The Intelligence of Fools:
Reading the US Military Archive of the Korean War

Monica Kim

The Korean War has not yet come to an official end. The one still remaining “hot war” of the Cold War, the war confounds the usual logic of historical narrative with contradictions that seem to multiply at every turn. The Korean War is a war that is “forgotten” in the annals of United States history, but it has also continuously been in plain sight of the world through the latter half of the twentieth century into the second millennium in the form of the hypermilitarized demilitarized zone (DMZ) on the Korean peninsula. The impetus for continued investment in the Korean War—national security—has become part of the everyday language and politics of Korea, East Asia, and the United States. The Korean War has become a war that is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. It is a war that is marked both on territory and on consciousness.

This essay begins in 1945 with the arrival of the US military occupation
forces on the southern half of the Korean peninsula. But rather than conducting a search for the origins of the war that officially broke out in June 1950, I trace a project that was central to the US occupation and subsequent political rule on the peninsula—the creation of a military intelligence network. Stories about the US occupation often begin with August 1945, when the 38th parallel was established as the dividing line between the Soviet and US military occupations on the peninsula. The story about the war over the consciousness and political will of the Korean people begins in early September 1945 with 300,000 leaflets falling from US airplanes over the southern part of the peninsula, announcing the arrival of the US military occupation forces. The relationship between paper and blood, rather than land and blood, is the focus of this essay’s analysis of the unending nature of the Korean War.

In 1950, when the Korean War broke out, global attention focused upon a postcolonial civil war between two nation-states facing each other across the border of the 38th parallel—the northern Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the southern Republic of Korea (ROK). However, as this essay will demonstrate, the war is also an extension of a struggle carried over from the US occupation of Korea. A critical facet of the conflict operated on the plane of exceptional sovereign power, where the claims to defining the dynamics of “emergency” rather than the “nation” proved to be the site of power. The post-1945 US experiment of putative decolonization on the Korean peninsula hinged not upon the 38th parallel but, rather, the creation of a US military intelligence structure that defined, translated, and invented the Korean political subject for what would become the universal template of governance in the anticommunist orbit of the Cold War: the national security state.

The establishment of a legitimate Korean nation-state was neither the concern nor the objective of the US military government. The creation of an exceptional sovereign plane of authority, one that I demonstrate persisted through the Korean War, was the central project. The key, critical element that consolidated this project was the US military intelligence sections. The documents produced by the US Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) and the G-2 Intelligence Branch of the US military form the fundamental archival basis for much of the historical scholarship on the Korean War. This
essay renders this familiar archive of the war—the documents of the CIC and G-2—strange again by extracting from the archive strategies for disruptive reading. I ask how the archive of US military intelligence reveals a US military that operated on the symbolic realm of power, preoccupied with rumors and pamphlets, and frustrated with the very real limits of US authority. The very archive that has been the foundation for much of the historiography on the Korean War can also be, I argue, the starting point for gleaning the contours and dynamics of a war that is unsettled, dispersed, and even mundane.

People and paper both posed immediate problems to the incoming US military government. On September 10, 1945, the day after US military personnel arrived on the peninsula to commence the military occupation, the Korean populace filled the streets of the capital city of Seoul to protest the first decision announced by the US military occupation authorities. As the Associated Press commented, the “United States Army orders” mandated that the “Japanese overlords who have ruled the little empire for thirty-five years” were to remain temporarily in office. Demonstrations across the city were extensive, and the Koreans had “plastered walls with posters of protest,” noted the Associated Press. The US military was also taking note of the undeniable mass of both people and paper in public spaces across the peninsula. Military intelligence units of the United States of America Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) reported, “Posters and pamphlets continue to appear in INCH’ON and SEOUL criticizing and denouncing the U.S. Army occupational policy in KOREA.”

In early October 1945, published copies of a pamphlet began circulating in the streets of Seoul, amidst the escalating demonstrations. This pamphlet, written in English and titled “Message to U.S.A. Citizens,” caused a good deal of concern among US military intelligence agents, who were also in the middle of trying to divine exactly who kept on taking down the military government ordinances that had been plastered on the walls of the city. The writers of the pamphlet—members of the Committee of the People’s Republic—reprimanded the US military government officials in their decision to ban public gatherings and demonstrations in the streets that had not received express permission from the USAMGIK. “A few days ago,” noted the handbill, “the Military Government of U.S. Army in Corea
issued a decree that says, ‘No gathering, no procession or parade should be held without permission of the government authority.’... Do you think it is possible to build a new nation in democratic way without freedom of speech, without freedom of mass meeting without freedom of all political activities?’”

The Committee of the People’s Republic was a national organization that governed a network of local committees organized by Koreans after liberation from Japanese colonial rule. Edward Meade, a US official working with USAMGIK, called the People’s Republic the “de facto government” on the Korean peninsula even before the arrival of the US army personnel in early September 1945. The writers of the pamphlet asserted their sovereign claim to the political future of the peninsula: “Let the Coreans govern themselves. Protect us, but do not try to rule over us. We know what is the best government for us; we are intelligence [sic] enough to manage our own affairs.” The committee did not oppose occupation in absolute terms, but they did remind the US officials that the occupation was to be temporary: “Your sympathy and your help will make an imperishable record in the glorious history of New Korea.” US military occupation was a mere bounded event, within a longer history—a history quite literally embodied and enacted by the Korean person. There was no need for the United States military government to invent the Korean as a political subject.

Invention, however, was at the heart of the US military government project, and the Korean was its primary site. To validate the project of invention, the US military government had to insist repeatedly that there was an absence, a lack of a coherent, legible Korean political subjectivity. This article examines the struggle over sovereignty on the Korean peninsula from postwar occupation through the Korean War not over the usual stakes of geopolitical territory but, rather, over the politics of recognition surrounding the capacity of the individual postcolonial subject. A landscape of paper and language intersected with the more historically familiar story of mass violence, political movements, and the entrenchment of an exceptional sovereign power that continued through the years of occupation, war, and beyond on the Korean peninsula.

On October 10, 1945, US Major General Archibald Arnold, the military governor of occupied southern Korea, responded to the activities of the
People’s Republic—perhaps with the handbill specifically in mind—with his own statement in front of the Korean press: “Self-appointed ‘officials’ and ‘police groups,’ big (or little) conferences representing all the people, the (self-styled) government of the Republic of Korea, are entirely without any authority, power or reality. If the men who are arrogating to themselves such high-sounding titles are merely play-acting on a puppet stage with entertainment of questionable amusement value they must immediately pull down the curtain on the puppet show.” The political gatherings or organizations of Koreans—and here, Arnold is specifically concerned with the Committee of the People’s Republic of Korea—were not canny, strategic performances. Indeed, in the eyes of the major general, it was only a mere farce, a pathetic mimicry, a false gesture. Political authenticity—or to quote Arnold, “authority, power, or reality”—lay with the US military government, and it was theirs to confer. The Koreans were not yet legally citizens, and Korea was not yet a nation-state.

