

Tragic Education: An Introductory Investigation into Various Education Policies Concerning Tragedy

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Abstract

The National Museum of Taiwan History is holding a special exhibition titled: “Our 2.28: 70 Years After the 2.28 Incident”. The creation of this exhibition coincided with a push to get 2.28 registered as an UNESCO Memory of the World. With the continued development and recognition of the history of Taiwan 2.28 has led to the question about how to educate people about the events, especially their own students. In this paper, an introductory investigation into how various countries handles the teaching of state-sponsored tragic events to their students.

Key words :

Education Policy, Holocaust Education, Textbook Controversy, Jeju 4.3, Gwangju Uprising, The Great Terror, Khmer Rouge

Introduction

Currently at the National Museum of Taiwan History there is a special exhibition being held titled: "Our 2.28: 70 Years After the 2.28 Incident".¹ The 2.28 Incident was an anti-government uprising in Taiwan and was violently suppressed by the Kuomintang-led Republic of China government, which killed thousands of civilians beginning on February 28. Estimates of the number of deaths vary from 10,000 to 50,000 or more. The massacre marked the beginning of the Kuomintang's White Terror period in Taiwan, in which tens of thousands more inhabitants vanished, died, or were imprisoned.

The Chinese Civil War and the implementation of Martial Law soon after the incident made talking about 2.28 a taboo in Taiwanese society. The government often characterized the groups who had participated in the incident as "mobs" and their actions as "riots" or "incited by the Communists." Under government surveillance and marginalized by society, the families of victims suffered through their daily lives even to the present day.² The creation of this exhibition coincided with a push to get 2.28 registered as an UNESCO Memory of the World. Many people believe that the proposal and submission will be successful. With the continued development and recognition of the history of Taiwan 2.28 has led to the question about how to educate people about the events, especially their own students.

The similarities between Taiwan 2.28 and Jeju 4.3 are many and telling. From the date, (both started in 1947) to the harsh response by the government, to finally the taboo about the incidents and the labeling of the participants and their families. The recognition and reconciliation of the events also process similar with the government apologies, official reports, creations of memorials, etc...³

Taiwan educators, professors, and politicians are currently discussing how to teach 2.28 in Taiwan schools. With my previous job as an educator and a probable joint-workshop between Jeju and Taiwan upcoming in 2017 or 2018; I was compelled to research how currently others countries approach the problem of teaching their own countries government enacted tragic events. It is reasonable to think that it is difficult to teach the history of

one's countries mistakes and that most countries are not enthusiastic to do so. The following is just my initial research and observations about the topic with a short introduction of each tragic event.

Methodology

Due to the large scope of this topic I imposed some limiting factors to help focus my inquiries.

Factors

1. Events happened during the 20th century (preferably after 1918 and before 2000)
2. Events had to be one country's government killing their OWN people
3. Events that happened under colonial rule were excluded
4. Civil Wars were in general excluded, especially if the Civil War directly followed the end of colonial rule

From these limiting factors I further narrowed the concentration of my research to events and countries where I was able to find education curriculum information published in either English or Korean. Also I confirmed the curriculum by asking people who studied in the relevant country. These listed tragic events are in no way a definite list and hopefully more events will be added later when relevant education policy information is found and confirmation is obtained.

Germany – WWII Holocaust

While The WWII Holocaust doesn't follow my guidelines strictly since Nazi Germany enforced this policy on other country's people as well as its own people, I felt it was reasonable to include since Germany currently has an expansive educational policy to treat the holocaust. From 1941–1945, Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered about six million Jews. Some definitions of the Holocaust include the additional five million non-Jewish victims of Nazi mass murders, bringing the total to about 11 million.

With the exception of Israel, probably no nation has placed a greater emphasis on Holocaust education than Germany in the last decades. Since the early 60s, the conference of ministers of education and culture in the German states has provided explicit guidelines for teaching about National Socialism and the Holocaust. All official schoolbooks published since the mid-1980s have dealt with the Holocaust.⁴ The treatment of the Nazi

1) National Museum of Taiwan History. (2016) Retrieved from http://en.nmth.gov.tw/exhibition_64_353.html.

2) Ibid.

