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STABLE DEMOCRACY IN KOREA?

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STABLE DEMOCRACY IN KOREA?

The assassination of President Park Chung-Hee on October 26, 1979, brought to an end one of the most remarkable and controversial regimes of the second half of the 20th Century. Park Chung-Hee took one of the world's poorest and most chaotic societies and imposed order and growth. This accomplishment yielded many fervent supporters inside and outside Korea. But he did so with such harsh authoritarian political measures that he acquired equally fervent opponents. For anyone aware of the harsh conditions of the 1950s and of the early 1960s, to tour South Korea's prosperous farms and vast, successful industrial projects was not just a technocratic achievement but a moral experience. To be harassed and bullied by the Korean CIA was a moral experience of a quite different kind. By the late 1970s, the train of Harvard economics professors journeying from Cambridge to Seoul to study the economic miracle was matched only by the train of Harvard Law School professors following the same path to denounce the muzzling of the press and the jailing of the opposition.

The assassination of Park Chung-Hee raised the possibility that democracy could reawaken in South Korea. Immediately after the assassination, both government and opposition put on a remarkable display of national unity. Opposition and government leaders paid their respects to one another and quickly reached a consensus that the authoritarian constitution had to be changed to a democratic one and that clean elections had to be held. The government acted firmly to prevent disorder, as was appropriate to such a period. But it moved systematically to dismantle the authoritarian apparatus of the Park Chung-Hee regime. There was widespread euphoria in academic, middle class and working class circles, and elsewhere in Korean society, about what appeared to be an emerging democratic consensus.

Then, on December 12, 1979, came the shock of domestic military clash. General Chon Too Hwan, in charge of investigating the assassination of Park Chung-Hee, moved against the army chief of staff, General Chung Seung Hwa, arguing that the latter was involved in the assassination of President Park. Following an armed clash, General Chon won, and soon afterward there followed the sweeping retirement of the senior leadership of the Korean army. General Chon and his young colleagues from the 11th class of the Korean Military Academy suddenly came to control the South Korean military, assuming positions of command that they could not previously have expected to attain for years. Numerous foreign newspapers reported that a coup had occurred, and that a group of authoritarian young officers, committed to the maintenance of authoritarian rule, had effectively seized power in South Korea. If these reports were correct, hopes for democracy had vanished. Moreover, given the emerging civilian democratic consensus, such reports implied an imminent social clash.

Since December 12, the young generals have continued to consolidate their power within the army. They are now the ultimate guarantors of any government. Simultaneously, however, democratization of the rest of Korean society has proceeded apace. Virtually all of the student demonstrators have been released from jail. The opposition leaders who had been arrested in demonstrations have been released. Former president Yun Po-Sun, long identified as one of the most radical of the demonstrators, lives comfortably on a generous pension with three secretaries provided by the government. Both the old opposition party (NDP -- New Democratic Party) and the former governing party (DRP -- Democratic Republican Party) oppose the government and the military on critical political issues. The Korean CIA, formerly the backbone of repression in South Korean society, has suffered both the wrath of the military, an old competitor which was deeply offended by the KCIA chief's assassination of the president, and of

the democratic portions of the government, which have long demanded that the KCIA be cut back to a Western-style intelligence agency. Not only are KCIA activities now restricted by policy, but sweeping personnel cutbacks restrict KCIA activities.

More important, most dissidents are free and have returned to their jobs. Kim Dong-Gill, the principal hero of the opposition students, is a historian who specializes in Abraham Lincoln and is author of nine books, including a satire of fascist politics. Deprived of a job, with many of his books banned from distribution, Kim Dong-Gill in 1978 was a deeply bitter man who lacked hope for his professional situation or his country. In his bitterness, he not only promoted democratic ideals but also seemed to deny that social and economic progress had occurred under Park Chung Hee. In February of 1980, he was a changed man. His teaching job at the University had been restored; he beamed at the idea of teaching his beloved students again. He was optimistic about the country's progress toward democracy and was confident that neither conservative soldiers nor riotous students would disrupt it.

Both the democratization of Korea and the consolidation of power by the young generals continue. The young generals have a high regard for themselves as the guarantors of South Korea's future stability. They are self-consciously honest men who believe that they have a mission to maintain the organizational and professional standards of Park Chung-Hee against the corrupting influences of other sectors of society. They are conscious, correctly, of being an elite of unusually competent military leaders. Their sense of mission to carry their standards into the rest of society sometimes gives their pronouncements in areas outside their expertise overwhelming arrogance. On the other hand, they do not seek direct personal political power. They have accepted, so far at least, the

idea of a democratic constitution. They have not interfered in the social opening of the society. They have even condoned the return of civil rights to Park Chung-Hee's most powerful opponent, the political leader Kim Dae-Jung, who nearly defeated Park Chung-Hee in the 1971 election and who has spent much of the intervening period in jail or under house arrest. Now Kim Dae-Jung is actively campaigning for the presidency.

Thus, the military and the democracy in South Korea are both consolidating. While the future is unclear, the present can be understood and the options for the future can be clarified by putting the current situation into historical perspective. South Korea can be understood neither by the economics professors who celebrate the economic miracle and relegate the political problems to footnotes nor by the law professors who denounce the country's political authoritarianism and relegate the economic miracle and the security problem to footnotes. Korea can only be understood in its full complexity, and its full complexity can only be comprehended through some sense of its history.

All of Korea was occupied by the Japanese from 1905 through 1945. During much of that colonial era, Korea was one of the world's poorest societies. In the 1930s the Japanese governor-general wrote that rural Koreans had to forage for grass and bark to eat. Fears of widespread starvation pervaded Korea in the mid-1950s. South Korea was the Bangladesh of the early 1960s, widely perceived as doomed to eternal poverty and instability. Under the Japanese, Korea had little economic progress, but it did acquire an anti-colonial nationalism, reviving the intense nationalism of a society which had resisted Japanese and Chinese pressures for thirteen centuries. Despite this nationalism and cultural unity, however, during the Japanese period no ideological consensus emerged. When the U.S. appeared on the scene in 1945 as the liberator of Korea from the Japanese, Korean society was a jumble of hostile, confused factions.

Korea in this era faced a number of critical challenges: military survival; income distribution; poverty; ideological consensus; and political constitution.

The problem of income distribution was addressed first. South Korea expropriated the Japanese and also expropriated large Korean landowners and compensated them with bonds. The North Koreans completed the solution of the income distribution problem by an invasion which destroyed virtually all industrial property in the country and rendered the former landowners' bonds virtually worthless. Universal education programs undergirded the future of an egalitarian income distribution -- although liberal American intellectuals derided what one later called the "tumorous growth" of education under both Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-Hee. South Korea had an ideological consensus on an egalitarian distribution, and Syngman Rhee, who occasionally professed socialist policies, was no exception to the consensus. From that time on, South Korea pursued a policy of urban and rural egalitarianism which has yielded it the fifth or sixth most egalitarian economy in the non-communist world.

