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**Making History in the Trench City of Kwangju:  
The Dialectic of Class and Cultural Conflicts  
in South Korea**

presented by

Tae Shin Chung

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Sociology

  
Major professor

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**MAKING HISTORY IN THE TRENCH CITY OF KWANGJU:  
THE DIALECTIC OF CLASS AND CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN  
SOUTH KOREA**

VOLUME I

By

Tae Shin Chung

**A DISSERTATION**

Submitted To  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Department of Sociology

1991

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ABSTRACT

**MAKING HISTORY IN THE TRENCH CITY OF KWANGJU:  
THE DIALECTIC OF CLASS AND CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN  
SOUTH KOREA**

By

Tae Shin Chung

This study uses the concept of class to explain South Korean collective actions by offering a historical analysis of culture and class formation in the city of Kwangju. The distinctive economic and social changes that created conflicts in the South Korean society are described as 'late industrialization.' Modern Korean institutions of political party, government policy, education, corporation and trade union are termed a 'trench-system.' This study shows how this complex trench-system is related to the catastrophic economic crises and the development of working class consciousness in South Korea. This thesis first presents reviews of urban historical studies of class and culture relations, and then provides a historical overview of the making of the city trench-system in Kwangju. Then the relevance of the trench-system idea is explored through a detailed case study of political economic changes in Kwangju. The Kwangju Uprising is interpreted as a class-based social action possessing a radical culture in a rapidly changing capitalist society. The formation and mobilization of the Korean working class and its relations with the student movement and other democratic

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movements is also investigated. The study closes with a case examination of the people's struggle in Kwangju, Cholla Province of South Korea in May 1980.

This study is based on an investigation of city records in Kwangju, national archives, workers' writings, newspapers and magazines and is in an effort to develop a meaningful historical interpretation of class relations and collective action in South Korea.

**To the people who remember Kwangju.**

I wish to e  
Professor Richar  
encouragement t  
appreciation is  
Hamilton and C  
committee.

I thank all  
for their friend  
my studies at M.

Special th  
Fujita, and Mrs.  
and Korean mater  
brothers and sis

A final not  
geun (Cheon) for  
graduate studies

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Special thanks are given to Jin Sunwoo, Dr. Kuniko Fujita, and Mrs. Mok who took the time to translate Japanese and Korean materials into English. The support of my parents, brothers and sisters is also greatly acknowledged.

A final note of appreciation should go to my wife Ock-geum (Cheon) for her understanding and encouragement during my graduate studies.

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**MAKING HISTORY IN THE TRENCH CITY OF KWANGJU:  
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SOUTH KOREA**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. Problems: C

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Problems: Class and Culture**

This study explores the concept of class in South Korean collective actions and social movements by offering a historical analysis of culture and class formation in a case study of the city of Kwangju. The important question is how to conceptualize social action and social structure in Kwangju. My purpose is to provide a theoretical and methodological analysis that demonstrates that human beings possess the power collectively to make history.

This urban historical study will focus on specific features of the formation and mobilization of the Korean working class, and its relations with the student movement and other democratic movements. One element of class formation is the relation between the working class and bourgeoisie class. The relationships between them are of capital and labor in the workplace as well as in the community. The actors' structural capacity to achieve their aims is derived from their position within the relations of production.

A second issue involves the political mechanisms which control the conflicts between capital and labor. This includes state institutions, electoral mechanisms, ideological discourses, and government policies.

A third issue is the development of class consciousness.

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The consciousness of human beings can be expressed as "engaging in a range of intentional activities."<sup>1</sup> Intentional activities are beliefs and desires which cause agents to act. The intentional activities, of course, are not endorsed by an epistemological knowledge and meaning.

A fourth issue involves social movement relations, especially among student groups, political groups, and workers. Finally, this study will analyze the agency issue in social movements which has become a major concern among social movement theorists since the late 1970s. This issue is related to the role of non-class social movements in social changes in capitalist societies.

The important analytical tools in this study are class and culture from a historical viewpoint. History is the process through which human beings constantly make and remake their lives. Human activity, Marx says, takes place "under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."<sup>2</sup> The power agents in social structure are classes, which become contenders for political power. A strict structural definition of class as objective positions of ownership relations<sup>3</sup> excludes culture whereas Marx's presentation of class formation among the French peasantry includes it<sup>4</sup>. Class agents are not aggregates composed of individuals who are unacquainted with and unreceptive to each other. Class members share experience and behavior. The importance of social awareness and consciousness comes from



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## 2. Class Concept: A Historical and Cultural Definition

The constitutive principles of Thompson's class concept, in The Making of English Working Class (1966), are the logic of capitalist expropriation and the consequent intensification of exploitation in the capitalist relations of production. Productive relations created common class interests and common experiences among workers subordinated to capital. Thompson's approach to class as a complex composite succeeds in presenting the interplay among economic, political, and cultural processes which combined to create the English working class. He desires to escape a simple, economic definition of class. Thompson's definition of class has been heavily quoted. Direct quotations from Thompson's The Making of the English Class (1966) will be quite helpful in conveying the concept of class used in this study.

Thompson's class definition has several significant characteristics; first, it avoids defining class as a static structure or a category, organizing numbers and percentages in tables. Second, his class only exists in terms of 'relations of production' and in the process of exploitation, conflict, and struggle. Third, his class experiences traditions, values, ideas and institutions. Culture might be viewed as a synthesis of all these things. Thompson explains:

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"There is today an ever-present temptation to suppose that class is a thing. This was not Marx's meaning, in his own historical writing, yet this error vitiates much latter-day 'Marxist' writing. 'It', the working class, is assumed to have a real existence which can be defined almost mathematically - so many men who stand in a certain relation to the means of production(p. 10)"... "If we remember that class is a relationship, and not a thing, we cannot think in this way(p. 11)," ... "because class is a cultural as much as an economic formation...(p. 13)."<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, class is a historical happening which is based on experiences of interest conflicts in productive relations.

"class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences(inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born - or enter involuntarily."<sup>6</sup>

Fifth, class is social, economic, and cultural formation which can only historically exist in relation to other classes. Finally, the awareness of interest relations, social experiences, traditions, and value systems in action and consciousness occur among those who have a disposition to behave as a class.

In the "The Peculiarities of the English" in The Poverty of Theory & Other Essays(1978), Thompson says:

"Class is a social and cultural formation(often finding institutional expression) which cannot be defined abstractly or in isolation, but only in terms of relationship with other classes; and ultimately the

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definition can only be made in the medium of time - that is, action and reaction, change and conflict. ... But class itself is not a thing it is happening."<sup>7</sup>

Class changes its nature and significance as society changes. Edsforth(1987) says that class is a "process or long series of events, not a static category or structure."<sup>8</sup> The class development occurs out of specific circumstances in which class consciousness and class conflict occur. The exact form of class in a society is determined by historical evolution of the country.

Thompson emphasizes the consciousness component of his complex notion of class: "Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and, in the end, this is its only definition"<sup>9</sup>. Thompson's composite view of class becomes a 'making itself'; class is only historically real and effective when its key constituent element, class consciousness, has been fashioned. Consciousness is the most important point, at least from the standpoint of concrete class relations.

"Class consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas and institutional forms. If experiences appears as determined, class-consciousness does not. We can see a logic in the responses of similar occupational groups undergoing similar experiences, but we can not predicate any law. Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places but never in just the same way."<sup>10</sup>

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time. Identifying class is possible through describing patterns of social, ideological, and institutional change as they emerge from historical events.

Thompson's (1966) approach sees class embedded in culture. Class formation is extended to the creation of dispositions of either a class or nonclass kind.<sup>11</sup> Class formation is the making of a class that is capable of acting in accordance with its interests. The process of class and group formation occurs through historical happenings. Class formation includes experiences of conflict and struggle arising out of social relations of production. Thompson's view derives from actual historical case studies.

### 3. Problem Approach

In the last several decades theoretically forceful analyses of class and culture relations in the U.S. have also been written by Alan Dawley (1976), Ira Katznelson (1981), and Ronald Edsforth (1987). All three are community studies and two focus on an industry: the shoe industry by Dawley and the automobile industry by Edsforth. These studies take common macro- and micro-historical approaches, make connections between economics and politics, employ a subjective class concept and historical materialism to understand class consciousness and collective action, the social movement of labor relations, and conflicts between capital and labor. More



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importantly, they share the class concept of E. P. Thompson, and a critique of electoral politics and bourgeoisie discourse. In short, they all place human agency at the very center of historical change.

In addition, even though they deal with different periods of American history, from the 18th to mid-20th centuries, they came to almost the same conclusions about the failures of social change in American society. That is, the American working class has been less class conscious and has less desire for social reconstruction than European working class because of electoral politics, a community-based emphasis in social movements and mass consumerism. These studies also employ concepts to interpret history, one of the three research strategies in historical sociology discussed by Skocpol(1984). Their methods are identical in so far as they use concepts to develop a meaningful historical interpretation.

However, the three studies have also taken somewhat different approaches to the interpretation of urban history. Dawley(1976) emphasizes the inherited character and culture of the preindustrial past, the transition from merchant to industrial capitalism, and political relations through parties and elections. Katznelson(1981) distinguishes the relations between the politics of work and the politics of community, and he emphasizes that community-based social movements haven't succeeded because of the split in the

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practical consciousness of workers between workplace and community. Edsforth(1987) emphasizes the development of mass consumer culture, science and technology, and a business class that was always more conscious of its class interests than the working class. He also pays attention to the political consequences of the second industrial revolution.

These authors' historical definition of class can be applied to South Korea but the experience of colonialism and neocolonialism must also be connected to class formation and cultural change in South Korea. As a third world country, Korean class formation was frequently confused with national contradictions. Class issues were hidden within the national independence and liberation movement. Therefore, additional analytical instruments must be introduced for a complete understanding of the Korean situation, including intellectuals' and students' role in social movements. A Korean liberation theology, the Minjung theology, was uniquely formed by the influence of Korean traditional beliefs and ideas, and is somewhat different from Liberation Theology in Latin America. Korean students, as intellectuals, emphasized the educational role in social transformation. Paulo Freire(1970) issued a powerful plea for human equality to demonstrate through educational action the achievement of a social order in which the majority of mankind may participate in determining its social-institutional environment. Freire's pedagogy was to be applied to the concrete realities via a

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However, the change agency problem is very important for the theoretical and strategic bases of a social movement. Pluralistic movements, that is, non-class social movements, have become an issue for theories of class-based social change through labor movements. Wood(1986) argues class struggles were used as a means to achieve political power rather than to make an equal society. She criticizes electoral politics to gain votes for political power rather than to confront the inequalities of the capitalist system and state policies. Her criticism is relevant to the student and democratic movements in Korea.

In sum, the proposed study will address class issues in South Korean collective actions and social movements by offering a historical analysis of culture and class formation in a case study of the city of Kwangju.

However, unlike the studies by Dawley, Katznelson, and Edsforth which share a pessimistic view of social change in American society, this study shows the development of working class consciousness and interests for cultural and political reasons. The dialectical understanding of culture and class will help illuminate the history of Korean people in their everyday lives.

## II. CLASS AND CO

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## **II. CLASS AND CULTURE**

### **1. Theory and Case Studies**

I will briefly review what the 5 authors (Dawley, Katznelson, Edsforth, Freire and Wood) argue in their studies and show how they can contribute to the proposed study of Kwangju.

#### **a. Alan Dawley's Analysis of Electoral Politics**

Dawley, in Class and Community(1976), shows how classes, industrial capitalist and proletarian, are constituted and at the same time constitute themselves. He presents the development of industrial capitalism, through the centrality of cultural creativity to class formation and consciousness. And he emphasizes the importance of traditions of struggle and the communication of shared memories to successive generations of industrial workers trying to organize against their oppressors. His approach escapes paradigmatic limitations.

Dawley provides us with a graphic account of how deskilling, social disorganization, poverty, the growth of bureaucratic public administration, and repressive city apparatuses(police), as well as trade unions and radical consciousness, are all consequences of the encroachment of industrial capitalism on traditional forms of community and



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Dawley places class struggle and industrial revolution at the center of historical inquiry. Dawley also details the impact of changing economic organization and technology on shoe makers, giving the labor process its rightful prominence in the historical process. He examines the workers at work, as well as work changes which often provoked responses. The artisans' reaction to their loss of status and influence was expressed as "Equal Rights", by which they meant the fair distribution of wealth, power, and status among those who contributed to the community's economy. Nevertheless, the power of capitalists accumulated, and with the introduction of the sewing machine, the appearance of the factory system during the 19th century was made possible.

Dawley does not explain the relative absence of socialist consciousness by recourse to theories of possibilities for social mobility and accessibility to property ownership in American society. Rather his explanation lies in the early established formal democracy of the American political system, which meant that struggles against declining job control and for better wages and working conditions did not coalesce into challenges to the state in the first half of the 19th century.

Dawley concludes that Lynn shoemakers with a long history of trade unionism and militancy rejected the success myth. He states "electoral politics, not faith in occupational success or property ownership, was the main safety valve of working-

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class discontent".<sup>12</sup>

The political system generated mechanisms for resolving class conflict. This went beyond merely the ability of the electoral system to provide upward social mobility to a few working class leaders removing indigenous working class leadership. Dawley indeed says that had there been better democracy in America, the labor movement would have attained the pristine Marxist purity he desires. Formal democracy prevented the emergence of a Marxian type of class consciousness, so it was the major obstacle to the attainment of labor's interests.

The important implications of Dawley's study to the proposed Kwangju research are: first, he has established an agenda for future discussions of class consciousness, that is, the consideration of electoral politics now challenges mobility theory and property ownership for center stage. Secondly, the late industrialization of South Korea reveals similar cultural conflicts to the Lynn case. Dawley shows how the later organizations of the shoemakers in factory production were decisively influenced by a working class that largely originated in the preindustrial culture of individual artisans and journeymen before the coming of factory production in the second half of the 19th century. In contrast to the Lynn shoe industry, which arose out of a previous system in which production took place in the

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household and a culture of sturdy independence, factory production in Kwangju, which initially was largely transplanted by Japanese colonialism, had to rely mainly on a work force of formerly independent farm households, and to deal with workers who perceived the factory routines as newly required encroachments on established rural customs of work and life. Just as in many agrarian movements throughout the world, peasants were led to revolt not so much by vision of a better future as by the memory of past rights and communities that were denied in the present, so Kwangju workers were sustained in their resistance to the deprivations of industrial production by the memory of, and the partial persistence of, a working class culture that involved them in communal solidarity. This argument will be demonstrated by the recollection of colonial experiences during the high economic development stage in the 1960s and 1970s and to peoples' comparison of the Kwangju struggle to the Korean war and to cruel situations of colonial rule.

#### **b. Ira Katznelson's Distinction of Work and Community**

Katznelson, in City Trenches (1981), traces the separation of workplace from community and home. The American working class was formed as labor in the workplace; outside work, non-class identifications and institutions dominated. Therefore, the workplace experience of class and the communal experience

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of race and ethnicity were distinctively separated. It is the sharply divided consciousness between the politics of work and the politics of community which has served to protect the core arrangements of U.S. capitalism from political challenge. This is the reason why Americans do not define all political issues in class terms and why Americans do not have working-class parties seeking to control the state.

Katznelson's main concern is how capitalist forces influencing class and community are molded through national institutions and ideological and cultural traditions. He argues that radical community politics are in vogue and that activists and theorists are turning to the place of residence rather than to the place of work as the main locus of insurgent activity.

He concludes that neither structural explanations nor community-based strategies for social change can succeed without comprehending America's special patterns of class formation, the divide between work and community in American class formation and the split in the practical consciousness of workers between the politics of work and that of community by racial and ethnic divisions.

The significant implications of Katznelson's study to the proposed study are: the distinction between work politics and community politics, and theoretical arguments over the historical analysis of social relations and politics in class



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First, Katznelson theoretically looks into the relations between patterns of class formation and the consequences of urban mass movements. He criticizes mechanistic fixation on class levels of inquiry, the mode of production/capitalist accumulation at the heuristic level, because it does not take sufficient account of historical contingencies of class formation and urban mass movements. He also argues that approaching it by social relations of labor markets and working class formation, because it only emphasizes workplace relations, is too narrow. To completely understand class politics, he argues for the study of both community and workplace class formation and the relationship between the two. Finally, he says we need to study the historically contingent process by which people in the real world develop dispositions that allow social relations/politics to be defined in class formation terms. This argument offers the theoretical framework for the proposed Kwangju study.

Second, his distinction of work and community can be applied to the historical explanation of defeatism in South Korean social movements. The distinctive element in South Korea is not just the experience of Japanese colonialism and therefore a bourgeoisie struggle and coalescence with a nationalistic nascent working class. An additional critical factor under neocolonialism was provided by Korean law and culture which restricted free association and the labor

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movement during the late industrialization era. There is also a lack of political coherence and clear working class divisions because of government's ideological propaganda, the cold-war, electoral politics, and regionalism. Social movements in South Korea seem to be based on regional institutions, territorial affinities, churches, universities, associations, and political parties, that is, community-based rather than workplace-based strategies. Most social movement organizations were highly centralized and showed regionally different dispositions according to their historical experiences, ideologies, and cultures. This decades-old pattern of community-based social movements was challenged at the workplace in the 1980s by the united worker's movement. Labor unions and political parties could hardly have succeeded in defining the experience of industrialization in wholly class terms. As a result, regional, community-based social movements, even within the labor movement, were shaped by non-class issues such as national reunification and national security.

**c. Edsforth's Analysis of Cultural Consensus and Class Integration**

According to Edsforth's (1987) argument, the working class was never revolutionary at least in Flint, Michigan. Rather the working class was always reformist, wedded to the dual

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illusions of electoral politics and business unionism that bound it to the capitalist system. His historical case study of Flint, Michigan, shows Flint auto workers were already integrated into a consensual culture of mass consumption by the mid-1920s. Mass consumerism, he insinuates, moved beyond the middle class and reached into the factory to an extent Marx could not have envisioned. The trade-off of alienated work for commodified leisure brought about an acquiescent work force. That is why a self conscious working class has failed to organize revolutionary groups in America.

The most important difference between contemporary advanced industrial capitalism and the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century is the way the second industrial revolution lessened fundamental class tensions by transforming the content of working people's lives by establishing new patterns of everyday experience.

According to Edsforth's argument, the new interests in both politics and unionism under the Great Depression and the class consciousness that emerged around the political party and the union(CIO) owed more to the resentments generated by withdrawal of workers' access to consumer culture than to desires for social reconstruction. Most workers did not share the leftists' vision of social transformation. He links the political cultures that emerged among workers in the second industrial revolution with a broader discussion of underlying changes in twentieth century American capitalism.

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Edsforth's work gives two thoughtful implications for the proposed study: the political consequences of the second industrial revolution and the necessity for a dialectical understanding of culture and class.

First, the prosperity generated by the industrial revolution produced social and political conditions such as business unionism and institutionalization of welfare capitalism, and the culture of abundance among workers. The political parties (for example, liberal Democrats in the 1930s) easily coopted the emerging working class and prevented it from finding its own, presumably more radical, political identity. This explanation gives an understanding of the opposition parties and their leaders in South Korea, especially after the 1987 Great Strikes. The political culture during the late industrialization had been a repeat of cooptation by the bourgeoisie. Strong upward mobility, plutocratic politics, and autocratic politics dominated the political culture.

Second, more importantly, Edsforth's own subjectivist and historicist approach to class overshadows the true nature and extent of class conflict because of the absence of dialectical thinking about culture and class conflicts. This brings into question Edsforth's epistemology. Also, a synthetic approach to the subjective and objective understanding of class should be introduced. Without this, the future of the social change seems pessimistic at least in America, like Edsforth argues.



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His humanistic approach against deterministic historiography sees history as the actions of people based on their experiences and beliefs. His class is defined, under E. P. Thompson's influence, as a process whereby people come to feel and articulate the identity of their interests.

Nevertheless, Edsforth's subjectivist argument underestimates the radical nature of worker actions. There is further need to understand the objective position of the working class in the production process that necessitated certain measures to defend their interests. This is the key element of class politics which I am going to adopt as a key concept. Even though working class' intentions and beliefs were not revolutionary, their actions were revolutionary in the Kwangju struggle. They took arms and requested changes in power relations. They didn't accept conciliatory resolutions. Rather they expelled the petty-bourgeoisie from the Citizen's Committee. This militancy came from their common interests and purposes in capitalist relations of production and exploitation. Edsforth's work seems to take the side of bourgeoisie technologism and its effects on consumption rather than the technical process of work and the relations of exploitation in production. This is quite different from Thompson's class concept.

This study will argue that an examination not only of some aspects of the culture of capitalist consumption, but also of production and the emergence of institutional

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supports, such as state regulated labor relations, pattern bargaining, and pseudo-Keynesian planned economic policy is necessary. Just looking at what people believed and felt is not enough for understanding the underlying dynamics of class. Because the formation of classes and class conflict is not merely a question of what people believe but also of what they are, the positions they occupy in historical structures of politics and economics, and the opportunities and demands for action that these provide. Therefore, this study will synthesize structural and historical human agency approaches.

#### **d. Paulo Freire and the Role of Intellectuals in Social Change**

Paulo Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed(1970), paid attention to the phenomena of the oppressor and the oppressed and traced the paths of oppression to the basic dehumanization of man and society. Given a situation in which oppression exists, there can be little motivation for basic humanization and freedom. To be able to restore to man his basic sense of humanization, it is necessary to develop a pedagogy of the oppressed; and that begins with education. The purpose of education is to make the individual responsible for his own freedom. However, freedom and humanization cannot be attained until the individual discovers the oppressive elements within himself. The role of change agent, intellectuals, is to be an ally in this search. As he stated, the oppressed must be

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their own example in the struggle for their redemption, so all agents such as racial, ethnic, and economic self-help groups can become agents in each country's different situations. For Freire, it is within the struggle itself that true humanization takes place. On a society level, the act of liberation would also benefit the oppressor. So, true humanization must eventually liberate the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

Freire's argument has important meaning for this study not because of his contribution towards social relations but by his emphasis towards the change agents' role in education process. He incorporates a dialogical educational system into his pedagogy of the oppressed. The process of problem posing is one of student and teacher becoming critical co-investigators. Students learn from the dialogue process. In the process of involvement as equals, both the teacher and student unite in their common humanity. He calls the process of humanization, 'conscientization'. Men emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality as it is unveiled. Intervention in reality - historical awareness itself - thus represents a step forward from emergence and results from the conscientization of the situation. In the deepening of the attitude of awareness, man codifies the relevancy of education to his personal interest.

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Korea to help factory workers/tenement dwellers expand their awareness of life via their own experiences. In subsequent group dialogues, the conscientization of the situation was attempted. The role of change agent in fostering conscientization became one of expanding the individual or group consciousness. So the oppressed was understood in relationship to change agents. However, the technique of conscientization depends greatly on an equality that seems difficult to establish. Without equality, dialogue cannot take place, and therefore the revolutionary qualities of a pedagogy of the oppressed are lost. It shall be the change agent who serves as a potential revolutionary theoretician in any pedagogy of the oppressed. But the supposed change agents (students) in South Korea seem not to be representative of a true dialogue.

e. E. M. Wood's View of Thompson's Working Class and Class Politics

Wood, in The Retreat from Class(1986), criticized the new social movement theorists(New True Socialists) and emphasized class politics instead of electoral politics. In her critiques of their characteristic exclusion of exploitation and emphasis on technologism in the labor process, she emphasized E. P. Thompson's argument about making a working class from different kinds of workers through new forms of



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organization and consciousness. Thompson's(1966) approach starts from relations of production and exploitation. Wood argues, "he(Thompson) shows that despite the ostensible differences between 'pre-industrial' and 'industrial' forms of work, these different kinds of workers were subject to the same logic of capitalist expropriation and the consequent intensification of exploitation which characterized the period, creating common class interests and common experiences among workers subordinated to capital."<sup>13</sup> Wood seems to find many Marxist ideas about the working class as a main force of change in the struggle of capital and labor, the exploitation of the workers, antagonistic class relations, and the role of the state as an organ of class oppression in Thompson's writings. In short, Wood finds the core of a Marxist strategy for social change in Thompson's arguments.

