

peaking élite and the Azeri and Kurdish leaders, or between the Azeris and the Kurds themselves. Just as the former antagonism lay in part at the root of the insurrections launched against the central government in Teheran, the latter antagonism rendered any attempt at co-operation between the two rebel regimes unattainable, even in the interest of survival.

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A Preconceived Formula for Sovietization: The Communist Takeover of North Korea

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Whatever may have been their initial and ultimate objectives in liberating the northern half of Korea, the Soviet troops that occupied the country for three years and four months beginning in August, 1945, implanted a viable Communist regime that has proven to be stable and friendly towards the Soviet Union. The importance of such a regime cannot be overstated. Not only was it the first Communist system of government to be instituted in Korea, but also it divided Korea politically and was alien to the people and culture of the country. Furthermore, less than two years after the Soviet occupation, the regime in the North launched a fratricidal war to communize all of Korea. The rapid consolidation of power by the Communists and the rigid regimentation they were able to enforce to assure political stability would seem to attest to the efficiency of the techniques they employed for the takeover of North Korea. However, a closer and more careful analysis reveals that the Communists did not make detailed preliminary preparations, did not possess a plan designed solely for the takeover, and did not have the mass support of the Korean people. Instead, the takeover was a haphazard application of the practices used in Soviet-occupied territories in Eastern Europe, particularly in East Germany, Poland, and Rumania.

This study will attempt to examine the Soviet techniques used in the takeover of North Korea and to compare them with those used in the East European countries and East Germany. No effort is made here to treat the Soviet occupation of Korea comprehensively or to give a systematic exposition of Soviet occupation policy in Korea. The study is rather intended to be a comparative analysis of the strategies of the Soviet occupation authorities in installing a Communist regime in North Korea.

One classification of Communist takeovers in Eastern Europe distinguishes three kinds of seizures of power: a successful guerrilla struggle, assumption of control through popular support and parliamentary means, and the outright imposition of a Soviet-backed regime, which is sometimes called a baggage-train government.¹ In this scheme, the Korean case might

¹ R. V. Burks, "Eastern Europe," in C. E. Black and T. P. Thornton (eds.), *Communism and Revolution*, Princeton, N. J., 1964, pp. 86-93.

be classified as a variant of the third category, but the baggage-train government that traveled on the Trans-Siberian railway to North Korea seems to have lost much in transit. Whatever finesse was used to set up the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe gave way to the rudeness and rigor of a military takeover in Korea that relied on little if any knowledge of the local situation.

The tactics used in the Soviet takeovers of East Germany and Poland have much in common with those used in North Korea. In both areas the military and the security police gained firm control; efforts were made to create popular front governments; and a forced fusion of the Socialist and Communist Parties took place, as exemplified by the creation of the Socialist Unity Party in East Germany and the Workers' Party in Korea. Moreover, the Home Army in Poland and the Korean Volunteer Corps in North Korea were both disarmed, and there were attempts to de-nazify the bureaucracy in East Germany and to eliminate the Japanese influence over the leaders of North Korea. Another aspect common to both the East European and Korean situations is the relative weakness of the local Communist Parties. Indeed, some puzzling developments in Korea can be better understood when compared and analyzed under the general rubric of Soviet occupation policy.

The takeover of North Korea might also be explained in terms of three stages of sovietization, evolving from (1) the formation of a genuine coalition through (2) the establishment of a bogus, Communist-dominated coalition, to (3) the creation of a monolithic Communist regime. However, there are other aspects of the Korean takeover that are unique, such as the relative ignorance of Korean affairs on the part of the Soviets, the rigid indifference towards the North on the part of the old Korean Communists, the special problems of the trusteeship and partition of Korea, and the singularly important role played by the Soviet-trained Koreans who were working with the occupation forces.

Had it been given a zone of occupation in Korea, Nationalist China would probably have proved to be the best prepared of the victorious Allies to establish a regime representative of the Korean revolutionary movement and readily acceptable to the Korean people as a whole. Nationalist China had nurtured a Korean government in exile for almost two and a half decades. Regardless of its shortcomings, the Korean Provisional Government in Chungking was the center of the Korean independence movement. In retrospect, it is ironic that Syngman Rhee, an American-trained Korean (although not American-sponsored) emerged as the leader in the South, for his "rapid realization of Korean independence" turned instead

into the permanent division of Korea, and this division greatly facilitated the Communist takeover of the North.