Having the problem of income distribution essentially behind him, Syngman Rhee devoted himself almost exclusively to the issue of military survival. This implied close relations with the U.S., a budgetary priority for the military, and a vigorous attempt to root out domestic subversion. The result was a classic right-wing regime which persecuted its opponents without persuading them, imposed authoritarian rule without achieving political consensus or social stability, and professed to be defending the ideals of the free world without permitting honest elections or open debate. With U.S. help, Syngman Rhee achieved a military balance with the North Koreans, but never raised South Korean per capita income much above U.S.\$100 per year and neither created effective governmental institutions nor provided a base of political legit-

imacy.

Syngman Rhee was overthrown in 1960 by student demonstrations. After a brief interim regime, South Korea held an honest election which chose President Chang Myon, a democratic idealist. This government intended to address the problems of the economy and of political legitimacy. The Chang Myon government put together an economic plan of great coherence and wisdom, a plan which provided the base for the great economic takeoff of succeeding years. However, it was never able to implement that economic plan, and it squandered its political legitimacy in an extraordinary display of political chaos, administrative incompetence, and general disarray. The sources of chaos were omnipresent.

The political parties of 1960-61 were comprised of personal factions united around individuals rather than policy views. Each party was divided into competing factions, and each faction contained critical divisions. The parties were totally undisciplined: when the party chose one aspirant, another aspirant frequently ran for election anyway. Each faction chose a particularly weak leader, so that they could manipulate him. The administration was staffed by political appointees, with little regard for merit. Leadership turnover was so rapid that no stable policies were possible: Chang Myon managed to go through four cabinets in one year.

Meanwhile, the left, unsuccessful in the election, refused to accept the voters' verdict and took to the streets. Violence permeated South Korean society. Student demonstrations eventually occurred in numerous major cities every day. Facing the radical violence and student disorders, the Chang Myon government also had to cope with the problem of purging undemocratic elements from the former administration. Instead of moving quickly to purge the top leadership and then stabilize the administration, the Chang Myon government first hesitated to conduct a purge, thereby losing the support of the left, and

subsequently conducted an extraordinary purge which rendered the police, much of the army, and most of the administration impotent in the face of rising disorder. There emerged from this period and from its predecessor a widespread feeling in South Korea that North Korean discipline and economic organization were greatly superior to South Korea's and that South Korea was doomed to fall eventually to superior North Korean military, economic and political performance. South Korean democracy was therefore discredited in the most humiliating fashion.

The resulting military government under Park Chung-Hee rapidly gave way to a civilian government led by Park Chung-Hee. The new government emphasized economic growth as the key to long-run political stability and military security, while maintaining the gains of the Syngman Rhee era in income distribution and (shaky) military security. The Park Chung-Hee regime, utilizing the economic plans of its democratic predecessor, embarked on a program of economic expansion which achieved real economic growth rates in excess of 10% for the period 1964-79. The economic growth under Park Chung-Hee was based upon effective and honest (by Third World standards) administration. Park Chung-Hee's strategy for modernizing his nation was to clean up one division of the army, then the whole army, then the economic and social institutions of South Korea. He systematically addressed industrial growth, rural development, education, income distribution, technological development, and even cultural and artistic development, and founded strong, effective, meritocratic institutions to deal with them. His aides were aware that eventually the question of political institutions had to be faced. But Park was not the man to face the political question.

Because South Korea was a small authoritarian state on the mainland of Asia, facing a communist opponent to the north, analogies with Vietnam came

frequently to mind among Western commentators in the mid-1970s. Because it was an authoritarian state with an extremely high economic growth rate, analogies to Iran became quite popular in 1978-80. But by 1980 the South seemed to be pulling ahead of the North in most important respects, and the fall of Park Chung-Hee occasioned a public display of unity and sobriety rather than the public jubilation that accompanied the Shah's fall.

The key to South Korea's differences from Iran and Vietnam was the extraordinary efficiency of the institutions Park created. Park himself was an honest, patriotic, decisive leader quite different from the indecisive Shah, who was surrounded by corruption, or the self-serving, corrupt, organizationally incompetent leadership of Somoza in Nicaragua. Under Park, South Korea's principal military, economic and educational institutions were purged of incompetents and staffed with the most able administrators available; by the mid-1970s most South Korean institutions were effectively led by a second or third tier of technocrats with advanced degrees from the most prestigious universities in America. South Korean institutions were not allowed to become factions fighting one another; instead, they were coordinated by a decisive president and by an organization, the Korean CIA, which has (deservedly) become better known in the West for crude repression but which has also performed effectively as a sensitive communication, analysis and coordination mechanism for the South Korean government.

Institutions are best judged by their performance, particularly their performance in periods of difficulty, and South Korea's institutions consistently perform spectacularly well even in such periods. Real per capita income nearly quadrupled in the Park Chung-Hee era. Exports rose from \$54.8 million in 1962 to \$15 billion in 1979. The rapid industrial and export growth of South Korea was only slightly hampered by the severe recession of 1975, when exports

grew about 20%. The Middle East oil embargo and the subsequent price rises, potentially crippling to a country which imports all of its oil, were effectively defused by South Korea's export strategy. In 1974 South Korea had few exports to the Middle East and heavy imports from it; by 1976 South Korea was exporting so many goods and services to the Middle East that it had a balance of payments surplus with that region. South Korean military institutions were transformed in the first decade of Park Chung-Hee's rule from some of the world's most incompetent and corrupt to some of the world's most effective. While developing its urban industry, South Korea also brought its rural areas into the modern world, eliminated a massive rice shortage, and virtually eliminated poverty by Asian standards. Along with this rapid growth, South Korea managed to maintain its favorable income distribution, although nations in this particular phase of development are expected by economists to experience aggravation of inequality, and although such rapid growth is frequently associated elsewhere (e.g., Brazil) with widening income disparities. In short, during this period South Korean institutions moved from factionalism to unity, from patronage to merit, from ineffectiveness under even good conditions to ability to profit from crisis. The Bangladesh of 1960 had by 1980 become the model of economic and institutional development for much of the Third World.

These economic gains were accompanied by social and political gains. South Korea's Confucian society experienced no religious reaction to modernization like that encountered by Iran and other Muslim countries. The relative absence of official corruption maintained the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the middle class to an extent not possible in most other Third World regimes. The Korean War had unified South Korean society in its anti-communism and provided the basis for building broader social consensus. Rapid growth and

a good income distribution provided the bases for support of the regime by the middle class, the peasantry, some labor groups and the industrial managers, as well as the government itself. The absence of severe corruption and disorder made possible maintenance of a professional military which, throughout the Park Chung-Hee regime, refrained from intervention in politics.

In short, South Korea achieved a degree of administrative competence, organizational integrity, limited but significant political consensus, political support, and military professionalism which made its prospects far more auspicious than those of Vietnam and Iran and which, indeed, differentiated South Korea favorably from most other Third World nations.

