

East meets West: connecting revolution in Korea and Ireland, 1919-1923

In January 1919, David Lloyd George and Saoinji Kinmochi led their victorious British and Japanese empires into the Paris peace conferences, to conclude the First World War. Beyond the halls and mirrors of these international accords, Korean and Irish nationalists made international representations for 'self-determination' as small nations, first at Versailles, and then in Seoul and Dublin respectively. Declarations of independence, the establishment of provisional governments, and resistance to colonial authority, through the Sam-il and Sinn Féin movements, connected the Irish and Korean experiences in 'East-West' time and space. This, collectively, was their 'Wilsonian moment'. Questions of comparison, however, remain. In what contexts, were Irish and Korean nationalisms translated into a global political language? How, and where, did Irish and Korean diaspora communities transfer their respective revolutionary ideas around the world? Was the Irish Revolution, ultimately, a divisive experience: 'West vs. Rest'? As part of the 'Competing Imperialisms in Northeast Asia' research network, this comparative research will be open, and contribute, to world-leading intellectual and scholarly exchange between Northeast Asia and the United Kingdom. As Akira Iriye, the doyen of global history, has concluded, of its 'past, present and future': 'East Asia must be studied as an entity rather than being divided into its separate national components...the region then should be put in the context of global developments'.