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Living with the Enemies: Japanese Imperialism, Protestant Christianity, and Marxist Socialism in Colonial Korea, 1919–1945

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Abstract: During the Korean War, conflicts between right-wing Protestants and radical socialists escalated and erupted into massacres, killing thousands of Korean civilians. Such extreme violence and tumultuous events afterwards—including Korea’s division into two separate states and the Cold War system—eclipsed the imbricated interactions between Protestant Christianity and socialism under Japanese colonial rule. While focusing on Korean Protestantism and socialism to probe their contest and compromise for survival, this article traces the tripartite relationship among the followers of Protestant Christianity, Marxist socialism, and Japanese imperialism as it evolved throughout colonial Korea between 1910 and 1945. These 35 years comprised a period of multiple possibilities for interaction among Korean Protestants, socialists, and Japanese authorities in the changing global environment. The international organizations with which they were associated influenced Korean Protestants and Marxist socialists while facing the common crisis of Japan’s assimilation. Namely, the Korean Protestant churches affiliated with Western missionaries’ denomination headquarters in their home countries and world Christian conferences, while the Korean socialists allied with Moscow’s Comintern and other radical political movements abroad. Within this broader context, these two religious and ideological forces competed for supremacy, cooperated in a joint struggle against the colonial regime, and antagonized each other over their divergent worldviews. By examining their complicated tripartite relationship, this essay comprehensively depicts the dynamic history of the Western-derived religious and political doctrines meeting a non-Western empire in a foreign land.

Keywords: Japanese Empire; Protestant Christianity; Marxist socialism; colonial Korea



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1. Introduction

The Guest, a novel by Hwang (2008), is an insightful commentary on the aftermath of the massacre of 35,000 civilians, which erupted in October 1950 during the Korean War (1950–1953) in Sinch’ŏn (a small town in present-day North Korea). When the protagonist, Reverend Ryu Yosŏp, visits his home town, Sinch’ŏn, for the first time in half a century, he speaks with specters of the massacre’s victims, thus facing the past horror and wounds left behind. Several days before Yosŏp departs for Sinch’ŏn, his older brother, Ryu Yohan, suddenly dies and returns as a ghost, haunting him until Yosŏp atones for Yohan’s guilt. In August 1945, when Korea gained independence from Japanese colonial rule, Yohan was a wealthy landowner and a chief member of the local Christian Youth League. He confronted the Communist Party and ultimately led the infamous massacre of the communists in Sinch’ŏn. Caught between the living and the dead, Yosŏp shudders as he hears the voices of the spirits of Yohan’s victims. The novel depicts Koreans pitted against one another by two indigenized outsiders—Protestants and communists—and seeks the possibility of reconciliation between them to transcend that division.

While Hwang’s novel focuses on the Sinch’ŏn Massacre through an imaginative retelling of the brothers’ story, this article reveals a more complex reality; it traces the tripartite relationship among the followers of Protestant Christianity (개신교, 改新教), Marxist socialism (사회주의, 社會主義), and Japanese imperialism as it evolved throughout

colonial Korea (1910–1945).¹ These 35 years comprised a period of multiple possibilities for interaction among Korean Protestants, socialists, and Japanese authorities. Extreme violence, such as the Sinch'ŏn Massacre, was not unavoidable and can be understood with greater nuance by exploring the fluid patterns of the three agents' engagement that constituted colonial Korea's intellectual and religious culture.

Since the 1980s, many scholars have examined Protestant Christianity's development and influence on modern Korean society. These studies cover a range of topics, from investigating how Protestantism attracted myriad followers across the country through the extensive revival rallies of the 1900s, (Yi 2011) to the contributions made by key actors (including Western missionaries, women, and rural converts), to the formation of early Korean Protestant churches (Kim 2014; Choi 2009). More recently, historians have explored the indigenization of evangelical Christianity and its ties to Korean nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century (Oak 2015; Baker 1998; Chang 2001). Notably, studies focusing on Korea's colonial period scrutinize shifting church–state relations and the extreme suffering experienced by Korean Christians who refused to participate in the mandatory Shintō shrine worship during the final years of Japanese rule (Kang 2005; Kim 1997; Yun 2020). Although a few scholars (primarily Korean) discussed the rise of socialism and Korean Protestants' response, more systematic research is needed—specifically in the Euro-American academic conversation. In particular, there is a dearth of analysis about how these two forces interacted with each other in relation to the Japanese colonial forces (Kim 1996; Ch'oe 2018).

This article seeks to enhance scholarly attention on Korean socio-religious history by illuminating the following points: how Korean Protestants viewed, adopted, or resisted socialism when it increasingly mesmerized Korean elites throughout the 1920s and 1930s; how that secular ideology and its Korean adherents influenced their Protestant counterparts; and how the Japanese authorities reacted to Korean converts and socialists in concert with Japan's changing international position and its assimilation policy. I argue that the three parties—Korean Protestants, Marxist socialists, and Japanese colonizers—were constantly negotiating their presence on the peninsula to achieve their disparate visions of the world. Korean evangelists sought to deliver and spread the Gospel message, thereby creating Protestant adherents, while Korean socialists envisioned an entirely new world via proletarian revolution. In contrast, Japanese imperialists aspired to sustain the colonial structure that served their particular politico-economic ends.

One should not assume that the conflict among the three entities maintained their parity in power throughout the colonial period. Indeed, the Government-General of Korea (GGK) overwhelmed Korean Protestants and socialists; it enacted laws and policies to regulate their activities, punished violators, and even crushed mission schools and communist organizations during the late 1930s when they disobeyed the authorities. However, Korean Protestants and socialists posed severe security threats to the regime because they were the two largest groups that could instigate popular movements, thereby disrupting the colonial order. Despite using disciplinary apparatuses such as surveillance, censorship, and enforcement of Shintō rituals, the GGK could not practically “convert” all Protestants and socialists into the emperor's loyal subjects.