Through the years of occupation, the Korean War, and beyond, it was exactly Major General Arnold’s “puppet stage” that preoccupied US military intelligence activities and formed the basis for much of the policy mobilized. Reading and interpreting the gestures on this “puppet stage” became the core of the professionalization process of the most important section of the US military intelligence section operating on the ground in southern Korea—the Counter Intelligence Corps. The first permanent SOP (standard operating procedure) for the CIC, drafted belatedly in March 1947, stated that the CIC’s “mission” encompassed “special investigative activity . . . involving political groups and social organizations and the collection of information relating to adjacent areas to insure the successful completion of the over-all mission of the U.S. Forces in Korea to set up a democratic form of government.” But even after the US/United Nations establishment of the Republic of Korea south of the 38th parallel in 1948, the CIC agents were still attempting to divine and assess this stage of politics in Korea in the early 1950s during the war.

The critical practice of this “special investigative activity” as it continued from the occupation years through the subsequent war was interrogation. But as Lieutenant Colonel Verne O. Jackson of the 210th CIC Detachment commented, “it was very difficult to interrogate Koreans. They lied repeat-
Neither threats nor bribes seemed to work—“It was very difficult to break these people.”

Or as Second Lieutenant Joseph Farell of the 116th CIC Detachment stated regarding the ROK military personnel who were working with them, “to describe the average mentality of the South Korean ROK, you would have to take into consideration the fact that they have been suppressed for many years, therefore, they have very little initiative [sic] . . . I would judge the average ROK as being that of at least a seven year old boy.”

The Korean was inscrutable, lying, unbreakable, immature, underdeveloped, still mentally colonized. The Korean, in sum, was incoherent.

I am interested in how US military intelligence invented time and time again the Korean subject as one of incoherence. If “interrogation is an art with as many branches as music, or painting,” as the 1952 guide for new CIC agents counseled, then for the interrogator “it is his object to produce a coherent, factual, and readable narrative.”

But how did one produce a “coherent, factual, and readable narrative” about an interrogated Korean who supposedly had the mentality of a child, who lied consistently, and refused to talk? How did one make incoherence coherent?

The narratives written by the Counter Intelligence Corps and the G-2 Intelligence Branch of the US military have become a critical part of the archival landscape that historians of the Korean War have mined in a search to understand the war’s origins. Nothing less than the legitimacy of state policy—whether that of the two Koreas or the United States—has been at stake in these historical analyses, which have largely confirmed Carl von Clausewitz’s famed statement on the nature of war: “War is the continuation of policy by other means.”

But the unending nature of the Korean War gives deep relevance to Michel Foucault’s reversal of Clausewitz’s statement—“Policy is the continuation of war by other means.”

Rather than turn to the CIC papers for answers to the origins of the war, we instead might draw upon Foucault’s inversion of the Clausewitz dictum and ask: What, in turn, can these very papers reveal about the war’s irresolution? In other words, what does an archive of a war without end look like?
A flurry of paper heralded the beginning of the US military occupation on the Korean peninsula. Three hundred thousand leaflets poured out from the sky over the southern part of the Korean peninsula from September 1 to 5, 1945. US Commanding General John Hodge, appointed by Douglas MacArthur to command the military occupation of Korea, had ordered the air force to distribute these leaflets in advance warning of the occupation to the Korean people. The leaflet, addressed “To the People of Korea,” began as follows:

The armed forces of the United States will soon arrive in Korea for the purpose of receiving the surrender of the Japanese forces, enforcing the terms of surrender, and insuring the orderly administration and rehabilitation of the country. These missions will be carried out with a firm hand, but with a hand that will be guided by a nation whose long heritage of democracy has fostered a kindly feeling for peoples less fortunate. How well and how rapidly these tasks are carried out will depend on the Koreans themselves.”

Subsequently, Proclamation No. 2 was issued on September 7, 1945—clearly, there was concern about how the Koreans would receive the US occupiers. This time MacArthur, aka “Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific,” addressed the “People of Korea,” proclaiming:

Any Person Who:
Violates the provision of the Instrument of Surrender, or any proclamation, order, or directive given under the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, or does any act to the prejudice of good order or the life, safety, or security of the persons or property of the United States or its Allies, or does any act calculated to disturb public peace and order, or prevent the administration of justice, or willfully does any act hostile to the Allied forces, shall, upon conviction by a military Occupation Court, suffer death or such other punishment as the Court may determine.
This pair of proclamations would become part of the slender file of documents given to the US military personnel arriving on the Korean peninsula on September 9, 1945, to guide them through the inventing of a “military occupation” in Korea. According to USAMGIK official Edward Meade, “each officer did receive a copy of the Cairo Declaration, of MacArthur’s three proclamations to the Korean people, of the secret operational military government plan that had been hastily improvised by a joint-staff committee of the XXIV Corps and the Seventh Fleets, and of those dozen or more ordinances, general orders, and notices thus far printed by Military Government.” These proclamations heralded—and positioned—the US occupation of Korea as a form of rule between benevolence and death. Who deserved benevolence, and who deserved death? The state of emergency that positioned the individual subject precariously on the edge between benevolence and death did not need to be resolved for a nation-building project. It was, in fact, integral.

When confronted by public mass protest on the streets and walls of Korea, Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, the commander of the XXIV US Army Corps, declared in a press conference, “In effect, I am the Korean government during the transition period” (italics added). Hodge’s assertion that he was the sovereign—“the Korean government”—was an attempt to wrest away possible authority from the masses in the streets, but it also belied an unsettled anxiety on the part of the US military authorities. Such an utterance put forth the legitimate authority of the US Army as assumed, as a priori, but as the posters, parades, and clamoring press attested, authority was anything but assumed in this moment. Lieutenant General Hodge, in a report to General MacArthur, commented on the attitudes of the Korean populace toward the US military government. “The Koreans are the most politically minded people I have ever seen,” Hodge wrote. “Every move, every word, every act is interpreted and evaluated politically.” The Koreans were apparently judging the “every move, every word, and every act” of the US military government.

“The Koreans want their independence more than any one thing and want it now,” noted Hodge, who continued, “This stems from the Allied promise of freedom and independence which is well known by every Korean without the qualifying phrase ‘in due course.’ I am told there are no Korean
words expressing ‘in due course.’” Hodge was referring to the single most important sentence framing the occupation of Korea, a line from the Cairo Declaration. For the group of “all professional soldiers and none with any training or experience in civil affairs” who arrived on the Korean peninsula to begin the occupation, the Cairo Declaration “provided the only statement of high policy available at the time, the single sentence: ‘The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.’” In other words, as according to the History of the United States Armed Forces in Korea, “Koreans were to be treated as liberated people, but liberation was to be given gradually.” The period of military occupation was to be one of granting, one of becoming, and one of suspension.

By essentially reducing the demands for immediate independence by Koreans as an impossibility of translation, Hodge held that the Korean language itself was incapable of holding the more complex meaning of a deferred temporal process of indeterminate duration. In due course—the operative phrase of the Cairo Declaration that placed Korea within the “waiting room of history” along with other mandates, colonies, and trusteeships—had become a concept indicative of mature and enlightened political thinking—and, according to Hodge’s logic, it was one external to the Korean person and history.

