

KOREAN WAR NARRATIVES IN 1950S CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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The Korean War was a crucial event at the beginning of Czechoslovakian Cold War ideology and propaganda, when, in the duel between the two worlds, culture was involved. The present article focuses on the formative era of the Korean War narrative through Cold War fictions and nonfictions in 1950s Czechoslovakia. It presents the most influential books in the Czechoslovakia of the time: Han Hüngsu's *Korea včera a dnes* (Korea Yesterday and Today), the Soviet publication *Viděli jsme Koreu* (We Saw Korea), and the North Korean anthology of pamphlets *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji* (How the Korean War was prepared). The article then analyses two anthologies of poetry written by the famous Soviet Korean poet Cho Kich'ŏn, the novel *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* (The Notebook Found in Sunchŏn) by Roman Kim, and the booklet *Čeští spisovatelé korejským dětem* (Czech Writers to Korean Children). The conclusion summarises the ways in which the Korean War was depicted and the pivots of its narrative.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Korean War, nonfiction, fiction, ideology, propaganda, narrative, Cho Kich'ŏn, Roman Kim, Czech writers to Korean Children¹

Introduction

Korean themes and motifs started to appear sporadically in the newly established Czechoslovak Republic during the 1930s. Nevertheless, these were not works that reflected the contemporary situation. Apart from two anthologies of Korean folk

¹ This research (or publication) was supported by the 2023 Korean Studies Grant Program of the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS-2023-R-047).

tales translated from Russian (Garin-Mikhailovsky, 1852 – 1906) *Z říše nezapadajícího slunce* [The Empire of the Never-Setting Sun, 1st edition in 1932] and *Žlutý pes a jiné povídky z Korey* [A Yellow Dog and Other Stories from Korea, 1932] written by a legionnaire, Jaroslav Spirhanzl-Duriš, a great success was Kang Younghill's *Drnová střecha* [The Grass Roof, 1934, 1938, 1945, 1946, 1948 and 1970], which was considered a part of the popular so-called “Oriental” literature in the Czech Republic.

Awareness of Korea increased considerably during WWII. In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia the Korean archeologist Han Hŭngsu (1909 – ?)² took up residence. He popularised Korea through many articles in newspapers and journals, after 1945 also by broadcast dramatisations and book publications. His view on Korea was highly nationalistic and, after WWII, socialist, especially in his work *Korea včera a dnes* [Korea Yesterday and Today],³ in which he expressed his opinion about the communist future of Korea under the guidance of Kim Il-sung. Han possessed contacts in both parts of the Korean peninsula and initiated the first translations from Korean,⁴ and it was thanks to him that Kim Namch'ŏn's (1911 – 1953) novel *Taeha* (*Proud*, *The Tide*)⁵ was published. He also recommended leftist literature for future translations and during the Korean War he drew attention to the prominent Korean poet Cho Kich'ŏn (1913 – 1951). Cho's anthologies *Paektusan* and *Pult'anŭn kŏriesŏ* were translated and published by his pupil and founder of Czechoslovak Korean Studies Alois Pultr (1906 – 1992). Han Hŭngsu was also the initiator of the first translation of Czech literature in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the work *Reportáž psaná na oprátce* [Notes from the Gallows, 1947] supposedly written by the Czech Communist journalist and official martyr Julius Fučík (1903 – 1943).⁶ At the Oriental Institute in Prague, Han started to teach the Korean language and produced a significant body of materials for the Czech public. Following his departure to North Korea in 1948, Alois Pultr and Han Hŭngsu's

² For details, see LÖWENSTEINOVÁ, M., OLŠA, J. *Han Hŭng-su, otec československé koreanistiky* [Han Hŭng-su, The Father of Czechoslovak Korean Studies].

³ HAN, Hŭng-su. *Korea včera a dnes* [Korea Yesterday and Today].

⁴ Han translated into German a set of Korean fairytales under the title *Zwölf Monatsgeschichten und andere Volkserzählungen aus Korea* [Twelve Monthly Stories and other Folk Stories from Korea]. Some of them were published in Czech journals as well as being dramatised in the Czech broadcasting company after 1945. In the Han Hŭngsu archive that is in possession of the author of this article, there are fragments of the future translation from German, also a list of the stories worthy of translation and publication in the Czech Republic.

⁵ KIM, N. *Proud* [The Tide].

⁶ PCHUCH'WIK, Yuriussŭ [Julius Fučík]. *Kohyŏngsuŭi sugi* [literally The Records of One Sentenced to Hanging]. Translated by Huberta Kim a Han Hŭngsu.

friend Huberta Kim⁷ reworked and used these manuscripts and adapted the materials for newspapers, radio, and theatre.⁸

After the February 1948 Communist coup d'état, Czechoslovakia belonged to the Eastern bloc for several decades. This implied also adopting the political standpoints taken by the USSR. In the context of this war and the worldwide interest in Korea, the Czechoslovak Republic published many publications in relation to Korean themes, mostly political. Materials were primarily sent from the DPRK, but also through Russian translations (e.g. *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji* [How the Korean War Was Prepared], see later); the publications were Soviet materials, anthologies and proclamations of the “progressive” world, the UN, women’s associations, and reactions to the popular slogan “Hands off Korea” [*Ruce pryč od Koreje*], adopted in the Czechoslovak Republic as well (see fig. 1).⁹ All information was diffused and, during the conflict, added to by new accusations, motives, and so called “facts”.

Nonfiction dramatically outweighed fiction, although the demand for Korean literature translations was obvious. Post-war fiction started to be sent through the DPRK’s Ministry of Culture and Propaganda; some was produced in Pyongyang in Russian, and then translated into other languages. Also, books in Russian written by Russian Koreans were published; the most influential being Roman Kim’s (1899 – 1967) representative novel *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* [The Notebook Found in Sunch’ŏn, see below]. The final kind of publications were books in Czech or Slovak. This endeavour was not limited to sporadic fiction and prevailing currents in poetry.¹⁰

We can sum all these works as belonging to a monothematic, mostly ideological stream. Nevertheless, every reflection brought a piece of the new Korea to the centre of attention of the “progressive” world. The selection of publications was more or less accidental, as in my opinion there was no

⁷ Huberta Algemisen Kim (1903 – 97), painter and sculptor, who lived with Han Hüngsu in Prague until 1948. She translated and adapted his German texts into Czech. In her archive there are some artefacts influenced by Korean culture.

⁸ Not all the projects came to fruition but there are interesting dramatisations of Korean folk tales and legends.

⁹ This slogan emerged in Czechoslovakia in various forms from 1951: also the name of a book, this slogan appeared on posters, as the title of musical works, but most frequently as an anti-war proclamation of political representatives and citizens in newspapers. Not only were meetings, donations and other activities held under this title, but also mobilisations took place in industry and agriculture.