Wood's position on class struggle is like some other scholars, such as Norman Geras(1987 & 1988). Objective class position is the primary historical determinant of social and political identities and alignments, the relations of production or economic structure have explanatory primacy, and the metaphor of base and superstructure is a theoretically viable one.

The working class has an objective interest in social change. There are structural tendencies towards unification of the working class through struggle for change. The abolition of capitalist production relations is the crucial

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## 1. Summary of Research

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Wood's argument is very important for judging previously existing social movements in South Korea and will be vindicated through the historical experience of Kwangju uprising. Most importantly, her argument implies strategic suggestions about the kind of movement for the social change that is possible.

## **2. Summary of Research Questions**

Research questions prompted by the stated theoretical considerations on the formation of class and social relations can be summarized as follows:

1. How did the colonial/neocolonial experience and Late Industrialization affect the capital-labor relation and the social movements in the city of Kwangju?

2. Why did the city of Kwangju, a relatively backward city, emerge as a site of class conflict with the kind of class-conscious culture that is characteristic of industrial capitalist cities?

This study will focus on specific features of working class formation, mobilization, and relations with a student (intellectuals) movement. The problem of class formation involves investigating the relations between working class and bourgeoisie. The social relationships between them are capital/labor relations in the workplace as well as in the

community. This study will, therefore, explore the internal material conditions of the city through industrialization and economic development.

The second problem concerns institutions, especially political mechanisms, which control conflicts between capital and labor. Of concern here is state control over labor and the state role in politics and economics, especially in the spatial allocation of segments of the labor process and political process. This includes state institutions, electoral mechanisms, ideological discourses, and policies.

The third problem is one of revealing the development of class consciousness. This study will see the emergence of working class consciousness through the mutual connections of student and labor movements in the city. It is also concerned with the conflict between capitalist culture and traditional culture in workplace and community.

Finally, the agent issue in social movements, a major concern among Marxists students since the late 1970s, will be treated in the analysis of the Kwangju case. The focal point is the role of non-class social movements in bringing about social change. Two positions can be distinguished: the "new social movements" position and the "class struggle" position. The aim is to show why the labor problem is serious in capitalist development and why the labor movement might be located at the center of social movements, and workers might be the main forces of social change.

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### 3. Methodology

The method which I want to employ, if it can be described as such, is a progressive Thompsonian research program, because this study employs the Thompson's concept of class. According to Burawoy(1989), the 'methodology of scientific research program' by Imre Lakatos is based upon the assertion that theories can not be abandoned even if they are refuted by facts because "science develops not through refuting theories but by refuting refutations or at least refuting some refutations and ignoring others."<sup>14</sup> What I called 'progressive Thompsonian' means that the hard core of Thompson's postulations can't be refuted. Rather one attempts to explore anomalies by employing or combining auxiliary theories, which hopefully expand the explanatory and predictive power of Thompson's core concept. This is what Lakatos calls a positive heuristic. The reason why I prefer this methodology is that it seems not to rely on fixed assumptions about universal contexts.

The research strategy in this study is "using concepts to develop a meaningful historical interpretation".<sup>15</sup> The proposed study will rely on Thompson's conceptualization of class as a starting point for an interpretation of modern Korean history.

Methodologically, I intend to combine two theoretical perspectives; a structural analysis and dialectical analysis

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of the historical process. Dialectical analysis of both the progressive and reactionary potential in Korean society could be combined with an analysis of why the reactionary structural potential was stronger in mid-twentieth century in Korean society. Structural analysis could help us understand what types of people under what conditions we can expect to use cultural resources toward reactionary and not progressive ends. It will clearly show how precapitalist culture has motivated anticapitalist class consciousness. It is my intention to combine Thompson's dialectical interpretations of cultural traditions with structural understandings of economic and social conditions.

My methodology is a micro as well as macro approach to history. History demands a willingness to narrow the scope of research so that individual voices can be heard and social relationships studied. The research demands are formidable, and also request exceptional tenacity. Rich veins of evidence must be mined, especially from national archives and from various record collections of the working class and other people of Cholla province and the city of Kwangju. Several interviews were needed to get oral histories from struggle participants and Night School students.

For generalizations from the particular community to society at large, it is essential to ask at some point how representative this community really is. The city of Kwangju was chosen for the representativeness of its social conflicts,

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The important methodological element in this study is the concrete conceptualization and categorization of useful terms such as bourgeoisie, working class, intellectuals, students, and lumpenproletariat. However, these actors are not static and fixed but active and dynamic.

In order to reveal the causation and contradiction in economic, social and political life, the investigation of history starts from the concrete theory of combined and unequal development. The revelation of the characteristics of the combined and unequal development of Korean capitalism is a defining process of base and superstructural terms. For the investigation of people's actions and the capital logic of profit making, the economic crisis theory is employed. This crisis is manifested in an absolute fall in production volume, underfilling of production capacities, greater unemployment, inflation, disorder of monetary and financial system, etc. The principal cause of economic crisis is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private form of appropriation. In short, methodologically all factors and variables are transmuted into procedural terms, that is continuously redefined and intensified in each historical phase, and they re-enter into structural analysis. This methodology is important because methodology does shape theory

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The class formation, according to E. P. Thompson, is a process of self-making, although under conditions which are a given. Therefore, we can imagine that in different places and in different times 'there are degree of class' in spite of the shared 'logic of process' of the mode of production. Ira Katznelson makes this point clear: "The character of ... the interplay between a set of givens produced principally by the historical and spatial logic of capitalist development on the one hand and class traditions and cultures on the other is ... distinctive about the dynamics of class and class conflict in any single national society."<sup>17</sup> This explanation allows that Korean working class might be more class conscious than American working class even though the degree of capitalist development is low. This also makes it possible to explain why the urban armed uprising occurred in Kwangju and not in Seoul or in Ulsan, which were more industrialized and had a larger group of workers.

The methodology is important to shape theory and its justification. The scientific research program gives more power to explanation, validation and prediction of history and is more open to expansion to other theories and auxiliary concepts.

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#### **4. Specific Questions and Research Sources**

Addressing each of the research questions, through chapters and sections in dissertation, involves several specific analytical steps and more delicate smaller questions.

The first problem, as summarized earlier, is related to the historical background of the city of Kwangju including social relations, political economy, and class relations in the city. The first problem has three related questions.

**(1) How did the colonial/neocolonial experience and Late Industrialization affect the capital-labor relation and social movements in the city of Kwangju?**

**A. How did local economic development in Kwangju; the industrialization process, uneven development, and changes in industry structure, associate with the colonial and neocolonial experience and the organized forms of various social movements?**

**B. What kinds of state policies were employed against labor and social movement groups, and what were their effects on the self-consciousness of people in local communities as well as workplaces?**

**C. How did the local class structure, relatively large petty-bourgeoisie and small proletarians, and political regime changes associate with the compositions, activities, and limitations of community-based social movements?**

The legacies of Japanese colonialism(1910-45) and U.S. military government(1945-1947), after independence, have thoroughly defined the social, political and economic development in South Korea. Industrial structure and ownership and its relations to Korean workers have affected the class formation. The bureaucratic systems including

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The peculiar characteristics of South Korean development can be said to be 'Late Industrialization.' It is the forcefully concentrated experience of First and Second industrial revolutions in a short period. It has brought high economic growth in a short period by employing a planned economy, an efficient financial policy, an export-oriented world market strategy etc. The preferential disposal of Japanese-owned property in the 1940s, the foreign aid in the 1950s, foreign loan, commercial loan, bank loans in the 1960s and 1970s were planned and distributed by the central government. The planned industrialization was skewed towards politically powerful persons, enterprises, and regions. The tight connections between politics and economics resulted in alienated regions and regional unequal development.

The Korean economy reacts very sensitively to world economic crises; world economic recessions and oil crises. World economic changes and the reactions of the Korean economy, and its political alignments and political regime changes seems closely related. The relations of Kwangju political economy to the global and national changes is an interesting question. However, very few data sources on the local economy is available except local government statistical data. There was no special economic newspaper or magazine in Kwangju and the local newspapers were under austere press

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ensorship and the ownership of business class. The Statistical Yearbook of Kwangju, The History of the City of Kwangju and The Far Eastern Economic Review are the best resources for studying the relations of world economy and national economy to political issues in the city of Kwangju.

The politically and economically integrated ruling class established a bureaucratic authoritarian government based on military, police and other institutions and foreign imperialist support. The state apparatus has been maintained through the politics of liberal suffrage. Electoral politics was the main conceptual weapon against various movement groups. The movement groups have been changed and managed by electoral strategies. The 1971 presidential election shows the false-conscious of electoral politics expresses in theoretical and strategic arguments by social movement groups.

The most important data sources on this problem are Korean government statistical data, government documents, archives, newspapers and periodicals, including:

Government Data Documents and Archives: Statistical Yearbook of Kwangju, Report on Mining and Manufacturing Census(Survey), Municipal Yearbook of Korea, The History of Kwangju City, The Present Condition of Enterprise, Survey Report on Establishment Labor Conditions, Report on Occupational Wage Survey, The Statistics of Industrial Injury in Manufacturing Factory, The Organization Rate of Trade Union in Kwangju Area, The Statistics of Labor Disputes in Kwangju Area, Korea Industrial Estate Directory, Yearbook of Labor Statistics, Production Urbanization Movement.

Newspapers and Periodicals: The Chonnam Daily Newspaper, Chonnam Newspaper, The Chonnam National University Weekly, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Far Eastern Economic Review, Business Week, The Nation, Time,

The second  
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In May 1980  
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Newsweek, The New Yorker.

The second problem is directly related to the urban uprising of Kwangju, and will focus on the formation of the working class in relation to tradition, culture, values and institutions. Agency issues and movement relations will be discussed in this section. This problem also has three related questions.

(2) Why did the city of Kwangju, a relatively backward city, emerge as a site of class conflict with the kind of class-conscious culture that is characteristic of industrial capitalist cities?

A. What were the characteristics of the local industries, what kinds of conflict existed between capital and labor and what were the workplace cultures and workers' behaviors? How were the conflicts solved locally through negotiation and cultural consensus?

B. Were there any conflicts between the precapitalist cultures, such as communalism, rural populism, familism, and the newly emerging capitalist cultures, such as individualism, consumerism, pragmatism, and foreign cultures?

C. What were the characteristics of various social movements, and especially how can we define the relations between student movement and labor movement? Why did the working class lose its hegemony and potentialities for social change?

In May 1980 the most dramatic social movement in modern Korean history took place in Kwangju, South Cholla Province: the armed uprising against military authoritarian government rule. I am going to organize this part of class and cultural change in the city of Kwangju around that event, explaining its underlying economic, social, and political origins and its

consequences.

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The "Production Urbanization Movement" by small-medium local business class in Kwangju initiated the local industrial estate establishments in the late 1970s and this was due to their economic and political uneasiness about continued capital accumulation.

Student movement groups drawing on Freire's pedagogy penetrated into the worker class. A night school(1978), "Wild Fire" was established in Kwangju by a group of Chonnam National University student for the purpose of factory workers and community inhabitants' education. I am choosing this school as a case study of the relations of students movement and workers. And I will analyze the development of worker's consciousness in the "Wildfire Anthology", a collection of factory workers' writings. This is excellent material for looking into workers' consciousness, culture and behaviors. This hand-written collection illustrates clearly the workers' world-view.

The Late Industrialization of South Korea gave birth to contradictions between cultures. The capitalistic consumer culture and individualism collided with the traditional culture of familism and communalism. In addition, a radical culture, with historical traditions of resistance, religions such as Tonghak, added to the economic and political alienation and helped to develop a consciousness of regional defeat. More importantly, it will be emphasized that the

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radical culture, historical traditions of resistance, music and literature traditions, rural populist culture, and historical cultural peculiarities of the community replaced the relative absences of working class in the objective class structure of the city of Kwangju and its class consciousness in the armed struggle. Cultural creativity linked to class formation and consciousness, traditions of struggle and the communication of shared community memories(experiences) can be traced through the study of music, art, common sentiment and religion.

I will examine the consciousness of industrial workers during the armed urban struggle, comparing the behavioral differences among workers, student groups, intellectuals, lumpenproletariat, and various other movement groups. Various pamphlets shows the attitudes of the working class towards the uprising.

The main sources in this section are pamphlets, Wildfire Night School documents, trade union publications, and video tape documents.

**Pamphlets:**

Fighter Bulletin and other 65 more pamphlets and leaflets, The Critique of Night School, The Prospect of Student Movement, Guiding Post of Our Education, Wage Struggle Prompt Report, Let's Think Together, Education Edition.

**Night School Documents:**

WildFire Anthology, Vol. 1, 2, 3, (Nov. 1978, Jan. 1979, Feb. 1980), Three Collections of Wildfire Night School Students' and Teachers' Writings, <Wildfire Night School> Wildfire Student-Teacher Discussion Daily Records) 1979, 10. 20 - 1980, 4. 21.

Who Are the Ignorant?: A Collective Creative Work, A scenario of a play which was played by worker-students.

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A Song of Resurrection(revival), A dialogue script of a 35 mm film which deals with Kwangju Struggle, <Sae Bitt Film Workshop>.

Kwang Cheon Wildfire Night School, Introductory statement of Wildfire night school, July 19, 1977.

The Daily Records of School Affairs, Vol. I & II.

The Research Report of Kwangju Industrial Estate Situations, 1979.

Korean <Textbook of Korean by 'Wildfire' Night School>

Chinese <Textbook of Chinese by 'Wildfire' Night School>

Trade Union Publications:

Mt. Mudeung <Asia Motors Co. Trade Union>

SaeUmTeo <Rocket Electricity Co. Trade Union>

Chonnam Textile Co. News Letter <Chonnam Textile Co.>

Asia NaeBangBul News <Asia Motors Co., Dept. of Labor Management>

Asia Motors <Asia Motors Co. Inc.>

Video Tape Documents:

Report of Kwangju, Kwangju Speaks, Song of Mother, The Fifth Republic, Korea: The Unknown War.

This study will shed new light on the significance of Late Industrialization in establishing class conflicts and actions in modern Korean politics and culture.

This study will divide 20th Korean history(1910-1980s) into several short and significant periods; colonialism, neocolonialism, capitalist development, first economic crisis and second economic crisis. And I shall examine the cultural consequence of class conflict and its economic and political relationships of each period. The Kwangju Uprising shall be interpreted in that context; a class-based social action with a radical culture tradition in a rapidly changing capitalist society.

The social movements before the Kwangju Uprising had been based on community, while workplace has since emerged as the

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most contradictory place in Korean society. Working class consciousness could have created a class-conscious movement for progressive social change. However, it has also shown that the obstacles are standing in the way of such movement; the political process of electoral politics, political parties, government institutions and policies have tried to deter the independent collective identity of the working class.

A difficult problem is that most data sources are originally written in Korean. Workers' poems, essays, letters, diaries etc. had to be translated into English. This is important for the understanding of the worker's consciousness and world view. But it is difficult to maintain the artistic merits in translations.

This study has important sociological meaning in that it attempts to synthesize social structure and human agency through the study of consciousness and history. The connections between macro- and micro-history as well as subjective and objective class are also explored.

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### **III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CITY OF KWANGJU IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

This chapter deals with how the city of Kwangju was formed under colonialism and neocolonialism and how the city developed during the Late Industrialization period. How these processes historically affected the capital-labor relation and social movements in the city is also investigated.

#### **1. City 'Trench-System'<sup>18</sup>**

In the historical study of a city most interdisciplinary approaches include economic, social, political and geographical dimensions. Urban history as a field of social history focuses on the environment, uneven development, political behavior and group experiences. Most neo-Marxist urban frameworks suggest that the analysis of the urban processes must include the logic of the process of capital accumulation and the role of the local state in organizing and reorganizing the conflictual relationship between community and accumulation.

Katznelson's(1981) approach in his New York City study is political, economic, social, geographical and historical. Unlike most urbanists, however, he addresses questions of production and workplace relations. He emphasizes the "radical separation in people's consciousness, speech and activity of the politics of work from the politics of

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community."<sup>19</sup> His urban history reveals that workers' share a heritage of material and cultural trauma, which provides a potential for collaboration. By also emphasizing the geographical factor, he shows how capitalist development involves the spatial patterning of both workplace and community. He, therefore, understands class as having "been lived and fought as a series of partial relationships," and as something that has "been experienced and talked about as only one of a number of competing bases of social life."<sup>20</sup>

Katznelson describes the capitalist urban system as composed of city trenches made up of three main elements: "trade unions at the work place; a quite separate decentralized party system; and an array of new government services that were delivered to citizens in their residential communities."<sup>21</sup> He analyses each sector - work, politics (party), and policy(government) - in his study of Manhattan. At key historical moments Katznelson shows the emergence of new kinds of links between a developing working class and the dominant class; between capital and labor at work, and between the state and workers in their neighborhoods.

Katznelson's analytical framework can be summarized as follows:

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political party	politics	community	suffrage, election
government	policy	home	service, welfare
trade union	work	workplace	political party

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Katznelson(1981) argues that the organization of labor into trade unions at the workplace, a separate decentralized party system, and governmental services delivered on a residential basis have separately affected the American people. He demonstrates how a disconnection between workplace and community politics emerged historically and how it continues to thwart efforts at urban social change. This is his explanation of why urban social movements in the 1960s were doomed to fail in restructuring American society.

After the establishment of the factory system resulted in the physical separation of the home and workplace, political machines organized workers at their place of residence in terms of ethnic identities, and unions organized the working class in the work place. In America, not only the physical separation between workplace and home, but also the political heritage of federalism, the lack of a strong central government, the lack of a tie between citizens' securing voting rights and their class position, and the relatively tolerant attitude of American legislatures, local officials, and courts to the organization of workers in factories affected the development of community-based social movements. The establishment of local political organizations and political machines tied workers to the political system on the basis of their ethnic and racial identity rather than their class position and identity.

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organized and developed their own activities. Political decentralization encouraged various local experiments in social economic policies. Government services expanded and proliferated in the city and the city dominated its hinterland. Ethnic and race conflict in the community and labor conflict in the workplace were regulated through union-management bargaining and the competition of mass democratic political parties in each sphere. Dawley(1976) has emphasized the connections between trade unions and political parties, while Edsforth(1987) focuses on the relations between trade unions and the delivery of government services.

In the study of a Korean city, Kwangju, it can be argued that the heritage of feudalism, colonialism, and military government has resulted in a highly centralized political structure, the lack of a tie between citizens' securing voting rights and their class position, and an intolerant attitude among politicians, local officials, and the courts toward the organization of workers in factories. Thus the city trench-system in Kwangju is likely to show different processes of class formation and the institutionalization of class relation than is revealed in the American experience.

## **2. The Changes of Urban Structure in Kwangju**

### **a. City Formation in Kwangju(before 1945)**

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Cholla Province in 1896, when the nation was divided into 13 provinces. The township of Kwangju which had a population 12,500 before 1920 increased by 2% annually during 1912-1921. Kwangju is located between the mountains and open fields in Southwestern inland Korea and has rich soil and a highly developed agriculture. Kwangju's location in a basin surrounded by mountains in the east and south and low mountains and open fields in the north and west helped the city become a center for military, trade and administration.

Kwangju township, at the end of Yi-Dynasty(late 19th century), was surrounded by walls and had an area of less than 1 km<sup>2</sup>. It expanded to about 2 km<sup>2</sup> in 1917; 4.5 km<sup>2</sup> in 1931; 19km<sup>2</sup> in 1935. Kwangju became a town in 1931 and a Bu (colonial city) in 1935. By 1935 the area of the city was equivalent to today's city center with a high population density, and the attributes of a service center(see Map 1). City expansion was East to West because a railroad was established on the west side of the city.

The transportation system developed under Japanese colonialism didn't bring industrialization directly to Kwangju. The Honam railroad (Seoul-Mokpo line) was established along the Youngsan river, to the west of Kwangju town, in 1914. Mokpo was emerging as one of the newer port cities for wholesalers, brokers, and merchants engaging in grain transactions. Because the railroad was separated from Kwangju township, it made industrial development difficult for

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the city. Japanese industrial policy excluded Kwangju from the industrialized area because of the town's inconvenient location. Kwangju was mainly developed as a center for food supply. Because agriculture was geared to the needs of the Japanese market, Kwangju's marketing, circulation, and transportation industries were relatively well developed. There were 19 transportation businesses at Kwangju by 1930.

Despite Japan's industrial policy for Korea, South Cholla province developed as a center for the textile and silk industry due to its favorable natural surrounding and material resource base. Colonial industry existed to support the Japanese economy. And, South Cholla Province was one of the most important silk producing provinces along with North Kyongsang Province and Kangwon Province, accounting for 50% of cocoon production. The sericulture industry reached its peak production in 1936. The textile industries of Kwangju had 35,104 spindles and 1,440 looms in 1945. These comprised 14% of total spindles and 17% of total looms in the nation<sup>22</sup>.

After industrialization began in the early 1920s, the population of Kwangju rapidly increased(see Appendix Table 1); growing by 12.6% in 1922 and 41% in 1923. Urbanization also progressed rapidly. The population increase in Kwangju came from surrounding rural areas. Under Japanese colonial rule Koreans migrated in large numbers into Manchuria and Japan. On the peninsula, large numbers of Koreans from southern provinces migrated into Northern Provinces because of the

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Kwangju can be analyzed during its city formation period (before independence) by following Katznelson's main elements in the city trench-system: trade unions at the work place; the politics of the party system; and the array of government policies and services that were delivered to citizens in their residential communities. The class structure of the city will also be discussed briefly. Then, I will look into social movements in the city system.

#### **Colonial Government and Political Party System**

Colonial government services were focused on the construction of infrastructure, whether for the Korean people or not, which brought great advances in transportation, communication, the textile industry, and related trade systems in Kwangju. Colonial military rule, previously based on a military police system, had been transformed into policies of spiritual and cultural suppression. Especially important was the establishment of education institutions which had enlightenment effects. The connection to Japan's education system offered better educational opportunities. The national independence movement was promoted by young people who were educated by Japanese intellectuals and institutions. Education effected the nature and outcome of social conflicts and negotiations. Still, education opportunity was restricted

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The political system scarcely developed and didn't allow independent political parties in Korea. The governor-general, dispatched from Japan, was a military general, so elections were non-existent and a democratic system didn't exist. The Korean Provisional Government and political parties, including the Daehan (Korea) Independence Party and various political associations were established abroad, especially in China and America. Although the Chosun(Korea) Communist Party existed, it acted underground supporting worker organization and the student movement. The administrative-bureaucratic system, military system, police system and industrial system were all organized in a single line(chain) of command even in the local area. This facilitated colonial land control and policy execution. It was a quite strict and efficient system of colonial control.

