

Christianity and Crisis

# REPRESSION AND RESPONSE: THE CHURCH in KOREA AND BRAZIL

REPORTS BY

**frank lanich and james otis  
thomas quigley**

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# CHURCH-STATE CONFRONTATION

## in the R.O.K.

Frank Lanich and James Otis

*Frank Lanich and James Otis are the pseudonyms of two American journalists, quite conversant with the situation in Korea, who desire continued access to South Korea. We publish their article and the article on Brazil by Thomas Quigley, Assistant Director of the Latin American Division of the United States Catholic Conference, because they point to the significant role being played by parts of the Christian community in resisting oppressive regimes.*

EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON of January 8, 1974 South Korean President Park Chung Hee issued an emergency decree designed to crush a burgeoning protest movement. The decree made it illegal for anyone to "propose or petition for revision or repeal of the Constitution" or to report such activity "through broadcasting, reporting or publishing or by any other means." Anyone accused of violating this edict was subject to "arrest, detention, search and seizure without warrant," trial by a special military tribunal and imprisonment up to 15 years. The Republic of Korea (ROK) Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) was empowered to conduct special investigations of violations. President Park immediately issued a second decree establishing an emergency court-martial and named General Lee Se-ho, former commander of the US-paid ROK expeditionary force in Viet Nam, as president of the tribunal. These extraordinary decrees provide a bench mark for future historians of authoritarian rule and church-state confrontation in South Korea.

The immediate target of these draconian measures was a peaceful, legal movement to revive the Constitution. On Christmas Eve 30 prominent intellectual, political and religious leaders had met at the Seoul YMCA and announced a campaign to collect one million signatures on a petition for constitutional revision. Among the organizers were Stephan Cardinal Kim; Dr. Yu Chin O, former President of the Korea University; Kim Jae Jun, former President of the Korea Theological Seminary; Chang Jun Ha, winner of the Magsaysay Award for "editorial integrity"; Dr. George L. Paik, President Emeritus of Yonsei University and a Protestant church leader; Kim Hong Il, retired

general Korean War hero and opposition leader; and Kim Chi Ha, the dissident poet laureate. They sought to restore the pre-November 1972 constitution, end oppressive police surveillance and limit Park's tenure of office.

Prime Minister Kim Jong P'il denounced the movement in a 90-minute television harangue on December 26, and Park personally warned that "all the seditious statements and activities of the petition campaign . . . are to be halted immediately." But the leaders refused to be intimidated and continued organizing. The petition was a brilliant tactic; the diffuse month-long protest now had a precise objective. Hundreds of volunteers joined the campaign, and additional organizations and groups indicated their support daily. According to one estimate, 500,000 signatures were obtained. Then on the afternoon of January 8 . . .

The ROK Government acted swiftly to enforce the new decrees against the press and the protest leaders. Seoul's newspapers were silenced in a few hours. The foreign press, mainly Japanese reporters—whose faithful reports of events in Korea have filtered back via tourists and Japanese TV in the Pusan area—were warned that if they wrote about the petition movement, they would be "subject to Korean law," i.e. 15 years imprisonment. When 11 Japanese reporters protested on the grounds of press freedom, the Ministry of Culture-Information (Orwell, 1984!) told them they would be imprisoned if they "continued to violate or defy Korean sovereignty."

With the domestic and foreign press temporarily silenced, the authorities moved against the protesters. On January 9 a group of student leaders were seized at the Christian Academy House, questioned and released after a few hours with a warning. Opposition political figures were taken into custody and held for varying periods. The following day the Korean Student Christian Federation (KSCF) offices were searched, and materials were confiscated. Other leaders, including the Rev. Kim Kwan Suk, General Secretary of the Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC), and Protestant



ministers Park Hyung Kyu, Oh Chung Il, Cho Seoung Hyuk, Kim Sang Keun and Kim Chung Yul, to cite only a few, were placed under 24-hour surveillance.

### Institutionalizing the Gulag Terror

The first arrests for court-martials were made on January 15 when Chang Jun Ha, 56, and Paik Ki Wan, 42, a well-known political scientist, were charged with criticizing the decrees; they were sentenced to 15 years in prison. Two days later ten young pastors and assistant pastors, three involved in the Urban-Industrial Mission (UIM), assembled at the KNCC headquarters in downtown Seoul and issued a brief "confession of faith" in "obedience to the will of God" and "the realities of our country." They called for the restoration of "democratic order" and "free discussion of the revision of the Constitution." They were detained by KCIA agents stationed in the building and officially arrested four days later.

On February 6 six of the churchmen were convicted on charges of "publicly demanding withdrawal of the presidential emergency measures." Four received 15-year prison terms, including Kim

Kyong Nak, 36, General Secretary of the Korean United Committee of UIM; two were given ten-year sentences, and four were released. Eighty Christians held a silent vigil outside the barred courtroom during the sentencing. Meanwhile, a young American missionary who attended the January 17 gathering was interrogated twice by the KCIA, threatened and forced into virtual house arrest.