¹⁰ During the Korean War musical works, artistic reflections and other works dedicated to Korea or to Korean children were produced in a contemporary anti-war militant tone accompanied by ideological clichés. During the Korean War three sets of North Korean songs were published.

preconceived publishing policy. Korea was at the centre of the political speeches (of Stalin, Kim Il-sung, Czech politics), and the same is true of the publication of the International Women's Association We Accuse [*Žalujeme*] and the book *Ruce pryč od Koreje* [Hands off Korea]. A travelogue of Russian journalists translated from Russian (Alexander Gitovich and Boris Bursov: *Viděli jsme Koreu* [We Saw Korea], in Russian 1947, in Czech 1950) was a combination of nonfiction and fiction; fully fictitious but inspired by the highly ideological works was a novel by Roman Kim (1950). The same can be said about the translations from Korean by Alois Pultr (Cho Kich'ŏn: *Pektusan, Ulice v plamenech*, see hereafter) and works on Korean themes, such as the poetry anthology *Čeští spisovatelé korejským dětem* [Czech Writers to Korean Children, 1952]. All publications were supplied with Czech forewords and afterwords, updated and sentimental.

During the Korean War many pamphlets, sketches, and poems were published in newspapers, and the Korean War was a special theme of the satiric pictorial *Dikobraz*.¹¹ In addition to the literary production, a significant number of illustrations, artefacts, paintings etc. were produced.¹²

The Czechoslovak Republic was a country frequently visited by Korean official delegations since it is situated in the centre of Europe: important political delegations (including Kim Il-sung); party delegations, women, trade union delegations; youth groups (especially for the World Festival of Youth and Students, WFYS); dance groups, musical ensembles, etc. came to the country. The visit of the famous dancer Ch'oe Sŭnghŭi (1911 – 1969) in 1956 was also a notable event.¹³ However, in this article, we will concentrate on the small number of iconic literary works translated from Korean or Russian and one Czech anthology. These were published shortly before the Korean War and during the conflict and were important for a fixed image of Korea valid for the Cold War era.

¹¹ *Dikobraz*, originally a satirical weekly, published from 1945 to 1989, from 1948 published under the Communist party daily *Rudé právo* and all humour was subjected to Stalinist supervision.

¹² Among the painters we will mention three names: Bohumila Doleželová (1910 – 1992) and her graphics in *Ulice v plamenech*; Jan Černý (1919 – 1997), who accompanied with his illustrations the journal publication of *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* in *Květy* and Václav Fiala (1896 – 1980), who created two paintings for the book *Čeští spisovatelé korejským dětem*.

¹³ For details, see LÖWENSTEINOVÁ, M., PUCEK, V., VALOŠEK, M. *Čchŏ Sŭnghŭi a An Songhŭi v Československu. Ch'oe Sŭnghŭi and An Sŏnghŭi in Czechoslovakia*.

The Pivots of the Korean War Narrative in Czechoslovakia: *Korea včera a dnes, Viděli jsme Koreu* and *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji*

From the late 1940s the whole world was divided into “we” and “they”. One side was represented by peaceful work, the other unambiguously determined by preparations for war. The former was led by Stalin (“generalissimo of Peace”), and all the leaders of the socialist countries occupied the appropriate positions. However, the countries of the Eastern bloc declared their ultimate mission as that of “fighting for peace” in all aspects of life, both in factories and farms, but it was also required to be reflected in the culture.

Such a division needed an enemy: the stable set of approved enemies of this world were a bourgeois capitalist, a factory owner, a landlord, an emigré traitor. The most important thing, however, was an external enemy. In the context of Czechoslovakia, propaganda followed the semantics of a German: “a German as an inhuman furious monster, a non-human, who dominated the contemporary semiotic system after 1945... in February 1948 it [the characterisation of a German] was flexibly applied in accordance with the linear causality of the historical evaluation of his new incarnation as the contemporary threat of the whole world – the USA and (in contemporary vocabulary) their servile satellites.”¹⁴ We find the most extreme and productive form of this figure during the Korean War. In this era: the enemy was defined by the specified attributes and details. This tendency was obvious in various texts: nonfiction, fiction, poetry, as well as in contemporary culture.

On the eve of the Korean War, the Czechoslovak Republic was not as uninformed about Korea as other European countries. As mentioned before, Czechs were relatively up to date thanks to the six-year-long activities of Han Hŭngsu, who had moved to Prague from Vienna. Han was a typical Korean intellectual of the Japanese era; he studied in Tokyo, and lived in Europe for twelve years (1936 – 48). He studied in Bern, Freiburg, Vienna, and Berlin and was influenced not only by his origins but also by European thought, not least by Marxism. His concept of Korea contained some points that he articulated in his 1940s articles written to German-speaking and subsequently Czech-speaking readers.¹⁵ Han’s concept of history stressed the “wise” people, in accordance with

¹⁴ SCHMARC, V. Míř přesněji. Korejská válka jako černý bod socialistického realismu. [Aim Accurately. The Korean War as a Black Spot of Social Realism]. In *Soudobé dějiny*, 2014, Vol. 21, Nos.1–2, p. 48.

¹⁵ According to Han, a Korean is a person who does not believe foreigners, especially missionaries, and religions. He compresses the characterisation of a Korean as “He does not hurry” and by an absurd emphasis on cultural phenomena (the white colour of clothes, practical shoes that produce no deformation of the feet, excellent water, therefore there is

leftist historiography and especially Paek Namun's (1894 – 1979) *Chosen shakai-keizaishi* [Socioeconomic history of Korea, 1933], the people's suffering and uprisings. During the final years of his Czechoslovak stay, he created a black and white picture of the North and South by using contemporary (Cold War) metaphors. This was typical especially of his depiction of modern Korean history in a single-valued chapter of his monograph *Korea včera a dnes*, and more explicitly in the *Dodatek* [Appendix] in its second edition,¹⁶ which he wrote in Pyongyang at the beginning of the Korean War. It contains a relatively elaborate indictment of the USA as to their obvious intention to i) colonise Korea (willful activities in the Soviet-American Joint Commission agenda), ii) subordinate the South Korean "puppet" government to US colonisation aims, iii) manipulate the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) and, iv) precipitate the long-planned war due to their inability to suppress the resistance in the South. Enemies and friends were not only attributed colourful characteristics but also named: the inventory in all texts included J. F. Dulles, General MacArthur, President Truman, President Yi Sŭngman, the ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the UN Ch'oe Pyŏngok, etc. As for the friends, Han Hŭngsu's list is longer than usual: apart from the USSR and its representatives he stressed several countries in Eastern Europe, such as Czechoslovakia, Romania, East Germany, etc. He referred to them in detail, and he described their activities in campaigns such as "Hands off Korea!".¹⁷ Accusations against the USA and South Korea alternated with a positive narrative of North Korea and the Eastern bloc, and all the information was supported by the contemporary habit of using numbers, statistics, and quotations from statements and the testimonies of "traitors". In accordance with contemporary and later publications, Han listed crimes against humanity,¹⁸ revealed the

