

UPF Prague, Czech Republic recognizes Korea's historic March 1st Movement

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March 1, 2022



Prague, Czech Republic - UPF recognized the 103rd anniversary of Korea's historic March 1st Movement with a lecture titled "Korea in the Light of World History."

Su-hyeon Kim, a teacher of the Korean language who has been living in the Czech Republic for 20 years, gave the presentation at the Peace Embassy on March 1, 2022.

In her lecture Mrs. Kim explained that on March 1, 1919, many thousands of Koreans in Seoul and other cities took to the streets to protest the Japanese occupation of their country. The Korean people, who had lost their identity and were suffering oppression under Japanese colonial rule, were standing up to let other nations know that Korea was an independent country. Out of 16.7 million Koreans, about 1.2 million participated in the non-violent protests. The Japanese police and military responded to the protestors with violence; according to some estimates, they killed about 7,500, wounded nearly 16,000, and arrested over 46,000.

Through the March 1st Movement (known in Korea as the Samil Movement) Koreans clearly showed their identity as Korea to the world, thereby laying the groundwork for the establishment of an independent state. This event influenced the May Fourth Movement in China (also in 1919) and the non-

cooperation movement in India.

Koreans have defended their country during 5,000 years of history, overcoming about 1,000 foreign invasions, Mrs. Kim explained. Then, about 70 years ago, North and South Korea were deliberately divided by foreign powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. As a result, at least 131,221 people were separated from their families and the Korean Peninsula became the last divided country in which communism and democracy compete. Another negative result of the division has been enormous military spending.

Koreans, who love peace, boast good customs and have a single history of 5,000 years, are at the right time to peacefully overcome the battle of ideologies and contribute to world peace by forming a unified Korea again, Mrs. Kim said. At this point, in the spirit of the March 1st Movement, she said, it is time to show the Taeggeukgi (Korean national flag), the symbol of Korea's hope which Koreans have hidden in their hearts, and stand up together for a new and unified Korea.

At the end of the lecture, the audience of about 15 had many questions.