Sericulture is a good example of how various social systems intertwined. Sericulture was highly organized on all levels even down to the Gun(county) where cocoon production was the heaviest. The chief sericulture technician on each level was invariably a Japanese, who was ordered to cooperate with various other societies also under Japanese control: The Korean Sericulture Society, the Silk Controlling Company, the Korean Filature Society, and the Korean Joint Floss-Silk Manufacturing Society. The Korean Sericulture Society was

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organized with other associations in each province and the Japanese, including Government employees, held all the lucrative positions. It was a common occurrence for one man to have a Government position and at the same time be an official in all of the above associations, companies, and societies. Thus, under the Japanese occupation, the Korean silk industry was expanded into one of the largest textile industries of the Far East.

### **Trade Union**

Labor unions under the Japanese colonial rule had the form of Chosun(Korea) Workers Beneficial Association(1920), and the Korean Workers Alliance(1922). In 1924 the Korean Worker-Peasant League was organized in hopes of uniting disparate unions in the localities. This league split into two organizations: the General League of Korean Workers and the General League of Korean Peasants. The workers' league initiated a three-month-long general strike in Wonsan in 1929. The peasants' league led tenancy disputes in the late 1920s and 1930s. Red Peasants Unions planted roots in the 1930s and continued to mid-1946. In the South Cholla area the Red Peasants Union had 14 city branches, 110 county branches, 3,019 village affiliates with total 369,414 members.<sup>24</sup>

### **Class Structure**

The class structure in Kwangju township was comprised of

land owners and the business class, their servants, rural petty-bourgeoisie, students, urban-petty bourgeoisie and workers. As in the industrialization process in other capitalist countries, large land owners and the small business class were the main force for industrialization in Kwangju. Large land owners, the so-called Gapbu, owned a large percentage of the rice fields in Cholla area. In turn, their need for clothing and household metals stimulated the sericulture, textile and metal processing industries. The modern education of their children was fulfilled by the Japanese. Elementary, middle and high school systems were developed and many students went to Japan for higher education. Kwangju developed as an education center and many newcomers who came for their education from surrounding rural counties and small towns. Education institutions produced professionals, lawyers, doctors, high administrators and military officers. However, education was limited to wealthy families who owned land in the rural areas. The business class also had their finance based on land and was tied strongly with land. These land owners and the business class were connected to Japanese colonialists, supported Japanese policies and benefitted in gaining additional land and commercial rights. This class mainly resided in the South-eastern ward of the township located near the Japanese dwelling area.

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owner and business class. The rural petty-bourgeoisie owned small parcels of land and managed land for big landowners. The urban petty-bourgeoisie developed as suppliers to manufacturing factories, small scale wholesalers and retailers, and lower level bureaucrats of the colonial government. Their national spirit was very strong. The educated among their children became leaders of the student movement and had a strong desire for national independence. This class lived and worked in the same building. They lived near the central township in a middle zone of land owners/business and craftsman and factory workers.

Korean craftsmen and journeyman engaged in small scale domestic production. There were relatively modern workers who worked in silk manufacturing, filature factories, ginned cotton factories, rice cleaning factories, breweries, and printing houses. They mainly came from the rural peasantry and established their communities around the factories. The silk manufacturing corporations were located at the north-west ward of the central zone of Kwangju township. The silk workers had strong relations with other industrial workers, in metal processing workers and printing, through the Workers Beneficial Associations(1920) and the Korean Workers Alliance(1922). A few skilled Japanese workers took important positions in factories and got higher wages. All owners of the factories were Japanese. However, labor disputes were growing on a national level; 6 disputes involving 1,573

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workers in 1912, 36 cases and 3,403 workers in 1921, 81 cases and 5,984 workers in 1926, and 205 cases and 21,180 workers in 1931.<sup>25</sup> In Kwangju, no record can be found on local labor disputes except the Printers' Written Declaration.

Under Japanese colonialism, the class conflict scarcely existed as such but rather appeared as national independence movements. However, most national independence movements were organized and guided by socialists or national communists<sup>26</sup>. The labor movement persisted under colonialism, as shown in the Wonsan general strike(1920)<sup>27</sup>, and under U.S. military control policies as shown in the railworkers general strike in September, 1946. The US military government liquidated democratic labor unions and supported the establishment and strengthening of the FKTU(Federation of Korean Trade Unions). The democratic labor movement was almost dead by the end of the Korean war in 1953.

### **Social Movements**

Kwangju experienced a student initiated mass movement under Japanese rule, on November 3, 1929. During Japanese rule, independence movements were based on three different strategies: armed struggle against Japanese imperialism, a cultural movement based on faith in self, and the social revolutionary movement by national communists. The armed struggle group went to Manchuria or China to fight against Japanese military forces. The cultural movement group stayed

in the homeland and initiated movements for educational enlightenment and consumption of domestic products which were easily coopted by colonial policies. The third group became the main force behind the labor and student movements in colonial Korea.

At that time, social movements stressed enlightenment as appears in the promotional words of the Chosun(Korea) Workers Beneficial Association(1920)<sup>28</sup> and the Kwangju Printing Worker Association.

1. Open lectures on social science every saturday.
2. Organize for a systematic labor movement, establishment of leadership and work for internal consolidation.
3. ....
4. Concerning the Young Printers Union.
  - a. For the more complete advancement of the current and future KwangJu Youth movement as well as the labor youth union, dismantle the trade-oriented youth organizations as well as all exclusive organizations, organize the KwangJu Youth organization under sole supervision of the labor youth organization.
  - b. Contact all antagonistic youth organization located within the same area of KwangJu and reorganize the intellectual youth and nationalistic youth under the KwangJu youth organization which has the lengthy history of 6-7 years of resistance, all labor youth to be organized into a single labor youth organization.

#### Written Declaration<sup>29</sup>

The content of the above written declaration suggests that workers already had class consciousness and were quite deeply influenced by labor movement organization theory. Various Youth movement organizations(about 6) were united in the Kwangju Youth League. And all youth organizations in

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Kwangju were requested to unite under the sole supervision of the labor youth organization.

Seven secondary schools allowed Korean attendance in Kwangju in the 1920s. Students organized two groups: the Seongjin Club and the Reading Club. The Seongjin Club(1926) criticized imperialist annexation, exploitation and pressure. They insisted on student solidarity and sacrifice for national independence. They discussed social reform, strategies of independence and struggle methods. They agreed to meet every first and third Saturday of the month to study social science and Korean history. Also they agreed to work to recruit comrade brothers. This club was dispersed because of a betrayer in 1927. However, the meetings continued secretly in 1928. In 1929 students reconstructed the Seongjin Club into a secret association for national independence and social reform.

One of founding members of the Seongjin Club, Jang, Jaesung, studied at Chuo University in Tokyo, and returned during each vacation to advise highschool students to study social science and he secretly organized the Reading Club Central Headquarters in June, 1928. Within that year each secondary school organized a Reading Club with about 20 members. All Reading Club members were divided into 5 small groups and urged to study and discuss social reality with the guidance of each group leader. According to a judgement of the Japanese colonial court, the Reading Club was a communist secret

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organization. Reading Club meetings were expanded and continued until the Kwangju Student Independence Movement in November, 1929. Reading Clubs in each school were connected to the Kwangju student movement<sup>30</sup>. Prior to the 1929 movement, there were several school strikes in 1927 and 1928. The main issues were Chosun(Korea) independence, national discrimination, and imperfect school facilities. School strikes developed into a united front in the 1928 school strike. Students who experienced school strikes and Reading Club members who returned from prison strengthened their resolve for future struggle. Japanese male students' raillery of Korean female students in a school attendance train ignited another movement effort.

Student demonstrations gained the support of the silk-raising farmers as well as town inhabitants. November 3, 1929 was a celebration day for achieving the production of 6 million Sok<sup>31</sup> of silkworms in South Cholla Province. A newspaper reported that a crowd of about 30,000 students, farmers and citizens marched together like a big army parade<sup>32</sup>. The population of Kwangju town, as shown in the Appendix Table 1, was 33,000 in 1930<sup>33</sup>. About 260 students were arrested and 188 students were indicted. 128 of the indicted students belonged to the Seongjin Club or Reading Club. At a later date, the Kwangju student movement was also indirectly related to Singanhoe<sup>34</sup> and other social movement groups such as the Women's Society, Youth League, and Chosun

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Student Vanguard League on a national level. However, the local Seongjin Club and Reading Club seem the most prominent organizations in initiating the Student Movement. This regional student movement sporadically spread across the country.

What kind of social science did they study and what was their theoretical grounds for national independence and social reforms? We can gain clues from the written judgement by Japanese local court, the available document states:

"...Kim, Sang-hwan(cosponsor of Reading Club), Kim, Jin-seop, Yun, Sang-ha distributed XXXXX pamphlet which could disturb social order and stability,...could be dismissed. ... Seongjin Club was secretly organized...and discussed XXXX ...and studied XXXX and discussion participants were gradually increased... Jang, jae-sung who studied XXXX in Tokyo returned to Kwangju, his hometown, and advised students to study XXXX with more intensively and systematically..."<sup>35</sup>

The History of the City of Kwangju writes the pamphlet's name and the person's name as XXXXX and XXXX. What was XXXXX? Who was XXXX? The local court indicted the students as communists because they read XXXX. XXXX should be MARX. Although the Kwangju student movement and uprising in 1929 against the Japanese was as close as they ever got to pure nationalism, the main influence on leftwing Korean nationalists during the 1920s and 1930s came from Japanese Marxists. The History of the City of Kwangju states that Japanese imperialists indicted the students as communists for the purpose of dividing the nationalists and communists. The

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Japanese believed nationalists hated communists. In fact, the leading groups all struggled for national independence. This is proved by their participation in the People's Committee<sup>36</sup> just after the World War II. This movement started with the local community and later diffused to the national level.

The movements in Kwangju area, according to their main actors, can be distinguished by three traditions: student, workers, and independent armed groups. These groups had different goals and took different actions, as revealed by their methods of reproduction and education. The student group focused on the education of other highschool or middle school students. And, as shown in the Kwangju Student Movement of 1929, the peasants in sericulture were regarded as collaborators with their movement for national independence and social change. Workers, even though a small portion of population, strived to organize and educate themselves, as shown in the Printers' Written Proclamation. Workers organizations were quite independent and had their own educational programs and leaders. This seems to indicate that they were influenced by the Japanese labor movement and leftist support from Japan. One common factor was that these groups were guided by national communists or socialists.

In South Cholla province perhaps 60% of the peasants were full or part-time tenants. A large percentage (about 46%) of the tenants worked land controlled by the Oriental Development Company which was established by the Japanese colonial

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government<sup>37</sup>. Bruce Cumings(1981) explains why South Cholla peasants were more rebellious than those of some of the other provinces at the time of liberation.

"we would predict the following to have been true for South Cholla: (1) traditional ties between lord and peasant would be eroded by the high degree of Oriental Development Company(ODC) ownership; (2) ethnicity would not affect class cleavages as markedly, since peasants dealt more with the Japanese ODC bureaucracy than with Korean landlords; (3) the lack of opportunities for upward mobility on the part of individual peasants or tenants(given the fairly uniform smallholding and the resultant homogenization of the peasantry) would direct their individual interests horizontally, toward solidarity, rather than vertically, toward individual mobility; and (4) the significant commercialization of the region, with considerable rice-export traffic through Mokpo, combined with one of the few plantation patterns in Korea, as cotton production grew near Mokpo, would also erode traditional agrarian relationships."<sup>38</sup>

Class conflict apparently trailed behind national and ethnic conflicts during the colonial age. The interests of Korean landlords and businessmen, however, were identical to the Japanese colonialists and they benefitted from colonial government policies. The conflicts of interest became ethnic issues rather than class issues. In the South Cholla area, big land owners and absentee landowners prospered under the protection of the Japanese administration and police system. Bruce Cumings implies the possibility of strong homogeneity and solidarity among Cholla people. In reality, there existed Korean landowners who worked for the Oriental Developmental Company in collecting land rent and labor from the Korean peasantry. Therefore, the conflict among residents in the

Cholla area was deeper than in other areas. Kwangju grew as a nodal point of conflict between large(absentee) land owners and poor tenants in the surrounding countryside.

b. Making the City of Kwangju (1945-1961)

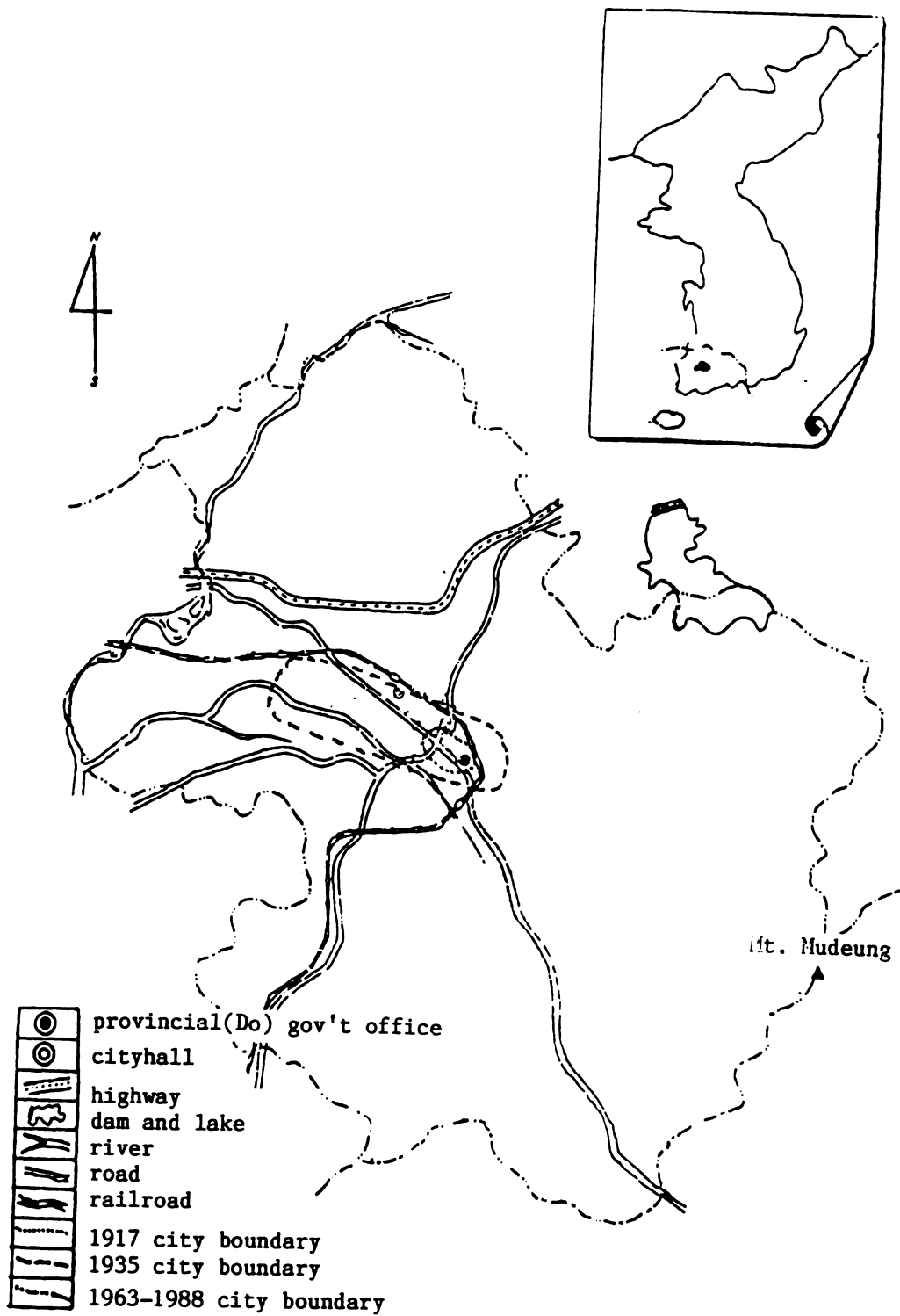
The city as built form can be regarded as a monument to capital accumulation. It is a physical and geographical result of the private locational decisions of households and firms as they respond to the cues provided by the capitalist system, such as price signals and profitability criteria. The values influencing these decisions have to do with the creation, accumulation, and reproduction of wealth.

As a social form, the city is a mosaic of institutions and organizations ranging outward from the family through neighborhood and class. The processes of community building involve reciprocity and mutual support. The accumulation and the social logic of community building process are contradictory. The urban process is conflictual and political.

After independence, Kwangju became known for its education and cultural. Many educational institutions were established. The increase in military and administrative organizations resulted in population growth. Growth was not based upon the industrial production; rather the city showed the characteristics of a consumption city.



Map 1: The City of Kwangju



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Kwangju town became a city in 1949. After independence, the city had to reshape its administrative institutions under the influence of the American military government. In the geographical sphere, the city area expanded to 155 km<sup>2</sup> in 1955 and to 279.1 km<sup>2</sup> in 1957. This geographical expansion was not the result of economic expansion but was due to changes in administrative boundaries. The Kwangju city area was reduced to 213.5 km<sup>2</sup> in 1963 again due to administrative redistricting (see Map 1). About 70% of the city area was actually forestland, rice field and gardens. Only 63 km<sup>2</sup> was an urban area with commercial, housing, and factory buildings.

The population of Kwangju, as shown in Appendix Table 1, rose from 83,000 in 1945 to 125,000 in 1950, largely due to the repatriates returning to South Korea from Japan, Manchuria, China, and North Korea<sup>39</sup>. In 1946, for example, about 10,000 repatriates settled in Kwangju town<sup>40</sup>. This workforce had some experience with factory, mining, and harbor work. On the other hand, many Japanese with technical skills evacuated Korea to Japan. They included mechanical engineers, managers, bureaucrats, merchants, and businessmen.

This was a period of industrial vacuum in Korea. For example, in the railway industry, ten out of eleven locomotives engineers and holders of other responsible jobs were Japanese. Of the 17,500 Japanese then employed by the railroads south of the 38th parallel, not one remained in 1949<sup>41</sup>. Koreans took over Japanese duties and showed ability

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and loyalty to the railroad. However, the overall train operation was inefficient and not dependable; engines and rolling stock were in poor condition. Most of the heavier engines were caught above the 38th parallel at the end of the war. The railway was the main transportation system in Korea. And the urban system relied upon the transportation and communication system. The urbanization in Korea seems to have proceeded quite rapidly prior to the war with the percentages of population residing in communities of over 10,000 in 1936 having reached 11.7 percent.

Following Katznelson's analytical elements of the city trench-system, how does Kwangju look during this period?

### **Neocolonial Government**

First of all, this was a deeply conflictual stage for the government. As soon as World War II was over, the Korean staff of Kwangju city hall organized Kwangju city hall branch of the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence, and took over city affairs for a while. In addition, a Youth Association was organized and organized food rationing until the US military took it over. The US military government followed in the foot steps of Japanese colonial rule except for the abolition of laws which constrained freedom and independence.

People's Committees, which assumed governmental

functions, controlled all of the counties in South Cholla Province.<sup>42</sup> The prime test of political legitimacy in liberated South Cholla Area was a leader's 'perceived role under Japanese colonialism.' Still, in many committees, traditional local leadership was able to prevail even in these uproarious times. If local village elders had managed to avoid the taint of collaborating or were perceived to have acted in the interests of their constituents, they could play a central role in local committees.

US military government rule lasted 35 months (Sep. 1945 - Aug. 1948) following the Cairo Declaration (1943). The military government pronounced its purposes: first, to rid Korea of foreign rule and construct a free and independent country able to join the United Nations; second, to assure the Korean people of the establishment of a democratic government that represents its free choice; third, to assist the Korean people in the reconstruction of its educational system and economy.<sup>43</sup> The US military government established the Farm Land Improvement Committee, Labor Mediation Central Committee, and Korean Economy Advisory Committee, and it abolished all kinds of anti-democratic colonial laws.

Political division of the nation destroyed the self-supporting character of the country's economy. Hunger and poverty were widespread in the South. The United States Army provided aid through the use of GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Areas) and EROA (Economic Rehabilitation in

Occupied Area) funds. The majority of Koreans desired the reunification of their country but they realized that Communist North Korea and ultra-conservative South Korea were separated even more deeply by the Soviet-American antagonism which had found in Korea another Cold War battle scene.

The underlying premise was that the USA in its own interests and in the interest of world peace should seize every opportunity to maintain and strengthen independence among the nations of the Far East.

On June 3, 1947, the U.S. military government was renamed the South Chosun(Korea) Interim Government. The South Korean government took over the relief and rehabilitation programs of the US Army in Korea after 1949.

In Kwangju, the US military government focused on several municipal policies: appointment of another Korean mayor; establishment and running of the under-advisory council populated by Koreans; establishment of post-war stability in civilian life through rationing; confiscation of Japanese-owned property and its administration; concentration on relief-work, inoculation and health administration. Regional self-government failed to develop during this period. On the contrary, the dissolution of regional councils prevented the participation of residents. In March 1946, based on military government law number 60, the US military government ordered the dissolution of the city council, town council, and county councils as well as school conferences even in isolated

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islands<sup>44</sup>. The American military government was under orders from the US not to accept the authority of any Korean group as representing the Korean people.<sup>45</sup> All major positions were held by a duplicate Korean and an American military officer, and US military advise was a required decision-making step in city governance. For the first time in Korean history, a modern Democratic Republic form of Government was established under the auspices of U.S. military support and economic aid in 1948. In this system, the central government had political power and authority over regional and local governments. The local government act was promulgated on July 4, 1949. However, execution was delayed until 1952, and the mayor was not elected by popular vote until 1958. The local government act was revised 5 times until before it was eliminated by the military coup commission in May 1961.

### **Trade Union**

The post World War II years had witnessed a resurgence of trade unionism in East Asia. Japan in 1947 had about six million, China over two million trade union members. In South Korea, even though the industrial development was still in its infancy, Communist influence infiltrated the ranks of organized labor. Like Japan, labor was divided into two camps, Communist and non-Communist. Labor on the whole has made important advances towards a more fully organized movement.

South Korea had two major labor unions - the Tai Han No Chong (Federation of Korean Trade Union: FKTU) an extreme rightist organization; and Chon Pyong (National Council of Korean Labor Unions), an extreme leftist organization. Both unions were young and inexperienced in dealing with labor matters and had many misconceptions concerning the functions of organized labor. The Tai Han No Chong had manifested an interest in learning labor union practices and had been willing to co-operate with authorities. On the other hand, the Chon Pyong was less cooperative refusing to appeal to the Mediation Board and also to participate in elections regarding the choice of proper bargaining agents. Chon Pyong alone had 235 branches, 1,676 chapters, and 574,475 members in August 1946.<sup>46</sup> Chon Pyong had branches in every industrial town and city and had almost complete control of former Japanese-owned plants. Altogether, the federations, Tai Han No Chong and Chon Pyong, claimed 3,680 chapters with 998,561 members.

Only a very small percentage of the South Korean population was engaged in large industrial enterprises; consequently labor unions in the economic sense of the term scarcely existed in the Republic of Korea. Labor statutes and regulations instituted by the US Military Government in the early years of the occupation remained basically unchanged during 1948. Provision of labor laws included: (1) The right of individuals or groups of individuals to work unmolested; (2) the establishment of a 48-hour week in industry; (3) the

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prohibition of work over 60 hours per week; (4) the payment of time and one-half pay for hours worked between 48 and 60 hours; and (5) the prohibition of employment of children under 14 years of age.

The Nongmin Chohap (National League of Peasants Unions) and red peasants unions prospered under the Communist Party in South Korea. In mid-1946, the peasants unions in South Cholla were shown to be the second top-rank union with registering membership of 369,414<sup>47</sup>. These peasants organizations raised land issues through People's Committees in rural areas.

