DANGEROUS FAULT LINES—KOREA: THE LAST VESTIGES OF THE COLD WAR

GRADES: 9-12

AUTHOR: Tommy Manning

SUBJECT: Modern History, Government

TIME REQUIRED: Three to four 45 minute class periods

BACKGROUND:

On the Korea peninsula today, one can bear witness to one of the last remaining vestiges of the Cold War. While in many places around the world the Cold War remains a story of the 20th century, the Korean people today find themselves physically divided along ideological and political fault lines.

The Japanese defeat and exit from Korea in 1945, coupled with the inability for free elections to occur created a political vacuum on the peninsula. The creation of a communist government in northern Korea and a subsequent invasion of the South in 1950 would extend the scope of the conflict to international actors. Korea, sandwiched between the regional hegemons of China, the USSR, and the United States, found itself a front for competing socialist and capitalist influences. In 1950, fearing a takeover by the northern communists, the United Nations, supported heavily by the United States, entered the war in support of the South. With the aid of the US, the south pushed the communist forces as far north as the Korea-Chinese border at the Yalu River. Only with the entry of the Chinese into the war were the northern communists able to repel the UN-led forces south to the 38th parallel. The north and south agreed to an armistice in 1953 with the 38th parallel the chosen site for a demilitarized zone that would extend across the peninsula. The splintering of Korea into two politically distinct nation-states worsened relations between the regional hegemons. The USSR and China financially supported North Korea while the United States’ political and military policy centered on securing the south.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and strained relations with China further isolated North Korea politically and economically. Once economic rivals, the North found itself the economic runt on the peninsula. While North Korea moved into a black hole of political isolation and economic destitution, the reverse occurred in the South. Increased political transparency combined with massive economic growth brought the South to the status of a regional power.

Despite political and economic stability, the south remains aware of its precarious situation. The north’s diplomatic isolation is an uneasy peace for many in the south. South Korea’s political and military policy reflects its lack of trust in the north. North of the DMZ, a nation-state has evolved that centers its economic and social will around its lone leader, Dictator Kim Jong-un.
OBJECTIVES:

- Locate major cities and natural landmarks on the Korean peninsula and East Asia
- Recall socialist/communist/capitalist ideology
- Comprehend the historical and political progression of communism from the USSR, to China & the Korean peninsula
- Comprehend the political implications of the United States and the United Nations’ intervention in 1950.
- Weigh the various political, economic, social, and military consequences of Soviet, Chinese, and American intervention.

NCSS Standards:
- Standard 6. POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE
  - Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

Common Core Standards:
- WHST 1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content
- WHST 4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience
- WHST 9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research
- SL 1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions
- RH I Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources
- RH 2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

- Handout 1: Korean Peninsula Map
- Handout 2: Korean Peninsula Satellite Image
- Handout 3: “Communism/Socialism vs. Capitalism” reading
- Handout 4: “Communism/Socialism vs. Capitalism” worksheet
- Handouts 5: Political Spectrum
- Handout 6: Korean War: An Overview
- Handout 7: Korean War Table
PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out handout 1 to students. Have them work in pencil to see how many countries/bodies of water they can identify. Once they have completed as many as they can, they may use an atlas in their text to complete assignment.

2. Pass out handout 2 to students. You may also wish to project this satellite image with the lights off. On the back of the handout, students are to write down 3 observations they have regarding this image. Ask students to speculate on how government policy impacts what they see in this satellite image.

3. Pass out handout 3 to students. As they read the article, they should complete the worksheet (handout 4).

4. Pass out handout 5 entitled “political spectrum.” After reading “communism/socialism vs. capitalism,” students should discuss as a class the differences between the two ideologies and how the two political philosophies emerged. Instructor should impress upon the students that the conclusion of WWII significantly brought about the creation of a bi-polar world, with the US and the USSR competing for influence and power. To shorten class time, the readings in Handout 3 can be given for homework or a jigsaw. Also, if this has been thoroughly covered earlier in the semester, the instructor can just jump to Handout 6 on the Korean War.

