

Learning How to Demand Responsibility from the Perpetrators:

A History of Korean Adoptions of Holocaust

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In this presentation, I would like to examine how Koreans who experienced World War II as a colonized nation came to appropriate the Holocaust in South Korea, North Korea, and Japan after the Liberation. The Holocaust, which means the systematic genocide committed by Nazi Germany against Jews, was treated as a major war crime after the war, and over a long period of time, discussions have been made on the investigation of the damage, punishment and condemnation of the perpetrators, memory, and remembrance. In the process, not only the question of direct responsibility of the perpetrators, but also the issue of the ordinary people who remained silent at the sight of the atrocities, intensified the discussion of war crimes dramatically. How did these discussions affect the Koreans? After the Liberation, Koreans in Japan and South Korea tried to hold Japan accountable for colonial rule. The fact that both suffering nations, Jews and Koreans, were oppressed and became victims of atrocities was cited as a commonality between Koreans' victimization and the Holocaust. But in the context of the Cold War, Japan was not properly held accountable for colonial rule. South Korea has experienced military dictatorship since then, and Adolf Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf* (1925-26), a bible of Nazism, has been considered a guidebook for effective leadership and reprinted several times. There has been a lack of awareness making it impossible to identify the Holocaust as an issue related to Koreans themselves. Meanwhile, North Korea initially supported the founding of Israel in sympathy with the desperate reality of Jews who experienced genocide in Europe. However, since the 1960s, they have supported the Palestinian liberation movement, comparing Israel's leaders to Hitler, and using the Holocaust to criticize Israel. North Korea tries to understand the Holocaust from the perspective of the liberation struggle of the weaker nations.

Meanwhile, as social democratization progresses in Korea, the case of the Holocaust is being constantly evoked in connection with Japan's responsibility for colonial rule, such as the massacre of Koreans in the Kanto Great Earthquake during the colonial period and the Japanese military sexual slavery ("comfort women"), as well as domestic violence such as the brutal suppression of Jeju 4.3 Uprising and the

Gwangju May 18 Democratization Movement. In this presentation, I will attempt to trace what Koreans in both Koreas and in Japan learned from the lessons of the Holocaust and how they learned these lessons, insofar as the issue of taking the perpetrators of war crimes and massive violence against civilians to justice is concerned.