Before the entry of the Red Army into Eastern Europe, the Soviet Communists were well informed about the various Polish underground leaders and their groups, most of whom were as anti-Soviet as they were anti-German; and although Hitler was successful in extirpating most of the German Communists living in Germany, the Soviets supported a contingent of exiled German Communists in the Soviet Union. In Korea, the Japanese were successful in curbing the Communists and reducing them to miniscule groups of slight importance, but the Soviets were generally ignorant of who the Korean Communist leaders were and of who among them might be identified with the Korean liberation movement and command its respect.

Two groups of Koreans, both unrelated and unknown to the Korean independence movement, were enlisted by the Soviets for the Korean takeover; one was a Korean minority living in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, while the other was a contingent of Koreans who had fought with the Soviet army during World War II, first in Europe and later in Manchuria and North Korea. The first group consisted of second- and third-generation Koreans and numbered over 300,000 persons; many of the Soviet-Koreans in this group were called on to manage the initial takeover in the North—e.g., Ho Ka-i, Nam Il, Pak Ui-wan (Ivan Pak), and Ki Sok-bok, to mention only a few.² The second group consisted of Koreans who either had been taken into the Soviet army when oriental minorities in Siberia were enlisted for combat in Europe³ or else had been secretly trained by the Russians. No evidence is available to substantiate the allegation that the Soviet Union secretly trained Koreans specifically for the future occupation of Korea, but there are many reports of political and military training being given to Koreans in the Soviet Union.⁴ Kim Il-song, Premier of the Democratic People's Republic and head of the Korean Workers' (Communist) Party,

² For a description of minority groups in the Soviet Far East, which includes the Koreans, see Walter Kolarz, *The Peoples of the Soviet Far East*, New York, 1954. For accounts of the Korean minority groups in the Soviet Maritime Province and Siberia, see, among others, Syn-khva Kim, *Ocherki po istorii Sovetskikh Koreytsev*, Alma-Ata, 1965; Chong-sik Lee and Ki-wan Oh, "The Russian Faction in North Korea," *Asian Survey*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, April, 1968, 270–88.

³ There is a description of the Siberian soldiers in Alan Clark, *Barbarossa, the German-Russian Conflict, 1941–1945*, New York, 1965, pp. 149–150, 170–172, 196–199; and a Russian account of the Siberian soldiers in *Stalingrad*, Moscow, 1943, pp. 74–76.

⁴ See, for example, Kazama Jokichi, *Mosko kyosan daigaku no omoite*, Tokyo, 1949, p. 109; or Wolfgang Leonhard, *Child of the Revolution*, Chicago, 1958, p. 178.

relates that when the Soviet Union declared war against Japan, his partisans co-ordinated their efforts with the Red Army in the struggle against the Japanese for the liberation of Korea.⁵

Claims that Kim Il-song was trained by the Soviet army and held the rank of a field officer have not yet been verified.⁶ The most commonly accepted story is that he was trained somewhere near Khabarovsk and joined the Soviet campaign in the battle of Stalingrad, fighting under General Ivan M. Chistiakov. General Chistiakov led the 21st Division of the Red Army in the battle of Stalingrad and later commanded the 25th Division in the occupation of North Korea. As late as November, 1944, Japanese intelligence reported that Kim was trained at the Okeanskaya Field School near Vladivostok, and that he worked for the Soviets, making two trips to Moscow to help co-ordinate the efforts of the Allies in Manchuria.⁷ Assuming that Kim did fight under General Chistiakov and that he did become a friend of General P. L. Romanenko, who later assisted him in North Korea, it would seem that the Russians had known Kim for only four years at the most,⁸ and that his involvement with them was primarily of a military nature. It is known that Kim cannot speak Russian, although he is fluent in Chinese.

Compared with the Communist leaders sponsored by the Soviet Union in Poland and East Germany, Kim was a relative newcomer as a collaborator. For example, Boleslaw Bierut of Poland had been a Comintern agent in Berlin, Vienna, and Prague, while Wilhelm Pieck of Germany had worked for the Comintern since the 1920's. Furthermore, Bierut stayed in Russia after his release from prison in 1938, and Walter Ulbricht of Germany spent many years in the Soviet Union preparing for his return with the Russians. Probably all that the Russians had from Kim was his pledge of loyalty to the Soviet Union. But this may have been all that was required of him, for he did not have the support of the Korean Communists or of the Korean people, and so could only be considered tentatively as a leader. He did

⁵ P'yongyang hyangt'osa p'yonch'an wiwon-hoe, *P'yong yang chi*, P'yongyang, 1957, pp. 410-414.