The known number of persons arrested under the January 8 decree stood at 19 by mid-February. But the terror is apparently only beginning. On February 5 the Seoul District Prosecutor's office announced the arrest of two novelists and three literary critics who were university professors. They were charged with espionage activities for North Korea and violations of the Anti-Communist Law. They were specifically accused of "writing novels and essays defaming the Seoul Government and agitating the students and other South Koreans to wage an anti-Government struggle." The authorities also announced that Chung Myung Nae, former managing editor of the *Tong-A Ilbo*, South Korea's biggest and most independent newspaper, was under investigation on similar charges.

Seoul authorities have frequently resorted to the



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charge of "Communist" to silence or execute dissent. These charges against writers, coming at the time of worldwide attention to the Solzhenitzyn affair, show the Kafkaesque nature of South Korea. ROK newspapers were permitted, probably required, to give prominent coverage to the Solzhenitzyn challenge and deportation as an example of the evils of Communism, while they were forbidden to report anything about the plight of South Korean writers!

A statement by students at Seoul National University (SNU) smuggled out of South Korea in mid-February and addressed to "Democratic Americans" places the Solzhenitzyn incident in a Korean perspective.

We wonder whether you are aware of the many other Asian "Solzhenitzyns" under fascist dictatorships in the developing nations . . . . We in South Korea—students, intellectuals, Christians—live under an extreme form of dictatorship . . . . We are without support from world public opinion, like Solzhenitzyn. We face the daily threat of being arrested, imprisoned and brutally tortured by the secret police . . . without anybody knowing of it. Some of us have been arrested and imprisoned with neither warrant nor trials and without our families knowing what happened to us. Thousands of our friends are under surveillance. The KCIA even surveil our worship services. At times we cannot even talk with our own parents.

Writers and intellectuals with liberal views are being accused of spying for the Communists simply because they participated in the movement to revise the Constitution. Men of conscience who resist the dictatorship face grave dangers of physical and mental harm. But the struggle of free men will continue. In the end the Park regime will regard the whole people as its enemies and will have to accuse them all of being Communists and Communist sympathizers.

The significance of the Park Administration's decision to rule by bayonet and court-martial and to imprison all opposition cannot be overstated. Before the January 8 decree the Government had eschewed the arrest and incarceration of dissidents. The KCIA modus operandi was harassment, threats, interrogations using torture, and short periods of detention. For example, an uncooperative newspaper reporter would be brought to KCIA headquarters early in the morning for "questioning" and sent home at night just before the midnight curfew. The routine continued, often accompanied by severe physical mistreatment, until the reporter and his newspaper became "cooperative." These tactics, and myriad KGB-like variations, substituted state

terror for the judicial process.

There were very few public indictments and trials because these brought public attention and international press coverage. The KCIA avoided creating large numbers of political prisoners lest martyrdom spur unrest. However, the summary arrests and imprisonment of opponents under the January 8 decree signals the Park Government's determination to fill its jails, detention centers and "other appropriate facilities" (Jan. 8 decree) with political prisoners, including many of the country's most able and respected academic, literary and religious leaders. The last legal safeguards have been swept away. No one is safe from a midnight visit by the KCIA, and there is no appeal from the court-martial. The Gulag terror is being institutionalized in South Korea.

### Park's "Korean Democracy"

The current protest is a reaction to President Park's constitutional coup d'etat in late 1972. On October 17, 1972 he abruptly declared martial law, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly and banned all political activity. The President claimed that a "Series of revitalizing reforms" were necessary to strengthen South Korean "democracy" to ensure that the country's interests were not "sacrificed for the relaxation of tension between the big powers." The reforms were presented as necessary to enable South Korea to continue the negotiations with North Korea begun after their historic July 4, 1972 joint declaration. A special council under presidential direction began drafting a new Constitution.

Three basic realignments from the cold war era have caused apprehension in the ROK Government: the US-China detente, the normalization of Japan-China relations in September 1972 and the impending "peace agreement" in Viet Nam, which would require the withdrawal of the lucrative ROK expeditionary force and reduce war-related business profits. (The ROK earned \$926.3 million in foreign exchange from military and commercial support of the US war effort.) Nevertheless, there was no serious opposition to the Park Government, nothing like the insurgency that brought martial law in the Philippines. The political opposition was divided, and the media and dissenters had been cowed by the December 1971 declaration of a national emergency. *The Christian Science Monitor* quoted US officials who saw President Park's explanation "as a flimsy rationale for . . . a bid for unchallenged political power."



That is what it turned out to be. Park insisted that rejection of the new Constitution would mean opposition to negotiations with North Korea, a clever self-serving interpretation that could not be refuted because of total censorship and the ban on political activities or even discussions. The November 21, 1972 referendum on the new Constitution, according to Government spokesmen, showed "overwhelming approval" for the "reforms." The authorities announced that 91.9 percent of the eligible voters had participated in the referendum and that 91.4 percent approved the new law.