Circulating in Seoul in early October 1945, a handbill titled “A Message to U.S.A. Citizens” directly addressed the members of the US military government in English. In fact, the authors of the handbill—the Central Committee of the People’s Republic of Korea—explicitly singled out Hodge and referred to Proclamation No. 1 in the opening paragraphs: “In his first message, General Hodge declared that one of three missions of the armed forces of the United States in Corea is to ‘rehabilitate Korea.’” We took his message in gratitude and with respect because we believed in his commandership—the general of the nation of Washington, Lincoln, and Roosevelt.” The committee had quickly turned the tables, conducting a reading of what the “benevolent” US military government should look like. The People’s Republic of Korea did welcome the US military government, and the handbill goes so far as to state, perhaps with an exaggerated sense of addressing the need of the US military government to be perceived as
benevolent, “At last our eagerly waited helper of the oppressed and guardian of liberty arrived,” referring to the US forces. The authors of the handbill were taking this standard of benevolence as an opportunity to teach the US military what the limit of the occupying powers must be. The text of this handbill conceded the benevolence of the US military occupation—but only up to an extent.

The handbill narrated an unbroken line of political will and subjectivity from the colonial period through the present—an argument, essentially, against the idea that decolonization would require the United States and Western powers to teach “politics” to the decolonized Korean: “If any Corean remained mentally normal during the [Pacific War], he was a fool. Coreans made themselves split personalities. They showed obedience in the presence of Japanese and they did just the opposite thing in reality. Without any munitions, revolutionists fought bravely in fields and in factories.” Political desire and historical agency were already the realm in which Koreans acted and made decisions. Perhaps most importantly, the committee, in asserting that the “mentally normal” Korean was a fool—which would conversely mean that insanity was actually a marker of calculated intelligence—was conveying to the US military government that it would have severe limits in trying to “read” the Korean.

Published and circulated less than a month after Hodge’s declaration, “I am the Korean government,” this handbill addressed the surprising escalation of events characterizing the US military occupation from September to October of 1945. US military authority was created not only through a display of force with a military presence but also through a great deal of paper—ordinances, proclamations, and published speeches. Distribution, however, turned out to be an entirely different issue than reception. A G-2 Intelligence Weekly Summary dated October 9, 1945, stated, “Civilians interviewed state that the proclamations issued by the US occupation forces reach only a few of the people. Some of these orders have been misunderstood because civilians are not able to either read or interpret the proclamations.” MacArthur had declared English to be the official language of the US occupation, adding the issue of translation to the mix. Without a reader, these pieces of paper distributed throughout the southern part of the peninsula became simply that—pieces of paper.
By the end of October though, the anxiety of the US military government was evident. On October 30, 1945, the US occupation forces published Ordinance No. 19. Section 1 was titled, “Declaration of National Emergency.” Significantly, the ordinance began with a reintroduction of the US forces to the Korean people, a move reminiscent of Proclamation No. 1: “After four long years of war, from which they emerged victorious, American Forces landed upon your shores the friends and protectors of the Korean people.” The appearance of the benevolent sovereign notwithstanding, the main preoccupation of the ordinance was an attempt to give shape to the threat of death through the stipulation of three kinds of “unlawful acts.”

The three “unlawful acts” encompassed an almost infinite range of actions—from language, to physical action, to political intent, thus revealing the difficulty the military government had encountered in establishing legitimacy on the ground. The first unlawful act was “knowingly making any false statement orally or in writing to any member of or person acting under the authority of USAFIK or the Military Government”; the second consisted of any “[attempt] to obstruct, or contravening any orders . . . of the Military Government”; and the third involved “directing or participating in acts of discipline, threats, coercion or any other form of intimidation or victimization (including boycotting) against any person cooperating in any form directly or indirectly with USAFIK or the Military Government of Korea.” In essence, the US military government was ordering the Korean populace to at least act and behave as if they had accepted the legitimate authority of their presence, while also broadening its own power of oversight.

The US military government’s preoccupation with controlling speech acts belied its anxiety about the Korean population. The different types of documents issued by the US military government—such as the posted ordinances or the printed identity passes—were often torn down, forged, or challenged by Koreans, who often, in turn, printed their own publications or pamphlets. Six months later, on May 4, 1946, the US military government published Ordinance No. 72 titled “Offenses against the Military Government.” This nine-page ordinance outlined eighty-two specific behaviors considered “Offenses against the Military Government.” It stated that the specificity with which these offenses were enumerated did not “[limit] the provisions of Proclamation Number 2,” the proclamation issued by General
MacArthur in the early days of the occupation that announced that those who committed acts “inimical” to the aims of the US military government would “suffer death or such other punishment as the Court may determine.” Ordinance No. 72 became the purveyor of the “state of emergency” framed by the threat of death.

Twenty-seven of the eighty-two stipulations dealt with language, paper, and the performance of authority—such as slander, rumors, fraudulent documents, false statements, forged identity cards or any other type of permit pass, “concealing” papers from authorities, falsifying contracts, and even impersonation of military government personnel. The “offenses” demonstrated the extent both to which US military authority could be mimicked and to which it was fragile and still not established. This ordinance specifically attacked the political use of language in the public sphere, a provision under which the handbills of the Central Committee of the People’s Republic no longer would be permissible. Number 22 stated, “Acts or conduct in support of, or participating in the formation of, any organization or movement dissolved or declared illegal by, or contrary to the interests of, the occupying forces, including publication or circulation of matter printed or written in aid of any thereof or the possession thereof with intent to publish or circulate same, or the provocative display of flags, uniforms or insignia of any such organization or movement.”

Number 30 addressed “removing, obliterating, defacing or altering written, printed or typed matter posted by or under authority of Military Government”; No. 31 forbade the publishing and distribution of material deemed “detrimental or disrespectful to the occupying forces or to the United Nations . . . or any person acting under their authority,” and also forbade the dissemination of rumors that “undermine the morale of the occupying forces.” Ordinance 72 conceded that the rumors circulated by Koreans could “undermine the morale of the occupying forces,” an indication of the fractured, fragmented nature of the US military occupation itself.

The criminalization of these behaviors was also essentially the criminalization of the political Left, primarily the People’s Republic of Korea. More importantly, the criminalization of these Korean speech acts pointed to the lack of hegemony behind the spectacle of exceptional sovereign power. Koreans treated the printed laws and bureaucratic papers exactly as just
that—paper. Even the US military was afraid of becoming ordinary, everyday, and mundane.