⁶ Most of the accounts by the South Koreans allege that Kim returned to Korea as a major in the Soviet Army. There is a most vituperative eyewitness account in Han Chae-dok, *Kongsan chui iron kwa hyonsil pip'an chonso, che ogwon*, Seoul, 1965, pp. 129-130.

⁷ "Kin Nichi-sei no katsudo jokyo," *Tokko gaiji geppo*, November, 1944, pp. 76-78.

⁸ See the account of Generals Chistiakov and Romanenko in the Stalingrad campaign in A. I. Evemenko, *Stalingrad*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 387-426. See also A. M. Samsonov, *Stalingradskaia bitva*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 379-381, 437-441, and 526-527.

command a small contingent of partisans who had supported him faithfully since the guerrilla campaign in Manchuria, and who had shared his experiences under the Chinese and Soviet Communists.

If the process of sovietization in North Korea is viewed in terms of the stages previously described as characteristic of Soviet takeovers in the East European countries, the constituent events fall roughly into three periods.⁹ The first stage, a period of genuine co-operation, lasted from August, 1945, to January, 1946, coinciding with the brief career of the Five Provinces Administration Bureau. It has been suggested that the Soviet authorities ordered the nationalist and Communist leaders to join in administering North Korea through the Bureau.¹⁰ This coalition ended when an irreconcilable rift developed between the Soviet-Koreans and the non-Communist leaders in the North over the question of a Korean trusteeship. Many nationalist leaders, including the chairman of the Bureau, Cho Man-sik, were arrested and imprisoned, while those who escaped arrest fled to the South.

The second stage, a period of bogus coalition, can be said to have begun in February, 1946, with the formation of the North Korean Provisional People's Committee headed by Kim Il-song. A major step towards this coalition was the merging of the New People's Party and the North Korean Branch Bureau of the Korean Communist Party, which was reportedly ordered by the Russians in August, 1946, to set up the Workers' Party of North Korea. A similar merger of three leftist parties in the South, including the Korean Communist Party, was also carried out in November, 1946, creating the Workers' Party of South Korea.

The emergence of a monolithic regime, the third stage in the takeover, could be detected as early as February, 1948, when the People's Army of Korea was formally established and the Workers' Party of North Korea held its second congress. And by April, 1948, when the North-South

⁹ The pattern of takeovers in Eastern Europe is described in: H. Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, New York, 1961, pp. 169-171. Also in H. Seton-Watson, *From Lenin to Malenkov: The History of World Communism*, New York, 1955, pp. 248-249. A somewhat different analysis of the Korean process, but using the same formula, is in Ho-min Yang, *Puk-han ui ideorogi wa chongchi'i*, Seoul, 1967, pp. 79-109.

¹⁰ Han Chae-dok, one of the thirty-two members of the Five Provinces Administration Bureau, reported that the first meeting on August 26, 1945, was presided over by General Romanenko, and that the thirty-two members of the Bureau were equally represented, sixteen each, by the nationalists and the Communists. Han, who later defected to the South, related that he was a member of the Communist group. See Han Chae-dok, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-188. See also an eyewitness account in Anna Louise Strong, *In North Korea*, New York, 1949, pp. 10-25.

Consultative Conference was held, the existence of a Communist dictatorship was undeniable. It was a mere formality to proclaim the establishment of a government in the North in September, 1948; soon after, in December, the Soviet army withdrew from Korea.¹¹

In Eastern Europe similar techniques of sovietization were used in those countries where comparatively few fundamental changes had occurred between prewar and postwar conditions; this necessitated the forming of coalition governments at the outset as a transitional phase. The obvious examples are Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria. In Korea, however, there was a marked social change after the war, with the uprooting of Japanese influence and the revitalization of Korean tradition representing major undertakings. Thus the Soviet military takeover in North Korea was relatively easier than in Eastern Europe. For the Soviet Union, the task in Korea was simply to implant communism, rather than to form a coalition with nationalist elements as one step towards the ultimate creation of a Communist regime.