no reason for drinking tea, the many vitamins in Korean cuisine, etc.). Several times he pointed out that backwardness is an advantage for the future revolution. In five points Han claims the possibility of rapid modernisation due to the i) weak bourgeoisie, ii) no ethnic problem (no minorities), iii) no enemy in the north, iv) the capacity of the country, v) no state religion. This information emerged across various articles and Han repeated them from the 1930s in Austrian and Czechoslovakian newspapers, respectively. For details, see SCHIRMER, A. (ed.). *Koreans in Central Europe. To Yu-ho, Han Hŭng-su, and Others*; LÖWENSTEINOVÁ, M., OLŠA, J. *Han Hŭng-su, otec československé koreanistiky* [Han Hŭng-su, The Father of Czechoslovak Korean Studies].

¹⁶ HAN, Hŭng-su. *Korea včera a dnes* [Korea, Yesterday and Today], pp. 248–267.

¹⁷ Including the Czechoslovak composer Miroslav Barvík (1919 – 1998) and his cantata "Ruky přeč od Koreje" [Hands off Korea] (1950).

¹⁸ HAN, Hŭng-su. *Korea včera a dnes* [Korea, Yesterday and Today], p. 262.

economic profit from the war,¹⁹ and, finally, a possible peaceful solution to the conflict. *Dodatek* ended with Kim Ilsung's message.²⁰ Han's text can be understood as a North Korean official narrative that, together with other texts and proclamations, formed the fixed interpretation of the Korean conflict. This basis was gradually enriched by other information taken from Soviet newspapers or publications.

The second important summary of Cold War rhetoric, widely diffused thanks to its huge print run, was a translation of the book 'We Saw Korea' written by Soviet journalists Alexander Gitovich and Boris Bursov.²¹ They visited Korea in 1946 and their trip ended in November 1946. However, the Czech edition was published during the Korean War in 1950. Apart from the travelogue it contained two afterwords: the first one was taken from the Russian edition and the second one was an update written especially for the Czech edition. The book mixed pictures of the Korean countryside and cities, presented the Russified models attributed to specific occupations (the model engineer, farmer, scientist, pastor, man, woman, old and new), stories of their lives during the Japanese annexation and, as a contrast, the contemporary enthusiastic building of socialism. The entries are rich in folklore and proverbs. Pyongyang was depicted as a key location, where the journalists received an official version of all the important narratives. They met contemporary personages such as Kim Ilsung,²² others are known rather to specialists in Korean history. Some of them were purged (the writers Han Sŏrya and Yi T'aejun) or executed (Kim Tubong), some of them were known in the USSR or were connected with the USSR, such as general Chistyakov, Pak Chŏngae (politician), Yi Kiyŏng (writer), Cho Kich'ŏn (poet), Ch'oe Sŭnghŭi (dancer). On the other side, Americans were presented as a devilish mass, headed by the military governor of Korea General Archer Lynn Lerch (1894 – 1947), South Koreans by Yi Sŭngman, Kim Ku, and "the reactionaries". The South was depicted as a police state full of collaborators and prisons. More important than the travelogue are the afterwords in the Czech edition. The Soviet one anticipated the 1948 elections and the retreat of the foreign armies from Korea. It pointed out the role of the USSR (during liberation, building democracy and the economy) and Korea's boundless gratitude to Stalin. The Czech afterword summarised the "facts" up to the Korean War (that was initiated by "American imperialists"). It referred to the elections that were

¹⁹ HAN, Hŭng-su. *Korea včera a dnes* [Korea, Yesterday and Today], pp. 264–265.

²⁰ All these arguments appear in several of Han's articles. See LÖWENSTEINOVÁ, M., OLŠA, J. *Han Hŭng-su, otec československé koreanistiky* [Han Hŭng-su, The Father of Czechoslovak Korean Studies].

²¹ GITOVICH, A., BURSOV, B. *Viděli jsme Koreu* [We Saw Korea].

²² This book contained 12 legends of Kim Ilsung's partisan life.

manipulated by the USA “for colonisation of Korea and division of the nation”.²³ It stressed the brutal incidents in Yösu and Sunch’ön, the resistance of the Korean “people”, strikes by workers and farmers, partisans, famines, etc., what led the narrative to the war. The afterword cited “progressive” but also well-known newspapers (*Le Monde*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *United Press*), the pronouncements, and conclusions of several commissions. The author was thus able to present the thesis about the conspiracy and the attack on the North, because it was the Korean resistance that drove the USA and Yi Süngman to war. As proof of this the afterword quoted Yi’s statement in *The New York Times*: “I am sure, we can occupy Pyongyang in three days,”²⁴ with the same intention General Chang T’aeksan’s words of December 1948 for the French Agence France Press: “North Korea belongs to us. As soon as it is possible, we will send our army there and liberate it.”²⁵

Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji [How the Korean War Was Prepared], the third and by its “arguments” crucial book was translated from English.²⁶ It was compiled in the DPRK with the subtitle Documents from the archive of Yi Süngman’s government. The Czech version was published in an edition of 95,000 copies in 1951.²⁷ For the development of the Korean War narrative, what was particular was the discovery of “evidence” in Yi Süngman’s presidential quarters during the first occupation (“liberation”) of Soul. Documents were backed up by the dating and the authentic authors that give them reliability; the book was supplemented by a strategic map of the alleged attack and commentaries.²⁸

The book was introduced by a letter from the DPRK head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pak Hönyöng (1900 – 1955),²⁹ to the president of the UN General Assembly dated 28 September 1950, in which Pak commented on texts and emphasized the official contemporary North Korean narrative about the Korean War: it was American imperialists and their flunkies (ROK), who attacked North and devastated the country under the flag of the UN. He repeated the reasons leading to the war: Yi Süngman’s terror (all the gravest crimes against his nation are listed: the suppression of the Cheju, Yösu, and Sunch’ön uprisings above all). There followed the accusation of the executors of Yi Süngman’s will

²³ GITOVICH, A., BURSOV, B. *Viděli jsme Koreu* [We Saw Korea], p. 155.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁶ Originally in Korean, but substantially abbreviated in English.

²⁷ *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji. Dokumenty z archivu Li Syn-manovy vlády* [How the Korean War Was Prepared. The Documents from the Archives of the Li Syn-man Government].