While focusing on the complicated history of the three agents in colonial Korea, this essay foregrounds Korean Protestantism and Marxist socialism to probe how they competed for supremacy and intertwined with the global environment. Facing the common crisis of Japan's assimilation, Korean Protestants and socialists cooperated for a short time in a joint struggle against the colonial regime. However, they antagonized each other over their divergent worldviews, influenced by foreign organizations with which they were associated. Namely, Korean Protestant churches affiliated with Western missionaries' headquarters in their home countries (e.g., the United States) and world Christian conferences, while Korean socialists allied with Moscow's Comintern and other radical political movements abroad. These international interactions helped shape many Korean Protestants' views of sociopolitical reform and socialists' perceptions of religion: Protestant leaders kept with the latest global trends of theology, and Korean leftists inherited earlier Western Marxists'

anti-Christian ideas. Within this broader context, friction between Korean Protestants and socialists escalated into irreversible opposition against each other under unique historical circumstances, particularly the Great Depression and Asia–Pacific War (1937–1945). These events led imperial Japan to tighten its hold on the anti-colonial forces and mobilize them for its war effort. Therefore, by examining the dynamic relationship of the colonial authorities, Korean Protestants, and Marxist socialists, this study shows how adherents of the Western-derived religious and political doctrines intersected with each other and a non-Western empire in a foreign land in the rapidly shifting geopolitical context of the period.

2. Korean Protestantism in the Early 1920s: The Communist Wave and Churches in Crisis

The March First Movement of 1919, the most significant popular protest during the colonial era, marked a decisive turning point in Korea under Japanese occupation. For nearly a decade after Japan annexed Korea in 1910, the Government-General of Korea (GGK) adopted “military rule” (*budan seiji*), which suppressed Koreans’ civil rights, denying them the freedoms of political participation, assembly, and speech, and the gendarmerie flogged people daily as a form of control and punishment. Dissatisfied with Japan’s conspicuous presence and harsh colonial policies, thousands of Koreans flooded the streets, demanding independence. Although the peaceful demonstration was swiftly met with the government’s bloody crackdown, Koreans’ concerted expression of anger toward imperial Japan helped inaugurate an era of more conciliatory “cultural rule” (*bunka seiji*) in the 1920s. The third Governor-General Saitō Makoto (1858–1936), who took office in September 1919, commenced administrative reforms and relaxed censorship. Subsequently, the GGK installed a new police system, Koreans created the vernacular press, and social groups (e.g., labor unions, study circles, and tenant associations) began to flourish (Caprio 2009, pp. 111–40).

The nationwide protest helped establish Korean Protestantism as a patriotic, national religion because church communities across the country provided numerous activists and organizational bases. Initially, most Western missionaries wanted to remain politically neutral, disentangling themselves and their Korean congregations from the socio-political turmoil; they believed that partisanship would damage their relationship with authorities and jeopardize their mission work. However, in April 1919, when the Japanese police committed brutal crimes—such as the Cheamni massacre in which they locked twenty-nine Koreans in a village church near the city of Suwŏn and burned them to death—and the atrocities became known to the public, Western missionaries were enraged and immediately denounced the government. Political neutrality was no longer possible.

In a petition submitted to the GGK, the American Methodist missionary Bliss W. Billings (1881–1969) wrote: “We cannot suppress our resentment brewing in our hearts because innocent Korean elders, women, and unarmed civilians who joined the rallies suffered tremendously. We strongly condemn the way government treated Koreans” (Billings [1919] 1996, p. 168). Statistics further demonstrate Korean Protestants’ significant involvement in the demonstration: out of 19,525 persons arrested in connection with the protests, 3371 were evangelicals—nearly 20 percent of the total. This number was impressive, considering that Protestants had constituted only 1 percent of the Korean population at the time (Lee 2010, p. 43). Moreover, such engagements helped link Protestant churches and Korean nationalism, “which had earlier been called into question by the church’s opposition to armed resistance and the willingness of missionaries especially to work with the Japanese” (Kim and Kim 2015, p. 124).

For imperial Japan, the Korean Protestants’ participation posed a grave threat to the colonial order. Thus, evangelical churches had to come under the government’s strict control. Before the March First Movement, the GGK had instituted a series of measures, including the Chōsen Education Code (1911), Regulations on Proselytization (1915), and the Revised Private School Ordinance (1915), all designed to restrict Koreans’ religious activities. In particular, the Revised Private School Ordinance targeted Korean Protestantism, forbidding church-affiliated schools from offering religious education or performing rituals;

the ordinance's pretext was "cultivating a sense of national identity for the prosperity and development of the empire" (Komatsu 1916, p. 15). While maintaining these coercive strategies, the new Governor-General Saitō simultaneously appeased Korean evangelical churches and engaged them more effectively. Saitō enacted several important policies, including a streamlined permit process for new chapel construction and the incorporation of church organizations. He also addressed missionaries' concerns regarding church administration and proselytization.

While such changes ensured a more stable Christian ministry than had been possible beforehand, they nonetheless induced Korean Protestants to distance themselves from nationalist politics and concentrate on spiritual duties within only the church's purview. After the protests were foiled and the anti-imperial fervor that had once driven the masses turned into frustration, many Korean Protestants "began to retreat from painful reality and to look for personal security and consolation." As Chung-Shin Park sharply points out, "their otherworldly theology"—based on Messianic eschatology and millennialism—"became a religious justification for their escapist political stand" (Park 2003, p. 66). Following the March First Movement, many disenchanted Koreans—those who had depended on the Protestant churches and had longed for national independence—were disappointed when Korean evangelicals positioned themselves as politically neutral. In response, many searched for alternatives to shape Korea's fate (Park 2003, p. 136).

Communism, for many, promised to fill the gap created by the evangelical community's neutrality. Indeed, for Koreans, "communism seemed a new hope . . . to gain revolutionary strength" and emerged as "the solution of age-old social problems and stratification" (Suh 1967, p. 132). Fascinated by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, some Korean nationalists working in Siberia, Manchuria, and Japan adopted the promising ideology.² Communism then penetrated rapidly and deeply into colonial Korea, catalyzing the founding of a communist party within only a few years. Furthermore, many Korean intellectuals—frustrated with U. S. President Woodrow Wilson's (1856–1924) principle of self-determination because it did not restore Korean sovereignty after World War I—greatly welcomed communism or, more broadly, radical socialist ideas (Im 2003, p. 88). At the Second Comintern Congress in July 1920, Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) referenced African Americans in the Theses on the National and Colonial Question, of which Clause 9 states that "all communist parties must directly support the revolutionary movement among the nations that are dependent and do not have equal rights . . . and in the colonies" (Riddell 1991, p. 364). For colonized Koreans, Lenin's pledge signaled the Comintern's commitment to the proletarian class. It sounded like, as the Korean historian Pak Ŭnsik (1859–1925) wrote, "news in roaring spring" for "the start of a world innovation" (Pak 1946, p. 59).