When they first occupied the North, the Soviets were unaware of the political and social setting of Korea, and unequivocally disavowed any intention either to administer Korea militarily or to implant a Communist system. However, it seems clear that the Soviet Union resolved to institute a Communist regime in the North as early as December, 1945, when the Koreans opposed the Allied plan for a trusteeship of Korea. The Soviet Union was aided in this resolve by the indifference of the Korean nationalists and the old Communist leaders, who hoped only for the speedy withdrawal of Soviet forces from Korea. In contrast to the Polish government in exile in London, whose leaders were arrested when they approached the Russians in Poland, the Korean Provisional Government in Chungking had no intention of establishing relations with or even contacting the Russians. Almost all the prominent Korean leaders, including the old-guard Communists, were in the South, trying to establish a national government by negotiating with the Americans.

The sovietization of North Korea was effected through the seizure of three key organizations: the military, the party, and the administrative mechanism. The specific tactics used were similar to those employed in

¹¹ For postwar political developments in Korea, see, among others, Kim Chong-bom and Kim Tong-un, *Haebang chon-hu ui Choson chinsang*, Seoul, 1945; a South Korean government account in *Hyondae-sa wa kongsan chui, che iljip*, Seoul, 1968; a North Korean official account in *Choson chung-ang jon'gam*, 1949, P'yongyang, 1950; and a Russian account in F. I. Shabshina, *Ocherki noveyshey istorii Korei, 1945-53*, Moscow, 1958.

Eastern Europe. There was the actual presence of the Red Army, and no domestic forces were allowed to emerge—nor were any Korean nationalist forces permitted to return—to compete with the Soviet-Koreans and Kim Il-song's partisans. Although there was no attempt by the Koreans to challenge the Soviet military presence, as was the case in Warsaw, and no incident to poison relations with the Soviet Union, such as the massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest, the Soviets did take steps to disband the Korean Volunteer Corps returning from Yen-an. Estimates place the number of soldiers in the Corps, which was a military arm of the Korean Independence League or the Yen-an Communists, at 2,000. When contacted by the Corps, which wanted to cross the border between China and Korea at Antu-Shinuiju, the Soviet occupation forces, in co-operation with the Soviet-Koreans and Kim's partisans, completely disarmed it and allegedly deported some of its members to Manchuria in a move reminiscent of the treatment of the Polish Home Army.¹² This was an important step in shaping the distribution of the contenders for power in the North at the time. After the incident at the Antu-Shinuiju border, the Yen-an Communists, who had had a popular following in Korea, lost much of their strength and came to represent a negligible force in comparison with the Russian-sponsored contingent of Soviet-Koreans. The number of Koreans who accompanied the Soviet occupation forces when they entered North Korea is thought to be approximately 300, but to this number must be added the group of non-military Soviet-Koreans brought in from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The Soviet-Koreans and Kim's partisans played a dominant role in the sovietization of the North, and were particularly conspicuous in controlling the internal security police and the North Korean army. (In much the same way, manipulation of the police and the army was a source of Communist strength in the countries of Eastern Europe.) A Soviet-Korean, Pang Hak-se, headed the Political Security Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and played the same role in Korea as Stanislaw Radkiewicz did in the Security Office in Poland. Pang was born and raised in the Soviet Union and was said to have worked for the NKVD (the Soviet secret police) in Uzbekistan prior to his return to Korea as a captain in the Red Army. Pang and Kim P'a, another Soviet-Korean, who was a boss in the Security Bureau,

¹² Marian K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland. An Outline History*, Cambridge, 1959, pp. 174-175. Kim Ch'ang-sun, *Puk-han ship-o-nyon-sa*, Seoul, 1961, pp. 61-65. Tsuboe Senji, a former Japanese police officer, reported that there were only 400 men, in his book *Chosen minzoku tokuritsu undo hishi*, Tokyo, 1959, pp. 468-469.

were said to have been the two most feared men in the North during the Soviet occupation.

The military forces were likewise controlled from the very beginning by partisan comrades of Kim Il-song, including An Kil, Kim Ch'aek, and Ch'oe Yong-gon. The first groups to appear in uniform in Korea were the Red Security Corps, the Peace Preservation Corps, the Border Constabulary, and the Railroad Guards; all the senior officers in these groups were followers of Kim or else Soviet-Koreans. A number of military training schools were established and directed exclusively by the Soviet-Koreans and Kim's partisans.¹³ Apart from controlling the military forces in Korea through their Soviet-Korean collaborators, the Soviet occupation forces initiated a program to train Korean soldiers in Siberia. Under this program, begun in late 1945, some 10,000 North Korean soldiers received military and technical training in Khabarovsk and Chita.¹⁴ Ch'oe Yong-gon, the Minister of Defense in North Korea, had an impeccable Communist military record, and was totally dedicated to the Communist cause. In sum, just as in Eastern Europe, Communist strength in North Korea relied on a close hold over the security police and the military.

