, 141-142, 148-150.

⁷ Betty L. King, "Japanese Colonialism and Korean Economic Development 1910-1945," *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia* (March 13, 1975): 18-20, <http://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-13-03-1975/king-japanese-colonialism-korean-economic-development.pdf>.

⁸ Merrill, 148.

⁹ Young-Tae Jung, "The Rise of the Cold War and Labor Movements in South Korea, 1945-1948," *Asian Perspective* 13, no. 1 (1989): 151-71.

possibly even poorer than 30 USD per capita in 1948, it is not hard to imagine why some moved towards communism or socialism in hopes of life betterment.

While the Japanese officially did not approve of communism or socialism, it was through Japan's more hands-on approach that Jeju residents learned of socialism. Many on the island were considered left-leaning, usually in this context meaning socialist or communist. So-called socialists and communists would heavily play into the Peoples' Committees that formed in the aftermath of liberation from Japan. Attraction to communism and socialism developed into a social force on the island. For instance, in 1931, self-proclaimed socialists held one of the few notable protests against Japanese colonial rule on the island after being denied diplomas due to holding what the Japanese viewed as socialist beliefs. The idea that these islanders were socialists or communists plays heavily into the memory of the Uprising. This idea still heavily influences how some, mostly older and conservative, South Koreans viewed the event. After gaining liberation from the Japanese, and having many of the people that were imprisoned for being socialists or communists released, islanders were able to talk about these ideas with local leftist leaders. Furthermore, at this point, islanders were also able to compare how the Soviet Union and the United States were treating their respective halves of Korea. The various Peoples' Committees that formed after Korean liberation and before the Korean War would ultimately fall under the banner of the Communist South Korean Labor Party (SKLP) and gain widespread support and prominence on the island. Once this organization was in place, the Jeju Peoples' Committees began making demands for becoming a separate province. The Jeju islanders' communist-inspired push for independence had a heavy influence on the Uprising.¹⁰

Before pushing for independence, the Peoples' Committees (henceforth known as the SKLP) had a large population problem to contend with. After the Japanese defeat in World War II, many of the islanders who had left Jeju in search of work returned. This mass reverse migration resulted in the population doubling in a matter of months.¹¹ The poor conditions these people left had not improved during their absence, and the population boom exacerbated poverty. There were fewer jobs, lower wages, and a major rice shortage.¹² A rice shortage in Korea, while physically trying, was also psychologically trying. In Korean, the word for rice is commonly used in place of the words meal or food.¹³ A shortage of rice literally meant that many poorer South Koreans were not eating.¹⁴ Taking advantage of the massive population spike and the increased burden of poverty, the SKLP took charge. The SKLP would remain the de-facto government of the island until it was made into an independent province of South Korea with U.S. Army Lt. General John R. Hodge in charge of the new top layer of government. It was with the addition of General Hodge who viewed communism and the SKLP as an enemy, that some of the ideological tensions on Jeju really began developing.¹⁵

¹⁰ Merrill, 148-149.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Young-Tae Jong, "The Rise of the Cold War and Labor Movements in South Korea, 1945-1948," *Asian Perspective* 13, no. 1 (1989): 151-71.

¹³ "밥 : 네이버 영어사전 검색결과," *NAVER Dictionary*, accessed November 15, 2016, <http://endic.naver.com/search.nhn?sLn=kr&searchOption=all&query=%EB%B0%A5>.

As a secondary definition for 밥 or rice, Naver uses the word "nosh" and in another example uses the word "meal." In the usage examples it is used in a way that indicates eating, but not eating rice specifically.

¹⁴ Jung.

¹⁵ Merrill, "The Cheju-Do Rebellion."