These various successes, however, began in the late 1970s to create a new set of problems for South Korea. Successful economic development created a more pluralistic society. Instead of the relatively homogeneous country of 1955, Korea in 1978 found itself with a well-organized military asserting its organizational interests, a private managerial class organized around the Third World's most successful business firms, influential educational groups, and an emerging labor movement which was increasingly well-educated and increasingly impatient with the company unions into which the government had organized it. Along with this social pluralism came economic and social complexity. By the late 1970s, intricately detailed management of the economy from the Blue House was becoming increasingly impossible for an economy that had moved from the simplicities of rice and textiles to the complexities of electronics, steel, shipbuilding, petrochemicals and machine tools. Just as importantly, numerous South Koreans, having acquired a new self-confidence that their society could compete with the North, and that their society had addressed and overcome the distribution problem, the military problem, the growth problem, and the administrative problem, felt once again that it was time to address the

political problem.

Throughout the late 1970s, Park Chung-Hee visibly aged, lost self-discipline, and became isolated by sycophantic advisors. Student audacity increased. Numerous government officials began to speak openly about a transition to democracy within the medium-term future. Throughout 1978 and 1979, student demonstrations spread throughout the country. These culminated in two incidents in the fall of 1979. In the first incident, a small textile organization went bankrupt, and the company's women workers refused to accept eviction from the company-provided housing. They were driven out by the government and occupied the opposition headquarters. In the ensuing conflict, the government invaded opposition headquarters, and one young woman was killed or committed suicide. A martyr had been created, a momentous event in Korea's Confucian culture. (It was the creation of martyrs that forced Syngman Rhee to step down in 1960.) Second, in October, a massive student demonstration in Seoul led to the arrest of 96 student leaders and to widespread foreign awareness of the spreading student demonstrations in South Korea.

The situation in South Korea was slowly coming to a head. There was a fierce division between advisors who wanted greater repression and those who advised restraint and consolidation. There was widespread fear within the government as well as within the opposition that Park Chung-Hee was not a Confucian leader who would step down, as Syngman Rhee had done, in the event of massive demonstrations and deaths. The assassination on October 26, 1979, averted a nationwide demonstration scheduled for October 29, a demonstration which might have shaken the regime. Kim Jae Kyu, the KCIA chief, was quickly arrested by the army under General Chung, and preparations began to try him for assassinating the nation's president. The nation's opposition political leaders moved quickly to demonstrate their patriotism and responsibility by helping to

maintain social order and a calm atmosphere. Government leaders promoted unity, in a gesture extraordinary for successors to Park Chung-Hee, by publicly visiting the homes of opposition leaders. The nation's technocrats, supported by Army Chief of Staff General Chung Seung-Hwa, provided continuity. Government and opposition quickly reached a degree of consensus on the need for a return to democracy that was remarkable, given the extent to which the Park Chung-Hee regime and the opposition had earlier become polarized.

On December 12, however, this favorable evolution was dramatically interrupted. General Chon, commander of a division normally stationed on the demilitarized zone, came to the conclusion that General Chung, who had arrested Kim Jae Kyu, was a conspirator in the assassination of Park Chung-Hee. He moved his division away from the demilitarized zone, despite countermanding orders from his American superior, and entered Seoul, disarming supporters of General Chung and using the amount of force necessary to arrest General Chung. It appeared to some observers that perhaps the nation's security would be jeopardized at a time when Park Chung-Hee's death could tempt North Korea and when an American preoccupation with the Middle East would preclude early U.S. support for South Korea in the event of a clash.

What actually happened on December 12, 1979, has never been published in the U.S. The details of are extraordinarily important because, if it really was a military coup, based largely on the personal ambitions of one group of officers, then one may reasonably fear that the future of South Korea will be shaped by Latin American-style coups. If it is true, moreover, that the military acted in willful disregard of civilian authority, and of the authority of its American commander, then the South Korean military is no longer the apolitical, professional force that it was under Park Chung-Hee. Generals seeking direct power might be prone to errors that could destroy political stability.

Moreover, a major political role for the military could destroy the military security of South Korea. This possibility was presented strongly in press reports which highlighted pullouts from the demilitarized zone area, where they were critical to the defense of the country of North Korea, and stated that the military had become so politicized that guards at military bases were no longer allowed to carry weapons.

What actually happened was considerably more complex. The army chief of staff, General Chung Seung Hwa, had been sitting, at the time of the assassination, 40 yards away from where he knew the president to be dining, but did nothing. Under later questioning he had no adequate explanation for why a four-star general would sit by while shots were being fired near his president. Moreover, it became clear during interrogations that the presidential secretary had gone along with the assassination only because, with both the chief of the KCIA and the chief of the armed forces present, he believed it politically hopeless and personally fatal to oppose them. Therefore, the presence of the armed forces chief of staff was a vital element in the assassination. Knowing this, General Chon Too Hwan, the legally appointed investigator of the assassination, had reasonable cause to interrogate the chief of staff.

Normal procedure in such a situation would require the arresting general to obtain permission from the Defense Minister to arrest his superior officer, the chief of staff, and for the Defense Minister to refer the matter to the president. However, there is adequate precedent in South Korea for such an important matter to be taken directly to the president. This General Chon Too Hwan set out to do. However, army intelligence in South Korea is so thorough that, within minutes of General Chon's visit, it would be widely known that he was seeing the president and for what reason. Therefore, General Chon Too Hwan took the precaution of telling his troops that, if he had not returned from the

presidential office within 15 minutes, they should proceed to arrest the chief of staff. It was a delicate decision. On one hand, if the president did not support him, the arrest would go forward even in the face of the president's disagreement. On the other hand, without this precaution, there was a strong possibility that the presumed conspirator would learn of General Chon's mission, rally his forces, and seize control of the country. General Chon was trying, in short, to balance the demands of the situation with the requirement of civilian concurrence. His choice might conceivably be unacceptable in the U.S. (but note Secretary of Defense Schlesinger's alerting of troops out of fear that President Nixon might misbehave). It was not inconsistent with widely accepted Korean standards.

In the conversation the president vacillated and then gave his approval, but instructed General Chon to obtain the formal concurrence of the Minister of Defense. General Chon went to do so. However, the 15-minute time limit expired and the troops of General Chon moved in to arrest the chief of staff. The chief of staff resisted with force. The Minister of Defense, who was then at home, heard shots, feared for his life and rushed to the Ministry of Defense, where he hid in a bunker underneath the Ministry without telling anyone. General Chon's men searched fruitlessly for the Minister of Defense. After the dust had settled later, the Minister of Defense was quickly replaced for his behavior in the situation.