Socialism's adherents viewing Christianity as an obstacle to pioneering a new era pressured Korean Protestants; most Korean socialists accepted earlier Western Marxists' anti-Christian views. Despite the long history of conflict between Christianity and revolutionary ideas, particularly in Europe, they did not always antagonize each other. During the Roman Empire's decline, as political scientist K. Mathew Kurian says, early Christianity was "the motive force of enslaved and oppressed people in their fight against class oppression and exploitation." However, given the institutionalization of Christianity as a church system whose "clergy obtained a monopoly on intellectual education" during the Middle Ages, it began to treat "revolutionary doctrines which attempted to fight feudalism . . . as theological heresies." According to Kurian, in France after the 1789 Revolution, "the bourgeoisie which [had] once [been] the champion of atheism and free thinking . . . retreat[ed]" and harnessed religion to retain their class power in the new capitalist economy (Kurian 1974, pp. 3–6). "For a society of commodity producers," Karl Marx wrote, "Christianity with its religious cult of man in the abstract, more particularly in its bourgeois development . . . is the most fitting form of religion" (Marx 1990, p. 172). Marx also asserted that "religion is only the illusory sun," and "the critique of religion disillusion[s] man so that he will think, act, and fashion his reality as a man who . . . regained his reason" (Marx 1970, pp. 131–32). The illusion to which Marx refers is, in Lenin's words, "a sort of spiritual booze" that teaches

“those who toil and live in want all their lives . . . to be submissive and patient while here on earth, and to take comfort in the hope of a heavenly reward” (Lenin 1965, pp. 83–87). Korean leftist intellectuals who dreamed of overthrowing colonial capitalism echoed these same ideas. In March 1922, the year after the anti-Christian movement against the Eleventh World Student Christian Federation Conference in Beijing, Korean socialists held the All-Korean Youth Party Congress in Seoul and passed a resolution forbidding all religions. At the third general assembly in 1925, the New Rising Youth League (Sinhŭng Ch’ŏngnyŏn), another socialist group, declared that it “rejects religion, especially Christianity, which is the opium of the people” (Tonga ilbo 1925).

That same year, Marxist socialists and Protestants dialogued for the first time. The editors of the *Kaebyŏk* (*Great Transformation*)—a monthly magazine established in 1905 by the Korean nationalist Son Pyŏnghŭi (1861–1922) dedicated to social reform based on Ch’ŏndogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way)—took the anti-religious movement seriously. As such, the editors created a forum to foster discussion because Korean socialists were also attacking Ch’ŏndogyo:

“A massive peasant uprising against feudal lords broke out in Germany in 1523. To escape from a life of slavery, peasants demanded a ban on the unrestricted imposition of forced labor and payment for overtime . . . The Protestant Reformer Martin Luther defended the feudal lords and disregarded the peasant movement . . . Luther, who had seen their humiliations as a son of a peasant, assisted the lords in suppressing the peasants. This fact clearly proves that he was a traitor to the commoners and a slave to the aristocracy . . . Christianity, which has become a religion of the [ruling] class, safeguarded the wealth and territories of the noble in feudal society and now advocates for the interests of the bourgeoisie in capitalist society”. (Pak 1925, pp. 65–66)

Pak Hŏnyŏng (1900–1956), who founded the South Korean Workers’ Party (Namjosŏn Nodongdang) in November 1946 after Korea’s independence, leveraged historical evidence to demonstrate that Protestantism actually bolsters the ruler while masquerading as caring for the poor and weak. Pak claimed that Martin Luther (1483–1546), the catalyzer of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, supported the ruling class at the expense of the peasants—despite also having come from the plebian class. In Pak’s view, Luther was influential in defeating the peasants during the Peasant’s War of 1524–1525, which meant that Protestantism was inherently contradictory—from its very inception. Similarly, Pae Sŏngnyong (1896–1964), a member of the Korean Communist Party, also aligned himself with Marx and Lenin. Calling religion “a fervent guardian of capitalism,” Pae contended that “the reason why the bourgeoisie deceives the masses by inspiring a religious sentiment” is only to “maintain their interests.” He thus concluded that “all existing religions must be abolished” and, accordingly, the anti-religious and anti-Christian movement achieving “the true liberation of mankind” is “an excellent social activity” (Pae 1925, p. 57–59).

Notably, Protestant intellectuals differed in their responses to these critiques. Sin Hŭngu (1883–1959), director of the Korean YMCA in the 1930s, concurred, at least partially, with Pak: “In the West, conservative political parties have long advocated for Christian morals and values. In addition, in most American churches . . . those who assume a heavy responsibility and influence others are the bourgeoisie.” However, while calling for “a dramatic reform of Korean churches,” Sin also said, “I expect that there will be a day when socialists and Christians reconcile with each other for the love of humanity” (Sin 1925, pp. 71–72). In contrast, Methodist Pastor Han Sŏgwŏn (1894–?) dismissed the socialists’ accusations: “I do not think much about the anti-Christian movement today. They are them and we are us. Should our Christian church be shaken by their opposition? They are just doing what they want to do. We don’t need to take any action” (Han 1925, p. 72).

Although, like Han, Korean Protestants could turn a blind eye to the rising communist wave, this was not the only crisis facing Korean Protestantism in the early 1920s; indeed, the situation worsened, and Han could no longer ignore it. In addition to the external challenges posed by the colonial authorities and radical ideas, internal divisions and scandalous affairs

troubled churches. For example, Sŏmunoe Church became one of the largest Presbyterian congregations, with thirteen hundred members in Pyongyang in 1923. However, allegations of financial corruption while constructing a new building sparked violent factional disputes. In 1926, parishioners exposed the pastors of Yŏngyu Church (South P'yŏngan Province) and Munch'ang Church (Masan) for sexually harassing women in their congregations. The churches' members split between those who defended and those who opposed their pastors (Tonga ilbo 1926). At Changdaehyŏn Church, the oldest Presbyterian church in Pyongyang, Pastor Kil Sŏnju (1869–1935) was forced to resign and over five hundred members left when sharp disagreements regarding the appointment of deacons and elders arose (Oak 2018b, pp. 148–50). Decreasing numbers of believers accompanied such problems for the first time in 30 years since the introduction of evangelical Christianity to the peninsula. In 1916, Korean Protestants numbered 279,586 but dropped to 259,076 in 1927, despite a net population increase of four million during that decade (Oak 2018a, p. 200). To surmount these difficulties, young Korean Protestant leaders began demanding reforms. Their efforts heralded a redefinition of the church's relationship with the GGK and the socialists.