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 107–8.

²⁹ Later accused of being a spy for the USA and executed.

– Ch’oe Pyŏngok (ambassador of the ROK at UN), Chang Myŏn (Ambassador of the ROK in USA), and Yun Pyŏnggu (Yi Sŭngman’s foreign affairs adviser). As for Americans, in the letter, Pak’s accusations concerned Douglas Mac Arthur and J. F. Dulles, again the role of Japan in the future war plans was suggested, having been developed in fictitious texts, e.g. in Roman Kim’s *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu*. When the narrative came closer to the date of June 25th, Pak Hŏnyŏng became more and more explicit: he quoted, added details and accusations. In accordance with previous publications, he claimed the UN was the puppet of the USA, he condemned the UN resolutions against the DPRK (the USSR and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) were not present at that time), he qualified the resolution as an “interference in the DPRK internal affairs”. The letter ended with the reassurance of the DPRK’s permanent resistance aiming for the “liberty and independence of the homeland”; on the other hand, it summarised atrocities against citizens (brutal attacks, the bombing of civilians and hospitals and enumerating the industrial complexes totally devastated). Pak Hŏnyŏng asked the UN for the publication of this letter and attached documents, as well as the condemnation of the American military for its crimes in Korea.³⁰

The documents are of several kinds: in essence, there is standard diplomatic correspondence between Yi Sŭngman and Ch’oe Pyŏngok or Chang Myŏn; private correspondence between J. F. Dulles and Yi Sŭngman; private correspondence between Chang Myŏn and American commanders. Though the USA were responsible for building up the Korean army, it is logical that the themes concerned military aid, military bases, and armament. A legitimate theme was also present in the description of the prospective clash with the North, Chinese involvement in it etc. In addition to the contemporary standard, three “testimonies” were supplied: the witnesses were Kim Isaek (former Minister of Internal Affairs of the ROK), dated 26 September 1950; Mun Hakpon (CIC adviser in Yi Sŭngman’s government) dated 21 December 1950 and broadcasted; the third was Han Suwan’s testimony (a member of Military Command of the ROK’s army) of June 1950. Two of them substantially enriched the narrative of the Korean War.

Kim Isaek³¹ in his testimony described the USA as a country that aimed to colonise and devastate Korea. With the establishment of Yi Sŭngman’s “puppet regime”, the USA formed the proper basis and continued by purges that terrorised the country (conflicts in Cheju and in Yŏsu, repeatedly the words *burnings* and *massacre* appeared) and by arrests, especially in Chŏlla province. The next revelation concerned the “truth” about the experimental invasion of July 1949. Plans continued

³⁰ *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji. Dokumenty z archivu Li Syn-manovy vlády* [How the Korean War Was Prepared. The Documents from the Archives of the Li Syn-man Government], pp. 7–18.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 62–74.

with provocations around the 38th parallel, the false evidence to the UN, and the alliance between Tokyo and MacArthur till the war order by J. F. Dulles.

Mun Hakpon's testimony concentrated on the Korean part of the conspiracy, especially on Yi Sŭngman and Hanguk Minjudang (Korean Democratic Party). He accused both of being servants of Japanese imperialism, claiming they followed American orders.³² This accusation reached a peak in the list of MacArthur's 11 requirements to Korea,³³ mostly concerning the Japanese participation in the future conflict (MacArthur would be the only commander of the clash, the commandment would be based in Japan, where the Korean commandants would be trained, and Korea would offer to Japan supplies of one million *sŏk* of rice; one million Japanese soldiers would participate in the war). This pronouncement ended with a portrayal of the Korean army and politicians. Yi Sŭngman fled like a coward to Japan after the first failed operation, politicians were thieving (their tasks were decided by American representatives – *disunite*, *corrupt*, and *degenerate*).³⁴ The embassy of the USA was designated a centre of conspiracy: the ambassador J. J. Muccio (1900 – 1989) was supported by the military commander of the US forces J. W. Roberts (1921 – 1999). Both the texts ended with exclamations; the first one with "Hands off Korea!" (in the second "hands" were followed by the adjective "bloody") followed by "Long live General Kim Il-sung, leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea!"³⁵ The third testimony was important especially due to the so-called "ABC plan" (see hereafter) that became a part of the Cold War narrative and was transferred into fiction as well.

All the publications mentioned above served as propaganda. Though there were no arguments supporting the "facts" and the accusations, they formed the stable narrative of the Korean War including the repeated and refined clichés.³⁶ Irrespective of the absurdity of some claims it functioned during the whole Cold War era although the theme was not so prominent in the following decades, and not in such an extreme way as during the 1950s.

³² *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji. Dokumenty z archivu Li Syn-manovy vlády* [How the Korean War Was Prepared. The Documents from the Archives of the Li Syn-man Government], p. 76.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

³⁶ For the most influential publications see the reference. In Czechoslovakia, however, the speeches of Soviet representatives and occasionally Koreans there were also available. Russian as the official language of communication in the Soviet bloc was widely used at that time. Apart from the party secretaries and officials, students were able to read it without substantial restriction.

Works Written by Ethnic Koreans

During the Korean War, in Czechoslovakia, not many works written by Koreans were translated. The reason for this was the poor literary quality of the contemporary “classics” of Korean literature, influenced by the so-called proletarian literature with formulaic plots and characters. This tendency was obvious when reading the anthology of short stories *Hrdinové bojující Koreje* [Heroes of Fighting Korea].³⁷ Because of the naivety of the narrative strategy and characters together with the other literary conventions, even in Communist Czechoslovakia it was not possible to present readers with the books of eminent Korean writers like Yi Kiyŏng and Han Sŏrya. The only anthology of Korean contemporary writers in Czechoslovakia was *Na stráži* [On Guard] with the subtitle *Povídky a črty* [Short Stories and Sketches],³⁸ which included short stories by Han Sŏrya (1900 – 1976), Yi T’aejun (1904 – ?) and Kim Saryang (1914 – 1950?).

During the Korean War only the poems of the Russian Korean Cho Kich’ŏn (originally written in Korean, but under the strong influence of the Russian and Soviet poetic tradition) and the novel by Roman Kim, written in Russian and not aspiring to be part of Korean literature met with a favourable response among Czechoslovak readers. Both writers were recommended and published in official publishing houses in several, relatively ambitious, editions.