The takeover of the Party machine by the Communists in the North also largely followed the pattern set in Eastern Europe. For example, the common Soviet policy of choosing local Communist leaders who had few domestic ties is glaringly apparent in the case of Korea, for Kim was unaffiliated with any Korean organization and was unknown to the Korean people. He had to be introduced to them as a hero of the Korean revolution by the Russians, and even then many doubted the authenticity of his meager record in the partisan struggle in Manchuria.¹⁵ Although he did participate in the anti-Japanese campaign, he played no part in the Korean Communist movement before the Soviet occupation. In contrast to some of the Communist leaders in Eastern Europe who had well-known names in their native countries before World War II, such as Dimitrov in Bulgaria and Gottwald

¹³ The North Korean army is discussed by V. A. Matsulenko in *Koreyskaya narodnaya armiya*, Moscow, 1959; Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to Nakton, North to Yalu*, Washington, D.C., 1961, pp. 7-18; Ki-won Chung, "The North Korean People's Army and Party," *The China Quarterly*, London, No. 14, April-June, 1963, pp. 105-124.

¹⁴ Department of State, *North Korea. A Case Study in the Technique of Takeover*, Washington, D.C., 1961, pp. 85-86; Malcolm Mackintosh, *Strategy and Tactics of Soviet Foreign Policy*, London, 1962, pp. 33-45.

¹⁵ For the record of Kim's participation in the anti-Japanese struggle in Manchuria, there is his own account, Baik Bong, *Kim Il Sung, Biography 1*, Tokyo, 1969. See a more realistic account in my book, *The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948*, Princeton, N. J., 1967.

in Czechoslovakia, Kim was a stranger even to most Korean Communists. It was not until after the murder of Hyon Chun-hyok (a native Communist leader who represented the Korean Communist Party in the North) and the death of Kim Yong-bom (chairman of the North Korean Branch Bureau of the Korean Communist Party) that Kim and his group took control of the Communist Party in the North. Surrounded by his armed partisans, Kim assumed the chairmanship of the Branch Bureau at its third enlarged plenum in December, 1945. His takeover was facilitated by the absence of potential "Titoist groups," for most of the prominent Communist leaders were in the South, and they made no effort to contest Kim.

Thus, in contrast to Eastern Europe, where popular support aided such native Communists as Dimitrov, Gottwald, and Tito, in North Korea Kim came to power without any popular following. The coercive fusion of political parties which underlay the creation of the Workers' Party of North Korea corresponded with the creation of the Socialist Unity Party in East Germany and the forceful merger of Communists and Social Democrats in Eastern Europe. The merger of the North Korean Branch Bureau of the Korean Communist Party and the New People's Party must have been ordered by the Soviets, for it would seem that without their directives such a merger could not have happened so smoothly or so soon after the liberation.¹⁶

The tactic of merger, or the strategy of "unity from below," was an attempt to join the supporters of the Yenan Communists with the Workers' Party of North Korea, in much the same way as the Soviets tried to split the German Social Democratic membership from its leaders. In North Korea the merger was attained at the cost of having Kim Il-song yield the chairmanship of the united party to a leader of the Yenan Communists, Kim Tubong, while accepting only the vice-chairmanship for himself. A parallel merger of the three leftist parties in the South was carried out with the creation of the Workers' Party of South Korea and had a devastating effect on the main forces of the Korean Communist Party in the South. This strategy of forceful fusion was successful in Korea, for it not only split the membership of the Korean Communist Party in the South on the issue of the merger, but also contributed significantly to the weakening of the Communist forces in the South, thus enhancing indirectly the influence of the Soviet-Korean forces in the North.

At the time of the founding congress of the Workers' Party of North Korea in August, 1946, it claimed a membership of 366,000 or about

¹⁶ John P. Nettl, *The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany, 1945-1950*, London, 1951, pp. 88-90; Pang In-hu, *Puk-han Choson nodong-dang ui hyongsong kwa paljon*, Seoul, 1967, pp. 81-110.

four percent of the population. As in most of Eastern Europe, virtually every member of the Party had joined after the war. Four months after the merger, the Party membership had almost doubled, reaching 600,000 in December, 1946. As in East Germany, most of the members were either opportunist or were unable to flee to the other part of the country and therefore decided to co-operate with the Communists.