3. The Politics of Co-Existence: Alliances, Negotiations, and Oppositions

The GGK was keenly aware of socialism's potential impact on the masses. The Japanese colonial authorities had overseen what they called "recalcitrant Koreans" (*futei senjin*) in overseas territories (e.g., Eastern Russia and Manchuria), even before socialists established underground organizations for workers and peasants to coordinate factory strikes and mediate tenant disputes (Yamamuro 2006, pp. 21–22). Therefore, the GGK paid particular attention to the influx of Marxist-Leninist books and socialist periodicals. For instance, between 1920 and 1926, the Bureau of Police Affairs (Keimu kyoku) confiscated more than 50 publications, including Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, the *Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, and leading Soviet newspapers, such as *Izvestiia* (Tidings) (Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 2003, p. 217).

Despite their efforts, the GGK could not stymie the surge of socialist influence. The worsening colonial economy after World War I—characterized by soaring rice prices due to increased exports to the Japanese archipelago, the gradual rise in tenancy and rural immiseration, and growing inequality caused by rapid industrialization—destabilized the colonial social order. Socialism in Korea developed against this background, but that development did not ensure the solidarity of its adherents. In the early 1920s, myriad socialist factions in Korea, including Yi Tonghwi (1873–1935)'s Shanghai Sect, Kim Ch'ŏrhun (1885–1938)'s Irkutsk faction, and the Seoul Youth Association, continuously vied for supremacy and debated theoretical issues. Specifically, they could not agree on the "national problem": whether Korea's independence was more urgent than abolishing the class system and actualizing proletarian dictatorship (Yi 2006, pp. 7–8). However, all factions concurred on the exigency of toppling Japanese imperialism, as well as Christianity, through revolutionary measures.

In response to the challenge posed by socialism and other radical ideas, the GGK promulgated the Peace Preservation Law (*Chianijihō*) in May 1925, a month after Japan enacted the same law. Article 3 of the bill reads: "Anyone who propagandizes [*senden*], or attempts to propagandize, in order to alter the fundamental structure of society [*shakai no konpon soshiki*] by means of riot, violence, intimidation, or by other illegal methods, shall be liable to imprisonment . . . for a term not exceeding five years" (*Chōsen sōtokufu kanpō* 1925, p. 333).³ Beforehand, the GGK had used the Security Law (*Hoanhō*, enacted in 1907) and the Ordinance on the Punishment of Political Crimes (*Sōjyō shobatsu rei*, enacted in 1919) to "control acts of association and expression by punishing politically disquieting speeches or [behaviors]" (Lee 1999, p. 43). If these two existing laws were designed primarily to restrain anti-colonial nationalism, then the Peace Preservation Law was drafted and applied, as its proponent Wakatsuki Reijiro (1866–1949) contended, "to prevent the unruly acts of . . . anarchists, Communists . . . and extreme socialists" more comprehensively (Itō

1928, pp. 124–25). Indeed, it became a legal foundation for the forced dissolution of the Korean Communist Party in 1928.

Strikingly, the colonial regime strategically differentiated its attitudes toward Korean Protestants and socialists. Although the GGK remained vigilant and constantly surveilled Protestants, it simultaneously endeavored to restore its reputation among church leaders, particularly foreign missionaries. Because the authorities knew that missionaries were inextricably linked to powerful Western countries and, further, that mistreating them could strain diplomatic ties, they therefore sought to cultivate good relationships. Such efforts continued until Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in March 1933 and built a self-reliant regional economy (Kim 2016, p. 76). Meanwhile, socialists also enjoyed the freedom to publish and assemble (although limited) unless they violated the Peace Preservation Law directly. Nonetheless, they faced long prison sentences for any attempt to “subvert the laws of the state” (*chōken o binran*) or “alter the national polity” (*kokutai o henkaku*) (Ward 2019, pp. 21–48). Between April 1925 and February 1928, the colonial police raided the Korean Communist Party offices, conducting four mass arrests. They accused 520 Korean leftists of plotting anti-Japanese or anti-capitalist revolutions (Ch’oe 2003, pp. 93–116).

Although the GGK and Marxist socialists remained mutually hostile until Japan’s defeat in World War II, they often raised a single voice against common enemies. A prominent example is the notorious “Haysmer Incident.” In July 1925, Clyde A. Haysmer (1897–1983), an American Seventh Day Adventist missionary, caught a boy stealing apples from his orchard. Haysmer detained and tortured the boy by writing the word *tojōk* (thief) on his forehead with hydrochloric acid (Chosŏn ilbo 1926a). When the boy’s mother protested, in great distress, Haysmer and his denomination apologized and tried settling the matter quietly. However, despite their efforts to bury the story, the media reported on it ten months later, inciting Koreans’ long-festered dissatisfactions with foreign missionaries’ sense of racial superiority and misconduct.

Socialists seized this golden opportunity to foster people’s distrust of Christianity and the West. For example, the leftist Kyōngsōng Student Federation inflamed the ongoing anti-Christian movement by promoting the abolition of biblical education in mission schools and asking missionaries to leave their mission fields (Chosŏn ilbo 1926b). A multiplicity of socialist writers regularly published explicit denunciations in broadsheets and magazines. While avoiding overt criticism of the United States, the GGK also expressed its displeasure with Haysmer and Protestant churches through the *Maeil sinbo* (Daily Newspaper), the GGK’s official mouthpiece. The newspaper detailed the mass rallies held on the same days in Keijō (modern-day Seoul) and Tokyo in July 1926.⁴ Furthermore, Vice Governor-General Yuasa Kurahei (1874–1940) issued a statement denouncing Haysmer’s abuse: “It is truly an abomination for anyone to inflict such an evil private punishment on a young child . . . [Haysmer] will be dealt with according to the law” (*Maeil sinbo* 1926). While Haysmer punished the boy according to his “personal” feelings, the authorities deliberately emphasized that justice would prevail through “legal” proceedings. After his trial, the colonial government deported Haysmer. While it remains indeterminate whether the court made a proper judicial decision, the verdict could not be de-contextualized. When the United States passed the Immigration Act in July 1924, limiting the number of immigrants into America through a national origins quota and denying entry to all Japanese nationals, protests and terror attacks against Americans ensued for days (Kang 2015, pp. 121–26).