While the South Korean electorate was ostensibly endorsing contacts with North Korea, the result was absolute and unlimited power for Park. Among the provisions increasing his power were: the end of direct presidential elections, the lengthening of the president's term of office to six years, the removal of the limitation on presidential terms and the emasculation of the National Assembly. On December 27, 1972 Park began a new term under procedures that made him president for life.

The late 1972 changes were not just a temporary tightening of the screws to ride out a crisis caused by international power shifts. Park accompanied each move with declarations that Western-style democracy was unsuitable for Korea and that henceforth "Korean democracy" would be the political system. The rejection of foreign elements and pressures is a powerful element of Korean nationalism, North or South, and Park sought to play on South Korean frustrations and pride to discredit representative government as foreign and "unsuitable for Korea." But his "Korean democracy" alternative soon turned out to be Newsspeak for police state controls reminiscent of the early years of the colonial period when the Japanese Government-General literally ruled by military police and the whip.

The ROK authorities increased their pressure against the press, the universities and the churches. Censorship, surveillance, KCIA control and "investigations" were ubiquitous before October 17, 1972, but now KCIA agents in the outer office became a feature of daily life. Seoul's newspapers were reduced to Government propaganda sheets, and even church sermons were monitored by Government agents. Old friends were unable to meet lest KCIA suspicions be aroused. The famous outspokenness of South Koreans in private conversations all but ended after November 1972 as a curtain of fear settled across the Republic.

The Park Administration entered 1973 with unprecedented powers, all opposition silenced and

"Korean democracy" apparently accepted by the populace. But the acquiescence was only terror-deep. Elizabeth Pond, *The Christian Science Monitor* Tokyo correspondent, wrote of "the widespread revulsion that President Park's assumption of authoritarian rule has aroused. This antipathy is voiced not only by the intelligentsia, who are in chronic conflict with the Government, but also by a wide strata of the middle class." *The Washington Post* had called the constitutional referendum a charade "organized by Park to turn South Korea into a dictatorship." Caught off balance by the preemptive strike on representative government, many South Koreans played their own game of charades with the Park Administration by appearing to bow to the fait accompli.

Opposition gradually gained momentum from late spring 1973. On June 29 the Rev. Park Hyung Kyu, 50, pastor of Seoul's First Presbyterian Church, and 14 associates were arrested for "attempting to overthrow the Government by force." The authorities charged that Park was behind a group of "agitators" that distributed leaflets calling for the "revival of democracy" at a public Easter sunrise service in April. The leaflets had been distributed, but Park's real offense was his community organizing in Seoul's teeming slums. Many of those arrested with him were affiliated with the KSCF and were active in community organizing. On September 25 Park was found guilty and sentenced to two years imprisonment. (Due to domestic and international church pressure he was released from jail pending an appeal decision.) The Park case was the first serious Government move against church officials, a salient feature of the current repression.

#### **Kim Dae Jung: Catalyst for Protest**

Park's conviction and the threat to the church might have deterred protest if the Government had not overreached itself so spectacularly in the Kim Dae Jung incident. Kim, who received 46 percent of the vote in the 1971 presidential election, was abducted in broad daylight from the Tokyo Palace Hotel on August 8, turned up in Seoul five days later, and was placed under house arrest and not allowed to leave the country. The KCIA got their man, but they left a trail from Tokyo to Kobe that the Japanese Government could not ignore or cover up, although it tried valiantly.

The Japanese media gave the Kim abduction extraordinary coverage, thereby probably saving his life, and strong protests were registered by academic, literary and political leaders. They were echoed in the US by Prof. Edward Reischauer, former Ambassador to Japan, Prof. Gregory Henderson, Korea specialist at Tufts University, and others. These activities brought international attention to the Kim Dae Jung incident and exposed South Korea's intelligence and police operations. More importantly, as the facts of the Kim case became known in South Korea in late August and early September, it became a catalyst for protest. Many South



Koreans sensed that no one was safe against such crude and brutal state power. There was a renewed will to speak out, to try and stop the Government police apparatus.

At the same time the Park regime's denials of involvement in the Kim abduction made it the laughing stock of Northeast Asia. (Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei generated some levity, too, when under sharp questioning in the Diet he declared that "South Korea is a nation in pursuit of liberty and democracy.") In South Korea there were demands for an honest explanation of the Kim case. Even the Government-controlled National Assembly began to ask embarrassing questions.

The ROK Government tried by threats and delays to ride out the storm of criticism, hoping that public attention would be short-lived, but the Kim incident had become a cause célèbre in Tokyo. The important ROK-Japan ministerial conference was indefinitely postponed, and five weeks of front-page news stories forced the Japanese police to reveal official KCIA involvement. These domestic pressures compelled the Tanaka Administration, if only to avoid charges of complicity, to demand "explanations" from the ROK Government. For example, the Japanese Ambassador was permitted to visit Kim Dae Jung, then under house arrest, a privilege not granted to Koreans (or to Americans). Finally, Prime Minister Kim Jong P'il visited Japan in early November to apologize for the incident, a comic opera kowtow since he continued to insist that there had not been any official ROK involvement.