Meanwhile, the chief of staff was mobilizing forces to oppose his arrest -- a suspicious act under the circumstances. Had General Chon done nothing, control of the army and perhaps of the country would have been seized by a man who was a presumed accomplice in the assassination of the president. If so, General Chon himself could reasonably have been expected to spend much of the rest of his life in jail. He therefore mobilized sympathetic troops. When the

American commander learned that troops from units defending the demilitarized zone were being mobilized in order to arrest another Korean general, he ordered them back to their barracks. The Koreans, acting under a long understanding on their side that the American command was in charge for purposes of defending the country against North Korea, but that it lacked authority over domestic South Korean issues, and believing that the security of the nation was at stake, disregarded General Wickham's order. Very few troops ever moved away from the demilitarized zone. Most moved back soon afterwards. Reports that the Korean military had become so politicized that guards were not allowed to carry weapons were based on the ignorance of the fact that the guards in question had never in the past been issued weapons.

Thus, the situation was sufficiently complex and delicate for people with strongly opposed political views to put strongly differing interpretations on the events in question. What is important, however, is that General Chon arrested his senior colleague based on reasonable evidence of complicity in assassination. He acted with what he considered to be respect for civilian authority in a delicate situation. He did not disregard in premeditated fashion the orders of an American superior but, instead, acted decisively in a situation where a decision was needed and where the American commander was not believed to be fully aware of the situation. Whether or not historians will eventually judge all of his decisions favorably, there is no basis for believing, on the basis of his actions, that South Korea's future will be determined by a series of Latin American-style coups led by ambitious generals.

Military action did not stop with the arrest of General Chon, however. General Chon Too Hwan and his colleagues of the 11th class of the Korean Military Academy may have arrested the chief of staff from reasonable motives, but it is also true that they are ambitious men who perceive themselves as having a

mission. The 11th class of the Korean Military Academy was the first class to graduate after the end of the Korean War and, therefore, the first class to obtain a full four-year term of professional training. This class (of 1955) believes that it is superior to all who went before because it received a full term of training, and superior to all who came afterwards, because they were the first to receive such training. Class members were sufficiently junior at the end of 1979 that their contact with senior political figures and with Americans was limited. The older generals possessed such contacts and had made such adjustments in their attitudes and policies as were necessary to get along with senior politicians and with Americans. To General Chon Too Hwan and his colleagues, this meant that the older generals had been corrupted. Moreover, it appeared to General Chon that many of the senior officers were willing to wink during the investigation of the assassination of President Park. The 11th class therefore swept aside senior officers and promoted themselves to the most senior positions in the army. Ambition and excessive pride certainly played a role in this purge.

While the arrest of Chung Seung Hwa appears justified, disturbing patterns center on his arrest. General Chon planned the purge of senior generals prior to the arrest, heightening concern over his motives. Since the arrest, the Defense Security Command (DSC), a political reporting and control mechanism within the military, has aggressively penetrated civilian agencies. The Seoul martial law commander declared in February 1980 that Kim Dae Jung is a communist, and the head of the DSC has declared to Japanese visitors that Kim Dae Jung will never be acceptable as president. Military investigations to establish unfavorable facts about Kim Dae Jung's background were given high priority. These ominous military trends acquired civilian counterparts in March, when former President Park's daughter was appointed chairman of a university,

former KCIA chief Lee Hu-Rak launched an attack on Kim Jong Pil for betraying the Yushin system, and Prime Minister Shin Hyon Hwack made favorable comments about the Yushin system.

On the other hand, while the young generals revere the legacy of Park Chung-Hee and regard that legacy as hinging on authoritarian politics, they have in fact so far done very little to impede the emergence of more open politics. They have accepted the idea of a new election, accepted progress toward a new constitution, and condoned the presidential candidacy of their "radical" opponent Kim Dae Jung. More important, they have allowed the spread of opposition political organizations throughout South Korea, the initiation of a public campaign, and the consolidation of an emerging democratic consensus. They have already gone further, particularly in condoning the return of Kim Dae Jung's civil rights, than most observers would have believed possible.

The military and many others fear that democracy might bring a return to the disorders of 1960 and 1961. Even those who believe emotionally and intellectually in democracy express deep fears. What if the nationwide student demonstrations of 1960-61 recur? Would that not risk the loss of all the economic and social progress achieved through great sacrifices over the past two decades? Would not social disorder and economic stagnation lead to desertion by the U.S. and to the terrible risks from the North which previously dominated South Korean society? Would not democracy then prove hollow? Anyone who believes in democracy for South Korea must address these fears directly. For the most part, pro-democratic forces have whitewashed the disasters of 1960-61 rather than arguing that times have changed. In fact, South Korea's democracy of 1960-61 succumbed to the same forces which have terminated democracy throughout the Third World. Although most Third World nations initially sought liberal democracy, only Malaysia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia and Sri Lanka have

sustained it, with Nigeria, Ghana, India, Bolivia and Peru making renewed, fitful efforts to restore free elections. Developing countries typically have weak social institutions which have to face unusually important (by our standards) domestic and international security problems, the rapid emergence of strong pressure groups, expectations for growth and equitable distribution that greatly exceed what Western nations faced at an early phase of development, and lack of popular literacy or knowledge of issues. Patronage politics cripples already weak institutions. Weak governments are pressured by strong social forces, with resultant inflation and disorder. Economic planning is immobilized and rendered incoherent by competing pressure groups in parliaments. A parliament composed of landlords will not accept land reforms, and the small middle class can veto the taxes which would equalize urban income distribution. Security fears erode democratic liberties. These problems have been fatal to democracy throughout the Third World, and they were more intense in South Korea in 1960 than elsewhere.

But times have changed in South Korea. The success of Park Chung-Hee's administrative, social and economic program did not only bring the problems of complexity, pluralism and democratic ferment. They also created social and institutional conditions which are far more favorable to democracy in the 1980s than in the early 1960s.

First, a widespread ideological consensus has been created. After the Korean war there was an anti-communist consensus, but little more. Now, due to economic and social success, the consensus includes anti-communism, the desirability of a market economy, a large role for the general trading companies, close ties to the United States and Japan, and democratic ideals.

Second, South Korea has changed from a largely uneducated society to an educated society. This education is necessary for voters to deal with issues

rather than with personalities. While no education ever eliminates the danger of demagoguery, South Korea has reached a level of education which the classical philosophers of democracy would have regarded as appropriate for the establishment of democratic institutions. Moreover, South Korea's teachers and textbooks have inculcated democratic ideology.

Third, the objectively increased military security of South Korea, and the increased confidence that has accompanied the increased military economic security, provide an important prerequisite for democratic development. No democracy has long functioned in accordance with its highest ideals under prolonged periods of severe military insecurity. The U.S. in World War II moved into camps 110,000 Americans of Japanese origin and 25,000 Americans of German origin without regard for their civil rights. Britain, facing terrorists in Northern Ireland during the 1970s, resorted to torture. Neither the U.S. nor Britain was threatened as directly as South Korea has been threatened since 1950. This does not excuse South Korea's abuses of civil liberties any more than it excuses Britain's or America's. It does call attention to the behavioral fact that South Korea is much more likely to be able to function democratically under more serene conditions than under previous military conditions.