3) For additional reading about the comparison between Taiwan 2.28 and Jeju 4.3, I suggest reading Kim Jong Min. (1993, April 21). The Taiwanese 2.28 Events: A Similar Case to the Jeju 4.3 Events. Jemin-Ilbo, and Section 7 of Kim, Hun Joon. (2008) Expansion of Transitional Justice Measures: A Comparative Analysis of Its Causes (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation). University of Minnesota, USA. (Proquest UMI Microform 3328317)

4) Kosmala, Beate.(1998) "Holocaust Education- Research - Remembrance in Germany" from Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets. Held from November 30 - December 3, 1998. pp. 5. Retrieved from <https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/assets/heac8.pdf>

period in all its aspects is part of the compulsory curriculum in all German schools and at all levels of education.

The Holocaust is treated in various school subjects in different ways:

- In history classes, the Nazi period is dealt with in the context of 20th century German or world history.
- In civics and current affairs classes the lessons of the Holocaust are related to teaching about German political institutions and about the values that govern political life in a democratic society. Tolerance and the role of law are a primary focus of these lessons.
- In religion and ethics classes, the Holocaust is discussed with reference to the guilt and responsibility of those Germans who did not risk their lives to fight National Socialism or to protect Jews.
- Much postwar German literature is concerned with coming to terms with the Nazi era and the Holocaust.
- A visit to a Holocaust memorial or a Holocaust museum at the site of a former concentration camp is a standard feature of German school excursions.⁵

Most of these points are confirmed by recently graduated German Nationals sharing their educational experiences by personal conversation, email or blogs.

The Following are some occasions that were remembered from Gymnasium (roughly equivalent to high school) time concerning the Holocaust:

- Subject – History: Students discussed the 1900–1950s not once, but thrice (in different years). Overall, Students spent more class time on this period than on any other era of world history.
- Subject – German: Students read two different books; one by a holocaust survivor, the other was the diary of Anne Frank. Each was discussed at length with several tests based on it. And that's not even including the many other topics that are hinted at that time span.
- Subject – Religion/Ethics: The nationalism era makes for excellent test material here, too. Many topics were somehow related to the Holocaust. Students would look at it from the angle of the church, then of the common individual, of the perpetrators, of the victims.
- Subject – Politics: This comes late in the curriculum (as opposed to history), but naturally, it also pays a lot of regard to this special timeframe. Students discuss the political situation before,

learn what factors made it happen, then go into detail with the actual thing, and then students discuss the political aftermath.

- Subject – Art: More indirectly in this one, but when students with this academic background get assignments like "abstractly picture a dark element of the human soul", you can imagine what will pop up.
- Misc.: We also went to relevant museums, watched several movies and documentaries, and even visited a former concentration camp.⁶

The objective of teaching about the Holocaust is not limited to educating students about historical facts. Instead, the primary political and educational objective seems to be about confronting young Germans with their country's darkest past to make them understand the consequences of Hitler's dictatorship, the uniqueness of the Holocaust, as well as, to make them appreciate the values and institutions that protect freedom and democracy.⁷ Unfortunately, sometimes German students, and even teachers say, "I've heard enough already." This reaction does not necessarily follow an intensive confrontation with the theme. Instead, it has to do with, on one hand, weariness with the many media programs in these issues, and on the other hand it involves a defense-mechanism and resistance to these themes.⁸ Thankfully German educators and schools frequently try to address this weariness by providing different sources and new pedagogical-psychological concepts. One interesting example from my research was a trial program in select Berlin Gymnasiums (High Schools) to use a comic book about the Holocaust to try to engage students more.⁹

Cambodia – Khmer Rouge

The Khmer Rouge (KR) regime that controlled Cambodia from April 1975 to January 1979 destroyed almost the country's entire infrastructure, economy, public and private properties, and the education system. The regime killed almost two million people through execution, starvation, forced labor, overwork, torture, malnutrition, and poor medical treatment.¹⁰ The regime left tens of thousands of widows and orphans in complete

5) German Information Center. (Date Unclear). Focus On... Holocaust Education in Germany n.d. pp. 120 Retrieved from <http://www.toponline.org/books/kits/germany%20today/GTpdf/Handout17.pdf>

6) Response was originally posted by Martin Schneider in 2013 on Quora.com. Used with author's permission

7) German Information Center.