To many Koreans, especially students and intellectuals, the Kim Dae Jung case showed the KCIA's ferocity against domestic dissent, the Government's contempt for the intelligence of the Korean people and its subordination to Japan. Passionate anti-Japanese emotions—fear of economic and political domination—merged with the demand for basic freedoms.

The protest burst out on October 2 when approximately 500 students at the SNU Liberal Arts College demonstrated for an end to "secret police rule" and the "subjugation of the Korean economy to Japan." They demanded the dissolution of the KCIA and an explanation of the "outrageous" Kim Dae Jung incident. The SNU demonstration was not reported in the press for five days, but the unrest spread widely, erupting in a series of rock throwing-tear gas confrontations between students and riot police in which hundreds of students were injured and arrested.

Student activism received a boost, and a new element joined the protest movement on November 5 when 13 intellectual leaders, including prominent religious leaders, met at the Seoul YMCA and issued a statement praising "the courageous and just demands of university students" and demanding an end to "the horrible atmosphere of fear and distrust caused by the KCIA" and to the "limitless corruption of the privileged." The men were immediately arrested, but the authorities were afraid to press charges against the distinguished "criminals" in such a volatile situation. The KCIA demanded that

the 13 sign statements promising an end to the protest. They refused; the KCIA yielded and released them.

The unrest then spread to corners of Seoul not previously noted for political courage or activism. On November 28 3000 students at Ewha Women's University held a sit-in demonstration near their campus. The police repeatedly fired tear gas at the protestors, but the students held their ground for five hours and collected 3000 signatures on a petition demanding the release of arrested students.

Two days later reporters and editorial staff members of the *Chungang Ilbo*, finally exasperated by Government interference, issued a statement that said in part, "It has been a long time since we . . . have been able to fulfill our mission as monitors of society—to tell the truth, to report the facts . . . ." They insisted upon an end to Government surveillance and promised the public they would now "report things as we see them."

### "Proper" and "Improper" Church Involvement

Christians were active in the protests as boycotts, fasts, sit-ins, prayer vigils and marches were held at Korea University, Hankuk Theological Seminary, Yonsei University and other schools. On November 27 50 Christians demonstrated in Seoul asking the Government to "suspend surveillance of churches" and to "release arrested students." On November 28 200 people from 14 denominations attended a special prayer meeting sponsored by the KSCF. That same day 38 members of the Saemunan Church demonstrated with a march and sit-in that led to 18 arrests. The next day a group of Methodist seminarians conducted a hymn-sing that ended in a clash with the police.

The protest gained momentum in mid-December. On December 16 Protestants and Roman Catholics held a joint service at the Seoul YMCA. Cardinal Kim urged restoration of freedom, and 200 Catholic students demonstrated in central Seoul. On December 23 several Protestant clergy began a six-day fast in repentance for not preserving democracy. And on December 24 the petition campaign began.

The ROK Government has struck hard at some Christian leaders for "improper" involvement with contemporary social and political issues. Yet religious activities of a militantly anti-Communist nature have enjoyed official blessing. Thus it is "political"—and *verboden*—to bring the Social Gospel to slum dwellers. But Christian evangelizing in the ROK Army was enthusiastically approved; there have reportedly been at least 25,000 conversions a year since 1971. It is "political"—and punishable by 15 years in prison—to urge citizens to exercise their (formerly) constitutional rights of petition. However, the Government has endorsed "Explo 74," a massive fundamentalist revival aimed at students and scheduled for Seoul in August 1974.

Explo 74, sponsored by the Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), is one of the Eleusian Mysteries of religious life in South Korea. According to church officials, much of CCC's income in Korea comes



from a 10-story building erected on land donated by the ROK Government in 1968 (after a bloody battle to remove squatters). The Government apparently hopes the CCC will split the Christian community, or at least shift influence to the conservatives. The CCC "is already succeeding in splitting many denominations right down the middle," said one minister.

As noted above, the religious leaders who issued a statement in support of democracy were arrested. But a demonstration by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church on January 25, 1974 in support of President Nixon (yes, President Nixon!) was permitted. In short, the Government has two policies toward religious concern with society. What threatens the Park regime is suppressed in the name of "meddling in political matters;" what serves the interests of the Government is supported, with more than a wisp of evidence of covert funding.

The prominent role of senior Christian leaders and Christian students in the protest movement is partly because Christian institutions provide the only major network of communications and support available to democratic elements. In addition, to be Christian was to be free of suspicion of Communist influence—and to be safe from fabricated Government charges under the all-purpose Anti-Communist Law. This slight protection is now gone as the January 8 decrees are being enforced without regard for creed.