The ideology of land and the disposal of Japanese-owned industry and property reflected ownership relations. In Korean society, land was an important symbol of class distinguishing landowners from tenants. The struggle over land reflected opposed class interests. In traditional agricultural society, peasant production sustained society, but the peasantry didn't own their land.<sup>48</sup>

The movement for land reform, soon after the beginning of the US army occupation, was occasioned by the preliberation Japanese ownership of 683,000 acres of choice farm land (constituting 15.3 percent of all arable land in South Korea) and ownership of as much as one-third of the farm land of the area by 46,000 absentee Korean landlords.

The process of land reform meant not only the legalization and execution processes, it also entailed severe conflicts among the Korean people. The conflict of interest

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on land issues appeared in the Daegu Riots(1946), the Cheju Island Rebellion(April 1948), and the Yosu & Sunchon Rebellions(1948).

Having inherited the ownership of about 90 percent of Korean industry as a result of the transfer of former Japanese-owned public and private property, the Korean Government was faced with the question of deciding which plants should be sold to private interests, and how to reorganize the management of government owned industries in order to increase production, reduce bureaucratic obstructions, and provide sound financing for the future.

For instance, the Japanese-owned Kanebuchi textile factory in Kwangju was sold to Kim, Hyong-nam, a pro-Japanese businessman and the highest bidder, at the price of six billion Won. However, Kim bought government land securities which were issued for the land reform at one-fifth the price of nominal value and used the land securities to pay for the textile factory. So the actual price paid for the factory was about Won 1.2 billion<sup>49</sup>. This instance shows the failure of land reform and the preferential disposal of Japanese-owned property. More importantly, it reveals how the Korean business class was formed and accumulated its capital.

### **Political System**

The political party system had been dominated by people's committees at the local level, but various political parties

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had grown with the support of the US military government. The Korean National Party, Chosun National Party, and various youth groups and associations (see Figure 1) emerged as political forces with American military government support. However, even in the South, the Communist Party had substantial power and was the best organized party until 1947.<sup>50</sup> So the U.S. military government outlawed the communists and put about 3,000 communists in jail.<sup>51</sup> The general election system was introduced into Korean society for the first time in 1948 by the American military government. A Multiple political party system was guaranteed and a democratic republican state was organized under the new national constitution.

The colonial/neocolonial origins of power and structural engineering was the prominent feature in the South Korean political structure. The bureaucratic system, especially police and military system and local bureaucratic institutions, were the overgrowth of colonial control and Japanese militarism. Under colonial rule, Japan established a police state to run Korea. The military police system supplanted civil police system and local bureaucratic systems were organized according to military concepts. The U.S. military government maintained the old order by retaining the police force by which Koreans had served under the Japanese.<sup>52</sup> Actually, 82% of Korean national police officers in late 1946 were former colonial police officers.<sup>53</sup> And the American



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military government in effect legitimated the Japanese government structure. The U.S. military government maintained the continuity of the Japanese colonialism in South Korea as a barrier against Soviet Union expansionism. As a frontline of the cold war strategies, the police and military organizations of South Korea were based on colonial manpower and experiences. In short, the legacies of Japanese colonialism were a stupendous bureaucratic system for the control of colonial land and the transformation of class contradictions into national ones.

Under Japanese rule, Koreans rarely reached even the rank of Section Chief in the Government. Syngman Rhee's government (1948 South Korean Independence Government) was based on the support of a very small layer of the population, mainly business interests and the landlords. Among the common people there has hardly any support for him at all. Syngman Rhee contemptuously assumed his fellow-nationals to be incapable of learning and did not allow them to experiment and to learn by mistake. The Americans added to these handicaps of history by spoonfeeding Korea. Politically, U.S. military rule paved the way for a two-party political system comparable to the one in the U.S. and abolished other interest-based parties and organizations.

Police organization worked as the main mechanism of power maintenance under the Rhee's regime<sup>4</sup>. Order was maintained by the police who were very cruel. They arrested people

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frequently without warrants. Rules of justice were frequently suspended. They relied on very little evidence. And people were tortured to produce statements for the prosecutors. Police guarded polling places in elections and mobilized support for president Rhee.<sup>55</sup> Throughout the 1950s conflicts existed between police and military organizations.<sup>56</sup> And the military took the initiative in the 1960s through a military coup(1961). Students were the only organized group to oppose the dominant power in South Korea. Social movements during the 1950s and 1960s were dominated by students.

#### **Social Movements**

It is worth recalling the April Student Revolution (April 19, 1960) in order to assess the relevance of social movements in South Korea in the 1960s. The March 15, 1960 elections had provided Syngman Rhee's Liberals with heavy victories. The President himself had no opposition, the Democratic candidate, Cho, Pyong-ok, having died in hospital four weeks before the election day. The campaign centered therefore on the vice-presidency, which Dr. Chang, Myon the Democrats, lost to Lee, Ki Poong, Dr. Rhee's heir apparent. The 63-year-old Mr. Lee was bedridden throughout the campaign, and in the previous election of 1956 he had been beaten by Dr. Chang by a good 200,000 votes. Yet this time he was returned with 78% of the votes, while Dr. Rhee won 92%. It was only gradually that the extent of falsification of the ballots was realized.

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There was scattered rioting and protesting in various cities during the election period and there were some casualties. A number of means had been employed by the Liberal party to ensure its success at the polls. Students led an uprising. The president of Korea university said, "I had no other choice than to encourage the student demonstration at that time. I told them I was glad to see my boys rising to fight against injustice...I risked the fate of Korea university...as well as my own...".<sup>57</sup> The students found that they were backed by their teachers, by the Americans, by the army and, of course, by the opposition political parties - notably the Democrats. Syngman Rhee had tears in his eyes as he said "and now I know the will of the people" the Revolution was accomplished. Rhee's resignation and flight to Hawaii and the new elections brought about the Second Republic.

President Rhee won 92% of the 1960 Presidential election, however, he said he knew the will of the people. What does 92% and the will of the people mean? The difference between 92% and the will of the people did come from the myth of ballot boxes in the pursuit of democracy by a third world country. There was only one-kind of party<sup>58</sup>, and one conservative and liberal bourgeoisie, in South Korean politics, (tough preparations were in hand for the merger of various small groups into a socialist party, but this was still negligible as a political force) and that was the

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Liberal Party and Democratic Party(see Figure 1). Even the Democratic Party was factionalised by an old and new squad.

The 1960 Student Movement in Kwangju involved mostly highschool students who participated a little bit later than in other cities like Seoul, Masan, and Daegu. Highschool students mounted wall poster protests against Rhee's dictatorship, the illegal election, police interference (inspection) in school affairs, and police shootings at Masan and they demanded the release of political prisoners. Students attacked police stations and the Liberal Party's local office, and burned them down. Only several dozens of university student participated in street demonstrations at the first day of demonstration. Then Chonnam National University students became prime actors in the second day of the student demonstration. Kwangju citizens responded to the student demonstrations by supplying them with water and stones. Provincial police fired upon the crowd and killed 7 people and injured 73. Data<sup>59</sup> shows 3 of 7 deaths were students and 38 of 73 injuries were students. Overall, the total deaths nationwide were 191 with 76 of them students. On a national level, 149 of 191 deaths<sup>60</sup> occurred in Seoul, the capital city of South Korea. The military took over the duty of keeping the peace from the police. The demo-group marched with placards written in blood: "Military force should support students," "Let's kill police murderers," "Break off swindled election, let's make a democratic Korea through re-election."



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Finally, the student-initiated movement toppled Rhee's dictatorship, and created the first modern democratic government in Korean history.

The Korean economy did not suffer severely from the political crisis. There were some labor troubles in some industrial cities and there was a reluctance by some manufacturers to maintain output levels pending the clarification of the new Government's economic policy. The April Revolution and the subsequent socio-political instability induced a transitional setback of economic activity instead of the usual seasonal upturn. The sluggishness following the April Revolution did not turn into a recession but reverted to a healthy condition when the political situation was set in order. Manufacturing industry acquired a momentum of its own that was extremely encouraging. Manufacturing industry had high potential to blossom and exports soar if Korea could invest the capital, import the know-how and attain a reasonable minimum political stability.

The Second Republic had a cabinet system and gave political autonomy to local self government. It introduced economic plans and a political development plan, despite the fact that the ruling party was fractionalized. However, the Second Republic came to an end through a military coup in 1961. In the Second Republic, the city of Kwangju had autonomy in local and congress elections. However, the military bureaucratic authoritarian government which replaced

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the Second Republic practiced centralized dictatorship. Thus, the city trench-system in Kwangju changed drastically.

c. Remaking the City of Kwangju (1962-1980)

It is in the realm of the state at the local level and the political parties and bureaucracies within it, that the relationship between community and accumulation is most powerfully mediated. The state provides a wide variety of physical and legal outputs designed to facilitate the accumulation of capital. Also, the state seeks to legitimate the inherently unequal distribution of economic and political resources in the city, either by intervening on the side of accumulation or by formulating political issues so as to evade the central problems of the urbanization process.

The state, like the city, is suspended between community and accumulation and strives to mitigate the most outrageous results of private decision-making in a situation of unequal social and economic power, and yet maintain the social and political system that institutionalizes this inequality.<sup>61</sup> As Katznelson argues, the organization of consent is accomplished by means of an interlocking "set of coercive, symbolic, and institutional buffers" that soften the impact of basic social contradictions,<sup>62</sup> including suffrage, political parties, and government policies. There is little doubt as to suffrage's effectiveness in helping to counterbalance the social effects

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Political parties were certainly of prime importance in defining and negotiating the relationship between community and accumulation, especially given their ability to define political issues and to corrupt or marginalize their opponents. Nonetheless, nothing is known about the ways by which various classes and groups were mobilized into the complicated sets of alliances characteristic of South Korean urban politics. How competing political organizations increased or undermined the political capacities of various classes and other groups is also not well understood.

It is necessary to reveal the relations between accumulation and community and underscore the enormous influence of capital accumulation upon community by analyzing the nature of industrial development and the impact of industry on the city's economic and residential-spatial management and on the structure of opportunity for various communities in the city. Community was reorganized and the futures of individuals, classes, and groups parceled out during the industrialization process.

The period, 1962-1980, is best divided into two periods: 1962-1972 and 1972-1980. These two periods are distinctive in economic development stages, governmental policies, and state form. The first period is characterized by the Free Planned Economy and Democratic Republic State, while the second period is a State Monopoly Economy and an Administrative Dictatorship

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(The October Revitalising Reform Dictatorship).

In characterizing these two periods, I will again follow Katznelson's main analytical elements of city trench-system: the trade union at the work place; the politics of the party system; and the array of government services and policies that were delivered to citizens in their residential communities.

### **Military Government**

The Korean state had a very limited, delegated role in the field of politics and economics in the 1950s. However, the state participated actively in the capitalist economy in the 1960s. A planned free economy was publicized under the Second Republic, in 1960, to reach eventually a take-off or self-developing stage, despite sharp pressures from population expansion. The government's economic development plan was an important symbol in the 1960s and 1970s. However, those responsible for planning and those for actual practice were quite different. Planning was done by the Second Republic and executed by the military and Third Republic. So there existed lots of discrepancies between planning and actual practice. Top investment priority would go to development of electric power, anthracite mining, fertilizer plants, small and medium industry, rural poverty, trade deficits, and export promotion. An equal emphasis was being placed by the Second Republic government on development of small and medium industry which, at that stage of Korean development, was probably the most



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effective media to raise the levels of employment and income. In 1960 about 62% of South Korea population still lived on agriculture, and yet agricultural production accounted for only 38% of the gross national product. Rural poverty was hampering South Korea's industrial growth, because it made the domestic market for industrial products a very small one.

The Government also launched a program of "National Construction Service", and promotion of export-oriented small industry and rural industry to help alleviate the pressure of unemployment. The Government announced plans for a "New Deal Type" public works program aimed at providing jobs for the unemployed and for poverty-stricken farming families in 1961. The National Construction Program went to certain reforestation and soil conservation projects which were undertaken in the period from Feb. to May 1961. This was the time of the year when many farming families, tilling excessively small farms, run out of food stocks. Small-scale irrigation projects and flood control projects were also carried out during each year's "spring hunger" period. The Government launched an "Emergency Winter Public Works Program," in major South Korean cities to alleviate the critical unemployment problem in urban areas. Road and bridge reconstruction, flood control, water works and sewage systems benefitted from the program.

Prosperity was the key to the political normalcy, continuity, and legitimacy in the 1960s and 1970s. The state

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controlled labor through a New Deal-type political machine, which produced management-government cooperation and bureaucratization of the Federation of Korean Trade Union(FKTU). After the Korean war, the small traditional working class communities were dispersed, and a reactionary political climate emerged, particularly the development of anticommunism as a kind of national policy bringing on labor's cold war. Anti-communist ideology was more than a weapon in factional struggles, it had a genuine appeal for most workers as well as other classes. Only the government-sanctioned union, FKTU, has survived most rank and file movements. It was the persistent conservatism of Korean labor that made possible the restructuring of political arrangements in 1972, the October Revitalization Reform, when the business class was threatened by the reemergence of working class consciousness and world economic recession. It was possible for ruling powers to use the issue of communist influence to purge the left from the workplace and FKTU and build very coopted labor organizations.

South Korean Government put forward the Multiple Purpose Development Plan of the Land in 1972. This plan greatly changed the urban structure of Kwangju, including transportation and communication facilities. The Honam highway was opened to traffic in 1973. This was expected to solve to a certain degree the transportation problem in Cholla

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area. The first industrial estate, Kwangju(Kwangcheon) Industrial Estate, became established in the city.

In the 1970s, Korean capitalist development was centralized and concentrated as was the growth of industrial labor. The growth of Chaebols was a symbol of South Korean economic growth. However, as shown in Table 1, textile, chemical and food industries were declining in Kwangju, while only machinery factories were increasing in numbers and employees due to the establishment of Asia Motor Company in the Kwangju Kwangcheon Industrial Estate in 1965.

Table 1. Distribution of Large Scale Manufacturing Factories (over 300 workers) and Number of Workers in Kwangju City.

(number of factories and workers)

year	total	textile	chemical	machinery	food	other
1971	5	3	2	-	-	2
1972	6	3	2	1	-	-
1975	8	3	1	2	2	-
1976	9	3	1	3	2	-
1979	9 (10,241)	2 (3,949)	1 (2,559)	4 (3,023)	1 (343)	1 (367)
1980	7 (9,947)	2 (4,275)	1 (2,285)	4 (3,387)	-	-
1981	7 (8,857)	2 (4,275)	-	5 (4,582)	-	-
1982	7 (8,352)	2 (3,959)	-	5 (4,393)	-	-
1984	5 (6,775)	2 (3,720)	-	1 ( 326)	-	2 (2,729)
1985	8 (8,644)	2 (3,907)	1 (312)	4 (4,023)	-	1 (402)
1986	6 (8,613)	2 (4,728)	-	4 (3,885)	-	-
1987	7 (7,713)	2 (3,637)	-	4 (3,696)	1 (380)	-
1988	7 (8,264)	2 (3,637)	-	4 (4,247)	1 (380)	-

Source: Municipal Yearbook of Korea, Ministry of Home Affairs, Seoul, Korea, 1971-1988.

The "Production Urbanization Movement" among the small-

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medium local business class in Kwangju provoked private-funded local industrial estate establishments in 1976 indicating political uneasiness towards the continuing concentration of capital accumulation. The intra-class conflict between big and small capital was going on a national level, and local capitals seemed to find their way in land speculation, the stock market, and service industries rather than by establishing manufacturing factories in local industrial estates.

The role of small and medium-sized enterprises in South Korea, unlike Japan and Taiwan, is very limited. Big corporations are more interested in financial engineering than investment in technology. Big corporations can generally obtain technology through the efforts of their research and development staffs, or through licensing or joint ventures with foreign partners. But medium and small-sized companies often do not have the skills or resources to obtain necessary information, so government needs to step in. Planners worry that it is harder than it used to be to buy, borrow, beg or steal technology since South Korea has thrived by using imported technologies.

The learning economy<sup>63</sup>, from planned economy and technology to small business incubator programs, has faced difficulties with the tight credit market and mounting protectionist trade pressures. With popular resentment towards the giant Chaebol growing more vocal, the government



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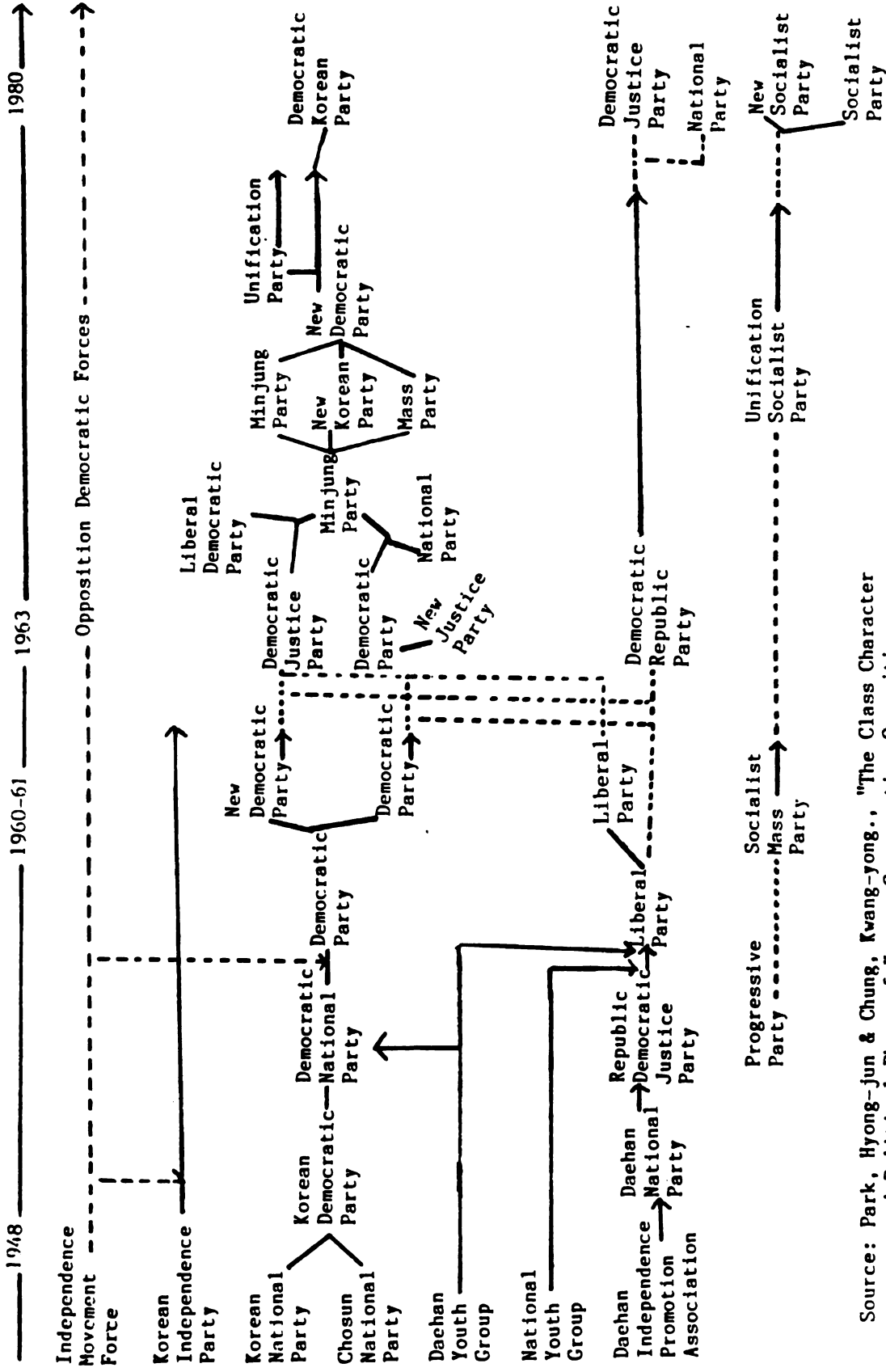
was forced to at least pay lip service to a policy for small companies. Small and medium industries were very important socially and politically. Because they absorb most of the labor source<sup>64</sup> and their workers account for most of the country's voters. South Korea has relied on Chaebols, the dozen leading business groups account for nearly one-quarter of GNP, to run the economy for the past several decades.<sup>65</sup>

### **Political Party**

Korean political parties are based factions which seeking political power(see Figure 1). The modern political party system was initiated and controlled by American occupation policy in the late 1940s. A political party tied to workplace interests hasn't existed in postwar South Korean history. Politics were controlled by plutocrats with connections to the military. Ballots were tied to the amount of spending money.

The party organizations were centered around one or two well-known authorized persons and dependant on their charismatic leaderships. Therefore, the decision making process was highly centralized in central party headquarters. Every new Republic has created a new political party as a base for fresh political forces and reputations. In fact, about 46 political parties had been organized and disappeared from the political scene since 1948(see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Change Figure of Korean Political Parties



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Kwangju citizens have shown their preference for opposition parties in the parliamentary elections since 1971. However, the local election results were not tied to local problems but to broad national issues. In the last 13 parliamentary elections in Kwangju, only 8(out of 32) ruling party candidates were elected, while the rest were opposition party candidates<sup>66</sup>. However, the preference for opposition party was not based on the party policies and programs but on party leadership's regional background and other factors such as belonging to the same clan, alumni etc.

The emergence and consolidation of conservative bourgeoisie opposition parties was integrated with conservative laborism. Whenever there were violent confrontations between labor and management, as shown in Y.H. Textile workers' strike in 1979, workers turned to the opposition party(NDP) by occupying the party's headquarters and engaging in sit-in strikes. Nevertheless, there was little hope of establishing an independent, nonhierarchical, politically progressive labor movement in South Korea during the 1960s and 1970s.

The 1971 Presidential election(April, 27) revealed the character of political parties in South Korea. The single factor most strongly operating against a vote to change the leadership was that the ruling party(DRP) and the opposition party(NDP) did not differ basically in the policies they advocated. Both candidates stood on strong anti-communist

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platforms, and advocated massive defence under a U.S. umbrella. The candidates mostly contented themselves with listing the others weaknesses. Each characterized the other as a rogue and left the public with but one choice. The voters accepted the ruling party candidate's (President Park) claim that South Korea could protect itself only by first building a strong economic and military base. Despite the fact that Park had altered the constitution to allow himself to run for a third term, voters were apparently willing to accept his promise that he would step down in 1975, leaving the South so strong that the North would have to abandon any invasion plans.

The 1971 President election was the last direct Presidential election until the 1987 Presidential election. During that period, there existed a so-called administrative democracy in South Korea. The KCIA and the military's Defense Security Command, which were responsible for much of the internal political surveillance, sent their agents to the assembly and even to the country's courts<sup>67</sup>. Those institutions and police system have frequently intervened during formations and disruptions of political parties. The frequent change of opposition parties in the 1970s and 1980s, as shown in the Figure 1, was largely due to political conspiracies.<sup>68</sup>

**Trade Union**

Overall, union organizations were not democratic unions during the 1960s and 1970s. They were all under the control of the government-sanctioned Federation of Korean Trade Unions(FKTU). Even these unions were non-existent in many companies. As shown in the Table 2, the number of organized union branches in the Kwangju area formed a low percentage relative to the total number of companies in the late 1960s. A seamster's suicide by burning(Chun, Tae-il, 1970) in Seoul brought labor issues to the front of social consciousness and resulted in the increase of labor union branches in Kwangju area in 1971. In 1971, as shown in the Table 2, the number of union branches in Kwangju had almost tripled from a year ago. However, the October Revitalization Reform(Oct. 1972) rendered illegal or smashed most unions with the aim of preventing future labor troubles.