Buildup to an Uprising

On March 1, 1947, the anniversary of the March 1 Independence Movement of 1919, the SKLP called for a peaceful protest against elections that were to take place in the southern half of Korea. This call for a peaceful protest was against the U.S. issued direct order that only one official, state-sponsored celebration of the March 1 Independence Movement was to occur. The American and Korean forces attempted to breakup peacefully protesting groups who were thus far meeting in school playgrounds. This action moved the protests into the streets.¹⁶ It was then that the police officers, reportedly under U.S. orders, open fired on the protesters. Six islanders were killed while many more were wounded. The citizens of Jeju reeled at the amount of people detained for a peaceful protest and protested again, peacefully, on March 10. These second protesters were again shot down by police officers under U.S. control, and many more were arrested. This second shooting resulted in Jeju natives being removed from the police force, being replaced with more anti-communist mainlanders, and the resignation of the governor in protest.¹⁷

On March 16th, 1947, Jeju citizens found three bodies floating in a river. The bodies belonged to captured protesters from a little over two weeks before. Their cause of death was torture. The torturers, the American and Korean police forces, were not brought to trial, but 328 civilians were.¹⁸ After SKLP's removal from power, and the trial of the civilians, rightist groups were sent in to fill the power void and maintain order as the United States wanted it. Rightist groups are in this context, anti-communist, pro-United States Korean men mostly from northern Korea. The most prominent of these was the Northwest Youth Group (NWYG).¹⁹ The NWYG was primarily made up of young men who had been driven out of their homes in northern Korea. Fueled by resentment, the NWYG indiscriminately attacked Jeju residents as a way to express anger and “get back” at communists. Coupled with their rage was the promise of land if they helped U.S. troops subdue Jeju residents. NWYG members were unpaid and were warned against terrorizing the island.²⁰ The on-going rice shortage was worsened by these groups. By the end of 1947, unauthorized rice taxation was five times higher than official taxation. For many, the Jeju Uprising amounted to a protest against extreme rightists, in particular the NWYG, on the island. Extreme right leaders controlled food rationing, imprisoned many islanders in small cells, and attacked civilians believed to be communist or communist sympathizers.²¹

Most accounts identify the residents of Jeju as leftists. Most islanders supported the SKLP, and by 1948 approximately 20% of the islanders were somehow linked to the SKLP.²² While impressive, it is worth noting, however, the party only had about 400 core supporters. The Jeju branch of the SKLP had even fewer guns than core supporters.²³ The SKLP was against the division of Korea, but not necessarily against democracy. There is very little indication that this group on Jeju opposed democracy in Korea. The SKLP decided to protest the 1948 May elections in which Syngman Rhee, due to American interference, ran unopposed.²⁴ The elections involved only the southern half of the peninsula and would divide the country in half. Residents of Jeju and the SKLP

¹⁶ Ibid, 153.

¹⁷ George N. Katsiaficas, *Asia's Unknown Uprisings: South Korean Social Movements in the 20th Century* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 92.

¹⁸ Ibid., 92-93.

¹⁹ There are no less than four ways to translate the name of this group. Other terms include Northwest Youth League, Northwest Youth Corp, and Seobuk Young Men's Association. Northwest Youth Group was chosen for convenience.

²⁰ Cumings, 123.

²¹ Ibid, 122-124.

²² Katsiaficas, 93.

²³ Merrill, 159.

²⁴ “Reds Will Make US Troops Quit Korea, They Say,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 9, 1948.

strongly opposed this division. Little evidence exists of opposition to a democratic system on the island. The last protest in April 1948 is the one known as the Jeju Uprising.