5. Pass out handout 6 entitled “the Korean War: An Overview.” This handout will give the students a concise overview of the Korean War. In addition, it illustrates how nations like the US and USSR began looking to influence areas such as Korea. Students should read silently until finished.

6. With a partner, students should use the information from handout 6 to begin completing handout

7. Students are asked to review the history of the Korean War and weigh the role of different nations had in intervening in the conflict. Students will be forced to speculate the influences different nations had in determining the fate of Korea today. Instructor should ask for student participation in hypothesizing how the nations in the table impacted Korea. Finally, the instructor will note that this conflict remains a current example of Cold War tension and conflict.

EVALUATION

Students’ knowledge of the material will be assessed in the form of an in-class written essay. Students should base their answers on information from the following: provided readings, in-class handouts, and class discussion. Students will be given the choice of two questions of which they are to write a minimum of 1 ½-2 pages.

Question 1: How did communism & socialism emerge? Secondly, what are the practical and philosophical differences between socialism and communism and capitalism?
Question 2: How did the United States, the USSR, and China influence Korea during the Korean War? How did these nations differ in their view of what Korea should become?

RESOURCES

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/korea_hickey_01.shtml

http://digilander.libero.it/mgtund/communismo_capitalism_%20abridged.htm
HANDOUT 2: SATELLITE IMAGRY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA

http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/a/6a00d8341c630a53ef012876ba8db7970c-pi
HANDOUT 3: COMMUNISM/SOCIALISM VS CAPITALISM

By Julien, Newcombe SC, Geelong

Introduction:

Our lives form a small part of an extremely complex society. The evolution of human society has never been more rapid. We are able to send unmanned satellites past the reaches of our solar system, when it was only during our great-grandparent's lives that man first took to the skies. This evolution has engendered two opposite political, economic, and social systems. On the "left" of politics are communism and socialism and on the "right" is capitalism.

Socialism:

Socialists believe that the inequalities that exist in our society are unjust and that the minority of the population should not own the vast majority of the wealth. Socialists do, nevertheless, differ on ways by which this change should be achieved. Some believe that the change should be gradual, achieved through parliament and others believe that the change should be rapid, brought about through revolution.

It is impossible to state "that at such and such a time socialism began". However, it is apparent that socialist ideas have been developing for hundreds of years. Modern socialism emerged as the world went through the process of industrialization. From the 18th century, the industrial revolution transformed Western Europe and North America from agricultural, trading nations to industrial nations. The metamorphosis of these countries’ economic structure led to great and complex changes in the lifestyle of their people. The average worker went from being a self-employed farmer to being an employee at a large factory. The working class was formed!

People began to move away from the country and the population became centralized. Cities grew rapidly and overcrowding became an enormous problem. This new industrial workforce, the proletariat, worked and lived in appalling conditions. Poverty was rampant. The cities were havens for crime and disease. The tumultuous transformation affected not only the lives of the workers (factory fodder) but also craftsmen, such as handloom weavers, who were being forced out of business by factories which could produce the same product at a lower price. Much of the working class was confounded by the radical changes that were going on.

Without anyone planning it, capitalism had emerged and began to flourish as there was no opposition to it. The factory owners became richer and low-skilled workers and the unemployed became poorer. Workers whose trades were less secure decided to form trade societies (the forerunners of trade unions). This allowed the proletariat who had nothing to trade but their labor,
to sell their labor for the best possible price. By uniting, workers could achieve results that could not be achieved individually.

Life wasn't easy for the trade unions in the early 19th century. In Britain, for example, many employers banded together to fight trade unions. There was also an increasing representation of employers' interests in the house of commons.

By 1814, industrialization had occurred in the majority of Europe, hence capitalism had sowed its seeds deep in society. It was in France (one of the first countries to industrialize) that opposition to capital and to the ruling class first developed. The saint-Simonians were among the most important opposition groups to capitalism at the time. They argued for the abolition of hereditary wealth and for the pooling of all land, machinery and capital in a social fund to be controlled by the state.