Case Study I. Cho Kich’ŏn (1913 – 1951)

The context of Cho Kich’ŏn’s life and his activity in post-war North Korea has been analysed in Tatiana Gabroussenko’s *Soldiers on the Cultural Front*,³⁹ including his Soviet education, cultural influences and Korean language, and criticized in North Korea. Both his anthologies *Paektusan*, [Pektusan] and *Pult’anŭn koriesŏ* [*Ulice v plamenech*] were translated from Korean by Alois Pultr. *Paektusan* with the collaboration of Sŏnu Hagwŏn (1918 – 2015), a Korean living in Prague, with the subtitle *Epic of Korean Partisans* with an original Korean illustration on the cover with the young Kim Ilsung on the top of the sacred Paektusan in a similar posture to Stalin (fig. 2). The original was published

³⁷ *Hrdinové bojující Koreje* [Heroes of Fighting Korea]. Translation by Vsevolod Sato and Zbyněk Kožnar.

³⁸ *Na stráži. Povídky a črty* [On Guard. Short Stories and Sketches]. The original title in Russian was Koreya boretsya. Translated from the Russian by Josef Šístek.

³⁹ GABROUSSENKO, T. *Soldiers on the Cultural Front. Developments in the Early History of North Korean Literature and Literary Policy*, pp. 46–70.

in *Rodong sinmun* in 1947 and dedicated to the “heroic Red Army that liberated Korea”. In Czech this long poem was published in two editions (Mír, 1950 and Družstevní práce, 1951) with a relatively large number of copies. The aim of this article is not to analyse this work, but let us at least mention that it had to be a celebration of the later highly mythologised battle of Poch’ŏnbo (1936). In Cho’s poem, it was still a partisan incident with the support of the common people centred on Paektusan. In this work Kim Ilsung is presented as a benevolent, wise leader, older than his companions, standing above them with his authority and abilities. According to the legend applied in the North Korean histories of literature, Kim Ilsung influenced the final version of the text and revised his own image.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, he and his partisans were not the only heroes of the poem. It was Paektusan that brought together all the mountains of the world and sent signals of revolution as far as the Pacific Ocean.

The text does not show Russian features explicitly. Nevertheless, it uses the classical Russian form – “poema” – not known in Korean classical or modern poetry. Moreover, the author adopts the terminology common in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Eastern European countries when referring to the USSR and Stalin.⁴¹ In this poem, Korea was liberated by the Soviet army and it was a Soviet soldier who climbed to the top of Paektusan and hoisted a flag there. In the last scene, Kim Ilsung shouted out: “We are not alone, comrades/the Soviet Union/the protector of all oppressed peoples/the defender of the most advanced line/of our century/and the great Stalin/will move the whole/immeasurable world.”⁴² The clichés common in the contemporary socialist world emerged in *Dozpěv* [Aftersong]. Here, Paektusan sings a hymn to the DPRK’s development and expresses the hope that the partisans in the Southern mountains will stand up and the spirit of Paektusan will be spread to the mountains of the whole world “...up to the Pacific/undulating/by the hastiness/and freezing the fresh face/of the newly born world”.⁴³

Ulice v plamenech [The Street in Flames]⁴⁴ (fig. 3 and 4) is an anthology of chronologically organised poems. By its lexicon and formal features, it resembles

⁴⁰ The same narrative is available in Han Sōrya’s novel *Käsōn*.

⁴¹ In the 1950s Alois Pultr was not yet a great expert on Korean poetry. Therefore, he instinctively followed the author’s influence and the Czech translation tends towards the Russian poetry even more.

⁴² CHO, K. *Peaktusan. Epopej korejských partyzánů* [Paektusan. The Epic of Korean Partisans], p. 98.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁴⁴ In Czech there were two editions of this translation: the first in *Malá knižnice Orientu*, 1952, and the second one in *Naše vojsko*, 1953, with graphics by Bohumila Doležalová. Doležalová’s main interest was gypsies and other ethnic groups.

Paektusan. It is a highly emotional picture of the ruins of war including the fixed images of death and the burning countryside juxtaposed with fighting and even fanatical exclamations, demanding soldiers to bring death to the enemy up to the south.⁴⁵ Americans are definitely barbarians, who “want to eradicate Korea”.⁴⁶ “Wall Street and the White House/stained by the fresh blood/of our comrades/is ripe for destruction!”⁴⁷ The author does not forget Stalin (“he is like a pylon in stormy waters”),⁴⁸ but also other countries: “The Great China... brave Vietnam... will destroy the bloodthirsty aggressor”.⁴⁹ He continues with an appeal to all people with “righteous hearts”, not forgetting the escalating depiction of the terror (Americans use napalm, nuclear bombs,⁵⁰ women are fighting, women are also tortured, girls are raped, children meet death or death of their parents, etc. Cho Kich’ŏn’s epithets are exaggerated: for example, the corpse of the enemy is “dirty” every time. The text written by the translator, Alois Pultr, supports the message of the book.⁵¹ In addition to an outline of Korean history up until the opening-up of Korea, he presents the critical moments after the liberation and the mythical life of Cho Kich’ŏn (“a proletarian internationalist”),⁵² containing many distortions including his heroic death in July 1951.⁵³

Case Study II: Roman Kim, *The Notebook Found in Sunch’ŏn*⁵⁴

Roman Kim (1899 – 1967) was a Soviet Korean writer, Orientalist, and counter-intelligence officer, well-known during the 1950s and 1960s in Eastern Europe as the author of novels such as *Děvčátko z Hirošimy* [The Girl from Hiroshima, in Czech 1954], *Kobra pod poduškou* [The Cobra under the Pillow, 1962], *Škola fantomů* [The School of Phantoms, 1965] and many others. During his life, full

⁴⁵ CHO, K. *Ulice v plamenech* [The Street in Flames], p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵¹ In the first edition Pultr was not presented as an author of the Epilogue.

⁵² CHO, K. *Ulice v plamenech* [The Street in Flames], p. 44.

⁵³ This poem was read during lectures on the Korean language at the Oriental Institute in Prague, where the translator worked at that time. The original including notes was found in the archive of Huberta Kim (in the possession of the author of this article).

