



CEACOP VIRTUAL SEMINAR

## Fists or Love: Cho So-ang and Yi Kwang-su on the Use of Violence in Colonial Korea

November 17th, 2023 (HKT 10AM)  
[zoom registration](#)



### Abstract

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon famously argues that violence is a prerequisite for national liberation from the colonizer. The deployment of violence transforms the colonized into a democratic people capable of collective action and self-rule. The logic is straightforward, but its implication is far-reaching: To what extent is violence constitutive of the founding act in the context of colonialism? Theorizing in the context of early 20th century colonial Korea, leading Korean intellectuals of the time held differing views on this issue of founding violence. On the one hand, those who vehemently opposed Japanese rule viewed violence as both necessary and productive. On the other hand, those who opted for a more “practical” path toward national self-determination were conflicted about the use of violence. Drawing on the political thought of Cho So-ang (1887-1958) and Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950), this paper reconstructs the discourse of founding violence in colonial Korea.

### About the Speaker

Chungjae Lee is a visiting assistant professor at Gettysburg College, where he teaches the history of political thought and contemporary political theory. Previously, he was an assistant professor in the department of military studies at the Republic of Korea Air Force Academy. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Irvine. His research focuses on the politics of founding, postcolonialism, and nationalism from an intercultural perspective. Specializing in democratic theory and comparative political theory, he has published several articles in *Political Theory*, *European Journal of Political Theory*, *Positions: Asia Critique*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, and *Pacific Affairs*.