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Japan's Dilemma

"The Role of Korea in Japanese Defense Policy" by James H. Buck, in *Asian Affairs* (Mar.-Apr. 1977), American-Asian Educational Exchange, 88 Morningside Dr., New York, N.Y. 10027.

Although a peaceful and economically healthy South Korea has been a major goal of Japanese foreign policy for the past 20 years, Japan has depended largely on the United States to achieve that end. Now, in the wake of apparently weakening U.S. commitment to Korean defense, Japan faces an array of disquieting choices.

Armed conflict on the Korean peninsula, writes Buck, a military affairs specialist at the University of Georgia, would expose Japan to unpleasant foreign policy alternatives and painful internal strains. If it sides with the United States in a Korean struggle, it will alienate China and the Soviet Union; if it refuses to aid the United States, it will damage the basis of its own defense under the U.S.-Japanese mutual security treaty. And reaching either decision in a country which lacks a popular consensus on Northeast Asia policy could well upset the fragile internal political balance. In realistic terms, only the status quo represents Japan's best interests.

Because of its own minimal military establishment—a 250,000-man non-nuclear force on which it spends less than 1 percent of its GNP—as well as the bilateral nature of U.S.-South Korean defense agreements, Japan lacks any significant ability to influence the situation. As Korea's major trading partner and source of investment capital, Japan has a vital stake in Korean stability. Nevertheless, says Buck, Japan has little choice save to remain "an interested, but essentially powerless bystander."

Nikita Who?

"CPSU History Re-Revised" by Kenneth A. Kerst, in *Problems of Communism* (May-June 1977), Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

There has been considerable debate in recent years over trends in Soviet control of intellectual life under the government of Leonid Brezhnev. While some analysts believe that Soviet writings now reflect a greater range of opinion than during Khrushchev's rule, others view the Brezhnev regime as especially repressive.

Kerst, a retired State Department official and former Guest Scholar at the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, suggests that, while there is still some room for innovative and imaginative thought in contemporary Russia, "it is equally obvious that some periodicals enjoy less freedom of discus-

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sion than they did in the Khrushchev years." Particularly glaring examples involve the histories of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), revised once by Khrushchev, and now being revised again.

Under Khrushchev, beginning with his "secret" speech to the 20th Party Congress in 1956 and culminating in his 1962 attack on Stalin at the 22nd Party Congress, historiographers were confronted with a rare opportunity for candid analysis. Party historians laid the groundwork for a wholesale re-evaluation of the Stalin era. Work was intensified on the multivolume general history of the CPSU.

After Khrushchev's removal in 1964, writes Kerst, the "new era" of permissiveness quickly disappeared. Historical studies completed during the Khrushchev years have been revised. Work has slowed on the *History of the CPSU*, and those volumes that have appeared reflect a new focus and contain startling omissions: gone is the standard reference to leading officials who perished in the Stalinist purges, for example, and there is no reference to the infamous Lavrenti Beria, the head of the secret police, who was assassinated in 1953. Khrushchev is all but ignored. The more recent party line has been to soft-pedal Stalin altogether; his worst atrocities are now being characterized as what dissident intellectual Roy Medvedev calls "lesser truths."

Cuba's Other Revolution

"Origins of Wealth and the Sugar Revolution in Cuba: 1750-1850" by Franklin W. Knight, in *Hispanic American Historical Review* (May 1977), Box 6697, College Station, Durham, N.C. 27708.

Between 1750 and 1850, colonial Cuba evolved from an island of small farmers (population 150,000) into a sprawling corporate plantation society with more than a million free men and slaves. The new plantation system gave rise to a "sugar revolution"—sugar mill production increased threefold during the period—as well as to a marked stratification of the island's social classes. Until recently, many historians had assumed that this transformation was sparked by an influx of new men and new money from Spain, then the country's colonial master.

Knight, a historian at Johns Hopkins, argues instead that "the dynamic change came from among the oldest stock of Cubans," whose distinguished ancestry could be traced to the earliest Spanish settlers. In a study of 450 prominent families, Knight finds that the old Cuban aristocracy, established before the wave of immigration, wielded considerable influence and could easily purchase public office on the town councils or *cabildos*. The councils, in turn, regulated commerce, commodity prices, and land tenure.

It was primarily these families, says Knight, and not newly arrived entrepreneurs, who consolidated the vast landholdings necessary for sugar cultivation. Receptive to technical innovations, they