Despite the Government's charges of "politics," the Korean churches have hardly been militantly progressive agents of political and social change. On the contrary, they have emphasized evangelism and salvation, paying relatively little attention to the Social Gospel or social issues. The Korean churches represented at the Korea-Japan Church Consultation in July 1973 acknowledged a dilemma: "Since the majority of the church population is comprised of the . . . middle-class, their thought patterns have dominated . . . [so] that it is very difficult for the church to approach the newly merging labor class and poor people."

To cite only one painful example, few misgivings were expressed about the role of the 312,000 ROK troops in the Viet Nam War, including their documented atrocities. Theological conservatism, the experience of the Korean War, the potential military threat of North Korea (the demilitarized zone is only 35 miles from Seoul) and heavily indoctrinated anti-Communism have made ROK Christians anything but rash progressives.

Thus, Government calumny to the contrary, the Christian participation in the current protest is not feckless theological "agit-prop." Serious men and women, generally of conservative disposition and aware of the grave consequences, have been impelled to action as a desperate response to the impending asphyxia by the secret police. The larger movement they are part of has moderate goals: a legal and peaceful end to President Park's one-man authoritarian rule, the restoration of representative government and the civil liberty to read, assemble, think and pray. In the words of one foreign observer, "They want the Government, with its army

of CIA agents and informers, to get off their backs."

## The ROK'S Image Problem

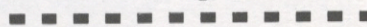
The ROK has had a severe image problem since October 1972, if not earlier. Propaganda activities in the US were greatly increased that year in an effort to assure continued American military and economic aid (which has totaled \$12 billion since 1946) and the continued presence of the 20-30,000



## The Great Berrigan Debate

On October 19, Fr. Daniel Berrigan spoke on the Middle East crisis before a group of American university graduates of Arab descent. While highly critical of both the Arab states and Israel, the talk has since been particularly attacked for its views on Israel. Still others have found the talk, however, a beginning point for dialogue on the route to peace.

Contained in this 36-page booklet is the text of Fr. Berrigan's original essay ("The Middle East: Sane Conduct?"), with responses by Rabbi Balfour Brickner, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, Robert Hoyt, June Stillman, William Novak and Allan Solomonow. Also included is the transcript of the televised discussion between Prof. Hans Morgenthau and Fr. Berrigan.



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US troops still stationed there 21 years after the Korean War. This image slipped badly in 1973 with highly publicized incidents of KCIA harassment and bullying of Koreans living here, which brought adverse comment even from the State Department. (These incidents included threats of unfavorable consequences if a meeting of Korean Christian intellectuals was held in St. Louis, photographing of anti-Park demonstrators at a New York rally, use of "toughs" to break up a Kim rally in San Francisco and the receipt of letters by Koreans here that indicated KCIA threats against their friends or relatives at home.) The Kim Dae Jung incident and latest repression have shown the realities of South Korea so graphically that the Nixon Administration will be hard pressed to explain why the US should pour more men and dollars into propping up the Park regime.

Simultaneously with the crackdown on political activities in early December, the regime moved to counter an expected US backlash by appointing Hahm Pyung Choon as Ambassador to Washington. The articulate, US-educated Hahm, a former professor from a distinguished Christian family, is expected to put the best possible face on events in South Korea. In recent months he has told foreign reporters that the Christian church is headed for a showdown with the Government. Rather ominously for the future of Christianity in South Korea, Hahm has reportedly called church architecture "inappropriate" for South Korea, with the implication that the Government is prepared to label Christianity as foreign and "unsuitable." At present, however, these threats seem intended more for foreign consumption—to dissuade US churches from supporting their embattled Korean colleagues—than as concrete policy plans.

The academic junket has become a PR weapon of unusual effectiveness in Seoul's image-building efforts over the last few years. Korean scholars in the US have been wine and dined in Washington, D.C. at special "academic conferences," and special grants have been made to friendly professors. However, the truly spectacular junkets have been the conferences held in South Korea since the 1971 "International Conference on Korean Unification." Virtually every US academic hawk (or former hawk) has been invited to a "conference," while independent critical scholars have been excluded. The Government's purpose is twofold: to influence US policy—"South Korea is not the same as Viet Nam"—and to publicize the conference domestically as evidence that US intellectuals still support Park. The willingness of American professors to accept travel money and other gratuities from the ROK

Government, some of it directly from the Blue House, has recently evoked protest in the US and bitter comments in South Korea and Japan.

## Two Questions

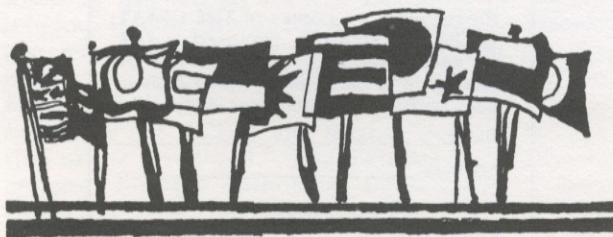
Neither censorship nor PR gambits, however, will resolve two fundamental questions raised by the January 8 decrees. The first is can the Republic of Korea be ruled by fiat and court-martials? Activities permitted by the Constitution on the morning of January 8 were illegal by nightfall, almost as if a commanding officer were changing unit regulations by whim. Since South Korea experienced military rule under then-General Park Chung Hee from 1961-63, there should be little doubt about the feasibility of government by command. Following the coup d'etat of May 16, 1961, the coup leaders suspended the Constitution, banned all political activity and tried to run the country like a military barracks. Except in encouraging economic planning, their two-year record was a dismal failure; they were forced to return to a civilian representative government in 1963.