Just as the GGK acted against the indomitable tides of radical opposition, Protestant Christians also produced many discourses, often competing and contradictory, about effectively coping with the secular crisis. Depending on their political orientations, evangelical Koreans articulated distinct positions regarding socialism through debates among themselves about specific issues, events, and theoretical points. Yi Taewi (1878–1928), the secretary of the Korean YMCA, was one of the most remarkable Protestants who engaged in socialism from a critical angle. Yi argued that Protestant Christianity and socialism are similar in that they both recognize the contradictions of the modern world and seek to improve it, gradually or radically. Although Christianity’s monotheism and (for some

sects) doctrine of free will differ from Marx's historical materialism and determinism, Yi "regarded Christ as a social reformer, exhort[ing] [his fellow] Christians to stop fighting with socialists and instead collaborate to build a new kingdom on earth" (Park 2014, p. 97). Indeed, Yi further asserted,

"Our foremost task is to harmonize Christianity and socialism by training the working class and educating the middle class . . . The two [Christianity and socialism] are very similar in nature, and there is no reason for them to clash. Which of the two is better is another problem, and even if their methodologies are different, they share the goal of helping others to have an ideal life. In other words, they are devoted to reforming society . . . We should become a role model for a new culture on the peninsula through the Christianization of socialism and the socialization of Christianity. The most prominent cases to learn from are Christian socialism in England in the past and social Christianity in the United States in the present day". (Yi 1923, pp. 8–12)

Christian socialism started in England during the 1850s, and later expanded into North America. Christian socialists strived to leverage theological and missionary changes to solve problems engendered by the Industrial Revolution, including economic disparity, alienation, and exploitation. English Christian socialists, such as John M. Ludlow (1821–1911) and Frederick D. Maurice (1805–1872), argued that the church was given "a high calling, namely, to save their civilization." Their aim was "not social or political revolution" but, instead, as Philip Turner aptly notes, to reestablish a community "whose foundation rested in Christian belief and practice—a society of ideals that could be offered as a response to the holiness of God made known to the world in and through the incarnation of God in Christ" (Turner 2021, pp. 6–7). Likewise, Yi understood Christian socialism in England and social Christianity in the United States as alternative paths for Korean Protestants and socialists. For Yi, fusing Christianity and socialism was the only way for the two worldviews to reconcile, simultaneously representing the rights of workers and the poor, while also actualizing Christian equality and fraternity.

Yi's ideas resonated with Japan's Christian socialist movement, which had gained momentum since the mid-1920s under the leadership of Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960), a labor activist and Christian theologian who led the "Kingdom of God" evangelization campaign from 1926 to 1934. Kagawa lived among the poor in Kobe's Shinkawa slums during his twenties, afterward studying at Princeton Theological Seminary for three years. While agreeing with Marx's critique of capitalism, Kagawa eschewed the revolutionary aspects of Marx's work. Instead of violence, Kagawa championed socialism of love and pacifism, repudiating the social Darwinist idea of survival of the fittest. As G. Clinton Godart notes, "Kagawa envisioned a postcapitalist society and proposed a reorganization of the country around networks of cooperatives that would provide production, consumption, health care, education, and other services" (Godart 2017, p. 150). Kagawa's impassioned theory impressed leftist Korean Protestants, including Yi, Pae Minsu (1896–1968), and Yu Chaegi (1902–1949). Inspired by Kagawa's labor activism and cooperatives movement, Yu especially sought to establish "villages of Jesus" (*yesuch'on*)—peaceful and harmonious communities in which people love and serve one another, address one another's economic needs, and worship God on the basis of unmitigated individual liberty (Yu [1931] 2011, pp. 216–20).

Yi and his fellow Protestants upheld both the "Christianization of socialism" and its alternative, the "socialization of Christianity" (or the Christian social movement); while the former movement was not viable, the latter proved possible. In February 1925, the YMCA, led by Yi, Pae, and Yu, created the Department of Rural Affairs (Nongch'onbu) and instituted agrarian reforms under the sponsorship of the YMCA International Committee of the United States. To improve tenant farmers' living standards, the YMCA promoted homestead farming, land reform, and the institutionalization of cooperative associations (Kim 2001, p. 94). These projects accelerated after the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in March 1928, attended by 231 Christian representatives from

50 countries. At the IMC Conference, American sociologist Edmund de Schweinitz Brunner (1889–1973) presented his Rural Korea report, which focused on the conditions of Korea's Christian churches and agricultural villages (Park 2014, p. 98).

Six Korean delegates, influenced by the IMC's messaging on social injustice and meeting people's material and spiritual needs, led Christian movements that helped revamp rural Korea's economic, social, and cultural conditions. Those movements included creating side jobs to boost household income, running night schools that taught literacy, and instructing farmers' cooperatives. The editors of the *Kidok sinbo* (*Christian News*) lauded these efforts and wrote: "The first priority is to awaken the peasants' soul through proselytization. There are large chapels everywhere in the countryside, but they have become places to nap for villagers or dens of sin . . . [In addition to] distributing the gospel, we should also strive to help tenant farmers obtain [economic] stability in their lives by cultivating new community leaders and pooling peasant labor and resources for a cooperative system" (*Kidok sinbo* 1932).

In contrast, many Korean socialists were skeptical of the Christian social movement. The socialist journalist Kim Musin wrote: "The nationalist [Christian] bourgeoisie are touting that their rural campaigns are to alleviate the poverty of peasants. However, they only exacerbate the peasants' living conditions" (Kim 1933, p. 36). Urging peasants to develop strong class consciousness and eschew Christianity, Song Yŏnghoe, another socialist intellectual, insisted: "In collaboration with the Proletariat, peasants must remove religion inexorably. This fight has to be systematic and organic." Next, he claimed, "They should not only denounce religious notions, but also exterminate all traditional religious practices in their everyday lives" (Song 1933a, pp. 61–62). Such remarks, issued in the early 1930s, were charged by strong reservations about Christianity; they differed very little from their socialist predecessors of the 1920s.

It was not only Korean socialists who viewed Christian socialism negatively during these years. As liberal Korean Protestants, influenced by Kagawa and the IMC, increasingly propagated Christian socialism (or the "social gospel"), conservative voices demanding actions against Christian socialism rose within Korean Protestant churches. Accordingly, in September 1932, the Korean National Christian Council—organized in 1924 by 11 Protestant denominations working in Korea—promulgated a 12-article statement identifying Korean Protestantism's position regarding social reform. The proclamation included ensuring human rights, protecting the sacredness of marriage, promoting abstinence from alcohol, prohibiting child labor, and abolishing state-regulated prostitution. The articles' undergirding principle was promoting Christian ideals: "While opposing education on materialism, socialism, class struggle, revolution and reactionary opposition to it . . . Christians should endeavor to spread the Christian spirit by expanding Christian evangelism, education, and social work" (*Chosŏn yesugyo yŏnhap kongŭihoe hoeŭirok* 1932, p. 52).