For the next hundred years capitalism thrived. In opposition to this, trade unions grew in magnitude also. But it must be remembered that trade unions are not always socialist instruments. In an economic boom, trade union's demands are usually met, which led to trade unions allying themselves with the capitalists instead of opposing them. Shortly before the First World War, British trade unions called many large strikes which resulted in the loss of millions of working days. When the war started, trade unions suspended any industrial action to allow the economy to work at maximum efficiency. During this period most private companies and factories fell into public control as part of the war-time effort. The success of the economy under state control during these "experimental times" demonstrated to some the inadequacy of capitalism. After the war, public companies reverted to private ownership.

In 1926 Britain came close to an anti-capitalist revolution. The TUC (Trade Union Congress) called a National Strike in response to wage cuts in the mining sector, but failed to anticipate the magnitude of the strike. Almost all industry in the entire country came to a halt. Clearly, the TUC had forged a revolutionary weapon without having any revolutionary intentions. In actual fact, the TUC were as afraid of a revolution as the Government. The TUC capitulated after nine days without winning any compensation.

Nowadays almost all western countries have Labor (or gradualist, socialist) parties who believe in achieving either total or partial socialism gradually. These parties go in and out of government just like the Liberal (or conservative) parties.
Karl Marx and Marxism

Karl Marx became the prophet and teacher of socialism, whose writings transformed socialist thinking all over the world. Marx was a philosopher and an idealist who studied history and was greatly influenced by the writings of Georg Hegel, the famous German philosopher. In 1848, Karl Marx published, with the help of his long-time friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels, "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei", more commonly known as "The Communist Manifesto". The publication of this book occurred at a most propitious time. The book appeared on the eve of the 1848 revolution in France and less than one year before an attempted revolution in Germany. After the failure of the 1848 revolution in Germany, he was expelled from his country of origin and moved to London. He later published "das Kapital" or Capital, an analysis of the economics of capitalism.

Marxism, a doctrine developed by Marx and to a lesser extent by Engels, consists fundamentally of two interrelated ideas; a philosophical view of man and a theory of history.

Marx believed that man should labor not only for himself as an individual but for society as well. Implied in Marxist philosophy is the notion that man being a social animal has his destiny, indeed his reality inextricably linked with his society. Hegel's idea of human history evolving in a dialectical process of thesis, antithesis leading to synthesis was taken up by Marx and applied to social and economic policy. In a capitalist society, the proletariat invests its labor so that the bourgeoisie (or upper-class) can make all the profits without investing any labor themselves. The disconnection of a worker from the end product of his labor leads Marx to his theory of alienation. Workers are alienated from the product they manufacture, having no control over what becomes of it. Finally, workers are alienated from other human beings, with competition replacing co-operation.

Marx's theory of history is an account of the different stages of government through history. His analysis describes capitalism as the first stage, followed by socialism and finally communism. Marx believed that socialism is an unrealized potential in capitalism and once most workers recognized their interests and became "class conscious," the overthrow of capitalism would proceed as quickly as capitalist opposition allowed. The socialist society that would emerge out of the revolution would have all the productive potential of capitalism. People would be aided on the basis of social needs. The final goal, communism, toward which socialist society would constantly strive, is the abolition of alienation. A class-less society would be advantageous for the vast majority of the population.

As the complexity of the social structure increases, more and more revisions were made to Marx's original doctrine.
Communism:

Communism, a form of government, inspires some people with the zeal of a religion. Communism in theory stands for total public ownership and rejects private property and personal profit. In practice, however, the state determines how strictly the doctrine is applied in any particular country.

Communism in Russia:

The huge losses (both human and material) in the First World War intensified the revolutionary spirit in Russia. In 1917, Lenin led a small party of professional revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks, to power after the Tsar was overthrown. To achieve the transition from Capitalism to socialism and finally communism, Lenin used Marx's theory of "Dictatorship of the Proletariat". The most politically advanced section of the proletariat would form the communist party and lead the rest of the country forward. Since the Bolsheviks totally represented the people, all other political parties were abolished. The party: tolerated no opposition, owned all industry and property, had a powerful secret police, kept strict control over all levels of education and disallowed all liberal literature and art from entering Russia; not unlike the regime that the Tsars ruled by. What became apparent after a few years was that power stemmed from the top, just like under the Tsars. For the average Russian, the repression continued!