Professionalizing the Exception: The US Military Institutionalization of Violence and Exception in Narrative Making

The criminalization of Korean leftist politics required, in turn, the professionalization of the Counter Intelligence Corps. The CIC defined and put into practice what was deemed to be appropriate behavior between the benevolence and death that the US occupation offered. In other words, the CIC determined the parameters of death and benevolence for the southern part of the Korean peninsula, while inventing themselves in the process. As CIC agent William Tigue recalled, “Gen Hodge relied [sic] a lot on CIC’s political coverage. To some extent he was willing to back anyone that CIC recommended.”30

On September 9, 1945, when agents of the 224th CIC Detachment arrived at the port of Inchon on the USS Chilton, they were coming from campaigns in Leyte and Okinawa. But despite this previous experience with US military and imperial projects in the Philippines and Japan, these agents of the “CIC had come to Korea without much preparation and with little idea of what to expect,” according to the official military history of the CIC in US-occupied Korea—“No precedents for CIC from previous occupations were available as guides for action.”31 The “total authorized strength” of the CIC was 126 agents, but in September 1946, the number of agents amounted to only 89. There were concerns about the constant turnover of the agents not “remain[ing] in Korea long enough to become thoroughly oriented in the situation or in the importance of security measures.” General MacArthur had forbidden “fraternization” between the US military personnel and Korean civilians, but unfortunately, “the lonely and homesick young soldier will talk at length with any Korean who can speak English and who wants to talk with him.”32 In the CIC monthly reports, cautionary injunctions like “Don’t Brag about your Last Case” to explicit capitalized directives like “GET OUT AND GET IT!!!” regarding the leftist organizations that had gone underground revealed a gamut of concerns over the CIC’s professionalization and effectiveness in its own official monthly reports.33
The Counter Intelligence Corps faced an immediate difficulty in carrying out operations—establishing its own legitimacy. And even though we may usually imagine CIC agents as working undercover, the annals of the CIC attest otherwise—“since CIC was outfitting its men in a uniform worn by no other organization, agents were open to compromise on all occasions.”34 Indeed, “the distinctive uniform of CIC agents in Korea was only one factor contributing to the unsought notice given to CIC operations in Korea.”35 The Korean population was wary of the CIC, reluctant to talk freely with them because “many Koreans [believed] the CIC is the American counterpart of the Japanese Kempei Tai.” As a result, CIC agents instead disguised themselves as “G-2 personnel, Office of Public Information personnel, members of the Political Advisory Group (PAG), or as novices who have developed a curiosity of and an interest in Korean politics,” although it is difficult to say that Koreans would have necessarily trusted these uniforms or performances either.36

The CIC was a very public operation, and even its learning curve regarding what the CIC official history called the “peculiar situation in Korea” was on public display.37 When the CIC first began its operations on the Korean peninsula in late 1945, the agents had been primarily responsible for “assembling all Japanese nationals preparatory to their repatriation; and maintaining law and order.”38 However, by the 1947 drafting of the permanent SOP for the CIC, “the basic mission of Counter Intelligence Corps,” which was “to assist in the maintenance of military security,” had been “enlarged to require special investigative activity in both the Positive Intelligence and Counter Intelligence fields involving political groups and social organizations and the collection of information relating to adjacent areas to insure the successful completion of the over-all mission of the U.S. Forces in Korea to set up a democratic form of government.”39 The SOP signaled a significant development in the objectives of the CIC. The organization that had begun the first two months of the occupation engaged in activities similar to the other forces of the USAFIK was now focused on the activities of “political groups and social organizations,” which, I argue, had become the CIC’s sense of purpose.

The space of legitimatization and professionalization for the CIC was the realm of “espionage.” Espionage became the all-encompassing term for the
supposed realities of the activities and individuals involved on the ground in Korea—and it would have a profound afterlife in the Korean War, as mobilized and identified by the CIC: “In many respects, the armed conflict that broke out in Korea in June 1950 was simply a new phase of a war that had been going on silently, insidiously, for five years. In its earlier phases, this war made few headlines and drew little attention. But CIC agents in the Korean occupation had known the quiet struggle. It was a war of espionage.” The “war of espionage” became the coalescing paradigm for the CIC, one that could focus a disparate group of amateurs into an efficient body of agents who, in turn, could produce narratives useful for the military government. For the very public CIC, comprised of primarily white male agents, creating a network to cover the “quiet struggle” would require Koreans. The CIC had to rely on Korean agents for “information” “because of the language barrier, and the customs of the Korean people, and the physical difference between the Oriental and the Caucasian.” The professionalization of the Counter Intelligence Corps was directly linked to the CIC’s increasing dependence on Korean labor and networks.

Approximately 180 Korean nationals worked as regular agents for the CIC, a number excluding those involved in special operations. Of the 180, 150 worked as informants within leftist organizations, and 30 others worked within political parties, the rightist organizations that had gained recognition with the US occupation forces. But a combination of 89 US CIC agents with a minimum of 180 Korean informants would not necessarily provide the type of coverage that the official military history had boasted about. The CIC had developed a network that depended on sundry paid agents and youth organizations. Over 1946 and 1947, the element that became central to the CIC operations was the “use of Youth organizations.” The CIC weekly report for June 19, 1947, noted that rightist organizations had set up their own “networks of agents and their own intelligence section for the purpose of working against Communism,” and the “most valuable of these organizations was one made up of individuals who, themselves, had fled from the Communist Police State, North Korea”—the North West Young Men’s Association (NWYMA).

The NWYMA, according to the CIC, had “complete coverage of each district” in the city of Seoul and had men stationed in each section: “They
know almost all of the people in their areas; they know when new persons move in or others move out, and they know the reasons for this moving. They become acquainted with the activities of almost every individual in their area and are able to report on anything suspicious.” The surveillance system set up by the NWYMA became crucial to the CIC’s own claims to knowing what was happening on the ground. The NWYMA—as well as the other rightist youth groups utilized by the CIC—enabled the maintenance and development of the exceptional reach of the Counter Intelligence Corps, as the CIC carved out its own niche within the military government apparatus in terms of claims over knowledge.

But soon, a very revealing tension developed between the CIC and the NWYMA over the realm of exceptional sovereignty—the use of violence in a state of emergency. However, the tension was not over the escalating violence that the NWYMA increasingly employed all over the southern peninsula, but rather the question of jurisdiction over police actions on the ground. By 1946 the CIC “had all the prerogatives of a police agency, including search and arrest.” As its history notes, these “police prerogatives and functions . . . endowed [the CIC] with power never intended for a confidential investigative organization.” In fact, in retrospect, former CIC agents “described the 971st as a rough and ready outfit that probably interpreted this unusual power too liberally, and have stated that, especially early in the occupation, operations were too ‘high, wide, and handsome.’” Or as William J. Tigue, another CIC agent in Korea during the occupation, noted, “For the early months of the occupation, CIC was God In Korea as far as the police and the general populace were concerned.”

However, within less than a year by the end of 1947, the CIC had a problem on their hands. The NWYMA, in sum, was refusing to be only an instrument of procuring, gathering, and purveying “information.” In the CIC report titled “Statistical Analysis of Terrorism, 1947,” the tally of the different acts of terrorism reported was as follows:

Rightists instigated—223
Leftist—74
Neutral—5
Unknown—203
The NWYMA emerged as one of the rightist organizations most involved in the violence. “Numerous reports of the Terroristic activities of the North West Association have reached this office during the past weeks,” stated the CIC report dated April 23, 1947. “Numerous reports on terrorism were received from almost every office. In Taegu, Taejon and Ongjin the North West Youth Association seemed particularly on the rampage,” a report from May 22, 1947, stated. By August 28, 1947, the CIC report revealed an escalation in the situation in the area of Kangnun, where the NWYMA’s “acts of terrorism [were] innumerable” in their “fight for control and complete extinction of the leftists. The rightists [were] believed to be capable of much more trouble in this area than the leftists, and in some instances they may even resist American personnel.” What becomes apparent through these detailed accounts of the NWYMA is that its violence itself did not pose a problem to the CIC; rather, what the CIC found troubling were the moments when the NWYMA usurped the police actions of the CIC and refused to be only a conduit of information.