Fourth, much of South Korea has experienced local democracy through the Saemaul program, which in the rural areas has taught villages to elect rural development leaders and to make decisions about development projects. Although the programs are seldom models of democratic achievement, the experience of elections and of issue-oriented politics is auspicious.

Fifth, during the late 1960s and the 1970s there has emerged a class of U.S.-trained technocrats who have firmly established a merit system within the government. No democratic administration is likely to seek to factionalize or

politicize these institutions and no democratic regime is likely to be able to do so. The young, U.S.-trained technocrats who exercise most important power condoned the system of Park Chung-Hee, but they are with few exceptions (especially among the best) people who have spent long years in the U.S. and who have absorbed democratic ideals. No longer is Korea administered, as in Syngman Rhee's days, by a Japanese-trained elite with Confucian ideals which regard democratic politics as a totally unacceptable form of social disorder.

Sixth, and above all, South Korean society now has the strong institutions outlined above. These provide an anchor for social order and a stabilizer for social and economic policies. Behind the failure of democracy in 1960-61 was, above all, the lack of such stabilizing institutions. Had the democratic administration of the earlier period been able to implement its brilliant economic plans through such effective institutions, democracy might have been viable in 1961.

Thus, the social and institutional prerequisites of democratic success are present in South Korea. However, the transition to democracy is difficult, as many nations have discovered. Recently, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil have discovered how difficult it is to move from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. Moreover, the transition is particularly difficult in South Korea because the two sides became extremely polarized under Park. The best transitions to democracy are the ones which are well planned. Planning and organizing take time. The constitution chosen must be not a steppingstone to dictatorship, but must be centralized enough for South Korea's special military problems. There must be some minimal consensus on the constitution. The political parties must organize for electoral competition and maintain a degree of coherence and discipline before, during and after the election. The formation of parties is particularly important. The opposition NDP is disunified and poorly organized.

It has lost its principal source of funds, namely, Park Chung-Hee. There is a severe danger that it would enter an early election divided against itself and unable to form a stable leadership even if one faction managed to achieve election. Moreover, there is some real possibility that the governing party, the DRP, will go the way of Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party in 1961; the Liberal Party effectively disintegrated immediately after Syngman Rhee stepped down. The DRP, like the Liberal Party before it, is essentially the creature of its leader. Its current leader, Kim Jong Pil, is a strong figure but not one whose party base or future electoral success can be assured. Therefore, the party system is unstable and needs more than a few weeks or months to mature before trying to stand the strains of elections and governing in today's South Korea.

The Problems of Students and Labor

Supposing that all the institutional conditions are as sound as has been argued here, and supposing that consensus on a new constitution is reached, there remain serious doubts as to whether key social groups will cooperate in a peaceful democracy. Aside from the military, the principal problems arise with students and labor.

Typically, the focus of discussion is the students. In no Third World country do the students support their government. But no student group elsewhere has established as strong a historical record of opposition to whatever government is in power as Korean students. Korean students promoted the colonization of the country by the Japanese in order to modernize the country, then became leaders of the nationalist movement against the Japanese. Korean students put down Syngman Rhee in the name of democracy, then helped bring down democracy in the name of vengeance against Rhee's officials. The radical students are organized into cells modeled on communist party cells. The main

student organizations are "study groups," which study Korean history, Korean society, the Korean economy and international relations from a radical perspective. Freshmen must apply in writing to the study groups, detailing their family backgrounds, their personal habits, the books they have read, and other extensive personal details. One student explained to this writer that he was rejected for a study group because he had one relative who once worked for the American Embassy.

Although the students advocate democracy, they have never in fact supported any government, and probably would find reasons to turn against a democratic government. The issue of vengeance is, once again, very important to radical students. Moreover, they might come into the streets to protest slow progress toward a democratic government. On the other hand, conditions have changed dramatically since the fall of Syngman Rhee. This time the country has a strong interim government, whereas the interim government after Syngman Rhee's fall was divided and incompetent. The students today have a stake in their society which their predecessors in 1960 and 1961 lacked. In 1960 there were fewer jobs for graduating students; the economy was so primitive that it did not need sophisticated skills, and it was growing so slowly that unemployment was omnipresent. Today most students have job offers long before they graduate, and the basic skills of most college graduates are scarce. Therefore, fewer students of 1980 may be willing to risk their futures. Moreover, students and academia are no longer the leading sectors of society. In 1960, to be a student or professor in South Korea was to be a member of a small elite. Today education is widespread, and the most creative and talented people have been drained off into government service or into South Korea's rapidly growing corporations. Nowhere in the world in this century have new opportunities opened up as rapidly as in Korea these past twenty years.

Finally, student activity will occur in a very different social context this time around. In 1960-61 there was a vast left in South Korea, which was not integrated into either a democratic consensus or a market economy consensus. Except among small labor groups, that left hardly exists today. Second, the idealistic democratic elements of South Korean society are more realistic about the constitution they seek in 1980. Unlike their counterparts in 1960, they recognize that South Korea faces unique security problems and economic conditions which require a decisive, relatively centralized democracy rather than a radically decentralized checks and balances system. This shared opinion further limits the social support available to radical students. Finally, opposition groups are enthusiastic to achieve power and convinced that they are making progress. They do not want to lose their opportunity. Therefore, to the extent that progress is made, opposition professors counsel their students to moderate their positions. Opposition leaders promise that, if progress occurs, they will undertake to control the students. They will do so through 600 formerly expelled students, now reinstated, who have become campus heroes and are amenable to Kim Dae Jung's moderating advice.

Because of the tradition and organization and attitudes of South Korea student leaders, there will be demonstrations. However, because of the new conditions, there is a real possibility that the demonstrations can be kept within limits and that this can be done without resort to military intervention. The greatest danger to democracy is that student riots will trigger an unwarranted military intervention.

The problems of labor are less discussed than those of students, but this is a fundamental error. The students are a lagging sector with declining social power. The workers are an emerging sector whose social power will rise for many years. In 1945 all of Korea had only 50,000 industrial workers. In

1961 South Korea had 350,000 industrial workers of low education and skills. In 1980 Korea has five million workers of relatively high education and high skills. Their story and prospects are complex.

The good side of the Korean labor story is so good that it has an almost fairy tale quality. Behind the above numbers is a process of industrialization which has employed vast numbers of men and women who in the earlier years would have lacked employment and who in the 1950s would have been hard-pressed to find the food to stay alive. Further, vast numbers of people were pulled from extraordinary rural poverty into the beginnings of modern industry. As Korea's industry has risen from cheap textiles and shoes to more expensive textiles, to radio and television sets, to steel and petrochemicals and 260,000-ton ships, many thousands of Korean workers have rocketed upward in salary, skill and responsibility. The average wage increase until recent years was 8.5% per year after discounting for inflation. Given this rate of wage increases, an assistant professor in the American university who started at \$15,000 per year would find himself making \$60,000 per year 17 years later -- without ever getting promoted. If he got promoted, with a typical doubling of salary, he would earn \$120,000 as a full professor halfway through his career. Very few Americans have ever experienced the kind of social mobility experienced by the average South Korean worker.