8) Kosmala, Beate pp. 5–6

9) Kimmelman, Michael. (2008, February 27) Germany's New 'Textbook' on the Holocaust. New York Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/27/arts/27iht-27holocaust.10451889.html>

10) Dy, Khamboly. (2007). "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)," Documentation Center of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, pp. 1–4.

poverty and the vast majority of the population was then illiterate. Several other hundreds of thousands of Cambodians fled the country and became refugees.

After 1979, the country was experiencing massive internal migrations as people moved from place to place in search of their lost relatives. Civil war among Cambodian factions intensified and only ended in 1998, after the last Khmer Rouge forces defected and integrated into the government. While a significant amount of time has passed since the Khmer Rouge period, its legacy continues to have great negative implications on Cambodia and her people today. The Khmer Rouge regime left almost no foundation upon which succeeding regimes might begin to rebuild education in the country.¹¹

Most researchers tend to agree that the turning point of teaching genocide in Cambodia happened with the 2007 publication of the textbook – *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)* by a nonprofit, non-governmental Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), which has worked on the field of the Khmer Rouge genocide since 1995. DC-Cam with its twin objectives, memory and justice, engages with the government and local educators in order to empower and assist the existing institution (the educational structure of the Ministry of Education) to conduct genocide education. DC-Cam has also developed a teacher's guidebook and student workbook to accompany the textbook. With these materials and resources, DC-Cam has worked with the Ministry of Education to train over three thousand teachers nationwide on both historical content and teaching methods. It has been a conduit of change in the Cambodian education system, especially through genocide education. At present, DC-Cam is the only institution that has been endorsed by the Ministry of Education to work with teachers nationwide on Democratic Kampuchea history.¹²

With assistances from a number of foreign governments and international organizations, over 500,000 copies of the textbook have been printed and distributed to all secondary schools throughout the country. The textbook was officially approved by the Ministry of Education as a core reference for teachers and students nationwide. The textbook provides Cambodian students with a comprehensive historical background of the KR history, which students could use as a foundation for further study and research.¹³ To ensure that the teaching of “*A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)*”

meets the pedagogical goals and the ultimate goals of bringing about national reconciliation, peace building and genocide prevention, a quality control evaluation program was conducted. From January 2011 to June 2012, DC-Cam and the Ministry of Education conducted quality control surveys in seventy-eight sample secondary schools, in twenty-four provinces throughout Cambodia. The primary findings suggests that teachers, students, education officials, and the general public, whom the evaluation team met and/or interviewed, agreed that teaching and studying about KR history in a formal classroom setting is important. However, the findings also suggest that the teaching and integration of Khmer Rouge history in Cambodian classrooms is still limited.¹⁴ The teachers integrated DK history through brief oral descriptions at one or several points during the regular teaching. This method has little impact on students' understanding on Khmer history. The answers to the questions are based primarily on students' prior knowledge, which they learned from their relatives or media sources. The teachers conduct little teaching, complaining on the lack of incentives and shortages of time.¹⁵

While the inclusion of the very well received and Ministry of Education approved *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)* is a great step toward genocide education and a noteworthy example of positive non-government influence on education curriculum, the problem still exists that in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge period is not given a lot of page space in the government made textbooks and since those books are what tests focus on.¹⁶ The key decision making about the content of curriculum still lies in the hands of politicians, and the depiction of modern Cambodian history in the two social studies textbooks remains politically controversial. These obstacles, in addition to a shortage of teachers and supplies, especially in rural areas, make the education the Khmer Rouge a struggle. I will say the signs are encouraging.

Uganda – Idi Amin Dada's Reign of Terror

In 1971, General Idi Amin overthrew the elected government of Milton Obote and declared himself president of Uganda, launching a ruthless eight-year regime, ending in 1979. Amin's rule was characterized by human rights abuses, political repression, ethnic persecution, extrajudicial killings, nepotism, corruption, and gross economic mismanagement. The number of people killed as a result of his regime is estimated by international

11) Dy, Khamboly. (2013). *Challenges of Teaching Genocide in Cambodian Secondary Schools. Policy and Practice: Pedagogy about the Holocaust and Genocide Papers*. 4. pp.1–2 Retrieved from <http://commons.clarku.edu/pedagogy2013/4>

12) *Ibid.* pp. 4

13) *Ibid.* pp. 4

14) *Ibid.* pp. 4–5

15) DC-Cam's Quality Control Report.