What couldn't be done in the simpler days of the early 1960's is not likely to be effective now. For example, in 1962 the ROK GNP was \$2.5 billion; it is now close to \$12.5 billion. A complex industrial and economic infrastructure has been built or is nearing completion: oil refineries, petrochemicals, cement and fertilizer plants, a steel complex and shipbuilding facilities. Exports reached almost \$3.2 billion in 1973, compared to \$55 million in 1962. There have been structural changes in South Korean society also as waves of rural migration to the cities have brought interrelated problems of housing, transportation and pollution.

To cope with these issues the Republic needs the best energies, talents and loyalties of its professional middle class. Because it lacks the ideological cement of Communism, which provides cohesion to North Korean society, the South needs public support, a consensus about values and goals. The economy may run for a time on the profit motive, but widespread corruption and the suppression of academics, intellectuals, religious leaders and the student generation will, at a minimum, destroy confidence in the very *raison d'être* of South Korea. And there is always the alternative of the North.

The second question posed by the January 8 decrees is whether the Park regime can survive the anticipated unrest this spring; a corollary is what degree of force the Government is prepared (or able) to use. In a November 1973 interview Kim Dae Jung said, "The Government cannot continue as it is. It is on a collision course with the people that is less than a year away. I ask you to convey this to the Japanese and the American peoples, so that they can urge their governments not to interfere . . . in the coming clash."

Kim's prediction seemed dramatic but unrealistic at the time. However, the student demonstrations, the support of social and church leaders, the constitutional revision campaign and the January 8





decrees have made Kim prophetic. In the next stage of the challenge to President Park, the reaction of Seoul's citizenry may be decisive. When riot police began blockading campuses in November, thousands of citizens poured out of their homes and shops and lined the streets to watch. Their expressions were somber, and they rarely spoke to one another. Yet the air was full of excitement and anticipation—the sense that history was being made. If the police had fired on the students and killed some, there might have been a spontaneous and bloody popular response. The situation is more tense now. The oil crisis has hit South Korea hard, inflation has increased and the

Park Government's major public support—economic development—is in serious trouble.

With the gauntlet thrown at dissent by post-January arrests, the sense of imminent confrontation is palpable. College students will return to their campuses from their Government-extended winter vacations in March, but they are expected to head soon for the streets. In April 1960 students marching toward the presidential mansion were fired on by the police. Many died, but the resultant public support toppled Syngman Rhee. If ordinary citizens join the protest, "Korean democracy" may become a form of governance worthy of its people. □

## BRAZIL:

new generals vs. renewal bishops

thomas quigley

**I**NTERPRETATIONS of the recent stepped-up repression in Brazil vary, but the fact that repression increased is undeniable. Sao Paulo, Rio and the teeming Northeast were the foci of the latest round of arrests, disappearances and allegations of torture.

No one, not even the security forces, are pretending that this was due to any new threat from urban guerrillas or other insurgents. The urban guerrilla movement in Brazil, like the Tupamaros in Uruguay, was effectively crushed some two years ago. There are rural guerrilla foci in the Amazon and elsewhere, but the latest police sweeps had nothing to do with them.

They did have something to do with March 15, the day General Emilio Medici transferred power to his handpicked successor, General Ernesto Geisel. On that everyone agrees, but opinions about the exact relationship vary. One opinion is that the Government wanted everything cleaned up so that their incoming look-alikes could start off with a fresh and vaguely humane image, possibly presaging a modicum of political freedom.

Another view is that while there may be no difference between the two generals, many lesser officials were coming in or going out of power, and some of those going out were willing to bequeath a bit of political turmoil.

Finally, there is the view that the governing generals do not control internal security anyway; the various police-security-intelligence forces do, and it is they who were conducting the crackdown and especially the attacks on the church. A member of the Brazilian intelligence team flown into Chile to interrogate Brazilians arrested by the junta is reported to have said that the three remaining enemies in Brazil are the church, the judges and—the generals! That is certainly a twist, but it may contain at least a scintilla of truth. There is no hard evidence, for example, to link the mafia-style executions by the infamous Death

Squads directly with the presidency in Brasilia, and there are some indications that the Government has in fact cracked down on some of these police-vigilante groups.

About the judges, one hears only that their efforts to apply the law and foster justice are routinely frustrated. When the Supreme Military Tribunal demanded information from the security forces about Paulo Stuart Wright, a former congressman with dual American-Brazilian citizenship who had been arrested in September, the response was so noncommunicative that the judges declared it to be in contempt of the tribunal.