Of course, the South Korean worker starts off earning \$100 per month, rather than more than \$1,000 per month, and remains very poor by U.S. standards, but compared with anything in Korean history and with the experience of most Third World countries, he is very well off indeed. Moreover, all of this was accomplished with a highly egalitarian income distribution. Urban and rural incomes are more similar in South Korea than anywhere else in the Third World. Whereas the ratio of wages in the larger firms to those in the smallest was

100:50 in 1960, it was 100:92.2 in 1978. South Korea's tax system and other policies level incomes with a vigor that would never be tolerated in less egalitarian Sweden.

On the other hand, there is a very dark side to the Korean labor story. Early labor organization in Korea was primarily communist and sought to destroy all of the industrial facilities of the country. In response Syngman Rhee organized company unions for all public utilities and the U.S. made the Communist Party illegal. Subsequently, unions were created by legislation and took government orders. From 1950 on, the labor unions were taken over by former communists who had converted to right-wing positions. In 1951, during a famous strike at the Chosun Textile Company, the leader of the strike switched his loyalties to management and developed a unique method of strikebreaking. He seized the young girl workers who were the primary leaders, stripped them, and forced a piece of wood into them, then threatened to tell the local men that the girls were no longer virgins. This man rose to become head of the textiles union and resigned only in February 1980. From 1963 on, an official of the Korean CIA became head of the Korean Federation of Trade Unions, and all union policies required the consent of the Korean CIA. From 1971 on, the National Security Act restricted the right of bargaining -- with the support of the trade union federation.

In recent years, the power of the workers and the egalitarian attitudes of Korean society accumulated to the point where nominal wages were raised an average of over 30% per year from 1976 to 1978. These dramatic wage increases are one major reason for a terrible inflation, estimated between 30% and 50%, that today threatens the living standards of some parts of the South Korean population. Because the living standards of Korean workers, although far better than in decades past, are still very low, any erosion of real living standards

is very difficult for their families. Moreover, because expectations have been raised so high by the spread of mass media and by two decades of rapid wage increases, the disappointment of workers in 1980 will be particularly great. The political implications still remain unclear. On one hand, Korean workers can clearly manage under conditions far worse than those of 1980, and they are mostly patriots who respond to appeals for national unity. On the other hand, their expectations are very high, and it might be a historic mistake for the South Korean government to add a political disappointment to major economic disappointments. Any move to deprive Kim Dae Jung of a fair chance for the presidency would be such a disappointment.

Potential student or labor disruption thus is a significant problem, but a problem that can be overcome. Conceivably, it can be overcome in the medium run by severe repression -- an option possibly tempting to the military. The easiest time to stop the development of strong labor unions is before they get organized. The easiest time to divide and control student demonstrations is before they become truly massive. However, given the democratic political attitudes of broad sectors of Korean society today, preemptive repression could spark conflicts which would destroy the prospects for stability rather than improve them. On the other hand, if there is continuous progress toward democratization, and if students or labor then behave so irresponsibly as to endanger social stability, repressive measures might well gather widespread public support. But the balance of evidence suggests that the problems of students and labor can most effectively be moderated by steady progress toward more open politics and by the appearance of a leader who can appeal to the patriotic instincts, self-interests, and democratic sentiments, of these two groups.

The next question, perhaps the most serious question of all, is whether the South Korean political system can produce parties and leaders capable of filling

this role. The military fears factionalism and instability, and it fears the corruption associated with democratic politics. Above all, however, it fears the rise of a radical candidate who might damage the administrative institutions, attack the trading companies which have created prosperity, and undertake dangerous or unstable policies in relations with the North.

Abstractly, such fears are not silly. They were very real problems in the 1950s. To ascertain whether they are well grounded in contemporary South Korea, one must survey the parties and their principal leaders. The governing party, the Democratic Republican Party (DRP), was founded by Park Chung-Hee and his associates to provide a political base for implementation of government programs. In judging the likely future of the DRP, one might look to the precedent of Syngman Rhee's Liberal Party, which was powerful as long as Syngman Rhee was personally in control, but which vanished almost instantly after Syngman Rhee's fall. The DRP, in fact, has more of a base than the Liberal Party, because the DRP is supported by Korea's principal institutions. Syngman Rhee built only a personal following. Park Chung-Hee built institutions. But the DRP is the party of the establishment and the party of the technocrats, rather than being a party of politicians who generate enthusiasm. It is therefore dependent on its leader for unity and stability.

Kim Jong-Pil, the official leader of the governing party, was once the number two man under Park Chung-Hee. He founded the Korean CIA and became prime minister. Eventually, he became so powerful that he represented a threat to Park Chung-Hee and was hence deposed. He is recognized as a brilliant administrator and is given credit for much of the negotiating skill that facilitated Korea's development of relationships with Middle Eastern countries after the 1973 oil price drive and the resulting extrication of the country from a very difficult trade imbalance. As the principal candidate of the establish-

ment, he should have an overwhelmingly powerful electoral position, but he suffers from three difficulties. First is his attachment to the legacy of Park Chung-Hee. Second, he has accumulated great wealth (including, for instance, \$20 million of assets which he recently put in trust in order to defuse the wealth issue), which is very hard to explain on a government salary. Third, he has a reputation for choosing abrasive and grasping subordinates who irritate many key members of the governing elite. Thus, his association with Park Chung-Hee damages him with the common people, his aura of corruption damages him with the middle class, and his abrasive subordinates damage him with some of the governing elite despite his universally acknowledged technocratic brilliance. Within his own party, he is attacked from the left for corruption and from the right for abandoning Park's system.

Within the establishment, the current president and the current prime minister are obvious candidates. The president, Choi Kyu Hah, is widely regarded, fairly or not, as a warm, amiable and able technocrat, but not as a strong, decisive leader. Therefore, attention focuses on Prime Minister Shin Hyon Hwack, whose strong principles and decisiveness have always endeared him to the foreign and domestic business communities. He is given credit for providing the firm guidance that has steadied South Korea ever since the assassination of President Park Chung-Hee. But he shares the basic problem of all the technocrats, including Kim Jong Pil and Choi Kyu Hah, namely, bureaucratic images and too-strong connections to the Park regime.