The Jeju Uprising

On April 3, 1948, the SKLP rose in armed struggle to protest the South Korean elections and to demand a halt to police aggression on the island. In hopes that it would lead to a wider Korean protest, islanders cut phone cables, destroyed railroads, and attacked police stations. Members distributed leaflets and demonstrated. The uprising would officially last from 1948 to 1954, after the conclusion of the Korean War. The protesters promoted reunification, independence, and “save-the-nation ideas.”²⁵ To the detriment of the protesters, rumors quickly circulated that they were North Korean communists, corrupt mainland butchers, or Japanese communists. These rumors were picked up by Korean newspapers. The South Korean government and American military forces used these rumors to justify a hardline stance against the protesters.²⁶ Many of the police, all mainlanders, viewed a deployment to Jeju as “undesirable” and sought to end the uprising quickly.²⁷ The SKLP used guerrilla tactics and fled to Mt. Halla to hide from government retaliation. Police forces captured towns and went house-to-house rooting out communist sympathizers. Newspapers branded guerrilla forces “armed rioters.”²⁸ Later, this term “riot” came back into play in South Korea during the textbook revision controversy and became a sore spot for South Koreans on both sides of the debate on how to teach the Jeju Uprising. As elections grew closer, guerrilla attacks increased. The mainland in response to the uprising sent around 1,700 military forces and around 10,000 people were detained between the months of March and May. The U.S. ordered a “scorched Earth” policy against the guerrilla forces.²⁹ This policy would result in 30,000 islanders being killed or going missing and a large unknown number of residents fleeing the island for places like Japan. Of 400 villages on the island, only 170 remained by the end of the violence.³⁰ The islanders that go to Japan, later to be known as Zainichi Koreans, provided unique and sometimes horrifying accounts of the Jeju Uprising during the investigation conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

Remembering Jeju

Currently, there is no clear-cut consensus on the Jeju Uprising. In selecting five randomly chosen articles from the *Korea Times* online, one can find at least four different names for the event.³¹ With conservatives claiming the Uprising has been given undue importance and liberals claiming that it was actually a pro-democracy event, the status of Jeju is less clear than ever.³² This uncertainty is due in part to the fact that speaking out about the event was illegal in South Korea until 2001. Those who broke this law were subject to jail time and in some cases torture.

The memory of the Jeju Uprising is different depending on what group is remembering it. A notable group of survivors are the Zainichi Koreans, who located in Osaka, Japan, after having fled

²⁵ “The Jeju 4·3 Incident Investigation Report,” 210, accessed September 27, 2016, http://www.jeju43peace.or.kr/report_eng.pdf.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 211-213.

²⁷ Merrill, 159.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

²⁹ Katsiaticas, 94.

³⁰ Cumings, 129-130.

³¹ On Korean Times.com, I found the Uprising labeled as “Jeju Riot,” “4-3 Incident,” “Jeju Uprising,” “Jeju April 3 Uprising of 1948,” and “Jeju Revolt.”

³² “An out-of-Context Society,” *Koreatimes*, June 26, 2014, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/11/137_159867.html.

the chaos. These survivors are so numerous that Tsuruhasi in Osaka has been dubbed “Jeju in Japan.” Travel for residents of Jeju to Osaka was fairly easy, especially during the colonial period. It was a two-day journey and the cost was only half the cost of a bag of rice. Osaka at the time was seen as Japan’s industrial heartland. Work in Japan paid low wages, but it allowed islanders to save money and help the economy of Jeju. Oftentimes islanders would bring over their entire families and educate their children in Japan. Jeju would have one of the most educated populations in Korea during the colonial period due to this exchange. It was also through this mass migration during the colonial period and after that islanders helped islanders understand new ideologies that had been brought over like socialism.³³ It is not odd that once Jeju fell on hard and violent times that many would go to Osaka, because, as history shows, it was almost always a trip that was beneficial for the traveler.

For Zainichi Koreans, talking about the event was never outright banned as it was for South Koreans. It is perhaps the reason why the Truth and Reconciliation Committee quotes a notable number of Japan-based survivors in its findings. The search for understanding has been just as persistent for this group as it is for Jeju residents and South Korean mainlanders. One Korean Japanese scholar, Sonia Ryang, has detailed violent and traumatic accounts of people from her childhood. Her article “Reading Volcano Island: In the Sixty-Fifth Year of the Jeju 4.3 Uprising,” recounts violent details that did not appear in English language sources or in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.³⁴ Nor did some of these violent details appear in Korean news articles examined for this study. However, the fact that Ryang, with a connection to Jeju, included these details reveals much about how the event was remembered and taught. Ryang in particular hits on the belief that mainlanders view Jeju residents as lesser beings, “considered even lower than vermin,” and that because of this they were “deserving to be exterminated.”³⁵ For those in Japan, the Jeju Uprising was remembered as a violent, sadistic slaughter that reflected the view that mainlanders were outsiders that looked down upon the islanders.