16) Dy, Khamboly. (2013) pp. 6

observers and human rights groups to range from 100,000 to 500,000.¹⁷

Uganda's secondary education system is similar to England with 4 years years at a lower level and 2 years at a higher level. The curriculum for lower secondary is currently being reviewed by the National Curriculum Development Center, and a new curriculum came out in 2014 or 2015 depending on the subject.¹⁸ If one was to read the standards, goals, and assessments associated with each teaching unit, there is a fluid vagueness to them. The social studies unit that would focus on the Idi Amin era is the first unit in year 4. (See insert for reference)¹⁹ In education, this is what is called "implied educational quality services". The language is neutral to avoid specific or conversational topics but in effect there is an implied push to still teach those issues.²⁰ Usually this is a pedagogical strategy in less politically stable countries, to step around politically sensitive issues. It gives more freedom to the teachers or individual schools to choose how they approach the issue. Since about 50% of Ugandan secondary students attend private schools, the freedom about the curriculum is more than other countries.²¹ There is usually a negative association with the policy since in Uganda there is such uneven teaching loads, lack of facilities and supplies shortages; therefore giving an even more imbalanced implementation of the curriculum. The uneven teaching loads in Uganda are more than the average East African Country since the adoption of Universal Secondary Education in 2007, which increased secondary schools enrollment about 20%.²² That added burden, coupled with a lack of qualified teachers, makes the teaching of Idi Amin's reign seem less important. According to Dr. Yusuf Nsubuga, director of basic and secondary

education at the Ugandan ministry of education, any loss in quality is an inevitable, but temporary, consequence of expanding access.²³ There is hope that with increased educational access and stability in Uganda in the coming decade that there will be a reassessing of the education of its post-independence instability era.

Russia – Stalin's Purges (the Great Terror)

The Great Terror was a campaign of political repression in the Soviet Union which occurred mainly from 1936 to 1938. It involved a large-scale purge of the Communist Party and government officials, repression of peasants and the Red Army leadership, with widespread police surveillance, suspicion of saboteurs, imprisonment, and seemingly arbitrary executions.²⁴

While estimates can only be approximations, and anything like complete accuracy on the casualty figures is probably unattainable. But In the original version of his book *The Great Terror*, Robert Conquest gave the following estimates of those arrested, executed, and incarcerated during the height of the Purge: about 7 million arrests, about 1 million executed, about 10 million died in camps, about 1 million died in prison.²⁵ Updating his figures in the late 1980s based on then recently-released archival sources, he increased the number of "arrests" to 8 million, but reduced the number in camps to 7 million, or even a little less. This would give a total death toll for the main Purge period of just under ten million people.²⁶

In the late 2000's to present day, there has been a discussion in the Russia Federation about the role of history education. In that discussion of history education and history textbooks, research has shifted the focus of history teaching to examining history teachers' perceptions of historical knowledge and significant events, as described in prescribed (government approved or written) history school textbooks.²⁷ In May 2012, the Russian Federation approved a new generation of Federal state standards for primary and secondary education [Federalnye gosudarstvennye obrazovatelnye standarty osnovnogo i srednego (polnogo) obshchego obrzovaniia]. They included new school curricula for history education—both the structure,

17) Keatley, Patrick. (2003, August 18). Obituary: Idi Amin. *The Guardian*. London. Retrieved 19 December 2016.

18) National Curriculum Development Centre [Uganda] (Date Unclear). *Social Studies Learning Area Syllabus. Lower Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Examination Reform Programme*.

19) *Ibid.* pg. 102

20) One of many papers that explore this idea and the surrounding issues would be, Supriadin, Dudin; Adiwaisastra, Josy; Mariana, Dede; Garna, Judistira K. (2014) *The Implementation of National Education Standard Policy that Implied Educational Quality Services of State Senior High School of South Jakarta Municipal*. *Scientific Research Journal (Scirj)*. 2(7), 21–27.