⁵⁴ For details, see LÖWENSTEINOVÁ, M., VALOŠEK, M., YU, S. Typický studenovělečný román? Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu Romana Kima. [Roman Kim’s The Notebook Found in Sunch’ŏn. A Typical Cold-War Fiction?] In *Svět literatury*, 2023, Vol. XXXIII, No. 67, pp. 21–36.

of ups and downs, he spent years in prison, but also worked as a translator for the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.⁵⁵ Russians glorify him even today as a model author “who served his country by his works;” they praise his potential, academic activities, translations of Akugatawa Ryūnosuke (1892 – 1927), and the literary qualities of his novels. For his readers in Central Europe, he is a mediocre writer representing the propaganda of the 1950s. As an Orientalist who was educated and lived 10 years in Japan, a Korean by origin, and a Russian by choice, Roman Kim created fictions not only believable for every reader but relatively accurate in their settings and related details. His works were widely read in Eastern Europe, translated into 12 languages and published in huge editions. Interestingly, his most famous novel *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchon* [The Notebook Found in Sunch’ŏn, in Russian *Tetrad’ naidennaya v Sunčene*, 1950] is not considered a part of the diasporic literature in Korea, on the other hand the second one – The Girl from Hiroshima – is not only known in Japan but also studied. Kim’s production is interesting from the point of view of the literature of the 1950s, forgotten, and not valued objectively, as was evident during the 2016 conference in Saint Petersburg dedicated to his life and work.⁵⁶

Sešit nalezený v Sunčchon is a typical novel of the Cold War era with a clear message, simplified and stereotypical characters of the bipolar world following the dominant narrative, and reducible to propaganda. It is primarily addressed to soldiers and intended to prepare them for the next war. This novel is presented as a fact, a testimony, the revealing of a crime. The afterword to the Czech edition, written by its translator, uses contemporary rhetoric.⁵⁷ This book met the standards of the official Kremlin discourse and by it Roman Kim openly accused the Americans and Japanese of implementing via the Korean War the “first of their ABC plan” leading eventually to World War III. All the editions of this book

⁵⁵ KULANOV, A. *Roman Kim*.

⁵⁶ KIM, Ye U Roman Nikolayevich Kim – vidnyi sovetskii issledovatel’ Vostocnoi Azii i pisatel’. Nauchnaya konferenciya v IDV RAN, posviaschonnaya yego tvorčestvu [Roman Nikolayevich Kim – the Important Soviet Researcher of the East Asia and a Writer]. In *Yaponskiye issledovaniya*, 2016, Vol. 2, pp. 82–91. For details of Roman Kim’s life and work, see SAKANAKA, N. *Roman Nikolayevich Kim and the Strange Plots of His Mystery Novellas* and especially the works of Aleksander Kulanov, e.g. KULANOV, A. *Roman Kim: The Ninja from the Lublianka*. In *Historian*, 2018, Vol. 80, No. 1, pp. 9–33; KULANOV, A. *Roman Kim*.

⁵⁷ KIM, R. *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchon* [The Notebook Found in Sunch’ŏn], pp. 147–158. The afterword was written by the translator Jaroslav Jankovský. It claims the authenticity of the “notebook” as a document that bears witness to the criminal planes of USA and Japan. As a product of the Korean conflict, it follows the official narrative, including a short history of Korean people, its sufferings and detailed accusations against the USA supported by “facts”.

(19 of them in Russian, many others in translations) presented the content of this novel as a pure reality, a revealed truth, and readers definitely believed this “fact”. This novel has a full-blown, convincing story line, supported by elaborate, black and white characters, symptomatic of the Cold War ideology and propaganda arguments of Eastern Europe.

Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu is a novel of the Korean War, set in Japan and Korea during the actual period but seen retrospectively through the diary of a Japanese, it goes back to 1945. The narrator is crucial: he is a Japanese war criminal who uncovers a plot full of US-Japanese conspiracy, in which Korea and the Korean War are a symbolic space for the clash of two worlds. The diary was found in Sunch’ön in November 1950 by DPRK partisans and the truth was revealed.

The diary recounts the last days of WWII, the capitulation of Japan, and the failed coup d’état. Some months later, “enemies” come together to form a conspiracy against the peaceful and progressive world. A Japanese soldier and an American spy serve as a metaphor for the conspiracy between the USA and Japan whose aim is to destroy “all the Reds.” The second half of the plot deals with the so-called ABC plan. What is stressed at the end of the diary are the more or less demonic aspects of the enemy (direct accusations): executions of the captives, tortures, and interrogations with the help of the American drugs amithal and pentothal). The scene is enriched by the desperate consumption of drugs and alcohol, as well as cruelties (shooting children for fun, torturing women).

Finally, the author enters the novel and updates the situation in short entries on the first and the second phases of the Korean War. He lists the names of American generals, their previous achievements, and merits during WWII. This enumeration continues with the American war techniques. In this context, the North Korean resistance can be considered heroic. This part is also coloured by the picture of the enemy: UN soldiers are hysterical, they are waiting for bombs, desperately smoking on the road, they always have a white handkerchief with them for their eventual surrender. The author ends the story not with the victory but the final retreat of the Americans, signalling that the North Koreans (with Chinese help) will win. The last scene is set in Pyongyang train station: everybody is leaving for the war and Kim Ilsung’s voice is heard through the loudspeakers.

The novel is complicated by the fact the narrator is Japanese and the author is a Soviet Korean with predominantly Japanese experience. Roman Kim’s Korean reality is limited to facts available in newspapers, except for some folklore, and he mentioned only modern historical figures (I Sŭngman, his wife, some persons from the Korean War). On the other hand, Japan in this book is authentic because the narrator is Japanese. Russian features are functional: crucial are the references to the Soviet war fiction *Molodaya gvardiya* (The Young Guard) written by A.

A. Fadeyev (1901 – 56) and to the legendary partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya (1923 – 41) whose name is praised by Korean female-partisans.⁵⁸

In the Cold War texts, the enemy is crucial: he is depicted as an object of natural, positive anger that will strengthen the fight; he is a real monster, whom the propaganda created by following the proven semantic model of the picture of the fascist. In the *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* the enemy varied because of a discrepancy between the narrator and the author. Nevertheless, every reader understands that the enemy is the aggressor who possesses modern weapons, dangerous for human beings; the aggressor is the real criminal, not hesitating to commit the most disgusting crimes.

Enemies in the novel are not only Americans and Japanese but also Taiwanese, American Koreans (traitors), members of Yi Sŭngman's government, and "Lisynmanese", i.e. South Koreans as a whole. Typical enemies are also Christians. The USA is not yet represented by Harry Truman, but exclusively by Douglas MacArthur whose role is highly demonized. Their enemies are all the Reds, Communists, whom the narrator understands as a plague, and so such people have to be annihilated.

Enemies of the progressive world are two-faced. They prove to be absolute cowards and they are foolish as well. However, their deeds are disgusting. In this novel, American perversity is concretised during interrogations, by the bombing of civilian targets and the murder of civilians during their retreats. Americans "...hurried, they did not catch to shoot them [captives]." ⁵⁹ Every enemy is characterized by his excessive consumption of alcohol, hiropo, and Manila cigarettes soaked in heroin. The enemy is a racist, as in the scene when the American shouted to the Japanese: "You yellow monkey; you scabby dog!" ⁶⁰ But the Japanese considers the American in accordance with his Pan-Asian education as an inferior being, as garbage. The racist depiction is also applied to the author's images of UN soldiers. On the other hand, the enemy is powerful due to its number and weapons; in the book the author frequently speculates about an unspecific highly dangerous weapon.