The New Democratic Party, which has long been the official opposition, is deeply divided between Kim Dae Jung, who nearly defeated Park Chung Hee in the election of 1971 and was subsequently deprived of his civil rights, and Kim Young Sam, party president. Kim Young Sam, a politician of eloquence who possesses a dramatic, movie-star appearance, deposed his predecessor in the

party by strongly opposing Park Chung-Hee. So firm was his opposition, in fact, that in late 1979 the Park Chung-Hee government strongly supported a move to oust him from his position. Kim Young Sam gains electoral support from having been an opponent of Park Chung-Hee, and he gains substantial middle class support from being a political moderate. His personal style is very similar to that of the Kennedys in the U.S., but he suffers, fairly or unfairly, from the common characterization that he is stronger on eloquence than on insight and organization.

Kim Young Sam is being challenged for leadership of the opposition party by Kim Dae Jung, the most flamboyant opposition leader of South Korea. Kim Dae Jung's nearly successful campaign against Park Chung Hee in 1971 was hampered by severe injuries the candidate suffered when his car was rammed by an army truck. After nearly defeating Park Chung Hee and subsequently making some extravagant statements in Tokyo, he was kidnapped from a Tokyo hotel room by the Korean CIA. He has spent most of the time since then in jail or under house arrest. He was deprived of his civil rights and, therefore, of the right to campaign, until March 1 of 1980. Because he is an eloquent populist leader, and because there is widespread respect for his suffering in the last decade, Kim Dae Jung generates an intense enthusiasm in some parts of the electorate that cannot be matched by any other politician in South Korea. Kim Dae Jung's problem is that he must break back into the leadership of a party from which he has been legally excluded for years, and that he must overcome suspicions among key social groups that he is a demagogue or a radical. Many intellectuals are skeptical of Kim Dae Jung because his speeches have often appeared rather demagogic. But Kim Dae Jung's greatest problem is the military's belief that he might prove to be a dangerous radical.

Kim Dae Jung is perceived as a radical for several reasons. Above all, he

strongly opposed Park Chung-Hee. Second, he has been supported by student and worker groups which frequently do have radical ambitions. Third, he has campaigned strongly against what he characterizes as a grossly unequal income distribution -- in a country where there is already a remarkably egalitarian income distribution. Finally, he is perceived by the military as a dangerous radical because their records indicate that he was a member of a communist front before the Korean war. Kim Dae Jung has indeed made some extravagant statements in the past, some of which are ascribable to the frustrations of a man whose legitimate aspirations for leadership were being frustrated by unconstitutional means. But to gauge whether he is really radical, it is important to look at his positions on the principal contemporary issues and to see whether his social base of support would force him into radical positions after he is elected. The critical questions are whether he would seek vengeance on the administrators of the Park Chung-Hee government at the risk of destroying the effectiveness of Korea's new institutions; whether he would alter the market economy; whether he would change the role of the general trading companies which are responsible for much of Korea's economic success; and whether he would take dangerous positions on international issues, particularly relations with the North.

This writer asked Kim Dae Jung whether he could rely on the existing administrative institutions to implement his policies, when he knew that virtually all of their personnel had been appointed by Park Chung-Hee. Behind this question was the knowledge that the democratic government in 1960-61 had lost much of its public support when it initially failed to take revenge on Syngman Rhee's administrators and that it subsequently emasculated its administrative capacities through an excessive purge. Kim Dae Jung replied that it would be necessary to change the ministers and vice ministers and a few other officials who happened to be corrupt or incompetent. However, he said that "The

rest of the officials are typists. You tell them what to type and they type. We need their talents. We don't have them ourselves." This moderate position augers well for the theory that a new democracy could be built upon the strong existing institutions. The students would not support such a moderate position, but most other groups supporting Jim Dae Jung would. Kim Young Sam took the same position.

This does not mean that all fears of Kim Dae Jung's appointments are alleviated. Korea's Confucian bureaucracies give far wider scope to their top men than Western, rule-oriented bureaucracies, thus obtaining greater decisiveness at some potential cost in continuity. Kim Dae Jung does indeed have around him potential ministers who are stronger on demogoguery than technocratic calculation. If he appoints them, he will do some damage -- as certain Western politicians have done with patronage appointments. But such damage is very different from radical or vengeful destruction of institutions, and those institutions, together with South Korea's social consensus, would limit the damage. In fact, South Korea's establishment does not fear radicalism, but rather the appointment of key cadres of officials from opposition groups and from Kim Dae Jung's home region, the southwest, which is traditionally excluded from power. In U.S. terms, the risk is not radicalism but Mississippi populism. On balance, the potential political healing due to such an outcome probably outweighs economic risk.

South Korea's consensus on the market economy includes Kim Dae Jung and a majority of his supporters. By this standard alone, Kim Dae Jung appears conservative compared with radicals in other Third World countries. However, in South Korea, the critical question is what attitude the candidate would take toward the general trading companies, a dozen firms which provide nearly half of South Korea's exports, and toward the leaders of big business, some of whom have

become very wealthy despite South Korea's otherwise successful egalitarian policies. Kim Dae Jung holds that the trading companies are important to the future of the economy, that they do require economies of scale in order to be successful, and that it is important to avoid damaging them. He also wants to avoid frightening businessmen and indicated that he would attack only those who had used primarily corrupt means to acquire wealth.

Concerning the general trading companies as institutions, he said it was unfair for giant institutions to obtain special privileges and that he would therefore remove the special privileges of the trading companies. Historically, the principal special privileges of the trading companies have been exemption of half their income from taxation, subsidized interest rates, and a quasi-monopoly position created by the fact that they are licensed by the government. The Park Chung-Hee government abolished the greatest of these privileges, namely, the income tax exemption. Nam Duk Woo, the principal economic advisor prior to recent political changes, expressed to this writer the wish that he had abolished the licensing requirement, which he said was now relatively unimportant to the general trading firms. Furthermore, Nam Duk Woo thought that the abolition of subsidized interest rates would not be very damaging to the companies. A further policy of Kim Dae Jung would be to insist on broad public ownership of the general trading companies -- a policy which the Park Chung-Hee government was moving strongly to implement. In short, there are no substantial differences in economic policy between the positions of Kim Dae Jung and those of Park Chung-Hee. On international issues he has no substantial differences with the government. He has vigorously opposed U.S. troop withdrawals and has been wary of Kim Il Sung's diplomatic overtures.

Many South Korean officials and foreign commentators are shocked to discover that the "radical" Kim Dae Jung is in fact a conservative. On closer

investigation this is not at all surprising. South Korean society now has a conservative consensus which includes all but students and a minority of the labor movement. No South Korean candidate could run on a platform of appeasing the North or abolishing the market economy. Moreover, the opposition party in Korea is traditionally a conservative party. The New Democratic Party was born of the Democratic Party, which in turn followed the Korea Democratic Party. The Korean Democratic Party was an association of landlords designed to protect conservative interests. Over the years this association assimilated the traditional Christian elite, which attained great power and prestige during the period when access to missionary education provided a special advantage but has become an unhappy conservative group trying to protect its position. The opposition is also strongly supported by the traditional academic elite, whose dominant social position has largely been supplanted by technocratic groups based in government and industry. The student and labor support which has given the Kim Dae Jung candidacy an aura of radical support will quickly fall away. Many students will never support any government, no matter how democratic, for more than a few weeks. The New Democratic Party, realizing the challenge to stability that could be posed by labor groups, has already written into its constitutional draft a special provision giving the government the right to regulate strikes. The opposition draft constitution recommends relatively centralized and hierarchical government and, in these respects is more conservative than the government draft. One of Kim Dae Jung's first acts after his civil rights were restored was a series of meetings with student leaders in which he appealed for restraint.