The rapid increase of union branches in 1977(\*) was the result of companies reestablishing their former unions. The economy was recovering from the first oil crisis and government policy and company strategy emphasized the company's elastic adjustment to economy and resources fluctuations. Companies needed to get workers' support and unions were used as means to get workers' consensus and paternalism. The sex ratio of union members indicates the gradual increase of female workers' participation in union organization. The most constant union membership among female



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Table 2: Management of Trade Union(FKTU) in Kwangju

year	no. of Branch	member of union				
		total	male	%	female	%
1967	104	10,001	7,047	70	2,964	30
1968	122	11,874	8,764	74	3,200	26
1969	109	13,950	7,236	52	6,714	48
1970	107	13,205	7,103	54	6,102	46
1971	343	32,675	18,415	56	14,260	44
1972	126	14,311	8,118	57	6,193	43
1973	126	14,363	8,165	57	6,198	43
1974	37	14,318	6,916	48	7,402	52
1975	59	11,626	4,390	38	7,236	62
1976	66	15,146	7,957	53	7,189	47
1977*	333	45,477	33,120	73	12,357	27

Source: Kwangju Statistical Yearbook, The City of Kwangju, 1968, p. 124 & 1977, p. 179.

The FKTU(Federation of Korean Labor Unions), descendant of Dai Han No Chong, was established under the auspices of American military government in 1946. This was a cooperative and mild union organization compared to Chon Pyong. FKTU re-organized after the military coup in 1961 with 16 unions, 313 local chapters, 1,820 branches, and 224,420 members in 1963. In 1970, union units were organized in railway, textile, mining, electric power, foreign institution, postal, transportation, shipping, finance, chemical, metal, publishing, automobile transportation, and tourist industries. In the South Cholla area, there were 37 local chapters of 15 union units with 45,477 members.

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## **Social Movements**

The Labor movement was almost a barren field in the 1960s.<sup>69</sup> It was reignited by the seamster suicide in 1970. But the semi-organized labor disputes were easily suppressed by government forces.<sup>70</sup> The laborers were not organized and the trade union(FKTU) was under the control of the government and the business class. However, there was a noticeable growth of wildcat strikes which were not sanctioned by reformist trade union organizations. In the second-half of the 1970s, some student activists were in touch with workers in the Night Schools and influenced factory workers through the pedagogy<sup>71</sup> and the Urban Industrial Mission<sup>72</sup>. But overall the social movements in the 1970s were still dominated by student groups, dissident politician groups out of power, and some intellectuals.

The working classes did not establish a legitimate and powerful place for themselves within the system until the end of 1970s. The working class and business class have been changing the character of their relationship and of class consciousness itself. The social and political system in South Korea didn't lessen the tensions between the business class and the expanding working class.

A labor dispute, in March 1980, at Honam Electric Company(later Rocket Electric Co.) in Kwangju was caused by unpaid wage and overdue bonus issues and failure to recognize the labor union's branch office manager. The manager of the

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union requested several times for a joint labor-management conference to solve the issues of unpaid wages and bonuses. However, the company ignored the requests because dialogue difficulties with female union representative as well as deficit operations by the company. Instead the company requested the loyalty and sacrifice from its 1,700 employees. Workers appealed to local citizens and circulated their leaflets arguing that the president of the company also owned the Chonnam Ilbo(Daily Newspaper) and Chunil Broadcasting Corporation so their difficulties were never reported or otherwise touched by public opinion organs. The company responded by firing 38 workers, abused the rights of personnel management, and practiced violence and violated the human rights of those who sympathized or helped the union activists. Requesting that human dignity and labor inviolability should be kept in the Honam Electric corporation, workers started a hunger strike in the workplace which lasted about a week. On the last day of March, 1980, the company accepted all of the workers' requests. It was a great success story for workers in the Kwangju area.

Another case, a labor dispute in Asia Motor Company, revealed a rank and file movement in the labor union. From early March of 1979 to May, 1980, there were conflicts between union members concerning the misdemeanor and corruption of the manager of the labor union of Asia Motor Company. The union members accused the manager of the branch union of Asia Motor

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of misappropriation of union funds and corruption in relations with employees and the disturbance of democratic labor union activities. Union members accused the union manager negligence in union education, democratic activities and union development. The Asia Motor union case only resulted in the sacrifice of several initiators who were sentenced to from 10 months to one and a half years in prison. The movement couldn't get support from all the workers because of the power struggles for union managership among leader groups and the uncommon issues of workers. At the end, the victory went to the union leader who had the backing of the company and government institutions including police, national security forces and the courts.

### **High Centralization and Low Institutionalization**

In the above three sections, I analyzed the social characters in South Korea following Ira Katznelson's three analytical factors.

The political party system prospered under the American military government(1945-1948), the First Republic(1948-1960) and the Second Republic(1960-1961). A modern political system and elections were introduced to Korea by the American military government which allowed a plural political party system with limitations on ideological parties such as the Communist Party, Workers' Party and Socialist Parties. However, after the military coup(1961), the two-party system



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was shaped by political compromises and controls. The two party-system was then constructed and manipulated by ruling groups since 1972, by means of the October Revitalizing Reforms. Existing bureaucratic organization was seized through military power and then political parties were constructed hurriedly and legalized by general elections. Thus, the political party system was highly centralized with no autonomy at the local level.

Trade unions were relatively well organized and active during 1945-1962. Trade unions were connected with political parties and they were allowed the right of organization, bargaining and collective action. However, after 1962 independent union activities were restricted, manipulated and unified under the Federation of Korean Trade Unions(FKTU).

The arguments in the above sections can be succinctly summarized as follows;

division time	government	political party	trade union	social movements
colonialism (1910-1945)	Low I High C	Low I High C	Low I Low C	independence student/worker
neocolonial (1945-1961)	High I Middle C	High I Middle C	High I Low C	peasants/worker student/political
1962-1971	Middle I High C	Middle I High C	Low I High C	student/political
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1972-1980	Low I High C	Low I High C	Low I High C	student/political worker/peasants

I: Institutionalization  
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High centralization seems to bring greater efficiency in dealing with nationwide issues of economic growth and national security. However, the cost was enormous in terms of political democracy and social quality of human lives. Low institutionalization means that the everyday variety of social organization found in society was relatively unstable and nonroutine.

South Korea shows some differences from the American experiences as depicted by Katznelson, Dawley and Edsforth. Katznelson sees high decentralization and institutionalization in the American political system, government system, and trade unions. Therefore, local self-government executed social services with autonomy; political parties focused on community based issues; and trade unions became involved in politics. Thus politics in the workplace disappeared or became separated from community politics. Dawley argues that local trade union activities and workers' consciousness was diluted by trade union political activities and election victories. Edsforth argues that trade unions were easily coopted to the political party and lost their class characteristics; the effect was class integration rather than class struggle.

The differences between American experience and Korean are the centralization vs. decentralization, highly institutionalized vs. less institutionalized, and organized advanced vs. unorganized backward. There poses difficulties of applying analytical framework of advanced capitalist

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society(American) to Korean society. But I believe that the analytical factors are useful in investigating societal changes. Unlike the American case the Korean ruling class' control and regulation seems not to deter or interrupt the formation of the working class. Therefore, severe social conflicts in Korean Society didn't have media coverage or routes of becoming institutionalized. This introduced radicalization to the social movement forces as well as classes. This is due to Korea's different stage in capitalist development and historical background.

#### d. Traditional Culture and Student Movements

The examples of social movements in Kwangju - the Kwangju Student Movement in 1929, the Student Revolution in 1960, student and democratic movement in the 1970s and labor disputes in early 1980 have cultural as well as economic causes.

The Kwangju Student Movement in 1929 was ignited by nationalism as a result of Japanese male students' harassment of a Korean girl student. The 1960 Student Revolution was caused by a death of a highschool student by police's shootings. The student and democratic movements in the 1970s was based on moral and human right issues. These movements did not arise from an interest-based consciousness but from traditional morality and values. Education played an

important role in the transmission of traditional values.

Cultural specificity was explicit in the formation of People's Committees, which were organizations of people's power just after independence. The Korean collaborators with colonial powers, colonial officers and landlords were not allowed to participate in the committee. However, with permissions from local village elders, they could work in the dominant organs. Thus traditional local leadership worked in the changing times. Later, during the Kwangju uprising, the citizen's committee was organized by men of high moral repute including lawyers, professors, politicians and local movement activists. But this committee was not welcomed by citizens and was replaced by a Student Citizen Committee and a citizen army.

Education played major role in the city of Kwangju. Traditionally Kwangju has been the center of education and administration in the Cholla area. The number of students and schools is high relative to the total population. The figures in Table 3 include from kindergarten to adult education systems and all students. The average percentage students in the total city population, as shown in the Table 3, was in the low twenties in the 1950s, high twenties in the 1960s and thirties in the 1970s. This shows that the city had numerous educational facilities and that education was an important function in the city.

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Table 3 : Number of School and Student in Kwangju

year	school	student	%*	year	school	student	%*
1946	26	14,986	14.7	1966	87	121,679	30.1
1947	25	23,727	20.5	1967	90	127,113	29.4
1952	37	33,981	25.9	1968	96	138,078	29.9
1953	45	39,373	26.3	1969	96	144,259	
1954	60	46,854	32.9	1970	118	157,535	31.3
1955	70	58,584	30.7	1971	154	161,449	31.0
1956	55	63,464	32.0	1972	157	166,453	30.9
1957	72	61,020	24.6	1973	116	172,303	31.2
1958	94	67,961	26.0	1974	116	179,261	30.5
1959	104	72,296	25.5	1975	119	191,923	31.6
1960	107	81,787	26.4	1976	148	241,245	38.6
1961	75	84,447	26.5				
1962	93	86,595	25.4				
1963	99	95,081	28.4				
1964	68	98,934	28.8				
1965	79	121,472	33.2				

\* student rate of total city population

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Kwangju, The City of Kwangju, 1946-1980.

The quite high rate of students among the city population indicates that a large portion of family income was spent on education and the sacrifices of some family members' lives for the education of other family members was not uncommon.

The social movements had mainly focused on the community level and issues of independence, democratic elections, corruption, liberty and justice. The workplace had been overshadowed by community due to government controls. Workers were only targeted as coparticipants in social movements. The liberal petty bourgeoisie and traditional conservative bourgeoisie party (New Democratic Party) sympathetically or as a political strategy helped coopt Kwangju's working class as

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well as the whole nation's working class in the 1970s. This prevented the Korean working class from realizing its own political identity, and hampered the more democratic and radical union activities. Students were the main actor in social movements during this period. An intellectual poet<sup>73</sup> sang as follows:

".....  
 The students are the voice of our peoples's cries of misery.  
 Where would these cries be heard, if it weren't for our young students?  
 In the name of vigilance, the students' efforts are blocked.  
 In the name of duty, the students movement is crushed. Even so, their right has been proven, and the evil power will stand isolated.  
 You might try to fool them with privileges - military dispensation or scholarships.  
 But do you think the students, our guardians, are that easily taken in? You Tigers of Koryo University, Eagles of Yonsei,  
 kick out the bastards who sold our country!  
 Students of all universities in Seoul, stand up together!  
 If the demo ranks are joined by high school students, by ordinary citizens, what difference can teargas make, or even guns.  
 Let the volcano erupt and light up the battle-fields of revolution!  
 The bells of freedom are tolling.  
 Let all the people rise!  
 Let the wild flowers proudly bloom in this nation of a great people!  
 ....."

Voice of the People<sup>74</sup>(1974)

Despite the decline of the artistic value caused by translating Korean into English, this poem still manages to convey its specific purpose and its value as historical legacy. The Korean students in the 1960s prevented

deradicalization and theorized their activism under the influence of American and French student movements. However, they could never organize or act as a vanguard group in a Marxist-Leninist sense. In the early 1970s, under the glare of the glorious victory of the 1960 Student Revolution, social activists never confronted the limits of their social movements.

#### IV. LATE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT

##### 1. Korean Capitalist Development

In the study of the emergence of automobility in his Flint case study, Edsforth(1987) emphasized the second industrial revolution which made possible mass production and the consequent culture of mass consumption. Edsforth connected mass production with mass consumption to study the cultural consensus among the auto workers. This perspective might be problematic as an explanation of the industrialization process. Edsforth's forerunner, E. P. Thompson was criticized by Perry Anderson for his inattention to the real subjection of labor in the factories during the (First) Industrial Revolution. Anderson pointed out Thompson's failure to perceive how heterogeneous groups of workers were reduced to 'the conditions of labor subsumed to capital' due to his idealist view of 'experience' separated from materialist orientation.<sup>75</sup> However, Harvey Kaye supported Thompson by arguing that Thompson examined 'the very objective historical process of the formal subjection of labor by capital.'<sup>76</sup> The issue is related to economic and technological determinism. In fact, the economic relations in Thompson appeared to 'determine(but not dictate) political and cultural activity'.<sup>77</sup> For Edsforth, however, the problem setting is no longer the production site, such as automobile

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factories, but community consumption places. He focuses on the effects of consumption cultures on the workers movement. Edsforth's work is embedded in culturalism. This 'Second Industrial Revolution' is not understood through the conditions of labor subsumed to capital. Therefore, Edsforth failed to recognize the collective character of auto workers' experiences of exploitation and oppression, and conflicts and struggles. Dawley(1976), on the contrary, explains the industrialization process in the contexts of labor subsumption to capital, working class consciousness and the political consequences. Dawley escapes the deterministic explanation and reveals the antagonistic nature of class relations through explanations of economic relations in the shoe industry.

Here, I am going to focus on the characteristics of industrialization in South Korea and how external and internal factors explain labors' subsumption to capital in Korean capitalist development.

#### a. Late Industrialization

The character of Korean industrialization can be summarized as 'Late Industrialization' which brought high economic growth rates in a short period by employing a free planned economy, an efficient financial policy, and an export-oriented world market strategy. Korean development shares some characteristics with the so-called New Asian

Industrialism.<sup>78</sup> Amsden(1989) explains that late industrializing countries "began the twentieth century in an economically backward state based on (production of) raw materials, and dramatically raised national income per capita by selectively investing in industry."<sup>79</sup> It is a forcefully concentrated experience of First and Second industrial revolution in a short period of time. It shows traits of both traditional industrial process and the second industrial revolution at the same time, with contradictory symptoms of industrialization generating explosive class and culture conflict.

Under the Japanese occupation(1910-1945), Korea developed, for several decades, as a part of the Japanese economy, not as a self-sustaining unit. Japanese landlords and agricultural corporations owned the best farm lands<sup>80</sup>. Japanese industrial firms owned most factories exploiting Korean minerals, while Japanese technicians and managers held key positions in industry, and Japanese traders dominated foreign trade. The Japanese had established the Oriental Development Company(1908) and promulgated the Land Survey Law in 1912 for the land grab. Most industries, mainly military, were located in the North following Japanese colonial and East Asia strategies of exploiting its abundant natural resources. Most industries were owned and managed by Japanese owners and technicians, while the Korean work force was relegated to



unskilled and drudgery positions.

Aid and a privileged economy reflected the character of the Korean economy in the 1950s. U.S. aid in the form of daily necessities and military materials was helpful for the prevalent hunger and poverty, but harmful to the growth of infant industries. To reduce production costs was as important as quantitative and qualitative advances in Korea's industrial production. The price of domestic products were considerably higher than those supplied through aid. It constituted a serious impediment to the development of industrial production in the country. The differences in prices essentially stemmed from the difference in production costs which in turn stemmed from the prices of raw materials, allocation system, and production efficiency. Industrial production consisted largely of the manufacture of consumer goods, with much of the total output coming from household industrial units. The production efficiency of South Korea's industry was at low ebb. The cotton spinning and weaving industry maintained the highest standard of industrial production in South Korea. In the 1950s the increased difficulties in balance of payments and the upward trend in prices were restrictive factors. The serious problems faced by the country, according to an Aide Memoire, were unemployment, rural poverty, large trade deficit, inflation, disintegration of public administration (bureaucrats corruption), excessive defense burden, and inadequate

provision of social overhead capital<sup>81</sup>.

In the early 1960s, the emergency phase seemed to be over. The need for a comprehensive reappraisal of the United States aid program in order to insure maximum benefits in achieving the common goal of building democracy in Korea was urgent. Supplying aid mainly in the form of consumer goods, agricultural surplus products and industrial raw materials, however essential they might be, had permitted Korea to live beyond its means and compelled Korean industry to become consumption-oriented.

A planned free economy focused on light industry mainly characterized the Korean economy in the 1960s. During the first five-year economic plan(1962-66), the nation's economy grew by an average of 8.3% a year in real terms compared with the 4.8% annual average during the previous 10 years ending in 1961. The Second five-year plan(1967-1971) had achieved over 10.5% annual average growth rates. However, the programs had failed to show clear results in terms of the capital formation so badly needed in Korea. Many new industrial giants, fattened under two economic programs, were fast changing their spending pattern to accord with the so-called westernization. Economically, the deteriorating balance of payments and imbalances among industries in many areas of the economy were by-products of the two plans' emphasis on high rates of growth, export-oriented policies, investment and expenditure styles.

The South Korean economy entered into the stage of state monopoly in the 1970s focusing on the heavy chemical industry initiated by the state and monopoly Chaebols. In the 1970s, however, South Korea's problem was still the balance of payment situation and inflation. The government was being accused of opening new loans to pay off old ones and inflation because of the devaluation of the Won currency. The low profit margin on major exports, plywood and textiles, was serious. For instance, thirty percent of Korea's textile industry was closed down because of the Nixon measures. It put almost 100,000 workers out of work. Farm labor was drifting to the cities so that agriculture faced serious labor shortages. Self-sufficiency in grain production became one of the proposed policy goals of the second five-year plan. The gap between primary and secondary industry growth, and the income of manual workers in urban and rural areas had been widening. Consumer-oriented industries were given top priority with heavy industries lagging behind. Korea was now faced with a serious imbalance between the consumer goods and capital goods industries.<sup>52</sup> The South Korean government adopted the Heavy Chemical Industrialization Policy in 1973, and the government more initiated industry restructuring envisaging a transformation from light industry to heavy chemical industry.

The state's role in regulation of the economy changed in its purposes and methods. During the 1960s, government's

participation through state enterprises and institutions in the economy was prominent. The Korean state took economic measures to regulate private, national and foreign enterprises in the interests of developing an independent national economy. For this, the state monopolized the regulation of the economy. In the early 1970s, the state strengthened the state sector in the economy, especially expanding its domination over financial capital. The state had taken economic measures to benefit big monopoly capitals (Chaebols) and aimed at implementing short term anti-crisis policies (example: the August 3 Presidential Decree in 1972) and long term programs (example: industrial structure change from light to heavy chemical industry in 1973). The state made direct investments in the heavy chemical industry such as the Pohang Steel Corporation. Also the state regulated the inflation and wage level. The state established the National Conference of Unification (NCU) for the public opinion gathering and processing. The state and monopoly Chaebols cooperated to suppress the working class and various democratic social movements.

South Korean capitalist development has the characteristics of state centrism, dependency, unequal development, a learning economy through education, human resource deterioration, and weakness of small and medium industry. These factors have been intertwined and produced socio-political structural problems throughout Korea's modern

history.

Late industrialization in South Korea has entailed dependency on other countries, such as Japan and the U.S., for policy, science and technology. The industrial revolution started in 1920 when the Company Law allowed the establishment of modern-type corporations for the first time in Korean history under Japanese rule. The industrial revolution which was backed by science and technology seems to have started in the early 1970s, with the establishment of the Heavy Chemical Industrial Investment Promotion Law in 1973.

Economic development plans were dominated by the central government. The preferential disposal of Japanese-owned property in the 1940s, foreign aid in the 1950s, foreign loans, commercial loans, and bank loans in the 1960s and 1970s were planned and distributed by the central government. Foreign direct investment and joint ventures were guided by political benefits and traditional cultural linkages, such as birth place and kinship relationships. Planned industrialization was skewed toward political powerful persons, enterprises, and regions. The tight connections between politics and economics resulted in political corruption, isolated regions and unequal regional development. The Korean economy ignored the market law, which is one of capitalism's merits. Because of the central government's monopoly over decision-making, free competition, fair rules, and open policy critiques could not be guaranteed.<sup>83</sup> Amsden

explains how South Korea's experience represents a refutation of neoclassical free-market theory: "Korea is an example of a country that grew very fast yet violated the canons of conventional wisdom ... instead of the market mechanism allocating resources and guiding private entrepreneurship, the government made most of the pivotal investment decisions."<sup>84</sup> Her argument is based on the assumption that the state had the power to discipline private capital in order to make appropriate use of trade and financial support. But her concept of the state is quite abstract and does not identify the individual military and government leaders who were rewarded with sizable financial gain. Her view does not take into consideration contradictions and class conflicts.

Low productivity in the labor-intensive domestic industry was a serious problem at the beginning of the 1970s. Light industry accounted for a sizable proportion of local production. In 1969, light industries accounted for about 60% of the total value added in secondary industries; small and medium size industries, by nature, labor-intensive, contributed 40% of the total value added in this sector<sup>85</sup>. Labor's low productivity and rapidly rising wage levels in certain sectors of industry were discouraging prospective foreign investors. Any slackening of interest in local industry by foreign businessmen could be blamed partly on wage increases while productivity remained stagnant. It is hard to show accurate figures on productivity and wage levels in

Korea, but the poor local investment climate is a reflection on the difficult economic situations of the early 1970s.

Table 4: Summary for Manufacturing/Mining Establishments by Year of South Cholla Province and National Total.

year	South Cholla Province Manufacturing/ Mining			National Total Manufacturing/Mining
	number* of factory (worker)	factory %	worker %	number of factory (worker)
1955	742 (18,914)	8.3	7.5	8,891 (250,917)
1958	1,133 (19,739)	8.5	6.6	13,334 (297,720)
1960	1,414 (18,847)	9.1	6.0	15,572 (315,054)
1963	2,137 (30,959)	10.9	6.7	19,550 (462,068)
1966	3,514 (39,490)	14.5	6.3	24,264 (631,279)
1967	3,541 (48,798)	13.9	6.8	25,445 (719,421)
1968	3,684 (53,895)	14.4	6.5	25,661 (825,819)
1969	3,500 (54,195)	13.1	6.0	26,699 (901,865)
1970	3,478 (52,617)	13.5	5.6	25,816 (937,650)
1971	3,598 (55,295)	14.6	6.0	24,693 (923,237)
1972	3,842 (69,584)	15.2	6.7	25,248 (1,045,201)
1973	3,484 (56,097)	14.0	4.6	24,881 (1,227,566)
1974	3,440 (60,445)	14.2	4.4	24,215 (1,369,677)
1975	2,925 (56,990)	12.1	3.8	24,229 (1,503,220)
1976	3,255 (62,869)	12.3	3.5	26,564 (1,799,016)
1977	2,882 (63,838)	10.2	3.2	28,292 (1,999,829)
1978	2,875 (67,886)	9.1	3.1	31,701 (2,194,982)
1979	2,979 (73,489)	8.9	3.3	33,583 (2,196,037)
1980	2,881 (75,657)	8.8	3.6	32,560 (2,098,873)
1981	3,115 (75,304)	8.8	3.5	35,357 (2,134,305)
1982	2,932 (72,538)	7.6	3.3	38,747 (2,186,632)
1983	2,841 (74,209)	6.9	3.2	41,088 (2,299,976)

\* includes Kwangju City

Source: Report on Mining and Manufacturing Survey, National Bureau of Statistics, Economic Planning Board, Republic of Korea, 1955-1983.