“Lectured [by CIC agents] on his responsibility for the activities” of the NWYMA in the area encompassing Taegu, Taejon, and Ongjin, one NWYMA leader “pledged that his group were mostly boys and really not bad boys at that.” Lecturing, reprimanding, and warning were the extent of the CIC’s commentary on the NWYMA’s activities and violence—prompted only when the violence suggested the organization’s assumption of certain sovereign surveillance powers; for example, the CIC had been preparing a raid to “apprehend three visitors from North Korea only to find that the North West Association had beat CIC to the punch and had abducted these men.” The CIC prepared a meeting with the leader to make NWYMA “understand that they have no powers along this line.”

The transgression lay, then, not in the acts of violence but, rather, in excessive claims to authority by Koreans—the kidnapping, the threats, the wielding of death. Villagers—and even policemen—began to take matters into their own hands. Coming under constant harsh criticism from leftists
for essentially facilitating rightist terrorism, the police, according to May 1947 CIC reports, began a different policy toward youth groups. Arrests were made, and troublesome members relocated. In one town, the “NWYA [sic] were ordered out of town by the Police and in another many members of the NWYA were placed aboard a train and shipped from the province; place the burden on some one else—you know.”55 In late August, reports from Pohong indicated that leftists had sent a petition to “General Hodge asking for the abolishment of the Northwest Young Men’s Association and other terrorist youth groups.”56 This request was never acted upon—only once in 1947 was a rightist youth group dissolved by order of the US military government, and it was not the NWYMA. With the CIC and the US military government condoning the violence, Korean villagers began to undertake measures for their own security. In Taejon, after “approximately 29 members of the Northwest Youth Assn, some of whom were armed, had attacked a small village in their area the villagers gathered together and drove the youths away.”57

In its official history, the Counter Intelligence Corps claimed a continuous “war of espionage” spanning the years of occupation and the later years of war on the Korean peninsula. But the important section missing from this narrative is the CIC’s own work to create the infrastructure necessary to produce this “war of espionage” within the Republic of Korea. In early 1948, Captain Kenneth MacDougall helped set up the “Korean counterpart” of the US military CIC, the Korean Counter Intelligence Corps (KCIC).58 In describing the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) CIC agents, CIC records noted that “many of the officers served previously with the Japanese Army in enlisted and warrant Officer capacities. Therefor [sic], their investigative methods are primarily based on a mixture of Japanese and American concepts.”59 The US Counter Intelligence Corps were, in fact, institutionalizing a war without end—and the Republic of Korea state under Syngman Rhee was invested in utilizing the state of emergency in order to assert sovereign power. Suh Hee-Kyung, a chief investigator for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Korea, notes the continuity between the pre- and post-1948 intelligence structures, as the Korean Defense Intelligence Unit—called the ROKA CIC in US military documents—“took charge of counter-communist activities from the 971st U.S. counter-Intelligence Corps.”60
In late June 1950, when the US Eighth Army landed on the Korean peninsula under the banner of the United Nations, salvaged remnants from World War II appeared on Korean territory. The Truman administration doled out moral rhetoric about a fight against totalitarianism—along with rusted tanks, finicky guns, and repaired jeeps—to young soldiers who had either volunteered or been drafted under Harry Truman’s 1948 “Universal Military Training” executive order. Language, machines, and bodies had been repurposed with both haste and insistence for a new global war, the Cold War. In the villages, towns, and mountains of Korea, the US military ended up confronting not the expected specter of Cold War totalitarianism but the afterlife of a US military occupation that had effectively never left the peninsula since its inception in 1945.

Major General Arnold’s characterization of Korean politics as a “puppet stage” was about to be overturned in a very unexpected manner. Following the close of the first year of the Korean War in February 1951, the US Counter Intelligence Corps made a surprising discovery in the southern city of Masan. “Thirty Korean Nationals [had been] posing as members of a G2 Office in Masan,” and had been effectively running a “G2 office” ever since the month of October in 1950. This group had taken over an abandoned fish warehouse in the city and had furnished the front door with a sign: “Branch Office, Namhang Commercial Company, Telephone Masan 19.” Paper, uniforms, English-language writing, and a perfectly calibrated performance were all that was needed—with “false G2 passes, permits to wear military uniforms, and travel authority permits,” the members would at times also disguise themselves as members of the CIC. It was perhaps startling to learn that these Koreans had been operating a “G2 office” in plain sight since October 1950. When questioned by the CIC on whether they knew about the G2 office, the Masan Police replied that “they believed that the organization was authorized by the United Nations forces.”

The Masan G2 case was a double-edged sword for the CIC regarding the legacies of US military intelligence work on the Korean peninsula. The case demonstrated that the US military had indeed created a sovereign, exceptional plane of activity and authority on the ground in Korea; at the same time, it also demonstrated that the Korean people did not necessarily consider it sacred or inviolable. The “thirty Korean Nationals” who had
established a false US military intelligence local headquarters in the city of Masan were clearly familiar with the performance needed to establish a semblance of US sovereign authority on the Korean peninsula. The personal histories of the Koreans involved in the case demonstrate a longer history of engaging in the struggle over the political public sphere. One of the members, Kim Chi Kyu, illustrates the continuity from the late colonial period through 1951. Arrested on July 17, 1944, for “disturbing the peace,” he was later released. In April 1946, after liberation, he joined the Masan Branch of the Democratic Youth League and began working with organizing students at the Masan Commercial School, whom he led in a strike on October 7, 1946. Supposedly around June 30, 1950, he “posted street posters welcoming the North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) and denouncing the American Far Eastern policy.” He joined the NKPA and later returned to Masan to help establish the G2 Office.62

The strategy of these Korean nationals to establish a G2 office as a front to and facilitator of their activities was a testament to the type of sovereignty and “state of exception” the US military government had established on the peninsula. If the object of a CIC interrogator was to “produce a coherent, factual, and readable narrative,” then it was the frame of “espionage” that lent the narrative of the interrogated Korean its coherency, accuracy, and legibility for a US readership.63 Instead of positioning “espionage” within the rubrics of paranoia, suspicion, or even conspiracy, I argue that the brilliant performance of the Masan G-2 office revealed how “espionage” was a practice of sovereign exception, where espionage signaled a type of doubled, simultaneous act of reading and also performing on the part of sovereign exceptional power. Anthropologists Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat call for us “to disentangle the notion of sovereign power from the state and to take a closer look at its constituent parts: on the one hand, the elusive ‘secret’ of sovereignty as a self-born, excessive, and violent will to rule; on the other hand, the human body and the irrepressible fact of ‘bare life’ as the site upon which sovereign violence always inscribes itself but also encounters the most stubborn resistance.”64 It was a “secret” that the Committee of the People’s Republic of Korea—the authors of the pamphlet analyzed in the introduction of this essay—knew all too well, as their cannily “split personalities” navigated for a brief space in how sovereign excep-
tional power read the Korean body. The thirty Korean nationals involved in the Masan G-2 office case had also conducted a critical reading against the grain, exploiting exactly how the United States military would misread both the Korean—and itself.