21) *Education Management Information System (EMIS). The Republic of Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports: Education and Sports Sector Fact Sheet 2002–2015*. pp. 4–5

22) Kavuma, Richard M. (2011, October 25). *Free universal secondary education in Uganda has yielded mixed results*. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/oct/25/free-secondary-education-uganda-mixed-results>

23) *Ibid*

24) Conquest, Robert. (2008) [1990]. *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 12

25) *Ibid*, pp. 485–88

26) *Ibid*, pp. 485–88

27) Zajda, J. (2015). *Globalisation, Ideology and History School Textbooks: The Russian Federation*. In Zajda, J. (Ed.), *Nation-building and history education in a global culture* (pp. 29–50). Dordrecht: Springer.

and content. Furthermore, history curricula guides, reflecting national standards in education were developed by the Russian Academy of Education, and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. Unlike the previous history curricula standards, which contained the core of defined knowledge and skills in history curriculum, the latest new generation standards replaced the core with samples and models of curriculum programs.²⁸ In addition, President Putin expressed his concern regarding the content and the sheer multitude of prescribed history textbooks, which he first raised in 2007, when he publicly attacked some prescribed history textbooks, which he labelled as ‘hair-raising’ history textbooks.²⁹

Ideally, President Putin and his team would like to see only one desirable and politically correct history core textbook for each year level. In February, 2013, at the meeting of the Council for International Relations, Putin said that it was necessary to develop a core textbook for each level of schooling (Grades 6–11). He also said that such textbooks should be devoid of inner contradictions and ‘double’ interpretations, thus implying a favored single interpretation). (Putin’s speech, February 19, 2013, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/5017>).³⁰

The guidelines also attempt to paint a “balanced” picture of Stalin’s rule. They describe Stalin as a modernizer who brought about Russia’s ultra-fast industrialization, laid the foundation for the Soviet Union’s scientific achievements and its victory in World War II, but also orchestrated mass purges “to liquidate a potential fifth column” and used forced labor to achieve an economic breakthrough. The soft-lens picture of Stalin is consistent with some of Putin’s utterances on the tyrant. “I very much doubt that had Stalin had the atomic bomb in the spring of 1945, he would have used it on Germany,” Putin said during a recent visit to the state-owned Russia Today TV station.³¹ “Russian history did contain some problematic pages,” Mr. Putin told the teachers. “But so did other states’ histories. We have fewer of them than other countries. And they were less terrible than in some other countries.” His message was that “we can’t allow anyone to impose a sense of guilt on us.” This is the thrust of the manual, entitled “A Modern History of Russia: 1945–2006: A Manual for History Teachers”³²

The manual does not deny Stalin’s purges; nor is it

silent about the suppression of protest movements in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. It does something more dangerous, justifying Stalin’s dictatorship as a necessary evil in response to a cold war started by America against the Soviet Union. “The domestic politics of the Soviet Union after the war fulfilled the tasks of mobilisation which the government set. In the circumstances of the cold war...democratisation was not an option for Stalin’s government.” The concentration of power in Stalin’s hands suited the country; indeed, the conditions of the time “demanded” it.³³

In Joseph Zadjia’s research and great work on the subject of history education in Russia he concluded that the first international survey of history teachers across the Russian Federation, which measured secondary Russian history teachers’ responses to history textbooks, especially the balance in the content. It shows that secondary school history teachers are divided as to whether textbook narratives provide a balanced description and analysis of certain periods and events. More than half of the teachers surveyed disagreed that textbooks offered a balanced narrative regarding various events, especially on the role of ethnic and racial minorities in Russian history from the year 1700 to 2011.³⁴

South Korea – Jeju 4.3 and The Gwangju Uprising

In 2011, the 1980 Archives for the May 18th Democratic Uprising against Military Regime located in Gwangju city hall were inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. The event was a popular uprising in the city of Gwangju, South Korea, from May 18 to 27, 1980. During this period, Gwangju citizens took up arms, when local Jeonnam University students –who were demonstrating against the Chun Doo-hwan government – were fired upon, beaten, and killed in an attack by government troops.³⁵ The city of Gwangju was subject to particularly severe and violent repression by the military after nationwide martial law was imposed. The denial of democracy with the coming to power of Chun Doo Hwan to replace Park Chung Hee prompted nation-wide protests which, because of Jeolla’s historical legacy of dissent and radicalism, were more intense in that region.³⁶

There is no universally accepted death toll for the

28) Ibid

29) The Economist Newspaper Ltd, London (2007, November 7) Russia’s Past: The Rewriting of History. The Economist. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/10102921>

30) Zajda, J. (2015).

