

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES IN KOREA
Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
APO 235

15 October 1947

WHO'S WHO IN KOREA
Third Revision

The following is a revision of the REVISED WHO'S WHO IN KOREA, dated 01 October 46, published as Inclosure #1 to XXIV Corps G-2 Weekly Summary No 56.

吳龍國

Oh, Yong Kook (Oh) - B. about 1907; educated in Japan; is a rightist, but no party affiliation; previous political posts were unimportant, highest having been that of myun head; of moderate means, caters to the wealthy in the extreme right; elected to ILA from Choju-do in February 1947.

梁濟博

YANG, Choi Bek - B. 7 July 1887, Choju Do; G. Law College, Seoul, 1912; clerk in Kwangju District Court for 5 years; failed in several business ventures; chairman, Incheon Branch, Hankook Democratic Party; elected to ILA from Kyonggi Do, October 1946; chairman of ILA committee on Food and Price Control Measures, also member, Legislative and Judicial Committee; one of sponsors of anti-trusteeship resolution passed by ILA on 20 January 1947.

• 남한의 재소자 현황(1947. 12. 19)

CONFIDENTIAL

No. 175

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIVISION OF
NORTHWEST ASIAN AFFAIRS

JAN 1948

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DCI

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Office of Political Adviser
Hqs., XXIV Corps, APO 235
c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, Cal.
December 19, 1947

SUBJECT: Prison Population in S. A. Forces

THE HONORABLE

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

With reference to this Office's despatch No. 128 of October 24, 1947, on the subject, "Political Conditions in Cholla Provinces", there is enclosed herewith a copy of a census of persons in Department of Justice, South Korean Interim Government, prisons as of October 31, 1947.

The reference despatch mentioned that an official party dispatched by the Department of Justice of SKIG found that in North Cholla Province alone during August 12-14, 1947, 850 Leftists were jailed and as of August 30th were still in jail without being arraigned. This is in violation of the law which requires police to release prisoners if charges are not filed in ten days.

The Department of Justice figures in the enclosed report show only 533 persons in prisons in all Korea who had not been indicted as of October 31st. This apparent large discrepancy is explained by two factors, the major one being the number of persons held in police jails before being turned over to the Department of Justice prisons. Persons may legally be held by police for ten days without formal charges. After charges are made, the prisoner is turned over to a prosecutor of the Department of Justice, SKIG, who has ten days to prepare a case or release the prisoner. The persons held in police jails (for police investigation or on account of the prosecutor pending indictment or release) are not included in the Department of Justice prison figures.

Another factor in the discrepancy is the drive made by the police in August against Leftist factions. There were numerous arrests at that time which created a jam in the police jails in certain areas.

In a despatch from Seoul of October 15th, a copy of which is enclosed, Keyes Beech, New York Post correspondent, said that Korean jails were overflowing with political prisoners and that such prisoners were kept in strictly POW camps. There are only five camps for prisoners in South Korea and these are operated by the Department of Justice. They are supervised by the prisons in which district they lie and their population figures are included in the figures of the supervising prison. Officials in the Department of Justice say that the camps are used primarily for prisoners serving short terms as they are less escape-proof than the prisons.

As to the charge that there are thousands of political prisoners in South Korea, of the 17,867 convicted prisoners

on October 31st, some are listed for political offenses. However, there are two more or less ambiguous categories in which political prisoners could be concealed by falsification or distortion of charges: "Violation of Military Government Regulations", embracing a total of 1,787 prisoners, and "Other Crimes", with a total of 3,773 prisoners. The record would probably show, with truth in general, that most of these cases were for overt peace-breaking, terrorism, unlawful assembly or strike, instigation to riot or to disobedience or violation of laws, etc.

Department of Justice officials are now working on a report of prison population in South Korea, breaking it down by years and by type of crime. On June 30, 1945, there were approximately 17,000 prisoners in South Korea and 13,000 in North Korea, but there was no clear line of demarcation as prisoners could be sent from one prison to another, and the presence of a prisoner in a prison in South Korea did not necessarily indicate that the crime was committed in South Korea.

In comparing the 17,000 prisoners in South Korea in 1945 to the 21,458 listed in October 1947, the large increase in population due to the influx of refugees from the North and the financial condition of the refugees, encouraging theft and similar crimes, should be taken into consideration. On that basis, the per capita proportion of prisoners to the total population would be almost the same.

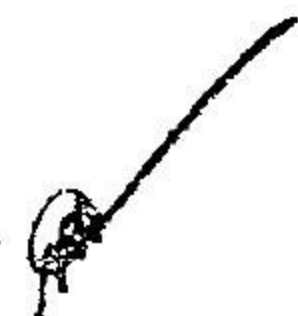
Despite the serious charges that have been made against the prisons in South Korea, it would seem that the most unsatisfactory condition lies not in the prisons supervised by the Department of Justice, but in the police jails where prisoners are held before being turned over to Department of Justice prosecutors. Here again, the fault is not altogether that of the police. The ratio of policemen to population is 1.4 to 1,000 (said to be 1.84 in the United States). The society further is politically excited, restive, and frustrated, and economically on a subsistence margin. If the police cannot keep up with their cases, some consideration ought to be given to these factors.

The more complete statistical analyses of the prison population in South Korea will be sent to the Department when they are available.

Respectfully yours,



Wm. R. Langdon
Acting United States Political Adviser

Enclosures: 

1. Copy of report of Department of Justice, SKIC, on prison population as of October 31, 1947

2. Copy of CINCFE Telegram 171334, October 1947, repeating Keyes Beech N. Y. Post story of October 15, 1947

<첨부분서> 제2호 : 미극동군 사령부 전문내용(1947. 10. 15)

171334 Oct 47

WOL 30437 170148Z

From: CINCFE

To: CG USAFIK

From: WAR/CSPID/

To : CINCFE/Personal to Commander and Bridge/ pass to CG USAFIK

NY Post correspondent Keyes Beech, Seoul 15 Oct: South Korea's jails are overflowing with political prisoners as a result of undeclared war by its rightist police on leftist elements. Not all are political prisoners of course, but Military Government sources estimate that at least 2,000 are Communists. While American authorities deplore the notoriously brutal police methods, they look favorably on the current campaign because the Communists are the target. Political prisoners are kept strictly in POW camps an American official said today, "Because they make trouble." Only professional criminals enjoy comparative freedom. Many prisoners are charged with attending illegal meetings. In South Korea any meeting not authorized by the Rightist police is illegal. It is impossible to determine how many innocent persons are jailed along with Communists, thugs and agitators, but the police practice is to arrest everybody in sight. It is also customary to hold prisoners incommunicado, deny bail and beat them into making confessions, knowing that in Russian-held North Korea Rightists get ever harsher treatment from the Communists there.

• 남한의 폭동과 소요 발생 지역(1948. 1. 17)

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~~INTERNAL SECURITY~~

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Office of Economic Affairs

CG USAFIK, A.P.O. 235,

17 January 1948.