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WEEKLY SURVEY
28 MAY 1948

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Korea

KOREA

The Moscow radio is interested in one theme and one theme only in broadcasts to and about Korea again this week--namely, disparagement of the elections in the merican zone.

Pyongyang, too, is concerned with discrediting the elections; but it is equally interested, however, in advancing North Korea's position on the electric power issue. In both contexts the Soviet-controlled transmitter frequently turns to vilification of General Hodge.

a. "Inside Story" of the 10 May Elections: "Using nothing but American or pro-American sources," one Moscow commentator pieces together the "hidden" facts concerning the elections. (in English to North America, 19 May 1948) Descriptions of the "police terror" in Seoul on 10 May are culled from reports of the AP, UP and the Chinese CENTRAL NEWS, and are bolstered by references to the vast numbers of political prisoners in the American zone. This picture of terror and oppression under the American aegis is contrasted, in familiar terms, with the opposite situation in the Soviet zone.

Danilov, an IZVESTIA article, and a lengthy TASS report reiterate these same charges in other transmissions during the week. They also report that the Korean people reject the election results and that they consider the election to be null and void.

Pyongyang, in reporting "instances" of brutality during the elections is more specific than Moscow in that it quotes the experiences of named individuals. It also diverges from the Moscow line of attack in claiming that the results were announced "hastily," the day after the election in an effort to give an air of authenticity to American claims of widescale participation. Last week, on the other hand, Moscow claimed that the results were not released for "as long as" five days after the voting--attempting thereby to cast doubts on the announced results.

b. Pyongyang on the Power Issue: Pyongyang devotes appreciable time to expounding the North Korean point of view in the current electric power issue. Again and again broadcasters defend the "just" and "conscientious" attitude of northern leaders in this case and criticize American occupation officials for their alleged refusal to comply with terms of the agreement. Various broadcasts claim that Koreans in the southern zone are being charged exorbitant fees for electric power, that the funds are not used properly, and that the U.S. has made no effort to secure the goods specified by the Pyongyang People's Committee as those to be used in payment for transmission of North Korean power. They claim that General Hodge and members of his staff have shown bad faith in establishing power facilities in the American zone and in refusing to permit southern Koreans to negotiate the power problem.

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c. Pyongyang Profiles General Hodge: In one group of broadcasts, Pyongyang commentators have built up a picture of General Hodge as a both ludicrous and evil figure, suffering from neurasthenia and subject to the whims of Wall Street. These transmissions purport to be in answer to the public statements issued by the General in recent weeks. The statements are likened to the barkings of a mad dog excited by the moon and to the squeals of a pig caught under a fence. Pyongyang offers, as proof of Hodge's venality, reports that Hodge ordered the death of "any patriotic Korean opposing the elections." In an open letter to General Hodge, broadcast on 8 May, he is advised to remember his earlier statements:

"You accused the democratic elections in North Korea of (single ticket system). But now you say that the movement in South Korea for a single ticket system is an expression of ardent patriotism. What a self-contradiction! Once upon a time, it is said, there existed a fox with nine tails. How many tongues does your Excellency have?"

The letter concludes by "advising" Hodge to return to America: "How about packing up and going home quick? Then, we may say a comforting word to you that has sweated so much in Korea, together with a bon voyage."

"The longer you remain in south Korea the more miserable will Korea become and the more disturbed will you be. Yes, the situation is going from bad to worse and what are you going to do about it if your neurasthenia becomes a chronic disease, forcing you into fits of insanity in a strange land? Therefore, we repeat that for the sake of Korea, and all the more for the sake of yourself, we think you had better pack up."

In a broadcast derogating Hodge's statement on the power question Pyongyang accuses him of a series of "fabrications" with reference to the goods asked by North Korea in payment for its electric power:

"Hodge said that he is endeavoring to obtain precious, valuable commodities on the world market in order to pay for the electric bill.... Now what are those precious commodities? ... Does he mean to say that in payment of the electric bill North Korea has asked for earrings of an Egyptian queen three thousand years ago which are dug out of a tomb? Or that we have asked for the crown of Queen Victoria?"

"The kind of commodities the North Korea People's Committee has asked for ranges from electric bulbs, electric wire, cotton yarns, to such electrical goods as fuses and batteries. In an effort to evade paying even in such commodities, Hodge attempted to pay us in such commodities, which he could not dispose of elsewhere, as syrup, tooth powder, chocolate, powdered soap, bamboo sprouts, and 'myok.'"

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d. Pyongyang on the Situation in Japan: Pyongyang departs from its usual preoccupation with domestic affairs in two commentaries on Japan this week. In previous weeks Pyongyang transmissions have included news reports of the Korean riots in Japan; but on 25 May, the "Commentary Committee" of Pyongyang radio discourses on the efforts of "American imperialists" who are allegedly "bent on employing Japan as a tool for their aggression in the east by rearming Japan." The commentary is keyed to the alleged "coercion" of Koreans by Japanese officials; and it accuses the Americans of responsibility for allowing this coercion. To this end, General MacArthur is quoted as having announced that "the Japanese Government is mine; so is the Japanese police. Therefore, the Koreans residing in Japan must obey unconditionally the (workers of the Japanese Government and police."

The claim that America is "rearming" Japan is arrived at by alleging that because America permits such coercive action against foreign nationals, it is fostering the revival of a spirit of militarism. Hence, "America is rearming Japan."

Pyongyang also comments on the alleged American plan to revive Japan's war industries by broadcasting on 25 May an article by Eidus which originally appeared in RED FLEET and which TASS transmits on 23 May. The article reiterates Moscow's familiar complaint; the U.S. is circumventing the Potsdam Declaration in reviving Japan's industrial war potential.