The regional unequal investment and state directed economic policies resulted in a severe regional gap in industrial establishments and related unemployment increases,

income inequality and social insecurity. Table 4 shows a gradual decrease in the rate of manufacturing establishments and workers in South Cholla Province compared to the rest of the nation despite vigorous economic development plans and economic growth. After 1972, the number of manufacturing establishments in South Cholla Province was decreasing as contrasted to the continuous increase of the national total. This seems to be the result of changes in state policies to an anti-crisis policy and long-term economic policy with heavy chemical industrialization and monopoly-centered financial policies in 1972.

Among South Korea's six largest cities, the manufacturing factories have shown increases in numbers with the exception of Kwangju and Daejon. The relative decrease in the number of manufacturing factories in Kwangju was because of the low industrialization in the Kwangju area. Table 5 shows the comparative number of manufacturing factories in the 6 largest cities in Korea. The number of manufacturing factories in Kwangju did not increase during the 1970s, on the contrary, the number of factories decreased. Daejon, in South Choongcheong province, is another city which did not gain any benefits from the industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s. The other cities (Seoul, Pusan, Daegu and Inchon) doubled or tripled their number of factory in the decade, 1971-1980. This was largely due to the central government's development plans which had focused on these areas and provoked regional



discrimination issues.

**Table 5: Comparative Summary of Distribution of Manufacturing Factories of 6 large cities (Seoul, Pusan, Daegu, Inchon, Kwangju, Daejon) by Year.**

year	Seoul	Pusan	Daegu	Inchon	Kwangju	Daejon
1971	2,497	1,743	1,291	539	584	429
1972	3,931	1,810	1,295	561	345	315
1974	4,085	2,149	1,872	428	583	966
1975	4,103	2,489	1,232	467	515	354
1976*	4,101	2,645	-	1,775	541	430
1979	4,366	3,011	-	1,744	513	503
1980	-	4,541	2,957	1,579	505	472
1981	8,557	4,152	2,537	1,730	487	486
1982	7,348	4,009	3,028	1,824	477	511
1983	9,470	3,733	3,028	1,732	459	462
1984	8,167	4,305	3,606	1,821	465	401
1985	7,221	4,421	3,606	1,843	438	492

Source: Municipal Yearbook of Korea 1971-1985, Ministry of Home Affairs(1971-1985) & The Korean Municipal Association(1971).

### b. Inequality Matters

The violent protests in the early 1970s came from realization of the extent of disparate wealth among South Koreans. The much publicized high rates of economic growth, rising exports and industrialization under the economic plans were no longer convincing the masses that they would be better off by the end of second five-year economic plan<sup>6</sup>. The question prompted by the high rate economic growth was: where have the fruits of growth gone? And, when do working people begin to feel the benefits? Politically oriented government

spending and the lavish consumption of the richer group led to inflation which hit the poorer groups hardest. The widening gap between rich and poor caused social disruption in a way it would not have done in the 1960s. The case of Chon Tae-Il, a seamster, who burnt himself to death following an unanswered wage demand in 1970, was not an isolated incident. The economic plans had created new problems as much as solving old ones.

The level of social discontent was widespread. Students were in the forefront of the protest movement. They demonstrated in the streets and clashed with teargas-firing riot police. A friction between judges and the prosecutors touched off a mass protest among the nation's judges. Judges demanded the independence of the judiciary and freedom from executive pressures especially in cases involving anti-communist and security laws. Judges resigned en masse, they were promised increased pay and allowances. Even though judges's original demands had not been met, they returned to work in order to avoid continuance of confusion. Professors demanded a guarantee of academic freedom, reforms in the administrative system and a raise in salary. They showed resentment at the rigid application of anti-communist laws on campus. Interns and residents in hospitals went on strike to dramatize their demands for increased salaries and for abolition of restriction on foreign travel. A shopkeepers' strike in the two big markets in Seoul raised the issues of

high taxes.

Social discontent of a similar nature culminated in a revolt which toppled the Rhee's regime in 1960. The movement then was almost completely confined to students. Massive student protests against corruption were instrumental in bringing down the government of the Syngman Rhee. In the 1970s a much wider spectrum of society was involved. In August 1971 residents of Gwangjoo resettlement community in Kyongki Province rioted against municipal officials who had requested early payment of dues. Special forces trainees on an island mutinied and rioted and made a drive to Seoul. There was an attack on the Korean Airlines building in the centre of Seoul by angry workers protesting against South Korea's principal contractor firm in South Vietnam. Workers said the firm had cheated them and that numerous petitions to the authorities had been neglected. The government promised a crusade against mistrust, corruption and lack of moral stability. But government failed to tackle corruption at the top.

The students' complaints and conflict with government started about compulsory military training, which soon escalated into demonstrations against high-level corruption in Park's government. Students demanded an end to corruption and social irregularities and the guarantee of subsistence wages. Any student who opposed military training was expelled from school and immediately conscripted. All campus organizations

not concerned with academic matters were abolished and all campus newspapers, magazines and other publications were suspended. For example, in October 1971, 81 student organizations had been disbanded and 160 students expelled from 24 universities and colleges, and the conscription office revealed that 9,307 students who had boycotted military drill on campus would be drafted before the end of year.<sup>87</sup>

Undoubtedly none of this was lost on other groups considering taking to the streets to redress grievances, such as the unemployed 23% of Seoul's labor force, the poor, the displaced squatters, unpaid laborers and the underpaid factory workers. They remained apart and without a voice.

Economic inequality became the politically explosive issue in the 1970s and 1980s. Although South Korea's income distribution is one of the most even among developing countries, its asset distribution is skewed and the wealthy are suspect in South Korea.<sup>88</sup> Rapid industrialization had made these strains worse by creating a visible class of free-spending rich people. It was in 1988 that the South Korean Government established a "blue-ribbon commission on economic restructuring"<sup>89</sup> with an agenda ranging from a re-examination of export-led growth policy to a debate on agricultural policy. The commission has focused on the issues of internationalization, industrial restructuring and social development policies.

## 2. The State and Political Culture

During capitalist development, as Gramsci argues, the clusters of ideas and behaviors look like "the trench system of modern warfare."<sup>90</sup> And this system of trenches defines the terrain of battle in wars of position and imparts a logic to the war itself. Because each system of trenches is distinctive, it defines both the place and the content of conflict.<sup>91</sup> The capitalist democracy of South Korea is defined politically by its country-specific systems of political and social 'trenches' which delineate what is special about class and politics in the Korean society and which will help shape the Korea's rules of conflict. In the argument about the city trench system in Chapter III, I looked into how the trench system, including the state's role in economy, trade union, and political party, was different in each historical period.

Dawley(1976), in his argument about working class consciousness, emphasized the superstructural elements of ideology and politics. He showed how slave liberation ideology and liberal suffrage worked dampened of class conflicts and organized workers' actions. Dawley argues that the American Civil War caused workers to direct their protest more vigorously against the Southern slave-owners than against their exploiter, the local industrialists. This dimmed collisions between workers and industrialists and the slave

liberation issue worked as an element of political consensus between them. Furthermore, workers were coopted into a political electoral system that appeared to be democratic while it really favored the capitalists' interests. He laments that "the ballot box was the coffin of class consciousness"<sup>92</sup> for in these years American workers considered that "the government was but the executive committee of the people."<sup>93</sup> The trade unions and Local Workingmen's Party were not radical and failed to create "a new working class style of its own"<sup>94</sup>. The workingmen's parties were "institutions of class integration, rather than ... vehicles of class conflict".<sup>95</sup> Workers' involvement in American electoral politics "gave wage earners a vested interests in the existing political system".<sup>96</sup> Local politics provided a demonstration that union men and movement leaders from their ranks could rise to top positions. Dawley believes that widespread participation by workers in the electoral process channeled their radical impulse away from a critique of the political system as a whole. Labor militancy did not translate into a pronounced class consciousness. Edsforth(1987) also sees the different interests between politics and unionism in the 1930s; the class consciousness that emerged around the political party(Democrats) and the union(CIO) was not based on the desire for social reconstruction. Most workers in Flint did not share the leftists' vision of social transformation.

South Korea has had her own trench system which was the result of traditions of absolutist, centralized bureaucratic state, colonial and neocolonial government, and military authoritarian state. Local politics was thoroughly controlled and directed by central government. Local politics in Kwangju had never had any autonomy in the decision making and policy selection. Short experiences of democratic politics, democratic republic, political party system, and election systems brought lots of problems common in other Third World countries.

#### a. Political Oppression and Resistance Culture

President Park took power through military coup in 1961. After 2 years military rule, he metamorphosed it into a civilian government by election in 1963. He was reelected in 1967. Within two years, with time growing short for him under the constitutional limit of two presidential terms, the nation and the assembly approved a constitutional amendment to permit three terms, and he won again in 1971 election. During each presidential and parliamentary elections the political parties vowed not to resort to rampant spending sprees to win. However, the election which came once every four years had been more or less a vicious cycle of buying votes with money. Total loans for the first six months of 1971 was about Won 99,000 million. That was the ceiling placed by the IMF on the

scale of domestic loans. It was estimated about 15% of the total would flow into the election campaign.<sup>97</sup> The money could cover anything from outright vote-buying to giveaways and financing of abruptly-started community development projects. Depending on locality, campaign funds could differ enormously. The 15% of released funds that went to buying pairs of rubber shoes for village elders and passing out noodles and Makkolli rice wine could have been piped into more sensible channels. Elections were be neither quiet nor cheap.

One year after the 1971 presidential election, President Park wanted to restructure the Constitution to create a viable framework in the South for speeding the task of reunification. President Park had told the council drafting the amendments to the Constitution to do so in such a way as to ensure the maximization of efficiency which he said is most essential to maintaining and developing the nation's democratic system. The new Constitution gave new powers to President Park, and carefully reined in the National Assembly. There was a new government body, the National Conference for Unification(NCU), composed of 2,000-5,000 delegates elected through direct popular elections. The new Constitution stated that this body, "based on the collective will of the people...shall be the depository of the national sovereignty."<sup>98</sup> To be chaired by the President, the NCU also had the duty of electing the president by a simple majority without debate. This replaced direct popular election under the old constitution. This was



so-called the October Revitalizing Reforms.

The new Constitution received roughly 90% of the vote in the referendum, in which an amazing 91.1% of registered voters were moved to go to the polls.<sup>99</sup> People were urged by every possible means to vote, receiving letters, telephone calls and even telegrams. At transportation terminals, government representatives urged voting before departure. Village leaders took some whole villages to the polls as single groups. In cities, students were mobilized to round up voters, and in snowy Kwangju city girl students were organized to lead people to ballot boxes.

However, most people outside Seoul were unaware of the lack of a limit on presidential terms. In the countryside farmers admittedly knew little about the New Constitution, but said they were voting for it because they had been told it was necessary for the nation's future. Tanks slipped quietly away in the dark after a month's stay in the cities for the election. However, as soon as the polls closed, the military was back on the streets in force. Under his carefully designed new law, Park could well have made himself President for life until his assassination in 1979.

Besides Park's military, police and KCIA's machines, repeated assurances of US support and North Korea's apparently aggressive attentions were the President's strength. A 600,000 strong army, a nationwide militia, a well-armed national police force and an omnipresent and highly efficient

intelligence network were the bases of the machinations of Park's rule and entrenched government.

In the first half of the 1970s, the Presbyterian Church, the second largest Presbyterian group in South Korea, with 250,000 members, spawned a human rights movement that was not even dreamed of 10 years ago. The arrests of churchmen and mission workers and the executions of the alleged People's Revolutionary Party members in 1972, had intensified opposition among the disaffected minorities.

The human rights issue, perhaps Park's biggest image problem abroad, had not boiled over domestically, but the potential existed for greater agitation by the Christians and university students, who made up the bulk of the concerned population. Yet only a tiny minority of Christians were concerned with human rights, despite the obvious fact that the whole of South Korea's society was undergoing transformation. Institutions were being destroyed, created, altered. Traditions were under fire or being maintained under duress. The small minority of educated and articulate who could express themselves about what should and should not be done were too often merely looking for personal recognition.

When criticism were directed at the workers' organizing rights and employment conditions which became a Achilles heel, the government tried to repress it. Oppositions and their particular ideals came and went or were suppressed but the

administration's more basic problems remained.

The Government initiated mass rallies to form favorable public opinion. A government controlled Newspaper reported, "Hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life vowed to fight the communists to the last, during continuing rallies"<sup>100</sup> when one million South Koreans, both supporters and Park's political adversaries alike, came together in mass rallies against the communist North. By this method President Park virtually achieved a national consensus. The students and faculty members pledged to strengthen national harmony and security and apologized for divisive demonstrations. Faculty members and university professors said consensus and unity were the only means to survive the current crisis. The five-man Permanent Council of the Catholic Bishops' Conference said: "Communist successes in Indochina showed the need for a strong government based on justice to forestall any communist advances."<sup>101</sup> To prevent further detentions or seizures of activist priests, the bishops said they would assume responsibility for the protection of human rights through a dialogue with government in hopes of finding a solution. The communist threat gave justification for constitutional revision and the restoration of human rights had but all been forgotten.

The people's military consciousness was sustained with monthly air-raid drills in which citizens were shoed off the streets into alleys, and told to cover their faces with flu

masks or handkerchiefs to protect them from gas attacks. Short films, beginning with wartime bombing scenes, showed how to flee to the basement with emergency equipment, wait for the attack, then take a super-sudsy shower afterwards to dispel the effects of poison gas.

The security question had indeed touched a sensitive national nerve cord. Anti-communism, especially opposition to North Korean has been a supremely genuine sentiment. The American moral commitment to help defend the military regime against communist aggression had about as much impact on South Koreans as the hot air expelled in its verbalization. Few really believed in American promises, America's will to contain communist advances. The feeling that it would be American national interests and not national honor that would force it to defend South Korea was widespread. Maintenance of a balance of power through the continued division of the Korean peninsula was regarded as the purpose of U.S. foreign policy in South Korea.

Even though a poet, Shin, Dong Yeup, compared the Americans with the Japanese colonialist of an earlier age, the national sentiment was worse against Japanese than Americans.

".....  
 Developing countries are like wine.  
 Isn't it true that wine has to go bad to be good?  
 Is our country to be fermented by butter, jazz, dollars  
 and Yankeeism?  
 ....."

Cotton River<sup>102</sup>

Most South Korean people were pro-American and the passage of the years since Korean war had not dimmed the ingrained anti-Communism of the people. The students who made the April Revolution were the generation that speaks no Japanese and remember little or nothing of Japanese rule; it was liable to be much influenced by things and thoughts of Japanese.

Emergency Decree No. 9, which was issued on May 1975, was based on trust and confidence in the US commitment and pursuit of an open door policy towards communist countries. The opposition party NDP had conceded that President Park's anxiety over national security in the post-Indochina era was justifiable. The party postponed the prearranged provincial campaign for constitutional amendments. The Decree Nine prohibited any falsehoods, any opposition to, distortion or defamation of the Constitution, and any appeals for the revision or repeal of the Constitution, whether by demonstrations or through the mass media. The aim of the decree, with a few exceptions and additional restrictions, was almost precisely cumulative and intensified one of Park's previous decrees. There was no ceiling on the length of imprisonment which faced anyone who dared violate the decree although life terms were excluded. The media had come under nearly total control of Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) which resulted in a completeness black-out. The Decree pointedly banned any student activities from interfering in

politics.

Students, however, continued their protests against the election and against enforced military drill on campus. Even high school students attempted to demonstrate against Park's new Constitution. With some students in jail on charges of plotting to overthrow the government, and many others inducted into the army after the Government required their expulsion from the universities.

A student's suicide<sup>103</sup> message read: "We(students) cry to the people because our country now is under a disgraceful military. In order to attain democracy...and to realize social justice, I will give my life." Students leaflets followed: "How can we stand this situation anymore. Carry the torch of patriot Kim Sang Jin and attack the stronghold of the dictator."

While a majority of students cling to a centrist view on most economic and political issues, some radicals often come under the spell of a class of dedicated leftists seeking fundamentally to restructure South Korean society into a socialist system.<sup>104</sup> These activists spurn big business groups as "comprador capitalists" serving the interest of foreign investors, and demand "ownership by the masses" of major industries. Politically, they scorned parliamentary democracy as "revisionist" and "reformistic".

The radical workers seek to emasculate the power of the family-run Chaebols, or conglomerates, which have been a main

engine of South Korea's economic expansion over the past few decades.

In assessing political power in South Korea, one has to distinguish between the attitude of ruler's opponents and their ability to rock the boat. So far they have managed to cast a kind of pall over the regime outside the country but have little domestic achievement to their credit. A prominent political dissident<sup>105</sup>, Kim, Dae jung, with sufficient charisma and sincerity, plus political intelligence and courage, to command overall respect, he came close but not close enough. He would never again accept a party position and would only work for the restoration of democracy in the period of suppression. However, he established another opposition party for his candidacy in 1987 Presidential election.

Major political leaders, including principal opposition figure Kim, Dae Jung, issued warnings against the trend towards radicalism and violence on the part of students and workers. An underdog in the 1987 presidential election, Kim. Dae Jung, redressed "I'm a radical in the fight against dictatorship but definitely a moderate in seeking democracy."<sup>106</sup> On the issues of labor unrest and antigovernment violence by university student, he moved away from his radical supporters. In a clear shift to the centre, he began disengaging himself from radicals on campuses and in labor groups - the very people who helped earn him the status

of South Korea's foremost opposition leader. His political acrobatics weakened opposition unity and cooperation. The labor movement, while cloaked in demands for higher pay and better working conditions, turned into campaign issues. Most political dissidents opposed students and workers resorting to force as a means of making demands. Kim said in a speech to foreign diplomats and journalists that his party focuses on "solving problems through dialogues, national consensus and the electoral process".<sup>107</sup> His view concerning anti-Americanism was that it went against Korean national interests, and his political strategy was seeking for acceptance by the relatively conservative middle class in the coming presidential election. Although Kwangju remains his political base, Kim was prepared to play the role of mediator between government and Kwangju citizens, who demanded the prosecution of all people involved in the massacre.

The electoral politics has formed an electoral pragmatism among Cholla voters. The pragmatism was built largely on the belief that the party in power is better equipped to deal with local problems than a party that is not. This pragmatism, however, worked for Kim's party in 1988 general election. And this gave landslide victory to Kim in Cholla province.

#### b. Hidden Class Conflict

A representative intellectual poet, Kim, Chi-ha, had



addressed the problem of corruption among governmental officials and raised concern over human rights and humanism. In his poem, *Five Thieves* (May 1970), he portrayed of the cabinet ministers, members of the National Assembly (DRP), army generals, senior bureaucrats and others in high places. He strongly criticized government officials for alleged corruption. He accused the President and his supporting bureaucrats and big businessmen of being traitors, pimps and robbers. The rulers in Seoul were seen as traitors threatening to crush the cultural, political and economic independence of the Korean people by their subservience to foreign interests. His jargon and ideas reflected the mentality of a people who have always felt under siege by stronger powers, of a people whose very survival was felt to be at stake. However such political poems expressed little sympathy to the poor, especially workers.

Thus, the intellectuals' concerns seems to be towards more superstructural changes and emphasis on cultural identity, language, idea and such abstract things. The poet says:

"We must be Korean. Our language, now a mixture of Japanese and American influences, must be Korean. We must express our thoughts in good Korean, use Korean folk songs, Korean dance; give Korean, not Chinese, names to our children."<sup>108</sup>

He was a part of distinct tradition of protest.

Much of the rhetoric which Koreans could be heard in the

1970s with embarrassment smiles was an echo of intellectuals's world view in the social movements. Some intellectuals like Kim was always wary of foreign influence and of the official methods of modernization. His traditionalism was part of his rebellious politics. Anti-foreign traditionalism, not to be confused with political conservatism, had been regarded as the core of rebellions in Korea for centuries. Korean government had always been accused of pandering to foreign powers; China, Japan, or the US, and modernization often involved this tradition. First, historically, it was Japanese colonialism, which forced open the hermit kingdom. Then, the industrialization in Korea was called an "American industrialization."

Kim, originally came from Cholla Province, was fascinated by Tonghak religion, Eastern Learning, and Tonghak rebellion in 1894, when peasants attacked their own ruling class, which then enlisted Chinese and Japanese troops to crush the movement. He saw an implied parallel with his times. It was general understanding of the historical epoch among Korean intellectuals. He then became infatuated with the Roman Catholic church. He attempts to explain his infatuation saying, "I was desperate to find a way to overcome a fear of death, as well as the material poverty of our people and the spiritual dehumanization that threatens Korean society."<sup>109</sup> Finally, he believed he had found "a new principle of human liberation was born: the identification of God with

revolution." The Catholic Liberation Theology seems to be his third idea in his intellectual journey.

His knowledge was not based on scientific politico-economic analysis, but a direct, abstract and emotional response. Korean intellectuals, generally, had resorted to cultural, nationalistic, sentimental and mental reform in Korean society. Their ideas invoked cultural movements without social grounds of substructure. He was fascinated with the strong traditional form of Pansori, a kind of rhythmic story-telling, which has been a long popular tradition especially in Cholla province. This music represents the historical distinction of a group of people who has always been in the position of being exploited and alienated. The Cholla province has always had those people who were opposed to the exploiters and rulers. Because the region was so rich in agriculture it was always exploited by the central power. The human right issues had once been the chief concern of intellectuals, student activists, and political dissidents aiming for humanization, social justice and equality.

There is surely no return  
 After entering here, and sleeping here  
 A deep sleep engulfing the body  
 That sleep, that white room, that bottomless vertigo.

There is surely no return  
 Even if you get up  
 Red blood on the wall, like an old scream  
 Even if you get up, once, twitching, twitching  
 Once you go to sleep

Ah, the rough road  
There is no second time for the traveller.

All night, the sound of their boots  
Black and forth on the floor above  
Invisible movements of faces, hands, bodies  
That room where they laughed out loud  
That white room, that bottomless vertigo.  
The eyes open wide at the pain of pulled finger-nails  
A scream as the body is torn apart, please  
Is it not possible for the skeleton of the soul to stay  
alive and leave the body?

The miserable, miserable way my friends died  
Fell asleep, covered in shame, fell asleep, miserably  
They used to smile  
They used to cry out loud  
Those dear friends.

Ah, there is surely no return, no return  
Once you sleep in that room  
Pale, so pale  
Once your body is wracked by madness  
On that stormy, rough road,  
No second time for our brothers, for the traveller.

No Return<sup>110</sup>(1971)

Kim expresses the life of fear in the underground, and the tortures suffered by the student activists. His anger, resulted because "they(the government and the KCIA) tortured them(his friends) this year and two years ago and five or six years ago. This is ordinary life for those around me... I must forgive them, but I cannot. Even after I am dead I'll not be able to forgive them. I want to, but I can't."<sup>111</sup>

However, the feeling of wrath felt by the people was far different from the intellectuals' sentiments in the 1970s. Hidden behind the high economic growth was the sacrifice of the poor workers both urban and rural whose sufferings and deep frustration were being changed into hatred. The song of

the urban poor(in Seoul) who were evicted from their  
unlicensed shacks illuminates their strong struggle  
consciousness.

