

*Korea*KOREA: THE OLD REFRAIN

Soviet broadcasters place primary emphasis, again this week, on the charge that the elections planned for 10 May in the southern zone are designed to give a semblance of legality to the "bastard" government which the United States intends to establish in the south. The real purpose of the elections is to divide Korea, commentators claim again and again. Reportorial attention is devoted to the joint meeting of northern and southern leaders which has been convened in Pyongyang, but Moscow has as yet made no effort to capitalize on the session.

Pyongyang, however, continues to devote almost exclusive attention to the joint session, and to the election--opposition to which is the motif of the meeting. A great volume of wordage is devoted to answering, and simultaneously denouncing, General Hodge, to "revealing" the terroristic methods allegedly used by the American occupation forces during the registration period just concluded, and to confirming, by means of announcements and resolutions, the opposition of southern groups to the election.

The difference between Moscow and Pyongyang reactions to the election issue is evident both in volume and content--Moscow has far less to say on the subject and makes general charges of American misconduct or perfidy, while Pyongyang fills in the general outline with detailed accounts of specific instances of that misconduct.

a. Joint Political Conference in Pyongyang: Soviet broadcasts do not report the day-to-day developments in the convening of the joint conference. PRAVDA carries a TASS dispatch, according to a Korean-language broadcast of 21 April, reporting the opening of the session on 19 April. The dispatch elaborates upon the announced purpose of the session--"to prepare measures to oppose the American-sponsored elections"--and reports statements issued in Pyongyang by delegates from the American zone. "Only the hirelings" of the Americans are supporting the elections, the delegates are said to have declared. In further adherence to stereotype, the delegates are quoted as reporting the vast difference in conditions in the two zones. The TASS dispatch also reports their accounts of disorders or "demonstrations" in the American zone.

b. Moscow on the Elections: Two monitored Soviet commentaries attack the election plans at some length and according to previous patterns. The balloting is designed, commentators argue, purely and simply to further America's plans to divide and rule Korea for her own selfish gain. The plan takes no cognizance of Korean welfare or wishes, it is claimed repeatedly. Smolensky, in a Korean-language broadcast of 21 April, makes the familiar charges and bolsters them with the familiar arguments. Similarly, a Soviet Home service broadcast of 16 April paints the same picture of American insistence on the election to further its "imperialist schemes" in the face of Korean opposition as symbolized by the joint conference. Both place heavy stress on the reported opposition of southern organizations to the election, but overlook the disorders which have been taking place.

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c. In the North, Contentment; In the South, Oppression: The usual quota of comment delineating the advantages of life in the Soviet zone is included in Soviet broadcasts this week. A RED STAR article by Ostrovsky, broadcast in Russian to Soviet Asia on 20 April, details the pleasant working conditions in the north and the impoverishment and oppression allegedly existing in the south. Ostrovsky attacks southern "reactionaries" who resort to "lies and slander" since there are no facts with which to discredit the northern administration. The commentator also quotes Kim Doo Bong's denunciation of "provocatory reports" issued in Seoul to the effect that a separate regime has been established in Pyongyang.

Equally familiar is the Davidov commentary of 17 April which claims that no adequate land reform program has been started in the American zone, while in the north "there is no longer any land held by landlords." This criticism of the American administration is allegedly substantiated by reference to March issues of UNITED NATIONS WORLD in which, says Moscow, the failure to redistribute land in the American zone has been commented upon. The magazine is also quoted as declaring that "American military authorities do not appear to have any intention whatever of lowering the present position of landlords" in their zone.

Reports of North Korean economic wellbeing are usually supplemented by reports of political wellbeing which are generally keyed to the subject of the draft constitution and the civil privileges contained therein. These standard claims of northern privileges are the backbone of a RED STAR "travelog" broadcast in Korean on 20 April.