After Lenin's death in the late 1920's, Josef Stalin took control of Russia. It was under Stalin's command that the terrible political purges of the 1930s took place. Until his death in 1953, this dictator showed what Marxism-Leninism could mean in practice, which is vastly different than in theory.

For about 15 years after the revolution, farmers continued to own their own farms, islands of private ownership in a sea of state owned property. Stalin, after a long and bloody battle with farmers, put into practice the collectivization of agriculture. This meant that farmers would go and work on huge state owned farms to earn a wage. Theoretically these large farms would make better use of land and machinery, but in practice these farms were inefficient and unproductive.

The Bolshevik government actively discouraged all religious practice, handing out pamphlets and closing down churches. Schools were totally under the control of the communist party. Marxism was taught in schools like religion.

There were programs such as the "young pioneers" for children under 14 and the "communist youth league" for teenagers and young adults which were set up to promote the involvement of young people with the communist party.
At the conclusion of the Second World War, Russian Forces pursued the last of the German troops into Germany and on their way occupied most of Eastern Europe. In these countries, Stalin imposed communist regimes. These nations became known as the satellites of the USSR. Over the next 25 years there were many attempted revolutions that were mercilessly crushed by the Soviet government. Gradually these countries became increasingly independent of the Soviet Union until its demise in 1993.

In January 1959, Fidel Castro became the head of a new revolutionary government in Cuba. Castro freed his country from the excessive US influence. In retaliation, the US imposed a trade embargo on Cuba. As a way of protecting Cuba, Castro allied himself with the other super power, the Soviet Union, and within 3 years Castro was proclaiming "I am a Marxist-Leninist".

**Capitalism:**

Capitalism is a political system in which factories, companies, land, etc. are owned privately in order to create profit for the owners. Prices of goods and services fluctuate depending on the desire of the consumer and the availability of the goods (the law of supply and demand). In a capitalist society there will be significant differences in wealth and power between those who have capital (machines, factories, ships, land, etc.) and those who do not.

No one can say when capitalism first began. Clearly the development of capitalism was not revolutionary like that of communism. Instead it emerged gradually without anyone making a plan of what it should become. However, aspects of modern capitalism such as the stock exchange, banks, and great disparity in wealth came about during the industrial revolution.

In 1776, Adam Smith, a Scottish university professor, produced a book which described the workings of a capitalist society. He believed that a country's wealth depends on all people pursuing their own interests. If a person promotes his own interest, he or she is unintentionally promoting his country's interest. Smith thought that governments should promote free trade and not interfere by protecting certain industries from competition. The only duty of governments, Smith wrote, was to provide services that couldn't be profitable like the building of roads, schools and churches. These policies were adopted by much of Western Europe and continue to be fundamental components in the thinking of most right-wing governments today.
Clearly Capitalism has its benefits; accelerated economic growth and prosperity and rapid progress in science and technology. But along with these came inequities; great disparity in standards of living, power concentrated into very few hands, dangerous working conditions, poor housing and unsanitary sewage systems due to rapid centralization.

Marx believed that capitalism would bring about its own demise. As capitalist companies competed against each other, they would reduce in number. Due to fewer companies, unemployment would rise and people would have less money to spend. This would mean that people could not buy the goods that the companies were producing. Finally in an attempt to find new markets, companies would go abroad only to come into conflict with other companies looking to go abroad and wars would begin as a consequence. The other faults, as Marx sees it, are the advances in technology reducing the need for human labor and the economic "boom-slump cycle" which is evident in all capitalist countries.

Nevertheless capitalist governments are in power in almost every country in the world and show little inclination to change their system.

Conclusion:

The war between capitalism and communism is an interesting one, with many battles and new developments still to come. I believe that the conflict between these different ideologies is by no means over.

In theory, both capitalism and communism have their advantages. In a theoretical capitalist society there is an extremely strong profit incentive which leads to the accelerated development of new products and technological advances which benefit not only those who are strong enough to succeed but also those who are left behind, through the famous "trickle-down effect". In a theoretical communist society there is no unemployment, no inflation, higher productivity in times of crisis and no disparity in wealth, status and power.