Paulo Wright is still missing, of course, and the police have yet to admit his arrest, despite absolutely verifiable evidence from people who saw him in prison and despite all efforts by the World Council of Churches, Sao Paulo's Cardinal Arns and several US Senators to get this information. Paulo's brother, Jaime, a Presbyterian pastor and one of the leading Protestant churchmen of Brazil, has succeeded at least in convincing the State Department that his brother, unlike Jaime himself, never gave up or lost his US citizenship and thus has a clear claim on US consular assistance. Ambassador Jack Crimmins is said to be working on the matter, although at this date many fear that the only information forthcoming will be the location of Paulo's grave.

Another judge—the one civilian on the four-man military court that last May found Father Francois Jentel guilty of subversion—declared in his dissenting opinion that Jentel should have been commended for his work on behalf of the impoverished peasants and Indians of Santa Terezinha. But that didn't prevent the two captains and the major from sentencing the priest to ten years imprisonment. In Brazil today the judiciary is something less than a coequal branch.

About the church, there is no longer any ques-



tion. It is the principal, if not the sole, major voice of dissent within the country. If that were all, if the church were simply a voice protesting arbitrary arrest, disappearances and torture, the Government might have neutralized it by now by pulling out the plug, cutting off the church's communication. It has tried this for some time, chiefly by censoring the media, prohibiting reports on certain kinds of events and statements, fostering campaigns of defamation against persons like Dom Helder Camara (whose own speeches cannot be reported) and, more recently, forcibly closing down church media. The radio station of the world's largest archdiocese, Sao Paulo, was summarily "intervened" and shut down last November without explanation, after 17 years of effective and popular broadcasting.

Effective and popular is, of course, the point. The bishops have been doing more than wringing their hands at each new atrocity. The church has a particular, defined point of view, a vision of what people and society can and should be, and it still holds the patent on the most powerful symbol-system in Western (including Brazilian) society. Whether it is the piety of the masses or the theologically refined social awareness of the conscientized, the church and Christian theology are the shared experience of millions of otherwise diverse persons.

### The Church's Path to Confrontation

In Brazil, as perhaps nowhere else, church progressives have been gradually winning over great numbers of their coreligionists who had been timorous, accommodationist, otherworldly or triumphalist. They have been assisted in no small measure, it is true, by the sheer stupidity of a repressive government.

At the time of the 1964 military coup many churchmen openly welcomed the "Glorious Revolution" as a needed check on the country's plunge into chaos and Communism. Those who were less enthusiastic about the new regime adopted what has come to be called "The Polish Solution"—refraining from openly confronting the Government lest the church lose all power to influence even minor policies. Only a few bishops like Helder Camara were outspoken from the start.

Today, ten years later, the church leadership of the world's largest "Catholic country" is essentially divided into two groups, those who are strongly opposed to their Government's unjust and discriminatory policies and are determined to be defenders of human rights and those whose religious commitment and social analysis have led them to a stance of total and unalterable opposition to the system their Government represents. The Catholic right, in other words the group that produced the fascist movement for Tradition, Family and Property (TFP), has been marginalized as the center has ineluctably shifted left.

TFP is far from dead in Brazil, and it has been growing elsewhere, notably in the United States and Chile. (The new Chilean ambassador to the Holy See is a member of TFP.) But its voice no

longer resounds in the deliberations of the Brazilian Bishops Conference. That body and its regional components have now become the world's preeminent defenders of human rights and integral development. In terms of both the quantity and the quality of its utterances, the Brazilian church easily established an all-time record last year: Never has any national Christian body said so much about the demands of justice and the imperatives of the Gospel in a single year as did these bishops in 1973.

Many of these statements were completely spontaneous responses to a particular atrocity by the Government, such as the outpouring of support for Jentel's Bishop, Dom Pedro Casaldaliga, who was himself arrested or Cardinal Arns' stirring homily at the funeral of the slain student leader Vanucci Leme. But many more were part of a coordinated Campaign for Human Rights and Dignity, keyed to the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The campaign, conceived as an essentially pastoral and educational effort, was planned at the February meeting of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB), at which time the bishops passed a lengthy set of resolutions on human rights. It is a curious document in many ways, a shopping list gathering the varied concerns of the many bishops who approved it in its entirety. (The final item has to do with the individual's right to auricular confession!) It is a model of coalition politics at its best and a total consensus on the right of all Brazilians:

(1) "to take part in politics" (presently denied to all outside the ruling party and the Government-approved "opposition," the Democratic Movement Party);

(2) "the right of association, particularly in the matter of trade union freedoms;" (Strikes are virtually prohibited.)

(3) "the right of expression and information;" (All media are heavily censored.)

(4) "the right to legal defense;" (Habeas corpus has been suspended.)

(5) "the right of protest." (Peaceful assembly to redress grievances is forbidden.)

The bishops also affirmed the right and duty of the church to inform the public of instances of human rights violations, and they declared themselves "ready to accept the consequences of such action."