Korean Presbyterian leaders replied by distinguishing the church from "earthly matters." One writer even declared that "The church is not a place to talk about social problems, labor disputes, peace issues, international events, or to discuss people's humble knowledge or petty ideologies." After analyzing the current situation, he concluded: "[Rather than] being drawn to various social movements that happened these days, we must first solidify the principles of our lives as Christians" (Song 1933b, pp. 21–26). Young Korean Protestants' interests in a more liberal form of Christianity alongside conservative suppressions of it significantly divided Korean Protestantism in the following decades, especially when the GKK hardened its policies against socialism during Japan's fanatical drive toward war. Friction between evangelical Koreans and socialists was not inevitable; however, conflict between them was unavoidable as long as Korean Protestants remained divided.

4. Korean Protestantism, Marxist Socialism, and Japanese Imperialism from the Late 1920s to 1945

The conflict between Protestants and socialists culminated at the Second Sunday School Conference, where 3000 people gathered at Seoul's YMCA hall for one week in

October 1925. This interdenominational meeting had been held every four years since 1921 to support the unity and revival of Korean Protestants. Socialists, especially the Hanyang Youth League (Hanyang ch'öngnyön yönmaeng), viewed Korean churches' mobilization as a potential danger to their existence, thus countering it by hosting anti-Christian public lectures and distributing leaflets near the conference site. Enraged, some Protestants rampaged to the League's office (Kang 1992, pp. 33–34). However, the colonial police took a surprising partisan stance and forcibly disbanded the socialists' assemblies while permitting the Protestants to continue their event, although they did round up several Protestants. The Korean socialists were indignant, condemning the GGK for unfair treatment; one writer even asserted: "It is clear that moderate nationalists and Protestants are closely affiliated with the government because it strictly prohibited socialist gatherings while supporting cultural activists and religious leaders as much as possible" (Kaebyök 1925, pp. 54–55).

Regardless, it would be erroneous to assume that all Korean socialists participated in the anti-Christian movement. In November 1926, the Righteous Friends Association (Chönguhoe), a group formed by four leftist organizations—the Tuesday Society (Hwayohoe), the Northern Wind Society (Pukp'unghoe), the Korean Labor Party (Chosön Nodongdang), and the Proletarian Alliance (Musanja Tongmaenghoe)—criticized the earlier socialists' activities, announcing that they would eliminate factional strife and develop an anti-imperialist united front. For moderate Korean nationalists, the Marxist socialists' reversal of their aggressive stance was surprising because it meant that the nationalist bourgeoisie, including Protestant Christians, were no longer targeted with animosity. This unforeseen turnabout resulted from two crucial factors: internally, there was a growing awareness among Korean socialists that they needed a strategic coalition with their nationalist counterparts to better withstand Japanese imperialism; externally, the First United Front (1924), which had recently formed in China between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), highly motivated the Korean socialist camps (Sö 1985, pp. 299–300).

The "Declaration of Chönguhoe," forged such a coalition and led to the founding of the New Korea Society (Sin'ganhoe) in February 1927. The Sin'ganhoe provided a joint base for different ideological camps. With prominent moderate nationalists, such as Cho Pyöngok (1894–1960) and An Chaehong (1891–1965), as key leaders, the Sin'ganhoe had 386 branches and 76,939 members by 1930 (Robinson 2007, p. 72). Significantly, its principal participants were YMCA members and Protestants.⁵ Because the YMCA had many local branches, it played a pivotal role in expanding the Sin'ganhoe into all regions of the peninsula. Elated with the Sin'ganhoe's founding, Cho stressed the radical alignment of Christianity with progressive forces: "Can a religious person be a revolutionist? ... Christianity does not uphold peace at any cost ... Christians must have a revolutionary mind when they encounter social injustice and inhumanity. It is not a violation of the Christian principle to use force for change if no other source of power is available" (Cho 1927, pp. 115–17).

Unfortunately, the partnership was short-lived. Communists and radicals soon occupied top posts, supplanting the nationalist leaders, and the GGK increasingly intervened in their activities as the Sin'ganhoe's membership and influence grew. The decisive blow came to the organization with the 1929 Kwangju Student Movement. Hundreds of socialists joined the crusade, and the police eventually arrested them, while most moderate nationalists abstained, becoming known as "compromising reformists." In response, the socialist leadership considered dissolving the organization. The following year, the Red International of Labor Unions, an affiliate of Moscow's Comintern, adopted the Theses on the Tasks of the Revolutionary Labor Union Movement in Korea—often referred to as the "September Theses." This resolution defined the Sin'ganhoe as a reactionary, anti-Soviet group, driving a wedge between the Korean socialist and nationalist camps because communist-led local branches had already been under the Comintern's direction. Consequently, at the Sin'ganhoe's first conference permitted to convene in May 1931, a majority vote for dissolution passed against the nationalists' objection. The GGK, as Michael E.

Robinson notes, “watched the process with relief, for their interests coincided with those of the communists” (Robinson 2007, p. 73).

The Sin’ganhoe’s fall ensured the division between Protestant Christians and Marxist socialists. However, the schism did not derive solely from disparate ideological identities; their divergent understanding of the current socio-political situation and colonial Korea’s prospects was also at play. The Great Depression was an additional and critical juncture for both groups. Judging that market capitalism had reached its crisis phase, the Korean socialists devised even more radical strategies to accomplish revolutionary ends. From the Chosŏn Textile Strike of January 1930 in Pusan to the Yangsan Farmers’ Union Riot in March 1932, they spearheaded numerous resistance campaigns in factories, coal mines, and farms. To many socialists, the extraordinary geopolitical unrest—including the increased chance of war between Japan and the Soviet Union; the rise of a fascist regime under Italy’s Benito Mussolini (1883–1945); and, above all, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria—was a perfect opportunity to trigger a revolution in the colony (Tikhonov 2017, p. 212).

The increasingly devastated economy gutted Korean churches within these global and regional contexts. The editors of the *Kidok sinbo* lamented, “We are now in a tremendously desperate moment! Mission funds have been depleted, the number of missionaries is dwindling, and all our educational, medical, and childcare projects are at risk” (*Kidok sinbo* 1934). Under such precarity, Korean church leaders distinguished themselves from socialists by holding even more tightly to Christian teachings instead of seeking salvation through physical and worldly means. Presbyterian Pastor Ch’oe Sŏkchu insisted, “Social transformation takes place from individual revolution. Socialists privilege the people (*minjung*) over the individual (*kaein*). Socialists always fail because they do not acknowledge individuals’ distinctive characteristics . . . Whereas socialism appeals to people by exhorting violence, we change the world with love. The true happiness of mankind can only be guaranteed by a belief in God and the love he showed on the Cross” (Ch’oe 1931).