However, in practice the story is vastly different for both political systems. Capitalism in practice leads to high unemployment, alienation, the boom-slump cycle, poverty, and crime. Communism in practice leads to political control, the suppression of free speech, limited travel, the repression of religion and restricted expression of the arts. Marx idea of the ultimate abolition of the state was in practice as far as it could be.
HANDOUT 4: COMMUNISM/SOCIALISM VS. CAPITALISM WORKSHEET

Name:

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. When do the authors claim that socialism emerged? During its formation, how did the average worker’s lifestyle change?

2. How did individual, low-skilled workers gain power in this new industrial society?

3. According to Marx, what happens to the proletariat in a capitalist society?

4. What does Marx say the final goal in Communism is? What does he mean by this?

5. What similarities do you see between the rule of the Russian Czar and the rule of the Bolsheviks?

6. List three attributes of capitalism.

7. What does Adam Smith argue about the role of the government in capitalist societies?

8. What are 3 benefits to theoretical capitalism? What are 3 disadvantages?
Handout 6: An Overview of the Korean War

By Michael Hickey
Last updated 2011-03-21

Introduction

At the mid-point of a century that had already seen two appallingly destructive and costly global conflicts, a savage war broke out in a remote country at the extremity of the Asian landmass. During the world war of 1939-45, the future of the Japanese empire was decided at Allied summit meetings. In the short term, pending the return of Korean independence, Korea, a Japanese colony since 1910, was to be occupied north of the 38th parallel by Soviet Russia. To the south, a United States military administration under the direction of General Douglas MacArthur would control the area from its headquarters in Tokyo.

In the North, the Soviets backed a Stalinist regime under their client Kim Il-sung and created the North Korean Peoples' Army, equipped with Russian tanks and artillery. In the South, the chaotic political situation resulted in an American-backed administration under the presidency of Syngman Rhee, who's openly declared aim was the imposition of national unity by force. As a result of this stance, the American-trained South Korean army was limited to a lightly armed gendarmerie, lacking tanks, combat aircraft, and all but a small amount of field artillery.

The North Koreans advanced rapidly south, aiming to take the vital port of Pusan. After several years of increasingly bloody frontier incidents along the 38th parallel, the Republic of Korea was invaded by the North Korean Peoples' Army on 25 June 1950. Despite earlier indications, the Pentagon was caught off-guard. As the North Koreans swept south, overwhelming all opposition, the US called on the Security Council to invoke the United Nations Charter and brand the North Koreans as aggressors. This was done and member states were called on to send in military assistance. The first American troops were then sent in to stiffen resistance against the invader. The British government responded at once and elements of the Far East Fleet were soon in action along the Korean coast, together with ships of Commonwealth navies.

However, the North Koreans still advanced rapidly south, aiming to take the vital port of Pusan. The American troops hurriedly sent from occupation duties in Japan fared badly against superior North Korean troops, but General Walton Walker, commanding the 8th United States Army in Korea (EUSAK), rallied his forces and held the Pusan bridgehead as reinforcements began to arrive. These reinforcements included two British battalions
from Hong Kong, the Middlesex and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and an Australian battalion from Japan. Furthermore, a strong brigade group was mobilized in England and several thousand reservists were recalled to active duty. The 29th Brigade set sail in October 1950, reaching Korea a month later just as it seemed that the war was over.

China's intervention

Corporal Derek Hirst of the Royal Army Medical Corps in Korea © In mid-September, General MacArthur brought off a masterstroke by landing two divisions 240km (150 miles) in the enemy rear at the port of Inchon. Their communications cut, and under heavy aerial bombardment, the North Koreans broke and fled back north; MacArthur ordered a hot pursuit which led across the 38th parallel and deep into North Korea. As the victorious UN forces drew near to the Manchurian border, there were ominous signals from Peking that communist China would intervene to defend its territory. In mid-October, MacArthur met President Harry Truman on Wake Island in their first encounter to assure him that a massive UN offensive was about to conclude the war victoriously by Christmas. No sooner had this been launched in November than the Chinese unleashed their armies.