Spurring the bishops beyond where their own consciences might otherwise have carried them were two other documents presented to them at this meeting. One was a lengthy plea from the families of political prisoners, detailing the atrocities suffered by their husbands and children. The other was a letter signed by over 250 of the country's leading intellectuals, writers and artists affirming what much of the world press, including *The New York Times*, seemed willing to overlook at that time: torture and repression had not only continued into 1973 but had in fact increased.

From that point on episcopal documents tumbled over one another. The bishops and major superiors of the Northeast and the Central-West regions issued



pastoral letters on May 6 describing in exhaustive detail the social, economic and political situations of their areas and calling for radical transformations. For their troubles the printers of the first document, "I Have Heard the Cries of My People," were arrested and their plates destroyed, but the ubiquitous mimeograph machine continued to thwart the censor's vigilance. The Central-West letter, "The Marginalization of a People," was similarly confiscated and similarly reproduced clandestinely.

The seldom cited document from the Northern Region, "The Church and the Amazonian Offensive," was evidently never printed, but two mimeographed copies made their way to the US. (All three, incidentally, average 50 or more pages plus notes, representing considerable socio-economic research as well as theological reflection.) A collection of these—together with the more outstanding pastoral letters of Dom Fernando Gomes, Dom Pedro Casaldaliga, Dom Helder Camara, Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns, etc. and such CNBB documents as the paper prepared for the 1974 Roman Synod, "Panorama of the Church of Brazil in Recent Years,"—is now in preparation by International Documentation.

### The Government Strikes Back

All this incessant talk about human dignity and the rights of the poor has clearly proved to be more than the Government can tolerate. Most observers feel there will be a period of breathholding now that Geisel has come to power, a time of cautious testing before the next gauntlet is thrown down.

The pre-March 15 cleanup, however, sounded some ominous notes, reminiscent of the febrile anti-Communism that preceded and accompanied the recent Chile coup. Among those arrested in mid-January were persons associated with the Church's Basic Education Movement (MEB), including Maria Nilde Mascellani, one of the founders of vocational education in Brazil. MEB had been seen as one of the more radical forces in the early 1960's when Paulo Freire was still there. In recent years it acquired a tamer reputation of being similar to the Government's own literacy program, MOBIL, which was based on the earlier MEB with the social consciousness component carefully removed. Now, according to the Ministry of Education, MEB is a Communist tool and must be destroyed.

The Ministry issued its condemnation at the end of January, just days after Rio hosted a closed door summit conference of the Latin American extreme right. Their main conclusion, as reported in the press, was that the Catholic church was teeming with crypto-Communists and worse. General Pinochet sent a message to the conference declaring that "Chile can provide the best example of the reaction of a democratic country to the totalitarian attacks of international Communism." One would think that Brazil has provided example enough, but the memory of Santiago in September—arrests by the thousands, summary executions and talks of surgical

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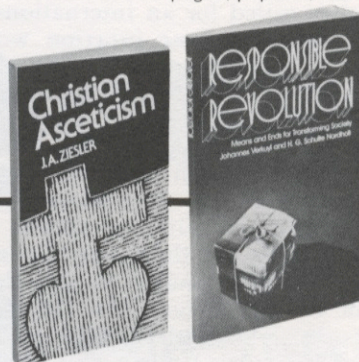
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excision of the Communist cancer—is cause for new worry. The fact that Chile, once the best refuge for people needing to leave Brazil and other dictatorships, is now a leading exporter of exiles only compounds the problem.

What hope there is lies chiefly in the sheer courage and determination of the Brazilian people, including now the solid majority of their bishops, and also in the searching eye of world public opinion. For almost five years church offices in the United States have been raising the issue of torture and terror in Brazil before their constituents and their Government. Evidence exists that it has had some effect; it has served continuous notice on Brasilia that the world is watching.

Now, with a strong statement from the US Catholic Conference administrative board, expressions of American church protest and solidarity have reached their highest and, one can hope, most effective level. When the US bishops passed their Brazil statement on February 13, it became their strongest and most specific human rights declaration ever. They joined their Brazilian brothers in castigating the economic injustice wrought by the so-called "Brazilian miracle" that has even further impoverished the bottom 40 percent of the people. They condemned torture and other forms of repression. And they called for an international tribunal on human dignity "whose function would be to judge, from an ethical point of view, the regimes that violate the basic rights of the human person, taking as a fundamental criterion for its judgments the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Further, the American bishops pledged themselves to search for "ever more effective ways of expressing our solidarity with the church in Brazil," including calling upon their own Government to reexamine its foreign policy in the light of the demands of human rights. The US Government, the bishops declared, "must continue to scrutinize Brazilian affairs closely and bring pressure to bear on the Brazilian authorities for the restoration of human rights."

Last year a somewhat ill-conceived suit was brought against the US Catholic Conference to enjoin it from lobbying without a license. If this latest foray of the bishops into the field of international affairs is meddling in politics, one can but hope they make the most of it. The lives and freedom of millions of people lie in the balance. □

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