Decolonization Denied: The Politics of Race, Speech, and Blood in the Interrogation Rooms and POW Camps of the War

Tying together the days of occupation with those of war was the thread of US military intelligence. By 1950, Koreans living on the peninsula were more fluent than newly arrived US soldiers in navigating what had become an everyday web of intelligence, violence, and surveillance. First Lieutenant Jack Sells of the 111th CIC Detachment commented, “The letters ‘CIC’ strike fear into the hearts of all Koreans, for Korean CIC is an utterly ruthless organization. American CIC is generally regarded in the same light.”

Master Sergeant Joseph Gorman of the CIC noted the same: “CIC was very much feared. The Korean CIC and ROK police were also very much feared.” And according to an internal history of the CIC in Korea, early during the Korean War, the “native CIC committed numerous executions without trial, not only of subversives but also of non-Communist opponents of the South Korean government,” and four different US CIC detachments pointed to this “brutality” as an issue. However, only two detachments pointed to the Korean CIC “brutality during interrogations” as “[rendering] the resulting information unreliable or beyond devaluation.”

As CIC agent Joseph Farell noted, the CIC interrogator had to be “careful” in the “treatments [sic] of [Korean] people or they will soon take advantage of you.” He explained, “What must be taken into consideration about these Korean peoples is that they have been suppressed for over forty-five years, they are used to being treated and beaten like dogs by their own Korean CIC and police. . . . They have no sense of moral terpitude [sic] and will lie and steal with out [sic] qualm, unless they are caught.” Instead of reading the Korean’s hesitation or resistance in “lying” as a possible bid for survival in negotiating multiple, simultaneous planes of exceptional sovereign claims upon his or her personhood (namely, the Korean CIC and the US CIC), Farell read the Korean’s “lying” as a symptom of an internalized colonialism, one that was
not about structures or meaning but, rather, simple violence. The Korean
remained in a closed system of meaning, unable to comprehend larger codes
of civil society, like morality.

Theodore Griemann, a CIC agent during the occupation years before the
war, explained the casual theorization he had made regarding colonialism
and the psyche of the Korean person: “There were few Koreans alive who
remembered anything other than the Japanese dictatorship. They were not
trained in any skills and that included the art of governing themselves. A
very few were able to function at all if someone were not telling them what
to do and how to do it. A democratic government or any government other
that [sic] a dictatorship of some kind, would have brought chaos.”69 Grie-
mann’s remarks are critical to understanding another facet of what Major
General Arnold had called the “puppet stage” of Korean politics. Sovereign
power, even when legally institutionalized, would have to be a continuous
state of exception, according to this logic. The individual Korean, under-
stood by Griemann as devoid of agency or judgment, could not participate
in a democratic society, in which language went hand in hand with rational,
political thinking. Instead, violence would need to be the common denomini-
ator of expression and structure—after all, Hodge himself had dismissed
the Korean language as being unable to translate or hold the meaning of the
phrase “in due course.”

But if the objective of CIC interrogation was to produce a “coherent, fac-
tual, and readable narrative,” how did one narrate a coherent story about
a politically incoherent subject?70 And how did the Korean subject need
to speak to the United States military in order to be perceived as coher-
ent? The issue of “truth,” in the eyes of the US military, was ultimately less
about language than about racial bodies. As the former CIC interrogators
asserted, the Korean was supposedly still mentally colonized and therefore
could understand only signs of violence, whether in the form of threats,
beatings, or killings. Was the Korean racially capable of telling the “truth,”
or at least differentiating between the “truth” and a “lie”?

During the Korean War, the US military experimented with the use of
polygraph machines—lie detectors—on Korean translators and interpreters
who worked for US military intelligence. Ultimately, the US military hoped
to use the polygraph machines to sort through the exponentially growing
The prisoner of war (POW) population with its exponential increase after General MacArthur’s landing at Inchon in September 1950 caught the US military by surprise. At the end of August 1950, before the Inchon landing operation, a total of 1,745 Korean POWs were under US custody. By the end of December, the total tallied up to 137,118—and by 1952 the population had leveled off at approximately 170,000, of whom the majority were Korean, and the rest Chinese. But who was who in this POW camp?

The CIC’s official history of its mission during the Korean War noted that during routine screenings of refugees, “whenever CIC Agents had a reasonable suspicion that an individual was a saboteur or espionage Agent or guerrilla, the man was classified a PW and sent to the rear.” And according to one Korean prisoner of war, Oh Se-hui, there were civilians who had either voluntarily joined or had been forcibly drafted by the northern Korean People’s Army (KPA) and had become POWs. There were also southern ROK soldiers who had been prisoners of war under KPA custody and then became POWs under US military custody because the US military personnel could not understand their explanations. Among the members of the Korean People’s Army from the DPRK who had also become POWs, whether through capture or surrender, were people—both men and women—who had been born on either side of the 38th parallel. The United Nations Camp #1 located on the island of Koje off the southeastern coast of the Korean peninsula had become home to over 170,000 prisoners and the new articulation of the “war of espionage.” Who was the enemy, and who was the friend? Critically constitutive of, rather than foils to, each other, the Asian friend and the Asian enemy, I argue, were fashioned out of the same crucible of postcolonial sovereign states of exception. It was onto this stage that the “prisoner of war” entered, as a newly focused site for US military intelligence reading practices of the Korean subject.

According to a report titled “Military Application of Polygraph Technique” written by George W. Haney in early 1951, the operators of the polygraph machines posed a series of questions to twenty-five “Korean Nationals” who had been working as interpreters or translators for the US military. For example, the fifth question asked was “Did you have something to eat today?”
which was followed by “Are you now a member of any Communist organization?” In the report’s summary of the experiment’s findings, Haney stated that “the Korean National does not present any special or different problem of interpretation” for the administration of the polygraph. In other words, Haney concluded, “it seems clear that Korean Nationals react as definitely and positively as do persons of the white race.” The “pressure changes in systolic blood pressure and changes in respiratory activity” that were the tell-tale signs of “emotions aroused during attempts at deception” were also predictably absent or present for the Korean body, similar to the Caucasian body.75 The capacity of truth telling—and thus, rational and moral thinking—was a question of racial embodiment. The institutionalization of the CIC’s “war of espionage” on the ground exposed a key foundational ideology undergirding both the further criminalization of the Korean Left and the continued dependence on the Korean ultra-rightist youth groups during the war. The Korean national, according to this “war of espionage,” could only comprehend, react, and act within a state of emergency, in which martial law was the normative everyday structure.