The history of Korean debate over economic policy leads to the same conclusions as an analysis of Kim Dae Jung's current platform and his social base. The basic economic plan of South Korea was established by the Democratic

Party in 1961 during Korea's brief democracy. Although the democratic government lacked the administrative capability to implement the plan, the program which Park Chung-Hee used to achieve the Korean economic take-off was in fact put together by the predecessors of Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam. The basic program was an extremely conservative one which involved devaluing the currency to encourage export-led growth, reducing tariffs to open up the economy and obtain the advantages of lower-cost materials and international competition, and dealing with multinational corporations. These were the policies which lead to rapid growth in South Korea. They were not, however, the causes of an egalitarian income distribution.

Egalitarian measures, aside from the land reform and educational investments made by Syngman Rhee, were made by an economic radical named Park Chung-Hee. Under Park huge taxes were imposed on luxury goods. For instance, a four-cylinder automobile can be purchased in South Korea for under \$5,000, but government taxes are so large that a six-cylinder automobile costs \$26,000 to \$30,000. Although South Korea is one of the world's largest manufacturers of color television sets and has enormous excess capacity, color television broadcasts are banned in South Korea because Park Chung-Hee did not believe in creating social distinctions between those who could afford color television and those who could only afford black-and-white. When the achievement tests for admission to the university resulted in half the student body being drawn from five elite high schools, Park first tried to upgrade other schools and, having failed, he abolished all five schools in order to avoid the creation of a social elite. As this example suggests, some of Park's additions to the program of the Democratic Party were nearly Maoist in their radicalism. Park Chung-Hee was the most successful economical radical of his era. Like most radicals, he never fully attained his vision of an egalitarian society, and he was in the end very

disappointed at the degree to which some businessmen and political leaders had become a wealthy elite. This disappointment may have been one source of the excessive wage raises given to workers in Park's declining years.

Kim Dae Jung's predecessors were well aware that they were the conservatives and Park the radical. In the 1963 election, former president Yun Po-Sun (currently regarded as a radical for his opposition to Park Chung-Hee) bitterly criticized Park Chung-Hee's socialist economic ideals and former membership in a communist party front. This vigorous denunciation by Yun Po-Sun, the man usually described as a radical, of Park Chung-Hee, the man usually described in the press as an ultra-rightist, alleging that Park was a communist, raises the final central issue related to Kim Dae Jung's role in South Korean politics. Of all the things the South Korean military holds against Kim Dae Jung, the worst are that he made some unpatriotic statements in Tokyo during 1971 and that before the Korean war he was a communist. Kim Dae Jung is always careful to say that the government has never been able to provide firm evidence that he was a communist. In fact, both South Korean and American files indicate that Kim Dae Jung was a member of a communist front group.

The accusation that Kim Dae Jung was a communist was made publicly by the Seoul martial law commander in February of 1980. It was never made publicly while Park Chung-Hee was alive, because Park Chung-Hee was also a member of a communist front. Neither Park nor the South Korean military ever wanted to confront that fact publicly. Park Chung-Hee's association with the communist party became one of the best kept secrets of the 20th Century. Senior South Korean military officials maintained that Park Chung-Hee cleansed himself by vigorous participation in the Korean War, whereas Kim Dae Jung did not. But association with the communists three decades ago, in the overwhelming ideological confusion of pre-war Korea (when association with any vigorous anti-

Japanese group like the communist party was an act of patriotism), cannot disguise the fact that Kim Dae Jung, like Kim Young Sam and Kim Jong Pil, is an economic conservative. In fact, there has only been one leader in recent South Korean history who has been a true economic radical. That leader was Park Chung-Hee.

South Korean economics will be considerably less lively in the absence of Park Chung-Hee. Park Chung-Hee and his counterparts in Taiwan and Singapore have been the only leaders in modern history who succeeded in combining the growth potential of a market economy with radical socialist precepts about the income distribution. These values are held by most economists to be in conflict, and to some extent they are. But Park Chung-Hee's senior economists marveled that, after having recommended strongly against implementation of Park's egalitarian policies on the grounds that they would diminish growth, time after time they found that growth actually increased. By creating a market economy without the inequalities of Brazil, and by creating an egalitarian economy without the economic tragedy of Mozambique, Park cut through the basic economic dilemma of this century. He was probably right in believing that the administrative discipline and economic opening to Japan, which were both necessary to rapid growth, were inconsistent with democratic politics. He was almost certainly right in believing that his harsh egalitarian measures would have been defeated by a vigorous parliament. But in the end he created conditions which will require either going forward into a democratic political regime, whose economic policies might be somewhat less decisive and less egalitarian, or backward into repression and a degree of social conflict which might well destroy the economic gains of the past generation. If democracy comes to South Korea, it will stand on the shoulders of the institutions created by right-wing Park Chung-Hee and of the egalitarianism promoted by radical Park Chung-Hee.

South Korea's political challenge is a great one because of the deep divisions created by Park Chung-Hee. On the other hand, all of the divisive social policy questions have been dissolved into consensus by the military and economic success of Park Chung-Hee. The differences concern not policies, but procedures and positions. How will the leadership be chosen? Will the new leaders be symbols of continuity with Park Chung-Hee or symbols of a fundamental break? Will they come from the southwest of the country, like Kim Dae Jung, or from the southeast, like the current elite? Will they represent technocratic calculation or popular enthusiasm? Can the political parties achieve the kind of coherence that other South Korean institutions have achieved? Can the students be induced to moderate their radical positions in the interest of personal careers and democratic elections? Can the military be induced to accept change, to address South Korea's political future in the same spirit of radical innovation and institution-building with which Park Chung-Hee addressed the economy? Or will it instead endanger even Park's economic institutions by attempting to prolong the legacy of Park in the one area where his imaginative spirit failed him, namely, politics?

South Korea has reached a moment of historic consequence for itself and for neighboring powers. If the military intervenes in the political process, failing to understand the magnitude of the new, democratic forces in Korean society, then there could be a conflict which would destroy much of what Park Chung-Hee accomplished. If students and labor insist on utopia, rather than steady progress, they may trigger the same disaster. But if South Korea achieves in politics what it has already achieved in administration, economics and the military, then its emergence on the world scene in the next generation could match Japan's emergence in the past one.