Laboring with sweat and blood beneath the sun  
Heading for the gutter in the hills with torches beneath  
the stars  
Let not our children be heir to the destiny of the poor  
filled with suffering  
Let us rise and break the slavery of oppression  
Let us rise and beat the dog-like cowardice  
With new strength of unity let us build new destiny  
Let us break and sweep away the corporate pigs  
And destroy the handful of tyrants  
Opening up the dawn of equality and liberation  
Let the cry of the poor become a raging forest fire

The Cry of the Poor<sup>112</sup>

**MAKING HISTORY IN THE TRENCH CITY OF KWANGJU:  
THE DIALECTIC OF CLASS AND CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN  
SOUTH KOREA**

VOLUME II

By

Tae Shin Chung

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## **V. CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF CLASS**

### **1. Economic Crisis and Political Alignments**

#### **a. Summary of Political Economy in Korea**

The economy of the 1950s was transformed externally into a planned free economy in the 1960s by the long-term third world development plans of Kennedy Administration. Long-term loans were preferred to short term aid programs. Internally, desire for accumulation called for production facilities rather than investment in consumer goods. The privileged economy based on the preferential distribution of consumer goods aid was transformed to a Keynesian planned economy in the early 1960s. During the 1960s, the planned economy was based on foreign government and military loans, and the development plans emphasized light industries for import substitution as well as export to the world market. High economic growth during the 1960s eventually confronted changes in the international market due to the first oil crisis and a call for equal internal distribution of the fruits of growth by workers.

The Korean economy for the first time was threatened by declining productivity and difficulties in external balance of payments. The world economy had been in a deep recession in the early 1970s, so-called stagflation, and the US under Nixon

issued measures against depression and a new policy called "Asian Solutions to Asian Problems" for East Asia was publicized. An acute crisis in the monetary financial system of capitalism broke out in the 1960s. An energy and a raw material crises also broke out in the capitalist countries in the 1970s. The term 'stagflation' signifies a recession or extremely low rate of growth hand in hand with a high level of unemployment and inflation. The Vietnam Boom was being undermined by Vietnamization policies and new foreign relation were necessary due to the changes in the US-China relations. Thus the Korean economy required structural changes from light industries to heavy chemical industries and more strict labor control. To squeeze the Korean workers more, the government executed the Emergency Presidential Decree on August 3, 1972. The most important purpose of this decree was to save slowly-dying industries whose debt servicing arrangements which were too heavy. Praised as the cure-all for the country's ailing industry, the measures were actually designed primarily to help big companies sort out their increasingly pressing foreign debt-servicing problems. This meant giving some breathing space to those big companies so that they could pay their debts and not rely on the government as had been the case in the past. Another underlying move was the growing disparity between soaring prices(inflation) and sagging business(stagnation). The national budget was in deficit which brought about the need to expand the revenues from



taxation. As evaluated 10 years later, "the August 3 measures failed because though they exposed the korb market (by having every creditor register with the government), they did not make it impossible for korb lenders to hide behind anonymous bank deposits."<sup>113</sup> The financial systems in Korea have been beyond the control of government financial machinery, banks and other institutions, since the 1950s because of the under korb market and its strength in the national economy.

To support of the economic policies, a more austere political system was required, and this resulted in the October Revitalization Reform, the so-called Yushin Constitution, which guaranteed Park's power for life. The government successfully coped with the world economic recession in the early 1970s at the expense of the Korean working class and lower middle class. And also because, prior to the 1973 oil crisis, the economy was pretty well prepared due to political changes in South Korea.

However, the swift adjustment did not occur during the second oil crisis (1978) because of renewed economic prosperity in 1976 and 1977, and heightened resistance. The government not only failed to adapt to the world economic changes but lost control of the Korean people. Many rebellions broke out. The Pusan & Masan Uprisings (1979) resulted in social instabilities. Park's regime ended due to internal contradictions and the crisis led to the Kwangju armed uprising. To continue capital accumulation, intensified

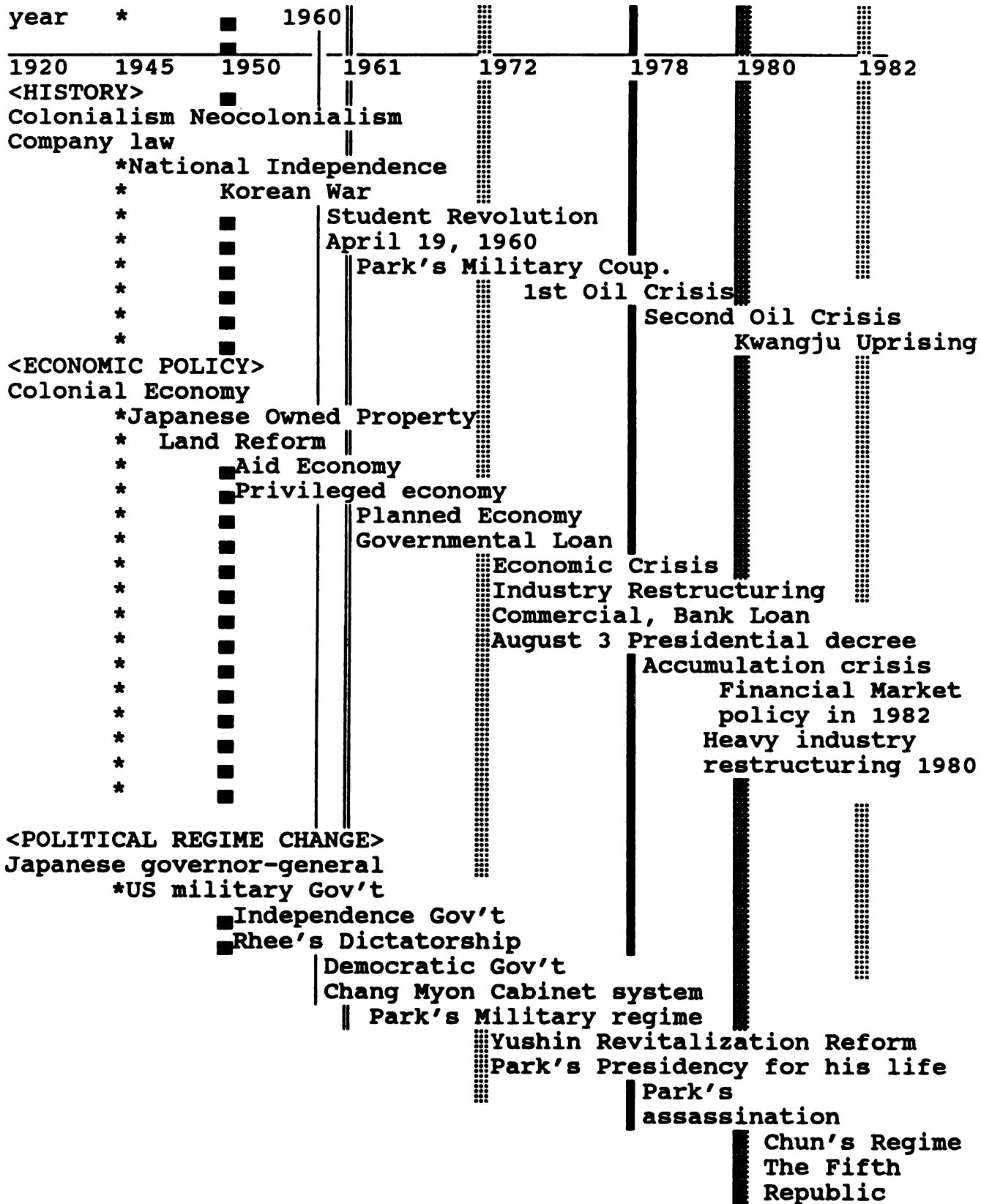
economic policies and political power in support of the economic policies were required. However, in the face of peoples' heightened consciousness of exploitation it was not easy. After the Kwangju Uprising, as soon as the counter revolutionary military group took power, they executed new economic policies; Restructuring Heavy Industries in August 1980 and consequent Financial Reform Policies(anti-crisis policies) in June 28 & July 3, 1982.

All this helped firms fight recession with renewed vigour but the threat of inflation loomed larger. Widespread fear of new price increases, ingrained in the public mind by years of double digit inflation, was making it hard for officials to sell their policy package. While big business welcomed it, the students and intellectuals in the street were skeptical.

South Korea's escape from chronic current-account deficits was clearly a major factor behind the reflation in the early 1980s. The deficit soared to US\$4.2 billion in 1979 under the impact of the second round of oil-price increases and rose to US\$5.3 billion in 1980.

The main objective of reflation was to take big business out of the prolonged recession. The average debt-equity ratio of South Korean firms, at 5:1, became almost untenable under existing interest rates, especially because 26% of South Korean firms were dependent on kerb-market loans at 30% annual interest charges. The bank rate cuts was estimated to have saved business up to Won 500 billion a year. With corporate

Figure 2 : Economic Crises and Political Alignments



tax cuts estimated to save another Won 500 billion, savings from these two sources matched the Won 1 trillion annual loan volume from the underground money market. Export manufacturers embraced the government's package with gusto.

The above explanations of South Korean capitalist development and political alignment can be summarized into the Figure 2. The summary Figure 2 shows that social changes in a capitalist society can scarcely be explained by a dictator's individual will but they rather come because of underlying economic dynamics. A short-term Kondratieff model can be deduced from the above investigations of Korean experiences. About every 10-year cycle, regular economic crises brought about political structure changes in the 1970s and 1980s. This reflects the causal relations between politics and economics as against arguments for viewing them independently.

#### b. Accumulation Crisis in Kwangju

The Korean economy was under the influence of the first oil shock until 1976. Strict finance, import restrictions and low economic growth policy were employed to recover from the oil shock. As a result, as shown in the Table 6, the Korean economy achieved high growth rates, price stability and international payment stability in 1976 and 1977.

**Table 6: GNP Annual Growth Rate(%) in South Korea, 1962-84**

(unit= %)

<b>year</b>	1962	1964	1966	1968	1970	1972	1973	1974	1975
<b>GNP*</b>	3.1	8.6	12.4	12.6	7.9	7.0	16.5	8.7	8.3
<b>year</b>	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
<b>GNP</b>	15.5	10.3	11.6	6.4	-6.2	6.4	5.4	11.9	8.4

\*In constant 1970 prices.

Source: 1962-1976: A World Bank Country Economic Report, Korea: Policy Issues for Long-term Development, p. 461.

1977-1984: Korea Bank, National Income of Korea, 1982. Economic Planning Board, Statistical Yearbook of Korea, 1986.

During the period of government-centered economic growth, Cholla province had contributed labor and cheap food. The agricultural population of Cholla Province was 66.9% of total population in 1970 and 52.7% in 1981. It has been the highest in the nation. The total population during 1970s decreased by 5.6%, but agricultural population was highest in nation<sup>14</sup>. Roughly a third of Seoul's population and about the same share of the working populations of Ulsan and Pusan, both Kyongsang province industrial boomtowns, were estimated to be migrants from Cholla farms. As a result of government's low price crop policy, the level of provincial income was the lowest in the country. The South Cholla economy in mid 1970s was the lowest among 11 provinces including 3 municipal cities. The GNP per capita of Cholla Province was the lowest among the provinces, Won 200,858 in 1976. The GNP per capita of Kwangju citizen was Won 137,000, that was just half of Incheon city, Daegu was

Won 173,000, Daejon was Won 179,000.

However, despite the Kwangju City's lower income, the rate of university student, 21.4 out of 1,000, was the highest in the nation<sup>115</sup>. The city of Kwangju has traditionally been strong in education, high educated unemployed population posed a serious problem because of its weak industrial capacities. In 1979, large scale corporations (those with over 300 employees) were 9 (1.8%) out of 513 corporations, small scale corporations(5-19 employees) were 365(72.4%) out of 513 corporations<sup>116</sup>.(see Table 1 & 5) Medium-small corporations were underdeveloped and employment opportunities of high educated people were seriously limited in Kwangju area. In industrial structure, tertiary sector was 70.5%, compared to the national average 45.3%, therefore, the employment structure was strikingly unproductive and industrialization was behind the national average. Export achievement was relatively lower every year, because food beverage industry was its main sector. The capital scale was small, 31.5% of corporations had less than Won 10,000,000 and over Won 500,000,000 was only 2.3% of all corporation<sup>117</sup>.

The economic conditions in Kwangju during the second-half of the 1970s can be explained by the circumstances of the manufacturing industry(Table 7). Overall the total establishments had decreased, and operation rate was about 96%. The most important reasons for suspending operations were sales and financial problem. The sales problem was

connected to the low buying power (low income) of the residents and low competitiveness of the factories in the domestic market share.

Table 7: Status of Manufacturing Industry Distribution in Kwangju

year	total	oper- ation	clo- sure	suspe- nsion	problem of suspension			
					sale	seasonal	finance	fix
1975	541	510	8	23	22	-	-	-
1976	505	480	4	21	18	2	-	1
1977	509	489	4	16	9	4	1	-
1978	504	490	2	12	6	1	5	-
1979	504	487	6	11	9	1	-	1
1980	495	478	7	10	3	1	5	1

Source: Kwangju Statistical Yearbook, 1981, The City of Kwangju, 1981, p. 116.

The 'Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement'<sup>118</sup> was supposed to establish big industrial estates in Kwangju inducing national big corporations (Chaebols) into the area for the expansion of employment opportunities and inhabitants' income increases through the subcontractization of local small-medium corporations. It was planned for the induction of local economic development.<sup>119</sup>

The "Production Urbanization Movement" among small-medium local business class in Kwangju led to the establishment of local industrial estates since 1976. Among the top-tier Chaebols, or industrial conglomerates, Samsung stands out as the most strongly Kyongsang. There are also a number of relatively smaller Cholla-based firms - Kumho Tire and the

Haitai group are good examples. The accumulation crisis was also reflected in labor relations a paternalism appeared in workplaces. The business class of Kwangju also suffered from defeatism and alienation from the center of the national economy and politics.

The local business class, through the Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry, had initiated the establishment of Bonchon and Songam Industrial Estates in 1978. The local business class had planned to buy land with their own financing and establish private-funded industrial estates for the first time in Korean history without Governmental help or interferences. Therefore, the local business elites had planned to pay for land and construction costs while city authorities took the responsibilities for administration and construction. These were the first privately funded industrial estates.

The second oil shock brought drastic inflation and government introduced austerity policies which affected local corporations. In 1979 drastic domestic inflation and the resulting tight-money policies were responsible for the corporations' financial difficulties. They were forced to use the usurious private money market which stimulated high interest rates and this weakened the competitiveness of local small-medium corporations. It is impossible to measure exactly the size of the underground economy in South Korea. The underground economy was estimated at 20-30% of the



country's GNP<sup>120</sup>, much of it involving kerb-market, untaxed stock and real-estate investment. The local Chamber of Commerce and Industry requested financial assistance to cover the costs of equipment from the national banks.

The Bonchon industrial estate was planned for anti-pollution industries such as the food industry; while the Songam industrial estate was intended for machinery and metal processing industries. These two industrial estates were designated as local industrial development encouragement sites by the Ministry of Construction in 1979. The corporations situated on the site of the industrial estates enjoyed the benefits of exemptions from acquisition, registration, and property tax for 5 years. In addition they got governmental assistances in water supply and drainage and road pavement etc.

Food companies, Honam food, Lottee Beverage, HaiTai Confectionery, and Oriental Beer in Bonchon Industrial Estate established factories to expand their business in the Kwangju area. In most cases they enjoyed monopoly in their fields.

Hanam Industrial Estate has been planned by South Cholla Provincial Government since 1978. The Central government guaranteed the construction of 4 way highway express, double track railway, and transformation of usages of farm land to industrial land. Big electronic corporations, the Goldstar, Daewoo, Samsung Chaebols, welcomed the Hanam Industrial Estate because of the high electronics market capacities in Cholla

Province and highly educated, abundant, low wage labor force. The national market for electronics was almost static with the exception of Cholla province where there was a growing market for electronics such as color TV and refrigerators. The Chaebol corporations had sought new market expansion in Cholla Province and the local small-medium corporations wanted to subcontract with them to continue making profits. It was a unique example of a survival strategy by the local small-medium capitalists in a time of economic crisis.

In 1982, privatization of financial institutions, self-regulation of markets, high economic growth rate(6%), and low price increases(4%), were accepted as changes favorable for capital accumulation. The local business elites had established their grounds of accumulation in industrial estates through subcontracting, and they needed to stabilize economic activities. So they emphasized social stability and economic order in Kwangju. To create a good profit making atmosphere in the Kwangju area, the local business elites had initiated the establishment of economic stability and order through the 'commercial transaction accounts settlement campaign'(1981), 'credit society settlement campaign'(1985), 'commercial and industrial transaction order establishment assurance campaign'(1986), and the 'fair trade system establishment campaign(1986)'<sup>121</sup>. Interesting was the campaign of the 'commercial transaction accounts settlement campaign' which designated the last day of every month as a

give and take day. The President of Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry has pointed out two issues; the credit problem and ethical issues of human relations, and the necessities of supporting campaigns in Kwangju<sup>122</sup>.

The president of the Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shin, Tae-ho, has served for over 15 years and initiated the 'Production Urbanization Movement' and other campaigns and for the industrial and commercial peace in Kwangju. He is the owner of Dong-hwa Oil Co. Ltd. in Kwangju city, an oil distribution company, and during the production urbanization campaign he established an educational foundation<sup>123</sup> which seemed to respond to the tremendous education desires in the Kwangju area. Education itself seemed good business considering the abnormal education demands in Kwangju area. Ironically, the education fever in Kwangju area was approached critically by the initial research team during the Seminar Committee for the Kwangju Area Production Urbanization<sup>124</sup>. On the contrary, the establishment of Bonchon and Songam industrial estates was delayed and confronted with difficulties of investment fund shortages because of the financial disabilities of assigned corporations, land speculation by adventurers, and large corporations' land(factory sites) monopolization<sup>125</sup>.

In sum, one reason for the Kwangju Area Urbanization Movement was to carry out the urban decentralization process which intended the manufacturing factories to move away from

the center of the Kwangju city to suburban area. The reason might be to reduce the cost of land and other costs such as traffic congestion, residents complaints of environmental problems etc. The Kwangju business class sold their factory sites at high prices and collectively got cheap factory sites in the suburban area. However, the profits were not invested back into the industrial establishments but were directed to the service industry like school foundations and into land speculation.

Another reason for the Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement by Kwangju business class is the growing labor power in workplaces. The labor union branches of FKTU, even though it was a government-sanctioned union, were rapidly increasing in 1977(see Table 2), and students groups penetrated into the workplaces through the Night School and by contacting workers in the Urban Industrial Mission. The night school and community movements were mainly formed around the factories in Kwangju(Kwangcheon) Industrial Estate where workers and the urban poor resided. The business class didn't want connections between the community and students movements established within the working place. They wanted to separate the workplaces from the emerging movement in workers' resident areas. They planned to move factories to the suburban area which was spatially separated from workers' residential areas. The Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement can, therefore, be understood in the logic of capital accumulation

and spatial relations of urban changes.

## **2. Class**

This section concentrates on the class changes during the high economic growth period(1960-1980). First of all, I will describe the class structure and its changes over the time. Then I will explore 'what (how) these structures do to the people's lives and what people do about it.' More importantly, I will show 'how the determining pressures of structured processes are experienced and handled by people.'<sup>126</sup> This follows the exploration of the so-called 'structured process' by E. P. Thompson. The objective structures of class composition must be acknowledged by the theoretical framework itself and will be embodied in the real experience of Kwangju Uprising analyzed in the following chapter. Thus, this section does not simply show the objective class structure but also shows the 'structured process'.

### **a. Class Structure**

Capitalist industrialization has transformed the relatively isolated and self-sufficient character of peasant production into a co-operative or socialized working environment. This facilitated the class formation of workers.

It was a general process that "economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle..., this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle."<sup>127</sup> The capitalist society has the basic trend of polarization of capital and labor following the development of productive forces and differentiation of labor process. The small scale urban self-managing group and small rural land owners have been transformed into industrial proletariats. Capital with superior production force becomes monopoly capital through the concentrated accumulation process. This process results in the emergence of a new middle class while small-medium capitals are threatened by the monopoly capital. In the 1970s the large portion of rural and urban petty bourgeoisie had transformed into industrial proletariats. Therefore, the working class emerged as the new center of class conflict.

As shown in the Table 8-a & Appendix Table 2, the class structure at the national level has the characteristics of a rapidly increasing working class, a rapid decreasing rural petty bourgeoisie, an increasing urban petty bourgeoisie, and a relative stabilize bourgeoisie class. The decrease of the

bourgeoisie during the high economic growth period seems due to the concentration and centralization of capital in the Chaebols. The decrease in agricultural population is connected with the increases of working class and urban petty bourgeoisie. However, the South Cholla Province (Table 8-b) had a relatively small capitalist class and the decrease of petty bourgeoisie has declined since the mid-1960s. The bourgeoisie in South Cholla Province has declined rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s due to isolation and unequal opportunities offered by the government's economic plan.

Table 8: The Trend of Class Structure of National and South Cholla Province

Table 8-a: National Class Structure (1960-1980)

(unit= thousand, %)

year	1960		1966		1975		1980	
p.o.f.	15,391		16,108		21,827		24,848	
e.a.p.	7,488		8,654		13,351		13,595	
e.p.	6,973		7,963		12,682		12,682	
class	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
capitalist	89.9	1.2	77.9	0.9	120.2	0.9	163.1	1.2
petty-bourgeoisie	5,406.3	72.2	5,374.1	62.1	7,463.2	55.9	7,096.6	52.2
working class	1,991.8	26.6	3,202.0	37.0	5,767.6	43.2	6,335.3	46.6
Total	7,488	100.0	8,654	100.0	13,351	100.0	13,595	100.0

Table 8-b: South Cholla Province Class Structure(1960-1980)

(unit= thousand, %)

year	1960		1966		1975		1980	
p.o.f.	2,180		2,187		2,345		2,379	
e.a.p.	1,289		1,291		1,592		1,498	
e.p.	1,245		1,230		1,545		1,418	
class	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
capit- alist	9.0	0.7	2.6	0.2	3.2	0.2	4.5	0.3
petty- bourg- eisie	1,078.9	83.7	983.7	76.2	1,216.3	76.4	1,138.5	76.0
working class	201.1	15.6	303.4	23.5	363.0	22.8	335.6	22.4
Total	1,289	100.0	1,289.7	99.9	1,582.5	99.4	1,478.6	98.7

p.o.f. : population fifteen years old & over  
e.a.p. : economically active population  
e.p. : employed person

Source: National Data: Seo, Kwan-Mo., Class Composition and Class Differentiation of Modern Korean Society, Korean Sociological Association, 1984, p. 36.

Cholla Province Data: Kim, Dong-Uk., "Struggle Subjects and Contradictory Structure of Korean Capitalism", in The Study of Kwangju Minjung(Mass) Struggle, Sakyejol Press, Seoul, 1990, p. 105.

Cholla Province has retained a large rural petty-bourgeoisie despite the large deruralization. There was no drastic changes in the urban petty bourgeoisie. The working class has decreased in its ratio in the late 1960s because of the decrease in the percentage of productive workers.

The class structure of Kwangju City in 1980, in the Table 9 & Appendix Table 3, shows it to have a higher percentage of



petty bourgeoisie compared to other cities as well as the nation as a whole. This is due to the large sales and service sector. The percentage working class is far below that of national average. The high portion of salaried class is due to the large employment in areas of education, public administration and circulation institutions. The peculiar characters of Kwangju class structure are the existence of large rural petty bourgeoisie, large urban petty bourgeoisie and relatively small working class.