The Korean prisoners of war were fully aware of the stakes involved in presenting oneself as an enemy or friend to the US military, and petitions began multiplying as prisoners of war tried to preempt how the US military would read them. A petition created by an organization called the Anti-Communist Youth League (ACYL) in the US-controlled POW camp at Yongchon perhaps best exemplifies this collapsing in the political public sphere between the US state of emergency and the political struggles on the ground. Meticulously written in Korean and translated into English by the POWs themselves, three sets of petitions, all dated May 10, 1953, were addressed individually to President Dwight Eisenhower, General Mark Clark, and Lieutenant General William Harrison.

Similarly to how the NWYMA became critical to the operations of the CIC during the occupation, the Anti-Communist Youth League came to play a similar role vis-à-vis the US military during the Korean War. The Civilian Information and Education (CIE) division of the US military, a program operated under the Psychological Warfare Section, encouraged the formation of different types of youth groups, such as the Students National Defense League or the Korean Youth Association. The groups, according
to an internal military publication, were “to provide the framework whereby security might be maintained ‘so that the common POW had nothing to worry about.’” These youth groups later were subsumed into the overall organization of the ACYL, the formation of which had been encouraged by the Republic of Korea Army. In other words, the ACYL functioned as a proxy in many ways for the anticommunist Korean state.

The Civilian Information and Education (CIE) division and the Psychological Warfare Section of the US military both worked very closely with the ACYL, and, in a familiar turn, the US military condoned the majority of the physical beatings and interrogations the anticommunist youth groups administered on fellow prisoners of war. Violence was, once again, not the issue. However, a Psychological Warfare Section report on the results of interviews with twenty-four POW ACYL leaders did express discontent with one particular finding: “The anti-communist leaders seem so eager to establish their own role in the creation of the anti-communist phalanx that they tend to minimize, or even deny, the contributions of CIE toward their success in the internal political struggle. What these leaders regret is that CIE (and the Camp Command generally) did not take an active physical part in destroying the communist groups, that is this sense its position was, to the leaders, ‘too neutral.’” The difficulty here was that the ACYL leaders, although anticommunist, did not willingly express gratitude for the “benevolence” of the US military activities. Even the rightist leaders asserted a claim to a political subjectivity that was not fundamentally shaped by the policies and agendas of the United States.

But the challenge facing the rightist, anticommunist prisoners of war in their aim to present themselves as politically viable subjects was that all Koreans were suspicious in the eyes of the CIC and US military, and the usual markers of identity, personal history, and self-narrative were no longer sufficient or deemed reliable. Language was no longer stable. What could be rendered visible as political during the Korean War was that other parameter of the “state of emergency”—death. The terrain of the political had been collapsed onto the individual Korean subject—and in turn, one could render oneself visible only by expressing one’s own relationship to US sovereign power.

In other words, from the occupation of liberation through the war of
intervention, the US military state demanded and recognized one type of Korean subject—one that answered directly to the sovereign, exceptional authority embodied by the United States. Just as the United States posited itself as a universal liberal power, the subject it demanded was, in turn, a universalized, decolonized subject—but here, “universalized” had come to mean a divestment of all particular material histories in order to sublimate a direct relationship between the individual postcolonial subject and the United States. For the text of the petitions, the POWs used a sharp, dark pencil, meticulously forming the Korean and English characters. For signatures, the POWs used their own pierced fingers. Blood was a key medium in facilitating the self-presentation of the petition.

The petition requested the release of ACYL members from the POW camps—and thus from the category of “prisoners of war”—so they might fight against communist Koreans on the battlefield. Beginning the petition with an excoriation of Joseph Stalin as the “son of a worthless shoe repairer,” the petition writers lamented the misrecognition of themselves as “prisoners of war”: “Our sad fortunes is that today still double fence weight heavy on us and fall asleep with detention and get disappointment at surrounding when we wake up, moreover, why and how comes we are punished as a guiltlessness and vexatious PW?” The petition continued, “We make a petition by our own warm blood. Dearest Your Excellency! Even though these bloods are not worthwhile to see and a little quantity but it is an expression of our real determination Sir. It is our crying that give us an opportunity of releasing just like what Your Excellency said. It is our real sincerity.”

“Real determination” and “real sincerity” was to be communicated via the medium of blood, where the blood would more transparently and directly convey the true intentions and sentiments than any language or text itself. In the end, it was the blood that mattered the most.

The members of the ACYL insisted on their political will by framing their commitment in terms of their willingness to die for their state, yet another spilling of blood: “Estimate the tremble recollection of long time from five years we, the all members of Anti-Communist Young Men who are would opposed against the Reds, have been fighting continuously and how many times was it go over the point of death?” The medium of blood itself was to reinforce the collapsing of the intention, desire, and
body into a “sincere subject,” in which the blood itself expressed the “real
determination.” Translation, in a sense, was circumvented by the medium of
blood—there was no denying or misrecognizing the intent of the prisoners
of war.

Each of the proclaimed demands of the prisoners of war was also posi-
tioned between two types of “deaths”—that of the anticommunist Korean
prisoner of war and that of the communist Korean:

1. We opposed to the death against prevail upon us to be repatri-
ated which is under negotiation at cease-fire talks at Pan-Moon Jeom,
because as we had been in N.K. under Red puppet regime for five years
we well know their deception. . . .

4. Give us an opportunity of releasing so that we may be able to going to
front lines to fight against Red and make revenge on Red and washed a
triumphal knife with the water of the Doo-Han River.81

The calculus between benevolence and death that determined the param-
eters of the US occupation was still in operation. Only in this instance dur-
ing the war, the anticommunist Korean POWs were positioning themselves
vis-à-vis death in order to invoke the benevolence of the US government
and military. The Korean could only articulate himself as a recognizable
subject by expressing his own political will through death, whether through
refusal or desire.

These prisoners of war in 1953 were preempting any ambiguity in how
they could be read by the US military and state—the POWs were already
performing the “collapsing” work of the demands of the United States in
order to present a political demand. It is important to pause and consider
this petition as an “act of writing,” not merely as text. For the 478 different,
individual Korean prisoners of war who signed their names with blood on
large, separate sheets of paper, each act of signing must have been witnessed
by the collective group. Moreover, the blood transformed the text into a
performance of one’s subjecthood, perfectly attuned to the demands upon it.

But what kind of performance was this petition, which was carefully
rendered into three separate copies with 487 signatures written in blood?
To refer back to an act of writing mentioned earlier in this essay: “If any
Corean remained mentally normal during the war, he was a fool. Coreans
made themselves split personalities. They showed obedience in the presence of Japanese and they did just the opposite thing in reality. Without any munitions, revolutionists fought bravely in fields and in factories.” This reflection on the demands on Korean subjectivity by the Japanese colonial rule within the pages of a leftist text from the US occupation resonates, I argue, with the ACYL blood petition signed in 1953 during the Korean War. Koreans still had to render themselves strategically as “split personalities,” performing recognition of the benevolence of the United States in order to gain limited political recognition in return, as death still hung in the balance.