For South Koreans and Jeju residents especially, figuring out how to remember the uprising is more complex. Due to the 50 year silence regarding the event, South Korea must tackle numerous issues that come from forgetting. Jeju residents had lived in fear of being branded communists or communist sympathizers due to the uprising, and many chose to forget the events that occurred in order to move forward.³⁶ For South Koreans, uncertainty about whether or not the uprising should be remembered and taught and how it should be taught surfaced under current president Park Geun-Hye, the daughter of dictator Park Chun-Hee. Park decided that South Korea needed a single state history textbook in order to correct the perceived errors of the supposedly “too liberal” textbooks on the market.³⁷ Until March 2017, the start of the school year in Korea, South Korean middle and high schools will be allowed to pick from eight different history textbooks. Each text book was approved by the Ministry of Education and were independently created, largely but not entirely without government interference. Once the new state sponsored text book is in place, the other eight text books will no longer be used. They will be replaced with a text book coincidentally named the “Correct History Textbook.”³⁸ This has been a hotly contested decision inspiring disdain both inside and outside of Korea. A source of contention is the lack of transparency. The academics

³³ “The Jeju 4·3 Incident Investigation Report,” 81–82.

³⁴ Sonia Ryang, “Reading Volcano Island: In the Sixty-Fifth Year of the Jeju 4.3 Uprising,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, accessed November 3, 2016, <http://apjif.org/2013/11/36/Sonia-Ryang/3995/article.html>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁶ “Islanders Still Mourn April 3 Massacre - JEJU WEEKLY,” <http://www.jeuweekly.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=657>, [accessed 27 September 2106].

³⁷ “Left-Leaning Textbooks to Be Revised,” *Koreatimes*, September 22, 2008, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/11/113_31438.html.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

behind the project were originally kept anonymous.³⁹ With this text book controversy, the legacy of the Jeju Uprising is up for debate. Yonhap News, describing the textbook controversy, labeled the Jeju Uprising, alongside the Korean War, one of the “most important incidents” in modern Korean history.⁴⁰ With the two contrasting views between liberals and conservatives, it becomes clear that the memory of Jeju impacts how South Korea sees itself and its actions.

Starting in 2000, South Koreans could legally begin deciding how to remember Jeju. For the first time, they could openly talk about the events that took place on Jeju Island in 1948–1949, but many were still too scared to do so. For a long time, there was a stigma against those associated with the Uprising in South Korea. Many suffered from the biases that come from “guilt-by-association.” Kim Byeong-jong in his testimony describes for the Truth and Reconciliation Committee how he was not allowed to enter into the Korean Military Academy due to his Jeju origins despite the fact he was only 12 when the Uprising occurred and had no other notable links to communism. At the time of the report, he had moved to Osaka, but he had grown up in Jeju until adulthood.⁴¹ Why would a person with no obvious connections to the Uprising other than having lived through it be denied acceptance into the Korean Military Academy? I believe part of this is due to lasting Cold War tensions between North and South Korea. North and South Korea are technically at war even today.