The reshaping of the Party was quickly undertaken. By 1948, approximately ten percent of its members had been purged. The shuffling and reshuffling of the Party membership by utilizing the device of issuing new identity cards resulted in the emergence of a very youthful group, not unlike in the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe. In 1948, nearly seventy percent of the Party membership was under thirty-five years of age and more than fifty percent was under thirty.¹⁷ The control exercised over the Party by the Soviet-Koreans and Kim's partisans was so strict that internal disagreements were few, and such disputes never reached the level of intensity that they did under Gomulka in Poland, Kostov in Bulgaria, and Clementis in Czechoslovakia.¹⁸ O Ki-sop, a native Communist, at times voiced his dissatisfaction publicly, but his opposition was patiently put down, eventually curbed, and later condemned, thus judiciously avoiding a direct confrontation within the Party. By eliminating channels for dissent in this way, the Party in North Korea assured its place, much as the Socialist Unity Party in East Germany did. In both countries Communist power derived not from the Party organizations or from popular support, but from the ubiquitous presence of the occupation authorities.

A merger in the style of the United Polish Workers' Party did not occur in Korea until after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, but when it did it was more like an absorption of the Workers' Party of South Korea by the North. The coalition was finalized in June, 1949, and Kim Il-song formally assumed chairmanship of the Workers' Party of all Korea, which included the old Communist revolutionaries who had fled to the North from the American-sponsored, anti-Communist regime in the South.¹⁹

Only two splinter parties were allowed to function in the North. These were the North Korean Democratic Party and the Ch'ondo-gyo Friends Party. The latter was the party of an old Korean religious sect, and although peasant-oriented, it had little political importance. On the other hand, the

¹⁷ Department of State, *North Korea*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁸ Dzierwanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 213. Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, pp. 307 and 316.

¹⁹ On the United Polish Workers' Party, see Dzierwanowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-240. For the Workers' Party of Korea, see Pang In-hu, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-138.

Democratic Party, a nationalist group, was led by Cho Man-sik, who was perhaps the only man in the North who commanded significant popular support. The extent to which the Communists infiltrated the Democratic Party is not known, but two important leaders of Kim Il-song's partisans, Ch'oe Yong-gon and Kim Ch'aek, were members. As with certain peasant parties in Eastern Europe, which were secretly managed by the Communists to confuse the people, Kim's partisans were able to wield strong influence in the Democratic Party, and eventually the Soviet-Koreans, together with the partisans, took it over completely.

The Soviet Union took considerable care to inflate its role as the liberator of an oppressed people in Korea. In fact, in direct contrast to its policy in East Germany, it did not set up an overt Soviet military administration in the North.²⁰ This was particularly appealing to the Koreans, especially in light of the United States military government in the South, which denied the legality of any local authorities, including the Korean Provisional Government returning from China. In Eastern Europe the first postwar administrations were either created by the Soviets, as was the Lublin Committee in Poland, or else were Soviet-sponsored, as was the Provisional Government of General Miklos in Hungary. In the absence of a native civilian government and without a Soviet military administration in Korea, a coalition was hastily formed, consisting of nationalist and Communist leaders. But the revolutionary credentials of both groups were not very impressive, and the coalition, the Five Provinces Administration Bureau, proved to be ineffective.

Although the Soviet occupation authorities did not set up a direct military administration in Korea, this in no way meant that they relinquished tight military control over the country. One account relates that during the period of the Five Provinces Administration Bureau, the Soviet army, under General P. L. Romanenko, created a committee consisting solely of Soviet-Koreans and Kim's partisans to carry out the wishes of the Soviet occupation forces.²¹ Little is known about the committee except that every one of its forty-three representatives was either a card-carrying member of the Soviet Communist Party or a trained recruit of the Soviet occupation forces. The most conspicuous counterpart of this group in Eastern Europe was the Lublin Committee in Poland. But the Soviets were more secretive in Korea where their regulatory committee was in existence for a very short period of time and did not provide the basis for the People's Committee that was

²⁰ Franz L. Neumann, "Soviet Policy in Germany," *The Annals*, Philadelphia, Pa., No. 263, May, 1949, pp. 165-179. The Russian proclamation of October 1 is given in *Choson chungang yon'gam*, 1949, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

²¹ Kim Ch'ang-sun, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

formed later. Furthermore, the Korean group was not as influential as the Lublin Committee, nor is it known whether it was imported from the Soviet Union in a "baggage train," or was hastily put together by the Soviet forces after the occupation.