31) Bershidsky, Leonid. (2013, June 18) Russian Schools to Teach Putin’s Version of History. Bloomberg. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2013-06-18/russian-schools-to-teach-putin-s-version-of-history>

32) The Economist Newspaper Ltd, London (2007)

33) Ibid

34) Zajda, J. (2015).

35) Ebrey, Patricia et al., (2009). East Asia: A Cultural, Social, and Political History (Second Edition) United States of America: Wadsworth Cengage Learning: 500

36) Sallie Yea. (2002). Rewriting Rebellion and Mapping Memory in South Korea: The (Re)presentation of the 1980 Kwangju Uprising through Mangwol-dong Cemetery. Urban Studies. 39(9), pp. 1557

1980 Gwangju Uprising. Official figures released by the Martial Law Command put the death toll at about 150 civilians, 25 troops and 5 police killed, with 125 civilians, 100 troops and 150 police wounded. However, the official figures have been criticized by some as being too low. Based on reports by foreign press sources and critics of the Chun Doo Hwan administration, it has been argued that the actual death toll was in the 1,000 to 2,000 range.³⁷

The Jeju 4.3 events were a series of armed uprisings and counterinsurgency actions that occurred between 1947 and 1954 in Jeju Province. The counterinsurgency strategy was extremely brutal, involving mass arrests and detentions, forced relocations, torture, indiscriminate killings, and many large-scale massacres of civilians. "The conflict resulted in an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 deaths, which corresponded to 10 percent of the total population of Jeju in 1947."³⁸ In 2000, the government established the National Committee for Investigating the Truth about the Jeju 4.3 Events and Recovering the Honor of the Victims. This prompted an official apology from President Roh Moo Hyun, the first presidential apology for the abuse of state power in South Korea. Moreover, President Roh visited Jeju on 3 April 2006, where he participated in a memorial service for the victims and issued a further apology for the events.³⁹

Like many countries in this paper, South Korea has also had intense discussions about their public school history textbooks. In 2015, the vice prime minister and education minister, Hwang Woo Yea Reflecting a prevailing conservative view said that textbooks should focus on teaching "the proud history of South Korea, which has achieved both democratization and industrialization in the shortest time in the world history."⁴⁰ Another conservative party minister alleged the current versions of history were too uncritical of North Korea: "One textbook, for example, used the term 'dictatorial' only twice when writing about North Korea, but as many as 28 times about South Korea."⁴¹

Since 2010, schools have been free to choose among several privately published textbooks, although the Education Ministry still has to approve the books.⁴² Some of the current books delve into long-hidden aspects of Korea's tumultuous modern history, which has been marked by colonial rule, war and dictatorship, as well as pro-democracy uprisings and rapid economic growth. The books teach students about Koreans who collaborated with Japanese colonialists, mass killings of civilians during the Korean War from 1950 to '53, and the abuse of political dissidents under dictators.⁴³ Even with textbook choices, many schools still choose to teach from the National Institute of Korean History's compiled textbook because the book follows the Ministry of Education's suggestions and certainly covers all test questions. In the 2010 edition of the textbook (*guk-sa*), there is no mention of Jeju 4.3, but there are two paragraphs about The Gwangju Uprising. The Paragraphs state, simply, the bare-bone facts and their context within the Korean Democratization movement.⁴⁴

Due to the Park Geun Hye presidential scandal, whether the policy of what history textbooks teach is going to change is unclear. The current education minister, Lee Joon Sik, recently stated that his ministry was considering other options, including allowing schools to choose between the new government-written textbooks and the current, privately published books. But he also said his ministry had no plan to scrap the government-prepared textbooks entirely, as the political opposition and other critics have demanded. "We must resolve the conflict and achieve national unity," he said.⁴⁵ This leads to wider questions about what the study of history is for. "Is history simply a tool for establishing loyalty to the nation or is it about producing critical citizens who can draw lessons?"⁴⁶

Moving on to some of those questions, and focusing on when Jeju 4.3 and the Gwangju Uprising were being taught. While Jeju 4.3 is not mentioned in the current textbook, during the 1990's, Jeju 4.3 was mentioned.⁴⁷ The focus being

37) Plunk, Daryl M. (1985). South Korea's Kwangju Incident Revisited. *Asian Studies Backgrounder* No. 35 (September 16) 1985: p. 5.