Consequently, in the 1930s, there were two distinct groups of Korean Protestantism, each adhering to its understanding of socialism. Because neither demarcated clear boundaries around its position, a “gray zone” existed between them. While some Protestants incorporated socialist tenets and institutions into their beliefs and church ministry, others vilified socialism vehemently. Unlike the Christian socialists of the 1920s, the former did more than try to establish harmony with radicals and communists; they also committed themselves to anti-capitalist and anti-colonial agendas against imperial Japan. The Cross Party (Sipchagadang) Incident in April 1933 is one noteworthy example. Namgung Ōk (1863–1939), a teacher at the Paehwa School, organized the Cross Party under the banner of “Building a Heaven on Earth for Coexistence and Co-prosperity” in Hongch’ŏn, Kangwŏn Province. This underground association consisted of ten Methodist pastors and their congregations. According to the *Tonga ilbo* (*Eastern Daily*), “[The Cross Party] added nationalistic ideas to Communism . . . [and] incited [the anti-Japanese independence] movement while ostensibly stating that it aimed to interpret the Bible anew and preach it” (*Tonga ilbo* 1933). The party secretly recruited discontented Koreans, offering seminars and reading sessions on Korea’s liberation and class struggle.

Despite lasting only six months, the party had ambitious goals, to which the police investigation report of the arrested Minister Yu Chahun attested: “The first is to eliminate all kinds of racial and ethnic discrimination; the second is to abolish the class system; and the third is to eradicate inequality between the rich and the poor” (Kuksa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [1933] 2001a, p. 169). Although Yu never confessed to pursuing communism in hopes of realizing these goals, the records show that communism’s foundational concepts had formed his ideas. During his interrogation, Yu spoke to a Japanese officer about his visions of the world, saying, “The individual ownership of land . . . will be allowed to the extent necessary for a family’s life, but ultimately belongs to the central party . . . The state and government apparatuses do not need to exist, and they will surely be destroyed when people organize themselves to bring about that change. Then the central party will become

the sole political agency that unites the world" (Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe [1933] 2001b, pp. 212–13).

Those on the other side of the aisle zealously advocated Christian evangelism, striving to restore its doctrinal traditions and purity rather than focusing on worldly matters. Like the church authorities' opposition to the Christian social movement during the 1920s, "conservative" trends within Korean Protestantism were far from novel. Western missionaries—mostly Americans—serving in Korea followed evangelical practices, opposing the early-nineteenth century's liberal religious tendencies, which had adopted scientific and historical methodologies of reading the Bible. As such, they had proposed a return to Luther's and John Calvin (1509–1564)'s testimonies of faith (Paik 1927, p. 367). Most missionaries disagreed with Koreans' resistance activities, such as the March First Movement. Separating themselves from the missionaries who had monopolized denominations and remained politically neutral, some Korean pastors established independent churches during the 1920s and 1930s (Paek 2003, pp. 261–68).

Many Korean converts differed in their approach, particularly Presbyterian evangelists who emulated their foreign predecessors by reinforcing Christian "orthodoxy," evidenced by the Abingdon Bible Commentary Incident (1934). On the basis of the theory of the inerrancy of scripture, Korean Presbyterian leaders labeled the Methodists' Abingdon Bible Commentary as heresy because it applied archeological and literary interpretive frameworks to the Bible. Three years later, the Presbyterian Church closed its Department of Rural Affairs and suspended its agrarian reform programs. Pastors from other denominations also joined this conservative turn. Among them was Yi Myŏngjik (1890–1973), a Holiness Church pastor who condemned Christian socialists: "Today, clergy and laity alike prefer society to the church and cry out for the socialization of the church. They bemoan that the church lags behind society ... [But] what is true socialization? ... We must Christianize ourselves ... The socialization of the Church means nothing but its secularization" (Yi 1932, pp. 2–5).

Voices supporting theological integrity were strong, but realizing it was almost impossible within the colonial structure. This drawback was particularly true when the Japanese Empire expanded its sphere of influence into Manchuria and waged war against China in the late 1930s. The colonial regime employed religion as an integral part of its assimilation policies to indoctrinate colonial subjects with Japanese values and beliefs. Under the slogan "*naisen ittai*" ("Japan and Korea as one body"), the GGK abandoned its earlier conciliatory gestures toward Korean Christianity and enforced mandatory worship at State Shintō shrines. The Japanese authorities also propagated that the Shintō ritual was merely a moral act expressing reverence to the imperial family and its ancestors. Korean Protestants, in contrast, perceived it as "unmistakable idolatry, an abomination admitting no compromise" (Park 2003, p. 38).

However, refusing to obey had devastating consequences. The GGK closed eight North Presbyterian mission schools and ten South Presbyterian mission schools between November 1935 and February 1938; by June 1940, the colonial regime shuttered over 200 Protestant churches across the country and arrested 2000 Protestant laity and 70 pastors (Chou 1996, p. 47). Consequently, most church leaders succumbed to Japanese pressure and bolstered Japan's wartime efforts by mobilizing the youth, organizing voluntary service corps, and sending military funds. Nor could socialists avoid getting drawn into Japan's travails. Between 1928 and 1937, the GGK arrested an average of more than 2700 "thought criminals" annually and produced 2137 ideological converts (*tenkōsha*) (Kim 1995, p. 240). Converting ex-communists did not simply mean preventing them from joining radical groups and fighting to achieve a proletarian revolution; as the chief of rehabilitation in the Justice Ministry, Moriyama Takeichirō (1891–1948), explained, it referred to creating "one who has mastered the Japanese Spirit and is able to actively put it into practice [*jissen kyūkō*]" (Moriyama 1937, pp. 62–65).⁶

At the 27th General Assembly in September 1938, the Presbyterian Church issued a resolution promising to participate actively in Shintō worship. Despite his uncompromising

stance toward heresy and secularism, Yi Myōngjik joined Japan's imperialization project (*kōminka*) and even praised the emperor: "We are the subjects of imperial Japan. As sons and daughters of the emperor whose unbroken line of descent is eternal, we receive first-class service anywhere in the world . . . This is indeed an honor" (Yi 1941, p. 304). The contradictions of Yi's life do not mean that all conservative Korean evangelists of the time showed the same disparity between words and deeds. However, Yi's conversion heralded a bleak reality in which Korean Protestants promoted the imperial cult and supported Japan's war efforts between the late 1930s and 1945.