**Conclusion: Reading an Archive of an Unending War**

In a high-security, climate-controlled vault at the National Military Archives in College Park, Maryland, two large archival boxes sit on a shelf in the company of Lee Harvey Oswald’s rifle, Eva Braun’s diary, and Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon’s surveying journal. Rather than housing an iconic object from “American” history, the boxes contain a blood document from a war largely forgotten by mainstream America—the petition covering over a hundred pages written and signed in blood by 487 anticommunist Korean prisoners of war members of the Anti-Communist Youth League in the Yongchon POW camp. This document’s residence in the vault, according to one senior archivist, is due to the difficulty in cataloging and preserving the material: how does one categorize and store a blood document? The blood document poses a challenge to the classification system because it forces us to confront language and corporeality at the same time, rupturing basic assumed divisions between the mind (language/text) and the body (blood). The writing medium of blood pushes us to approach the document as an *act* of writing instead of moving immediately to the textual content itself.

Although the blood document is quasi-quarantined away from the rest of the extensive paper archive on the Korean War in the National Archives, I have demonstrated the close relationship between the ACYL petition behind vault doors and the CIC and US military intelligence papers in the archival boxes. Indeed, the explicit performance of this blood document is instructive
for us in how we survey the bureaucratic files of US military intelligence, which have served as a crucial basis for reconstructing the puzzle of the US occupation and war in Korea. The medium of blood for the writing and signatures demands our attention to the medium itself—the blood. In front of the seemingly more banal intelligence reports, summaries, and orders, what is the medium with which the authors wrote and constructed the narratives? The raw material for both acts of writing was the Korean person—whether as a preemptive bounding and claiming of the self as a subject in the blood document, or as a constant insisting on and inventing of the Korean as fragmented, incoherent subject in the interrogation reports.

The high stakes involved in the performance of political subjectivity and the negotiation involved in rendering the performance legible on multiple stages has not lessened in terms of Korean politics since the signing of the cease-fire in 1953. The issue over sovereignty does not lie solely with the 38th parallel and the numerous territorial assertions made by the two states on the peninsula. Another facet of sovereignty actually applies to both North and South Korea in front of the United States and the hegemonic West, as the United States has held up the rigid norms of neoliberalism as the template for political visibility for the Korean peninsula, while also reinventing North Korea as a site of incoherence—the next version of what Major General Arnold had termed the “puppet stage.” Benevolence and death still have urgent meaning in the multiple states of exception configured upon the Korean peninsula today.

Notes

8. Lieutenant Colonel Verne O. Jackson of the 210th CIC Detachment, folder: 228–01 EEI: CIC Operations in Korea (1952), box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence), RG 319, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.
9. Second Lieutenant Joseph H. Farell of the 116th CIC Detachment; Folder: 228–01 EEI: CIC Operations in Korea (1952); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.
10. 181st CIC Detachment—1st Marine Division, SOP for Counter Intelligence Operations; Folder: 228–01 181st CIC Detachment—Korea—SOP—1952; Box 12; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.
16. Letter from Commander in Chief, US Army Forces, Pacific, to Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS], dated December 16, 1945; Folder: Papers of Harry S. Truman, SMOF: Selected Records on Korean War, Pertinent Papers on Korea Situation; Box 11; SMOF: National Security Files; Papers of Harry S. Truman; Harry S. Truman Library. Although the letter itself is from MacArthur to the JCS, he had enclosed a report made by Hodge on the current situation in Korea. The quote above is from Hodge’s report.
17. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. G-2 Weekly, October 9, 1945, 74.
24. Ibid.
27. The twenty-eight stipulations are as follows: Numbers 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 58, 59, 60.
29. Ibid.
30. William Tigue, Folder: 228–01 EEI: CIC Operations in Korea (1952); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.
32. Ibid., 90.
35. Ibid., 22.
37. Ibid., 17.
39. Ibid., 10. This quote is pulled from the “USAFIK letter AG 322 (TFGBI) dated 30 April 1946.” This document is one of four cited as explicating the “mission of the Counter Intelligence Corps” in Dow’s SOP: a) War Department letter AG 322, CIC (31 October 1944) OB-S-B-M dated 13 November 1944, Subject: Counter Intelligence Corps. b) AFPAC regulations #100–10 dated 1 August 1945. c) AFPAC letter AG 322 (22 March 1946), CI.
40. Ibid., 24.
42. Ibid.
43. Among the refugees, only those persons willing to talk were considered to be of any use to the Positive Intelligence Mission. *CIC 1945.9–1949.1*, vol. 1, 971st Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment Annual Progress Report for 1947, 259.
47. Ibid.
48. William J. Tigue (see note 30).
51. Ibid., 1947.5.22, 221.
52. Ibid., 1947.8.28, 364.
53. Ibid., 1947.5.22, 221.
54. Ibid., 1947.4.23, 174.
55. Ibid., 1947.5.22, 221.
56. Ibid., 1947.8.28, 367.
57. Ibid., 1947.8.21, 353.
58. Interview with Kenneth E. MacDougall; Folder: 228–01 MacDougall, Kenneth E.–CIC during Occupation of Korea—(1947–1948); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland. Previously in December of 1947 he had worked as the Chief Intelligence Advisor to the Korean Department of Internal Security, “the forerunner of the Korean Department of Defense.”
59. Korea Military Advisory Group (Internal Document); Folder: 228–07 CIC Operations in Korea (1952); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.
62. Ibid.
63. 181st CIC Detachment—1st Marine Division, SOP for Counter Intelligence Operations; Folder: 228–01 181st CIC Detachment—Korea—SOP—1952; Box 12; Counter Intelligence
The Intelligence of Fools


65. Interview with 1st Lt. Jack D. Sells, 111th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment; Folder: 228–01 EEI: CIC Operations in Korea (1952); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

66. Interview with M/Sgt Joseph P. Gorman; Folder: 228–01 EEI: CIC Operations in Korea (1952); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

67. Folder: 206–02.2 CIC Operations in Korea—CIC School (November 15, 1951); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

68. Second Lieutenant Joseph H. Farell of the 116th CIC Detachment; Folder: 228–01 EEI: CIC Operations in Korea (1952); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

69. Folder: 228–01 Griemann, Theodore E.—CIC during Occupation of Korea——(1947–1949); Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

70. 181st CIC Detachment—1st Marine Division, SOP for Counter Intelligence Operations; Folder: 228–01 181st CIC Detachment—Korea—SOP—1952; Box 12; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

71. Calculation of prisoners interned each month and captured rates (1952), Folder: Unclassified, 511–02, Korea; Box 19; Unclassified Records, 1969–75; POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Records of the Provost Marshall General, 1941--; Record Group 389; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

72. Folder: 206–02.2 CIC Operations in Korea—CIC School (November 15, 1951), Box 6; Counter Intelligence Corps Collection; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence); RG 319; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.


75. “Military Application of Polygraph Technique,” Folder: Correspondence Korea Classified 1951, Box 1; Records Relating to Korea; Provost Marshal’s Section; RG 544; National Archives and Records Administration; College Park, Maryland.

77. Ibid.

78. Due to its fragile and “unclassifiable” medium of blood and paper, this blood document is filed in a vault at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. I have kept all the original spelling and idiosyncrasies.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.