In the early 2000's, Korea established a Truth and Reconciliation Committee in order to learn the truth about the Uprising. Upon the conclusion of the fact-finding mission, the South Korean government issued a formal apology. It further sought to “restore honor” to the victims of the Uprising, but arguably the damage was already done for many. Still, the Truth Commission defined the event as the “brutal suppression by the Korean government against armed rebellion in Jeju.”⁴² This contrasts with the previous official narrative that it had been a pro-communist event. The commission further established that approximately 1/10 of the island's population had been killed or gone missing and that over half of the island's villages had been destroyed in the chaos.⁴³ An unknown number of Koreans fled to Japan during the uprising. Following the results of the commission, the last question for South Korea is to find a suitable name for the incident. For South Koreans, the name of the Uprising means a lot. The textbook controversy mostly revolves around the terms used to name the Jeju Uprising. In the conservative textbook released in 2008, “Alternative Textbook: Korea’s Modern History,” the uprising is referred to as merely a “riot.” The textbook also says the so-called riot was instigated by communists as opposed to protesters calling for independence and democracy.⁴⁴ The view of the uprising as a communist event exists in English scholarship and on both sides of the DMZ. North Korea has made use of Jeju to help solidify the position of its newest leader, Kim Jong-Un. This move has left Jeju residents worried that the North Koreans may try to play up the uprising on Jeju as a failed communist revolution.⁴⁵ The truth commission also made mention of communist roots of the Uprising. The Jeju branch of the South Korean Labor Party was initially a Peoples’ Committee. In English scholarship, this is usually the term used. However, in the truth finding report by the South Korean government, there is mention that the Jeju group that became part of the South Korean Labor Party was called “Jeju Committee

³⁹ Se-wong Koo, “South Korea’s Textbook Whitewash,” *The New York Times*, November 12, 2015.

⁴⁰ “S. Korea Locked in History Textbook Dispute,” *Yonhap News Agency*, [accessed November 14, 2016], <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/feature/2015/09/15/85/0900000000AEN20150915004500315F.html>.

⁴¹ “The Jeju 4·3 Incident Investigation Report,” 411-12.

⁴² “The Jeju 4·3 Incident Investigation Report.” Accessed September 27, 2016. http://www.jeju43peace.or.kr/report_eng.pdf.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “Dispute Erupts Over Right-Wing Textbook,” *Koreatimes*, March 24, 2008, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/11/113_21241.html.

⁴⁵ “Kim Jong-Un’s Jeju Blood Confirmed - JEJU WEEKLY,” accessed November 13, 2016, <http://www.jejuweekly.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=3852>.

of the Korean Communist Party.”⁴⁶ While a seemingly minor detail at first, it plays into a much larger Korea-wide debate about the origins of the uprising and how it is to be remembered. Others argue that most of the protesters were unsure of what communism was, and that the people were protesting against tyrannical government rule.⁴⁷ I believe that the residents of Jeju knew what communism was, but they were not likely faithful adherents to the ideology. They were more interested in being left to their own affairs. What is certain is that the idea of communism plays heavily into how Koreans abroad and at home remember the event. It speaks to much deeper biases. The terminology makes it easier for Koreans on both sides of the political spectrum to acknowledge or downplay the uprising. What is certain is that this event was a massive massacre that is second only to the Korean War and that it must be remembered.⁴⁸

Conclusion

For South Koreans, the legacy of the Cold War and ongoing tensions with their communist neighbors play heavily into the memory of Jeju. Deep abiding distaste for communism and the fact that the Jeju Uprising was put together by the SKLP, a communist group, complicates all efforts to come to grips with what happened. I first believe that many liberal South Koreans will have to reconcile that this group was communist in at least name. Many liberal South Koreans feel like they must acknowledge this event as one that was pro-independence and pro-democracy. This stance is not without merit, but the other half must be recognized. On the other side, Conservatives must acknowledge that this Uprising was communist mostly in name only. Until South Koreans on both sides can reconcile preconceived notions about communism as inherently evil, there will be a struggle to remember the Uprising as an Uprising instead of as a “riot,” which is fundamental to remembering the event. If South Korea allows the government to alter textbooks and diminish the Uprising there is nothing to stop the government from altering other important historical events. The event must remain in Korean memory both on the mainland and abroad, but there needs to be further reconciliation in order for everyone to move on. Until this further reconciliation happens, South Korea—and by extension the diaspora and North Korea—will continue to struggle to understand the event.

⁴⁶ “The Jeju 4·3 Incident Investigation Report,” 111.

⁴⁷ Ryang.

⁴⁸ “S. Korea Locked in History Textbook Dispute.”

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/09/15/85/030200000AEN20150915004500315F.html>