The UN forces recoiled in disorder and, by the new year, were defending a line well to the south of Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Morale was low but the new field commander, General Ridgway, revived his heterogeneous command and advanced slowly north in the spring of 1951. By mid-April, the allies were back in the area of the 38th parallel when the Chinese launched their spring offensive. The British 29th Brigade narrowly escaped annihilation on the Imjin river as the 27th Commonwealth brigade on the central front beat off savage Chinese attacks. The UN line held, then moved north again. This time, there was no reckless advance into the north. The line stabilized in the general area of the 38th parallel and the remaining two years of fighting consisted of near-static operations as both sides fought from heavily fortified positions, using artillery, mines and wire to deny the enemy access to strategically important ground.

Throughout the war, air power was decisive. The North Korean air force was driven from the skies by US Air Force, Navy and Marines, using their superior equipment and training. Heavy bombers razed the cities and industrial plants of North Korea. Continuous attacks on the transport system forced the Chinese to rely on the packhorse for much of their logistical support. A new phase of air war opened when American B-29 bombers and their fighter escorts were challenged by Russian-built MiG-15 fighters flown by Chinese airmen. The MiG-15's outflew first-generation American jet fighters until the introduction of the swept-wing F-86 Sabre tipped the balance. In the world's first supersonic air combats, the Americans prevailed.
Stalemate

The allies achieved total naval supremacy when the North Korean navy's torpedo boats were blown out of the water by UN firepower. For the rest of the war, American, British, Commonwealth and other allied ships maintained a tight blockade on North Korea. In addition, naval aviation played a leading role in air support of the army on the ground.

In July 1953, a great calm descended over the battlefields...

In mid-1951, with the land battle in stalemate, both sides agreed to go to the conference table and armistice talks began. They dragged on for two years. The main haggling point was the future of the tens of thousands of communist prisoners held in camps on Koje Island off the coast of South Korea. While the communist negotiators were adamant that all were to be returned to their country of origin, thousands of prisoners were unwilling to be repatriated. There were several great mutinies in the Koje camps before a satisfactory formula enabled those who wished to be repatriated to go home and for asylum to be granted to those who wished otherwise. In July 1953, a great calm descended over the battlefields and in Operation Big Switch, thousands of former prisoners on each side were returned. A Demilitarized Zone or DMZ was established on the border. Both sides withdrew from their fighting positions, and a UN commission was set up to supervise the armistice.

Some 100,000 British servicemen and women served in the Japan-Korea theatre during the war. In July 1951, with the arrival of the strong Canadian brigade, the British, Australian, New Zealand, and Indian units were formed into the 1st Commonwealth Division, which soon gained an enviable reputation among its allies.

The aftermath

No one knows exactly how many people died in this war. In a sense it was a civil war fought out with foreign participation on both sides. It was the first military test of the United Nations and also the last martial adventure of the old Commonwealth. The American Department of Defense acknowledges that almost 40,000 of its servicemen died, either in battle or of other causes. British casualties were 1,078 killed in action, 2,674 wounded and 1,060 missing or taken prisoner.

The true casualty figures for the North and South Koreans and Chinese will never be known. It is estimated that some 46,000 South Korean soldiers were killed and over 100,000 wounded. The Chinese are estimated by the Pentagon as having lost over
400,000 killed (including Mao Tse-tung's son) and 486,000 wounded, with over 21,000 captured. The North Koreans lost about 215,000 killed, 303,000 wounded and over 101,000 captured or missing.

British veterans of the campaign were left with abiding memories of a South Korea which had been deprived of its dignity, fought over and ruined, its demoralized population brought to beggary and its infrastructure destroyed. Since 1953, the Republic of Korea has transformed into a modern state. In the North, however, the Stalinist regime created by Kim Il-sung is only now beginning to move out of its hermit state. The economy is in ruins and famine stalks the land. It is too early to say if the tentative moves towards reconciliation will result in attainment of the unity so deeply desired by many Koreans.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/coldwar/korea_hickey_01.shtml
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