38) Kim, Hun Joon. (2009). Seeking Truth after 50 Years: The National Committee for Investigation of the Truth about the Jeju 4.3 Events. *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*. 3(3). Pp.406-423. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijtj/ijp014>

39) Roh Moo Hyun, Statement of the President on the Jeju April 3 Incident (2003, October 31). Jeju Commission. available at <http://www.jeju43.go.kr/english/sub07.html>;

40) Choe Sang Hun. (2015, October 12). "South Korea to Issue State History Textbooks, Rejecting Private Publishers". *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/13/world/asia/south-korea-to-issue-state-history-textbooks-rejecting-private-publishers.html?_r=1

41) Evans, Stephen. (2015, December 1). "Why South Korea is Rewriting its History Books", *BBC News*, Seoul. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34960878>

42) Choe Sang Hun. (2015)

43) Choe, Sang Hun. (2016, November 28) Amid Scandal, South Korean Officials Retreat on Controversial Textbook Plan. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/28/world/asia/south-korea-history-textbooks.html>

44) The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, compiled by the National Institute of Korean History. (2010) *Korean History*. Seoul. Doosan Donga. (Personal Translation)

45) Choe, Sang Hun. (2016).

46) Evans, Stephen. (2015)

47) Currently I have not personally been able to verify this with a hard copy of the previous editions of the textbook, in asking over 10 Koreans who graduated or taught high school during the 90's, all remember or confirmed that it was mentioned. The people asked were from various provinces through out Korea.

that the event was mostly a Communist uprising. Due to the Jeju 4.3 Truth Finding commission, there had to be a reevaluation about how to teach it. It seems that instead of confronting the complicated past of Jeju 4.3, it was easier to omit the event from the textbook. While The Gwangju Uprising is controversial and complicated in its own right, since the 90's the teaching of it is fairly consistent. The teaching of these events seems to boil down to the perception of importance to South Korean history and identity. The Gwangju Uprising has become a symbol of South Koreans' struggle against authoritarian regimes (even their own) and their fight for democracy. On the other hand, Jeju 4.3 does not seem to be a part of the collective nation's memory. There are few images and media broadcast from the time and it happened on the most isolated part of South Korea. In this case, TV and press coverage definitely helped the Gwangju Uprising become a part of Korean consciousness.

Final Thoughts

The teachings of these tragic events are taught in their respective countries at various levels, with varying degrees of emphasis. Returning back to the comment of the purpose of teaching history, whether it is to establish loyalty or produce critically thinking citizens, I would be remiss to not mention another reason to teach tragic events: to explore emotions and develop the skills needed to have emotion in society. Students spend a lot of time learning academic skills, crafting arguments, and being masters of academic language, but rarely talk about the emotional reactions they may have to what they read whether it is history or great literature. But, it is with literature that another opportunity exists to teach students about these tragic events. Patrick Hogan of the University of Connecticut and Keith Oatley of the University of Toronto, suggests that literature can play a vital role in helping people understand the lives and minds of others, and that individuals and communities can benefit from that ability along with literacy and analytical prowess.⁴⁸ It is this difference of adding an emotional literature element in the teaching of the Holocaust that makes Germany's tragic event educational curriculum more successful. Throughout this initial research, the argument and controversy about the statistics or facts of the events dominated the discussion, especially in Russia and South Korea. All countries in this paper teach the events, but not all of those countries'

students read about the human condition in those events. Literature, by itself, is not the answers but it should in combination with history education. For Jeju 4.3, attempts to address the event were systematically suppressed by the dictatorial and authoritarian regimes of the day. During this period, efforts to question, remember, and seek justice for the state violence was made on several occasions. The most meaningful breakthrough came in 1978 when Hyun Ki Young, a writer from Jeju, published a short story about the Bukchon massacre, which formed part of the Jeju 4.3 events.⁴⁹ This marked the first public mention of the Jeju 4.3 events and civilian massacres after three decades of total silence. However, the government suppression and surveillance again intensified after this, and there was no further mention of the Jeju 4.3 events until the democratic transition.⁵⁰ If this short story was taught, imagine the myriad of ways to teach analytical, critical, and emotional skills.

Returning back to the beginning and addressing how Taiwan educators, professors, and politicians could teach 2.28 in Taiwan schools. Many countries have events that they do not want to remember, but it is necessary to teach. An emotional response should be part of the curriculum and an honest portrayal of the event should be the goal.

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