The issue of a trusteeship for Korea brought a decisive change in the political climate.²² The Soviet directive to the Communists was to acquiesce and even support the plan for a five-year trusteeship, but the proposal was resisted by all Koreans. For the Korean Communists, the question was perhaps as unpopular as that of the German-Polish border or reparations was for the German Communists. The Korean Communists dutifully supported the plan for a trusteeship, but unlike the question of Germany's Polish border, the idea of a trusteeship was never worked out because of the overwhelming repugnance to it on the part of the Korean people in the South. When it became obvious that the American military authorities were yielding to popular pressure in the South, there was a period of rapid sovietization in the North. Purges of non-Communist leaders who had opposed the trusteeship in the North took place in much the same way as the elimination of non-Communist leaders in Eastern Europe.

Shortly after, in February, 1946, the formation of the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea was proclaimed, with Kim Il-song as chairman, and a year later the People's Committee of North Korea was organized. The People's Committee was to rule the North until the establishment of a formal government on September 9, 1948. In setting up these committees and the government in general, the Soviets attempted to preserve the appearance of a broad popular front. Many leaders of the Democratic Party and the Ch'ondo-gyo Friends Party, as well as leaders of the Yen'an Communists and domestic groups within the Workers' Party of North Korea, were placed in ministerial positions. One study contends that positions of prominence were differentiated from positions of power in the North Korean governmental structure, and that most of the positions of authority were entrusted to Soviet-Koreans. The Soviets are said to have exercised control through vice-ministers who were either Soviet-Koreans or members of Kim's partisans, and it is claimed that the actual power was held by these men.²³ The extent to which the Soviets managed these committees is difficult to ascertain, but close analysis of the committees reveals

²² There are numerous accounts of the question of the trusteeship in Korea. The details of the negotiations are to be found in Soon Sung-Cho, *Korea in World Politics, 1940-50: An Evaluation of American Responsibility*, Berkeley, Calif., 1967. See also George M. McCune, *Korea Today*, Cambridge, Mass., 1950.

²³ Yi Hong-gun, *Soryon kunjong ui simal*, Seoul, 1950, pp. 4-10; Department of State, *North Korea*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-54.

two important factors which suggest that the degree of Soviet influence in North Korea bears comparison with the situation in the East European countries.

The first of these factors is the background of the leaders who collaborated with the Soviet military. Though there is little doubt that the People's Committees represented a wide range of popular groups, their leadership resembled closely the types of people who co-operated with the Soviets in Poland—professional army men, prewar civil servants, returning émigré politicians, politicians with totalitarian proclivities, and leftist leaders won over by the Polish Workers' Party.²⁴ All of these types were present in North Korea, but none matched the Soviet-Koreans and the partisans in strength. Kim Il-song and his partisans used different types of people at different times. Together with the Soviet-Koreans, they were able to manipulate these groups by means of the de-japanization campaigns in the North. Under Japanese rule, the majority of Korean revolutionaries who operated in or near Korea were subdued. Indeed, there were very few Koreans who kept alive the anti-Japanese struggle, except for those who fled and lived abroad, such as the Soviet-Koreans, the Yen'an Koreans, and Kim's partisans. As a result, in the postwar period many Koreans could easily be accused of having collaborated with the Japanese, and these men held their positions at the whim of the Soviet-Koreans and the partisans. Ultimately all those who could be said to have collaborated with the Japanese in any way at all were eliminated. Much like the de-nazification of the bureaucracy in East Germany, the de-japanization campaign was gradually carried out not only among true collaborators, but among innocent anti-Communists as well.

The second factor attesting to the extent of Soviet control is the rapidity with which reform measures were inaugurated and completed. The Provisional People's Committee undertook six major reforms in the North in less than six months.²⁵ More than fifty percent of the farm land was redistributed in a sweeping land reform inaugurated in March, 1946. An eight-hour workday was established for the first time by a decree promulgated in June, 1946. These steps were quickly followed by the nationalization of virtually all heavy industries in the North, the regulation of a system of tax-in-kind in agriculture, the declaration of the equality of the sexes, and the formulation of an election code. The effort to win the support of the people by championing reforms was a common characteristic of the Com-

²⁴ Dzienanowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189.