Let us turn to the presentation of the Korean War. "How will it start?" I asked. "On the 38th parallel bombs will explode. The South Koreans will start to fire and the North Koreans will respond for sure. The members of the UN Committee for Korea will be witness that the North Koreans are shooting first. And after a

⁵⁸ For details, see GABROUSSENKO, T. *Soldiers on the Cultural Front. Developments in the Early History of North Korean Literature and Literary Policy*. In this novel the book was mentioned as a widely loved text that was kept by Korean youth as a treasure; KIM, R. *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* [The Notebook Found in Sunch'on], p. 144.

⁵⁹ KIM, R. *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* [The Notebook Found in Sunch'on], p. 7.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 91.

proper artillery preparation the West Army led by Kim Sŏgwŏn and the East one led by Ch'ae Pyŏngdŏk will shoot ahead.”⁶¹ This entry is full of facts, related to Korean reality but these are presented in a way used in Eastern European ideology, following the above-mentioned source *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji*.

According to the book, the Korean War is a clash of two worlds: the aggressors were Americans and UN troops equipped with modern weapons and bringing violence to Koreans. The victims are the North Korean people supported by the progressive part of the world. If we take into account the 1950s wording, the rhetoric in the novel is not exaggerated. On the other hand, the US ambitions, the pact between Japan and the USA, and their ABC plan are presented and confirmed as a truth. For the potential reader, it is extremely difficult to decipher all the falsifications because of the numerous details taken accurately from history.

If we read Roman Kim's novel in the context of the era, especially the emotional poetry and non-literary texts as declarations, it looks paradoxically authentic, not very propagandistic, and not very expressive. The reader has little time to think because of the quickly changing plot and the credibility of the form of the text (i.e. a diary). Roman Kim also successfully creates the illusion of authorial competence. *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* was written in the first year of the Korean War in the USSR and when comparing it with the sentimental poetry and fictitious, supposedly authentic, war reports, it was written in a way that in the era of 1950s could be considered as truthful. If the novel was not claiming to be true, it would be a successful exemplar of the spy novel, in which the familiar scenery and historical heroes are mixed with the half-fictitious and fully fictitious. Let us conclude that for the Korean War Roman Kim used the stable Kremlin narrative about the attack from the South, and the following narratives about bacteriological war, napalm, vivisection, combined with stories about great victories. All the accusations against the enemy were further elaborated during the three-year conflict in a very precise and convincing story.

The Czechoslovak Contribution

With the exception of Barbora Markéta Eliášová's (1884 – 1957) story *Sunae a Kétai. Korejské děti* [Sunae and Kétai. Korean Children], until the Korean War there were no original stories inspired by Korean themes or motifs. It is then all the more interesting that the booklet *Čeští spisovatelé korejským dětem* [Czech Writers to Korean Children] was published in 1952 in an edition of 15,000 copies.

⁶¹ KIM, R. *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu* [The Notebook Found in Sunch'on], p. 123.

⁶² Though dedicated to children, it is not aimed at them. Without doubt, it is a book written on the orders of the Communist Party as an act of solidarity with the DPRK. The cover is decorated with two illustrations of Václav Fiala (1896 – 1980). Both are dominated by a dark sky evoking a deathly danger. Even under a sky like this, children play among flowers; in the second one, a mother turns her desperate and angry face to the sky, holding a child in her arms. In both pictures, there are dolls (imagined Korean dolls) and Korean cloth (*hanbok*) (fig. 4).

This booklet is representative of the work of a number of prominent writers; the same is valid for the cover, foreword, and afterword. The authors represented the writers' elite of the 1950s: 11 poets and 2 novelists. The first foreword was written by the editor-in-chief of the publishing house, Karel Nový (1890 – 1980) and followed the mythology of US aggressors aiming at Korean colonisation, which was a threat to peaceful China, and the USSR's borders.⁶³ Here he applied the commonly expressed parallel with Hitler. The foreword alternated accusations of barbarity (the enumeration of "dastardly coward weapons created by crazy scientists") with the anger and sympathy of the whole peaceful world. The second text was an emotional pamphlet written by the Minister of Education and important cultural ideologist Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878 – 1962). "Children are the Flowers of Our Lives," he proclaims. He turns to the children of the whole world, to the fact they are hungry not only in Africa but even in civilised countries. In contrast, he mentions the children in the USSR. He refers to the contemporary abstract and frequent picture of children attacked by planes; he evokes schools devastated by bombs. He ends with an open attack on capitalism. In similar vein are the following short stories: Jiří Marek (1914 – 94) in the story *Jejich bude svět* [The World will be Theirs] tells the story of a Korean girl whose mother is killed by a plane ("devil birds"). The girl is saved by a boy who takes her away. These children symbolise hope, even though their future lives are unclear.

Poetry of the 1950s likes to use strong colorful pictures of barbarity. The "war machine" has no emotion, it is primitive and dehumanized. Weapons are enriched by a phantom of nuclear and bacteriological agents, or they are characterized as ominously unspecified "awful" weapons. In the context of the Korean War, Korea is considered "ours", this is "home", home in danger, attacked by an aggressor and bombed. Therefore, "we" have to fight for its freedom.

Poems in this anthology deal with the fighting process at various levels of pathos and stress. The most famous among them, Nezval's (1900 – 1958) *Zpěv míru* [Song of Peace], for a long time a part of the school curriculum, is not dedicated solely to Korea. Nevertheless, in this anthology, its "Korean" part is cited. In the beginning, Nezval rhymes: "So as not to bomb Korea/as robots/the

⁶² *Čeští spisovatelé korejským dětem* [Czech Writers to Korean Children].

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

pilots/sick with gonorrhea/I am singing the Song of Peace.”⁶⁴ Though the poem continues with other motifs, Nezval’s vocabulary is in accordance with the era, which is remarkable especially since he uses rhyme. More explicit and extremely warlike are the first verses of Konstantin Biebl (1898 – 1951) in *Korejská balada* [Korean Ballad]: “From the Chinese borders retreats/up to the dock of the court/for Nuremberg’s gallop marches/general MacArthur, general MacArthur...”⁶⁵ followed by motifs of planes, the bombing of civilians, all the way to gratitude towards the Chinese volunteers. Planes appear in the poem of Marie Pujmanová (1898 – 1958), this time as a disseminator of illnesses, as a symbol of bacteriological war (“dragon’s egg with cholera”). “From the planes the aggressor/of the little Koreans/ throws down typhus, throws down the plague...”⁶⁶ *Zpěv o Koreji* [The Song of Korea] by Lumír Čivrný (1915 – 2001) contains the line: “the intoxicated murderers, messengers of death/throw down the deadly cloud...”⁶⁷ Jan Alda (1901 – 1970) in *Země jitřní svěžesti* [The Land of Morning Calm] also uses the semantics of a deadly cloud, but the following verse offers an extreme connection ...“the children’s swaddles stained with blood”.⁶⁸ In the anthology, several times, Stalin is named as a metonym for “our” part of the world, for the people standing with Korea (i.e. with “us”) and as a symbol of great moral power.