Amidst the escalating wartime crisis, the GGK reinforced shrine worship to discipline the body politic and implemented daily rituals such as mass bowings in the direction of the imperial palace and the public recitation of the "Oath as Subjects of the Imperial Nation" (*Kōkoku shinmin no seishi*). In addition, the Korean Presbyterian, Methodist, and Holiness Church leaders provided war materials and funds to the GGK, giving lectures and speeches to encourage Korean youth to participate in Japan's war. In particular, those leaders advocated the government's decision when the GGK abolished all Korean Protestant denominations and reorganized them as part of Japanese Christianity in July 1945 (Maeil sinbo 1940a). The "Directives on Korean Christianity," announced five years earlier, was a prelude to the abolition of Korean Protestantism. This order included specific measures which aimed to "help ensure genuine Japanese Christianity." For instance, the directives banned Korean Protestants from interacting with Western missionaries, revised canon law to remove democratic elements within churches, and strengthened ties between Korean and Japanese Protestantism to build a new East Asian order (Maeil sinbo 1940b).

Until the Japanese Empire collapsed in World War II in August 1945, the GGK's control and suppression of Korean socialists and Protestants continued. Facing these existential pressures, some Korean Protestants and Marxist socialists defied Japanese colonial rule publicly and secretly. For example, pastor Son Yangwŏn (1902–1950) delivered a provocative message during his April 1940 sermon that Japan would lose the war and Protestants should prepare themselves for the second coming of Jesus Christ (*Shōwa jūroku-nen kei-ko* 1941b, p. 1304). Although this remark earned Son a prison sentence, he never gave up his faith. In addition, some young believers organized reading circles to study the Bible and held prayer meetings for Korea's independence (*Shōwa jūroku-nen kei-ko* 1941a, pp. 219–24; *Shōwa jūnana-nen kei-ko* 1942, pp. 1350–62). Similarly, several Korean socialists formed anti-colonial, communist units, penetrating factories and recruiting laborers for ideology education (*Shōwa jūgo-nen kei-ko* 1940, pp. 410–556). However, for Korean Protestants and Marxist socialists, who had already split up a decade previously, an alliance was only a thing of the past; they stood too far apart to unite against the totalitarian regime. Consequently, both groups similarly suffered as they failed to align themselves ideologically or practically against their common adversary.

5. Conclusions

This article examined how followers of Japanese imperialism, Protestant Christianity, and Marxist socialism struggled for survival and supremacy in colonial Korea between 1919 and 1945. Through a comprehensive analysis of their relationships, this study has demonstrated how these three entities of extraneous origins constantly negotiated their presence on the peninsula and developed interlocking, mutually influencing engagements. The multifaceted history of colonial Korea has made its religious and intellectual culture more dynamic.

However, although the colonial regime possessed the power to control the other two and increasingly restricted their activities after the Great Depression, each of the three forces had to adapt to the responses of the others as they all grappled with the period's rapidly changing global context. Notably, despite the Japanese authorities' long adherence to non-Christian traditions and promotion of State Shintō, they occasionally aligned themselves with Korean Protestants because churches formed the colony's most

prominent religious communities. Therefore, their collaboration was essential to meet Japan's imperial enterprises' material and ideological demands.

Meanwhile, the Marxist socialists posed a serious threat to colonial rule, but they also opposed Christianity in unison with the Japanese colonizers when their interests overlapped. Finally, although cooperating in their efforts to endure colonialism, Protestants and socialists disapproved of each other over diverging ideological and political orientations. This divide became more explicit when the GGK tightened its control over the peninsula during wartime, hindering the two parties from uniting against the totalitarian state.

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Notes

- ¹ Marxist scholars have long defined Marxism, communism, and socialism differently. However, these three ideologies are all radical in that they seek a new communal political economy, fundamentally overcoming the contradictions inherent in capitalist social relations. According to classical Marxism, socialism (which is based on the cooperative ownership of the means of production), is the preceding stage of communism. Marx theorizes that all classes and states will disappear in a communist society. Friedrich Engels and other later theorists call Marxism “scientific” socialism and distinguish it from the “utopian” socialism that emerged in the early-nineteenth century. In colonial Korea, socialism—or more broadly, leftist ideas—encompassed not only Marxism but also a wide range of ideological currents, such as anarchism, corporatism, progressive reformism, and Fabianism. However, as Vladimir Tikhonov points out, the “Comintern managed to establish something quite close to a monopoly on the Marxism-derived radicalism” in Korea during the 1920s and 1930s, compared to other East Asian countries. He further argues that “Unlike China or Vietnam, Korea had no sizeable Trotskyist movement, and unlike Japan, it did not develop any social democratic movement to speak of.” Therefore, in this study, I refer to the anti-imperialist Marx-Leninists who, as socialists, sought the proletarian revolution and the collapse of imperial Japan. For further discussion, see Vladimir Tikhonov, “Worldwide ‘Red Age’ and Colonial-era Korea: An Attempt at Metahistorical Analysis,” *Marxism* (Tikhonov 2020, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 146–82).
- ² Established by the anti-Japanese guerrilla leader, Yi Tonghwi, among Korean exiles in the Russian Far East in June 1918, the Korean Socialist Party (Hanin sahoedang) was the first “communist-oriented” party in Korean history. The following year, a Korean branch of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was created in Irkutsk, Russia. In 1923, young Korean intellectuals, including Kim Chaebong (1891–1944) and Pak Hŏnyŏng, organized the New Thought Research Society (Sinsasang Yŏn’guhoe), which was later renamed the Tuesday Society (Hwayohoe) in 1924. Meanwhile, Korean leftist students studying in Tokyo expanded their activities to Korea and formed the Northern Wind Society (Pukp’unghoe) in November 1924. Among these competing groups was the Tuesday Society under the control of the Irkutsk faction, which founded the Korean Communist Party (Chosŏn Kongsandang) in Seoul in April 1925 (Suh 1967, pp. 4–84).
- ³ This translation is from Ward, *Thought Crime*, p. 31.
- ⁴ See, for example, *Maeil sinbo* [Daily Newspaper], July 4, 1926; July 9, 1926; July 30, 1926.
- ⁵ When the Sin’ganhoe was organized, 12 of its 51 chief executives were Protestant Christians. In 1918, the Korean clergy of the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church totaled 1305, and this number rose to 1458 in 1934. Based on these figures, approximately 17 percent of the clergy participated in the Sin’ganhoe (Kang 1992, pp. 52–53).
- ⁶ Cited from Ward, *Thought Crime*, p. 147.

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