²⁵ Ch'ian-guk t'ukbyol chongbo-kwa, *Puk-han kongsan koeroe chong-kwon taeban koch'al*, Seoul, 1958, pp. 31-53; Pak Tong-un, *Puk-han t'ongch'i keiguro*, Seoul, 1964, pp. 3-16.

minist administrations in Eastern Europe, but the rapidity with which these reforms were proclaimed and executed in Korea was most unusual. In Korea, such measures seem to have represented the implementation of a preconceived formula for sovietization rather than the application of a program of action to win popular support. Aside from these reform measures, the creation of a monolithic regime and the institution of a stable control mechanism in the North seems to have been secured when the North Korean Communists announced the creation of the Korean People's Army in February, 1948, even before the formation of their government. In March, 1948, when the nationally prominent leaders from the South, Kim Ku and Kim Kyu-sik, met with the Communist leaders of the North at the North-South Political Consultative Conference, the Communists displayed a solid front, and the two leaders from the South could not help but recognize the rapid polarization of Korea.

It has been asserted that the Soviet zone in Germany provided a climate favorable to the advancement of the Socialist Unity Party there.²⁶ In Korea, the North was perhaps less amenable to a Communist takeover than the South was. However, the takeovers in both Korea and Germany did not depend on the popularity of the Communists or on the reforms they carried out or promised. The takeovers in both countries were effected by a small segment of cadres that the Soviet forces had either brought with them or trained in these countries and then superimposed on their societies.

A major purpose of the Soviet occupation and control of East Germany—apart from a desire to protect Soviet territory from the potential threat of a united, re-armed Germany—was to obtain reparations.²⁷ Initially, some Japanese industries in Korea and Manchuria were stripped by the Soviets, but the takeover of North Korea seems to have reflected more a desire on the part of the Soviet Union to improve its strategic position in the Far East, especially in the face of United States influence in both South Korea and Japan. In Korea, as well as in the ring of states along the European border of the Soviet Union, Stalin's chief motive in establishing Communist regimes was to protect and promote the national interests of the Soviet Union. Just as the creation of the East German government was tactically deferred until after the proclamation of the West German government in Bonn, the North Koreans waited until after the government in the South was established to announce the formation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The popularity of the regime in North Korea has been as dubious

²⁶ *The Soviet Zone of Germany*, Human Relations Area File No. 34, Harvard-1, pp. 5-6.

²⁷ Nettl, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

as that of East Germany, with both countries subject to declining populations, as large numbers of people flee whenever the opportunity arises.

In general, then, many characteristics common to other Communist takeovers are also to be found in the events that took place in North Korea. The Communists introduced a number of reforms in North Korea, and they brought about a coalition of Communist and Socialist Parties to increase their strength. The similarity in the choice of labels which are not obviously Communist to designate the newly created parties—for example, the Polish Workers' Party and the Korean Workers' Party—is indeed striking. Many opportunists and Communist sympathizers were admitted to the parties to confuse the people. In Korea, the strategy of unity from below was an efficient means of eliminating the leaders of other parties and enlisting their followers. Control of the security police and the military, purges and political murders, exploitation of prominent nationalist leaders, and the fashioning and installing of a Communist dictator—all these were strategies employed in Korea that followed closely the usual formula of Communist takeovers elsewhere. The Soviet-Koreans and Kim Il-song's partisans were "Muscovites" compared with the native Koreans, and even to the Korean Communists they were Manchurian "bandits," non-Koreans serving a foreign master.

Some facets unique to the Korean situation turned out to be in the Communists' favor. In the North, being an unpopular "Muscovite" was not a problem, because popularity was irrelevant to the situation. Simple military control was the primary consideration, with the Soviet-Koreans and the partisans ruling the North irrespective of their popularity among the people. Ignorance of Korea on the part of the Soviet Union was compensated for by indifference towards the North on the part of the prominent native Communists in the South. The division of Korea and the perpetuation of this division were, perhaps, the keys to the ease with which the sovietization of North Korea took place, just as the division of Germany made possible the establishment of a Communist regime there. In these two countries, as well as in the rest of Eastern Europe, Communist and Soviet tactics display remarkable similarities.