Conclusion

The Korean War was a crucial moment at the beginning of Czechoslovakian Cold War ideology and propaganda, when, in the duel between the two worlds, culture was involved. Culture, as an extended arm of the Communist Party’s directives and a part of its ideology, became a guardian of proper values, a weapon in the fight for freedom, and the dominant power forming and influencing history. For the fixed narrative of the Korean War and its nodal point, the Communist Party daily *Rudé právo* (Red Justice) was central; its claims and vocabulary infiltrated contemporary language and all literary genres, where the difference between fiction and nonfiction was not recognised. The 1950s world was strictly split into “we” and “they”; in the context of the extreme war conflict “we” belonged to the USSR, the Soviet Army, Stalin, and, from 1951 also to the PRC and its volunteers, who helped “us” (“Korean people”). The opposite was represented by the USA,

⁶⁴ *Čeští spisovatelé korejským dětem* [Czech Writers to Korean Children], p. 11.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–22.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Truman, Dulles, MacArthur, and some other people chosen by the propaganda. These are, according to the ideology, servants of Wall Street (billionaires). “Ours” were the DPRK and Kim Il-sung, “they” were representatives of the ROK, anonymous except for Yi Sungman, or labelled as “flunkies of the USA”, “puppet government” etc. Because of the details in *Jak byla připravena válka v Koreji* Japan in the sense of Japan under MacArthur’s government belonged to “them”. As a “puppet” the UN was designated and manipulated by the USA, but not directly accused as an initiator of war atrocities,

The enemy has two faces, as was mentioned before: he is demonised and mocked. The power of the enemy is exaggerated according to contemporary rhetoric (number, equipment, brutality, barbarity); on the other hand, caricatured and ironised, also mocked as in the characteristics in *Sešit nalezený v Sunčchonu*. The picture of the enemy aroused disgust, anger, dread, and laughter. References to the triumphs of the North Korean army were mixed with the depiction of war crimes and escalating crimes against humanity. This was connected to such worldwide appeals as “Hands off Korea” bringing together statements by influential and ordinary people, organizations, and countries.

The Korean War in the 1950s exceeded the boundary of the peninsula and became a proxy duel between the two camps. Both camps were gradually simplified and emblematically reduced to abstract or concrete ones. The semantics of the enemy also possessed folklore features; every depiction was dehumanised and animalised. During the conflict in Czechoslovakia and Eastern Europe, more detailed images of the war were created, despite not having much to do with the reality.

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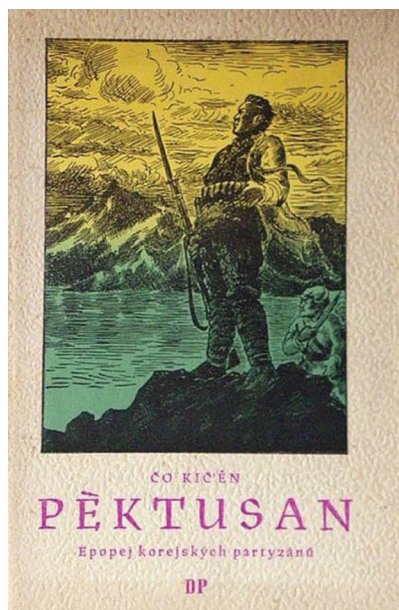
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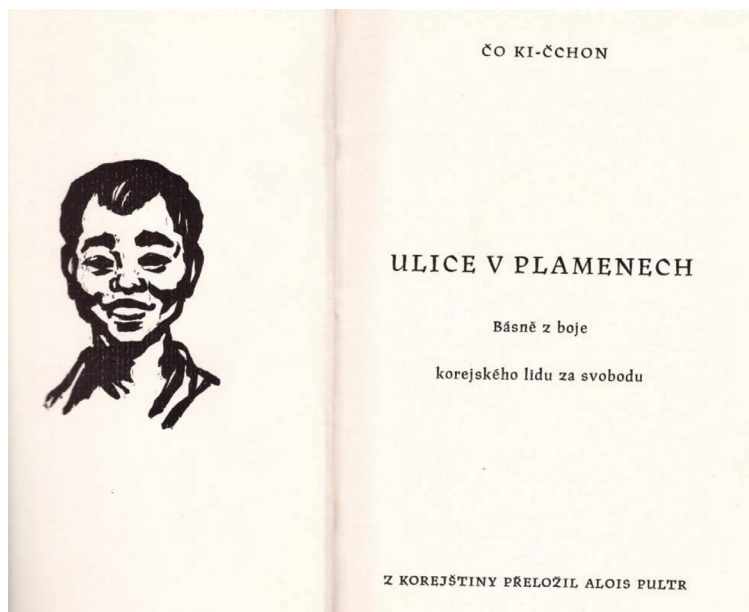
PLATES



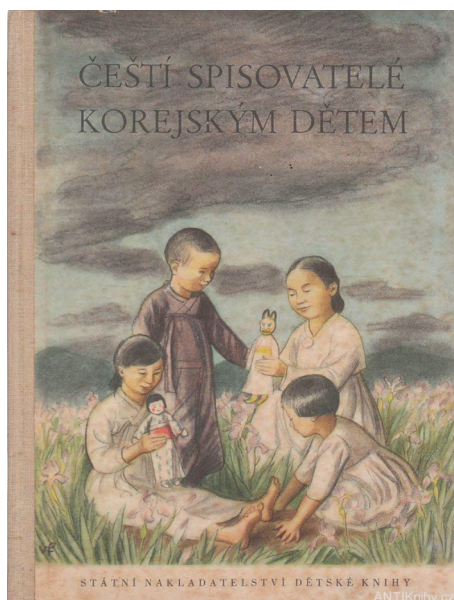
Löwensteinová, Fig. 1: “Hands off Korea”. A poster accompanied by a slogan “We are fighting for peace by obliging plans, collective harvest and fast purchases.”



Lőwensteinová, Fig. 2: Cover of the translation of Cho Kich'ŏn's Paektusan



Lőwensteinová, Fig. 3: The frontispiece of Cho Kich'ŏn's Street in Flames with a graphic of Bohumila Doležalová



Lőwensteinová, Fig. 4: Václav Černý's paintings to Czech Writers to Korean Children



Lőwensteinová, Fig. 5: Václav Černý's paintings to Czech Writers to Korean Children