Table 9: Class Structure of National Cities in 1980

(unit= thousand, %)

city	national		Kwangju		Seoul		Daegu		Pusan	
p.o.f.	14,487		479		5,749		1,099		2,127	
e.a.p.	7,139		208		2,826		525		1,088	
e.p.	6,416		182		2,559		479		977	
class	number	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
capit- alist	121.4	1.7	2.1	1.0	82	2.9	6.3	1.2	13	1.2
petty- bourg- eoisie	2,077.5	29.1	75.9	36.5	791	28.0	161.7	30.8	274	25.2
working class	4,933.0	69.1	129.2	62.1	1,953	69.1	357.0	68.0	800	73.5
Total	7,131.9	99.9	207.2	99.6	2,826	100	525	100	1087	99.9

p.o.f. : population fifteen years old & over  
e.a.p. : economically active population  
e.p. : employed person

Source: Kim, Dong-Uk., "Struggle Subjects and Contradictory Structure of Korean Capitalism", in The Study of Kwangju Minjung (Mass) Struggle, Sakyejol Press, Seoul, 1990, p. 107.

These class structure Tables can only distinguish one's class position. They can not distinguish the political or cultural expression of one's class identity. Seo(1984)<sup>128</sup>, in his structural analysis of Korean class structure, argues that class analysis requires the total process in understanding Korean capitalist development. The best understanding of class analysis in the rapidly changing Korean society is not the structural analysis but the historical analysis of class formation.

The class structures of Table 8 and 9 are based on the National Census Data. The class category is classified from the occupational categories of the Yearbook of Economically Active Population(Korea) and Yearbook of Labor Statistics (ILO). For the labor statistics, the Report of Actual Labor Conditions at Establishment, Statistical Yearbook of Korea, Report of Statistical Survey at Total Establishments were the important original sources put together by researchers. Class is understood in the social relations of production; capitalist and working class exists in the capitalist production sector, petty bourgeoisie and workers who are employed by petty bourgeoisie exist in petty production sector. The workers who are employed by petty bourgeoisie are also classified into working class. The basic class categorization is capitalist, petty bourgeoisie, and working class. This categorization escapes the political and ideological class categories. This class structure shows the

distribution of class in-itself.

The capitalist class includes company owners, company managerial positions, and governmental administrative officials. Petty-bourgeoisie is distinguished from capitalist in that they themselves participate in the production process and they stayed within the simple reproduction stage, just a small or little part goes to the capitalization. It includes self-employed groups of small farmers, small manufacturers, small merchants, and free professionals. The detailed Tables(Appendix Table 2 & 3) shows three groups, the rural petty bourgeoisie, the urban, and the professional and technicians, in the petty bourgeoisie category. The rural petty bourgeoisie includes agriculture, forestry and fishery sector; urban petty bourgeoisie includes production, transportation, sales, and service; professional and technicians have the highest socio economic position compared to other groups. The working class includes all others except capitalists, self-employed capital owners, and professionals. This includes free employed persons; specifically salaryman, productive workers, unproductive workers and unemployed persons. Salaryman includes employed professionals and technicians and office workers; productive workers includes agricultural, forestry, mining, fishery, transportation and simple workers as well as manufacturing factory workers; unproductive workers include sales persons and service workers. Unemployed persons are classified as working class

because of their freedom from the ownership of means of production.

Structural analysis that is schematic and quantitative represents only abstract class location and frequently leaves untouched the underlying dynamic process of social relations. This structural class analysis of Kwangju city can not explain why Kwangju, and not any other city, became the site of conscious class struggle and armed uprising.

As Marx said in The Eighteenth Brumaire, the French peasants form a class "insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter."<sup>129</sup> Marx's presentation of the peasant class includes the notion of culture as a component of class. And the analytical distinction of class in itself and class for itself does include culture as an element of a class in itself. Culture as a component of a class in itself extends to attitudes, habits of thought and behavior, felt interests and aspirations<sup>130</sup>. A class in itself is a class deficient in social awareness, an aggregate of individuals who are unacquainted with, or unreceptive to class definition. Class consciousness then needs to be imputed to workers from outside the working class by the Marxist intelligentsia.<sup>131</sup> The conception of a class against capital suggests an empirical

understanding of manifest opposition, struggle or conflict as definitive of class.

The empirical class psychology of the petty bourgeoisie in Kwangju was undistinguishable from that of proletarian class consciousness described by Lukacs. The petty bourgeoisie class in the South Cholla area was relatively isolated and excluded from the distribution of economic development and increases in income. Most petty bourgeoisie in Cholla area are difficult to distinguish from the working class in that they stayed just above the poverty line for family survival. However, the objective class position of petty bourgeoisie is different from that of working class in their self-employed status and small property ownership. But their subjective class location is identical to the social consciousness of the working class. Furthermore, while many workers migrated to industrialized areas for jobs in the 1970s and 1980s, some petty bourgeoisie were not able to leave their settlement places because of their small property holdings, mainly small patches of rice field. The lower middle class in Cholla province had been located at the margin of poverty as a transition class.

#### b. Working Class of Kwangju

The industry in Kwangju area in late Yi-Dynasty was largely domestic, such as, brassware, pottery, wooden

furniture, bambooware, nacre lacquered ware, alcoholic liquors, and oils (castor oil). The products were mainly sold to the upper class and tributary production, so mass demand was scarce.

Under Japanese rule, industry was not worthy of notice in Kwangju area except agricultural products and sea foods. Kanebuchi industrial corporation, Wakabayashi silk manufacturing corporation and Chonnam filature factory represented the sole modern production systems for cloth and raw silk. Kwangju has a history as a local administrative center, but commercial as well as industrial data at the turn of the century is scarce. As a local center for the production of daily necessities, industrial art were introduced from the outside. Imitative products were produced from metal processing and art refinery shops in the village. Korean craftsmen and journeymen existed at the level of small scale domestic production. Rich Koreans cooperated to establish the Kwangju Industrial Company, but it was in bad condition because of a lack of capital, managerial skill and technology. When the Japanese invested some capital in the ginned cotton industry, rice cleaning industry and brewery business, these business slowly flourished aided by management reform, expansion of scale and market. Bamboowares, paper and liquor were exported to other provinces on a small scale. There were 2 ginned cotton factories (Kwangju, Tomoda), three rice cleaning factories(Ito, Uchiyama, Shimoyama), 4

breweries(Matsuda, Urano, Ito, Otsu), and 3 printing houses(Kwangju ilbosa, Mokpo shinbo, Kiyama).

The Kwangju Electric Light Corporation was established in 1917, so Kwangju citizens for the first time experienced electric light on August 16 of that year. The engineering and construction industries were controlled by the Japanese. In the 1920s the production capacities of existing industries were expanded in numbers and capacities. Also new industrial sectors such as brush, briquette and paper rose up in the Kwangju area. In the 1930s, sericulture expanded enormously from about 69,000 Sok<sup>132</sup> in 1930 to one million Sok at the end of that decade. Three big silk manufacturing corporations (Chonnamdose, Kanebuchi Cotton Spinning, Wakabayashi) and a brewery corporation(Kwangju brewery) were prominent. The industry of Kwangju under Japanese rule was centered on the production of consumer products, however, it was not prosperous overall and stayed at a low level in its capital and technology.

Traditionally Kwangju was the center of local administration and there existed an extremely deep-rooted custom of placing government officials above people so that farmers, manufacturers, and merchants were hierarchically located below government officials and scholars. Most trivial merchants did their business at a tavern, a few of them had a store or roadside stand. Periodical markets had been developed traditionally at two places outside city walls;

Yangdong big fair and Kudong small fair. Two fairs formed every five days. The shop system(Jimbo) was introduced by the Japanese in 1911, which dealt with daily necessities and gradually formed a shop street in the center of the city. Business prospered in the central zone around two main streets; Choongjang-ro and Kumnam-ro, which were located inside the city walls. Commerce was dominated by Japanese merchants who organized the Kwangju Commerce and Industry Society. Korean merchants organized the Kwangju Business Youth Club in response to the Japanese merchants who threatened their commercial rights with a larger organization that could easily make large scale joint purchasing from big producers in Japan. Also, Japanese merchants monopolized the delivery of goods to government offices and schools. Later, those two conflicting organizations were integrated into the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1925. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry had become an official business institution which cooperated with colonial policies and supplied military strategic materials for the war.

Kwangju was also the center of transportation in Cholla province. A road system was developed from Kwangju to other local towns and was connected to the main road and railway to Seoul. The transportation system consisted of the A-frame carrier, oxen and horses, rickshaw, a few automobile and bicycles in the 1920s.

Industrial development in Kwangju was weak in 1930.



Factory workers worked mainly in silk manufacture, breweries and printshops. The number of silk factory workers at the three largest factories was about 1,257 in 1930.

Most industries were owned and managed by Japanese owners and technicians, while Korean workers did unskilled work. Koreans repatriates from Japan and Manchuria were influential in class formation. Those who had experienced factory work and mining in Japan and Manchuria could not find jobs in Kwangju area except a few in the rice cleaning industry. Most of them remained as rural wage workers or urban poor.

The class structure of Kwangju in Table 9 shows a relatively high percentage of petty bourgeoisie and relatively low working class composition compared to the other 5 largest cities of Korea in 1980. This was because of the low industrialization in Kwangju area. Table 10 shows comparative numbers of manufacturing workers in Korea's 6 largest cities. The number of manufacturing workers in Kwangju increased, but at a low rate compared to other cities.

Many workforces in Cholla province had to migrate to other cities to find employment opportunities. Mostly young people, mainly young females, migrated to northern (Seoul & Inchon) and eastern cities (Pusan & Daegu). They worked in manufacturing factories and remitted their wages back home to support their families. It is difficult to find the exact number of migrants from Cholla province to other cities. Some of them worked on a temporary, seasonal, and part-time basis.

They were fired first in case of economic recession and had to endure the worst working conditions, overwork, and low wage rates.

Table 10: Comparative Summary of Distribution of Manufacturing Workers of 6 large cities (Seoul, Pusan, Daegu, Inchon, Kwangju, Daejon) by Year.

year	Seoul	Pusan	Daegu	Inchon	Kwangju	Daejon
1971	334,796	117,435	63,782	33,578	12,706	31,846
1972	240,422	121,216	-	52,832	13,212	31,534
1974	319,411	138,251	77,384	54,196	14,215	48,123
1975	-	192,271	72,499	82,402	17,898	58,906
1976	-	263,441	-	87,587	18,848	67,620
1979	403,532	375,783	-	185,459	34,594	33,089
1980	-	358,224	124,536	181,927	24,108	32,640
1981	623,662	311,724	83,367	193,265	20,620	46,091
1982	476,369	345,360	144,713	217,303	19,376	35,767
1983	426,963	338,680	144,713	214,242	25,800	30,588
1984	405,213	365,333	148,190	220,155	25,064	33,494
1985	379,069	336,917	148,190	215,931	19,503	40,466

Source: Municipal Yearbook of Korea 1971-1989, Ministry of Home Affairs(1971-1985) & The Korean Municipal Association(1971).

A poem by Shin, Dong Yeup effectively captures the human sentiments associated with urbanization, migration, capitalist development, foreign capital, class formation, child labor, urban poverty, rural peasantry and lumpenproletariat in Seoul.

It was a dewy day  
 Beside a Seoh Shi Oh plate<sup>133</sup> in Chong-Roh<sup>134</sup> 5 Ga(the  
 5th street)  
 An outlandish youth clinged to me asking  
 for Dong Dae Moon(East Gate)<sup>135</sup>  
 .....  
 Seemingly just out of public school  
 Hugging his newly bought sportswear

And on his back, yams from afar were  
 Rubbing their dirt-stained faces together  
 getting wet amongst themselves

By his voice, could he be from Bo-eun<sup>136</sup> of Sok-Rhee Mt.  
 In North Choong Cheong Province or could he be from  
 A fishing village in Hae-nam<sup>137</sup> of South Cholla  
 Province?

Walking down to the next streetlamp I turned  
 But the youth was already disappeared amongst the  
 Flood of laborers.

.....

Could it be his sister?  
 A prostitute, an eye swollen, was sitting  
 leaning on the sunny side of the wall  
 Reading a long and stained letter in her under-clothes

.....

A former gravel-hauling coolie for the  
 Sky scrapper construction in Sae Jong Roh<sup>138</sup> lay fallen  
 His back broken

Could it be his father?  
 As this peninsula's sun was on fire,  
 From his sweat stained and chilly forehead, there rivers,  
 The continent's, the island nation's,  
 And also that new banking nations'  
 Waves were rolling  
 There is nothing left.

.....

Nothing has changed  
 The five hundred years of Yi-dynasty still is  
 Were it the past, he would have fled to the Northern Gan-  
 Doh<sup>139</sup>  
 Now he only comes to Seoul, a three hundred Lee<sup>140</sup>  
 distance

.....

On a dewy day  
 An outlandish youth clinged to me asking for  
 Dong Dae Moon(East Gate)  
 In his sinless big and mild eyes  
 The darkness settles  
 And in my labor-tired heart the  
 Lunch wrapping was getting wet under the rain.

Chong Roh 5 Ga(the 5th Street)<sup>141</sup>(1967)

### 3. Saga of a Worker

Wages in South Korea in the past decades have fallen far short of workers' productivity or expansion of the country's gross national product, contributing to a wide spread feeling of deprivation and frustration. Cheap labor has been one of major factors behind South Korea's successful industrial efforts over the past several decades.

The trade union was crippled by government control and labor laws and the government-sanctioned FKTU's top leadership was purged on assorted charges of corruption and ineptitude. The FKTU structure was transformed from industrial unionism, under which the top federation controlled the bottom unit, to a company union system. Thus it was fragmented the whole union movement into many small, independent units so that it could not function as a whole. The business class has shown austere attitudes toward the democratic union movement and has expounded the so-called industrial peace through cooperation between employers and employees. Business was supported by the government through physical force and legal systems during the high economic growth era. For example, the president of Samsung Chaebol declared, "there is not going to be a union in my conglomerate so long as I am alive."<sup>142</sup> In addition, he vowed he would shut down his factories rather than allow the unions to organize.

South Korea had been almost strike-free during the 1960s

and 1970s,<sup>143</sup> because there was no democratic radical union. From 1979-83, it lost an annual average of 0.5 of a day per 100 workers due to strikes. The rate in Japan was five times as high. In the US, it was more than 100 times higher. Possibly due to low wages and bad working conditions and delayed in payment of wages, workers changed their jobs frequently. The labor turnover rate averaged 6 % per month - more than four times as higher than Japan and half again as high as in the US.

A worker-student of the 'Wildfire' Night School wrote about his experiences as a worker. This essay shows a worker's labor experiences, capitalists' treatment of worker, work condition, work intensification and capital/labor conflicts in the city of Kwangju.

My father began his business when I first entered public school and continued to trade even though he knew that his business was failing. Eventually, however, everything failed and he began to work as a laborer by the time I was a fifth grader. We lived then, in the gutter up in the hills and he took care of our family of eight laboring all by himself. Thus, we lived with barely enough to eat. No one in our family has ever gone to junior school. All my sisters finished only public primary school and went to factories instead of junior school.

.....

We couldn't go to junior school because of heavy debt. I made up my mind to earn money and went to work in the factory. The first was at a tailor's. Because I went to work at eight and came home at eleven, I was always so tired I barely could endure it. At the end of the first month, when I received my first pay, it was Won 500. I thought then, that it wasn't right to make one, however small he is, work for 15 hours daily and pay only Won 500 per month. But, I endured patiently and continued working for another month. However, the pay was still Won

500 ...I moved to another job at a factory which made guitar strings. There I went to work at eight and went home at half past six. I worked less and enjoyed my work. My first pay was Won 6,000. Because I believed it wasn't yet time for making money but to learn skills, I moved to yet another job. The next factory was a maintenance factory and my experience there was far different from that I imagined. Going to work at half past seven, the finishing time wasn't fixed and I had literally lived beneath a car. Some days I got off at midnight and by average I went home at 10:30. ... Each time I resolved that "I need to learn skills". After all my pain, I got only Won 3,000 per month. But, I believed that one must endure hardship in order to learn skills. Also, because I never got a day off all month, I lived completely cut-off from the world. The question of "why must I live in this black greasy clothing working 15 hours a day when others of my age go comfortably to school" arose within me. And, each time I said to myself, "learn skill" "learn skill and make money". At that time I hated my boss. Making us work so much and paying us so little. After two years had passed, I thought of leaving. I had learned some skills. When I told my boss that I was quitting because of the low pay, he told me that he was going to raise it from Won 9,000 to Won 15,000. However, I didn't want to stay. I quit that factory without getting two months of my salary. But, I learned that you had to threaten to quit in order to get a raise. Next I got a job at Dong Shin Metallic Co. within an industrial complex. I went to work at eight and came off at half past six. I got to rest at Sundays and my first pay was Won 24,000. ... Then, I learned that you don't get raises in that factory. I got my first pay raise after seven months but the raise was only Won 100 per day. I was upset but continued to work for four more months. After four months, on March 1978, the pay rose to Won 922 per day. ... However, I told my manager that I wasn't going to stay with that salary. The vice-president acted surprised and told me that the pay had already been raised to Won 1,100 per day and that there must have been a mistake, pointing to the account book. He promised me that I will receive the remainder and told me to continue my work. According to the account book my salary was Won 1,022 per day. By chance I also saw the salary of another kid working with me written down as Won 1,000. And, when I realized that he was getting only Won 900, I discovered that they were keeping double accounts, showing the labor dept. officials the book with the larger sums and using the other one for us our pay.

.....  
I believe that laborers in factories all over our country are fighting their employers because of low pay. I also

believe that the biggest worry for the laborers is their salaries. Thus, unless laborers unite and join forces, we will never overcome this poverty.

Climbing the Stairs<sup>144</sup>(1978)

The intellectual poet, Kim, Chi Ha, attacked the Government's methods and its supposed disregard for the situation of the lower classes. He allegorically criticized the high life of the ruler's associates, the wealthy and mocked the judiciary machines and the unstoppable ambitions of the President. He was prosecuted for instigating the people to distrust the Government. In his poem, Pio(Groundless Rumors), Kim describes the fate of a poor worker, Ando. Unable to meet all the fees and taxes levied upon him, Ando in desperation exclaims in keeping with Pansori rhythm:

"Hell, what a bitch this world is!"  
 No sooner were these words out of his mouth than clink  
 clank  
 Handcuffs were at once put on both hands of Ando who was  
 then dragged to the court  
 Thonk, thonk, thonk...  
 "What's the charge?"  
 "His crime is that of standing on his two feet and  
 spitting groundless rumors from his mouth,  
 committing the crime of  
 Unwarranted touching of the ground with his two feet...  
 In spite of his poverty-stricken status, crime of wasting  
 time in thinking... crime of  
 Inhaling the air and expanding his thorax, crime of  
 forgetting his status and violating the right to  
 stand upright which is granted only to a special  
 privileged class, crime of insolently avoiding  
 The national policies for more production, export,  
 construction without resting...  
 Crime of thinking up groundless rumors which would  
 mislead the innocent people  
 Crime of intending to pronounce the same rumors, crime of  
 pronouncing same

Crime of intending to spread the same, crime of spreading  
the same, crime of...

Possibly helping the enemy, crime of entertaining anti-  
system thought...

And on top of these the accused committed the crime of  
violating the special society manipulating law, and  
therefore is found guilty.

He shall be placed in confinement for five hundred years  
from this date."

Pio<sup>145</sup>(Groundless Rumors)



## VI. THE FREQUENCY OF CLASS CONFLICT IN KWANGJU

This chapter shows how the working class was formed in the historical process of conflict and struggle in Kwangju. The unorganized working class showed a class disposition in changing from a petty bourgeoisie movement to an armed working class movement. The first section deals with movement relations between students and workers. Intellectuals' role in social change, as portrayed in the new social movements and class struggle debate will be compared and a different analytical framework for social class formation and social movements will be suggested.

In May 1980 the most dramatic social movement in modern Korean history took place in Kwangju, South Cholla province: an armed uprising against the military authoritarian government. City residents seem to have had a unique experience: "they (uprising participants) were not strangers. The whole city was experiencing a sense of unity. All were one. All were smiling. With rising happiness all held hands."<sup>146</sup> The participants of the Uprising in televised interviews described the period of citizen's control of the city as a "sacred world without egoistic mind," "peaceful world", "self-government period", "communal society of love"<sup>147</sup>, and "society of hope."<sup>148</sup> I am going to organize the second section on class and cultural conflict in the city of Kwangju around that event, explaining its underlying social

and political origins and its consequences. I want to show why the city of Kwangju, a relatively backward city, emerged as a site of class conflict with the kind of class-conscious culture that is characteristic of industrial capitalist cities.

### **1. The Rise and Fall of The Student Movement in Kwangju**

I examine how the student movement groups were connected to the worker groups and workers' movement in order to show how the workers' world-view and self-consciousness developed. A night school(1978), "Wild Fire" which was established by a group of Chonnam National University students for the purpose of industrial workers' education and organization, is chosen as a case study of the relations between the students movement and workers. I will examine the development of worker's consciousness through the analysis of the "Wildfire Anthology", a collection of night school factory workers' writings.

Students in Korean society were located at the center of social consciousness and justice. In the sphere of spiritual leadership, their criticism of social reality, even their actions were sympathetically were popularly accepted as social standards. However, students have been guaranteed social benefits such as employment opportunities, high wages, upward mobility opportunities, good marriages, and the deferment of

military service. Thus, confronted with strong student resistance in the early 1970s, President Park threatened the students with expulsion from campuses and the loss of their privileges as students.

a. 'Wildfire' Night School and Workers

You are the dawn, becoming ever brighter  
 You are the spring, rising forth  
 Light your fuse and come forward  
 New dawn of the people is in sight  
 Run, swallow the sweat and tears  
 Friend! Loving friend! Be like a wildfire

School Song of "Wildfire" night school<sup>149</sup>

Kwangcheon Wildfire Night School opened on July 24, 1978, and the first class was held with 34 students. The teachers were composed of 12 Chonnam National University students and a Yangdong Credit Union clerk, Yoon, Sang-won. Nine of the teachers were freshmen and three were sophomores<sup>150</sup>. Their social background can be measured by their parents' vocations; 2 vice-principles of school, 1 military officer, 1 clergyman, 3 officemen, 1 woman diver, 1 retailer, 1 agriculture, 1 unemployed. Most of the teachers (university students) can be classified as having petty-bourgeoisie family roots based on their parents' occupations.

The purpose of the Night School, according to a document<sup>151</sup>, was executing a new form of education for a more humane life. It stated the goal of night school education as the realization of humanity through a social movement for true

humanization<sup>152</sup>. Therefore, they emphasized solidarity among students and teachers and suggested the use of traditional economic meeting, Kye, as a means of solidarity and argued for cooperations with other community inhabitants, churches, and social organizations. The 'new type of education' emphasized love and beliefs which came from the realization of dehumanization and human deterioration and social irrationality in the existing society.

The night school was located at Kwangcheon-dong, near an industrial estate. Low-income workers lived around the factory area, as did many urban poor who were isolated from regular school opportunity. The students were mostly factory workers of Mudeung Textile Corporation, Kwangju Fishing Net Corporation, Asia Motor Company, and other metallic processing factories. Most were lower class Kwangcheon Apartment residents. Over 50 students registered for the first school-year. The sex ratio was about fifty to fifty and the age varied from 10 to 26. According to the Daily Records of School Affairs, the youngest student was age 10, and the oldest one was 26, but both dropped out within two months. An unexpectedly large number of students registered and 34-35 students attended the class regularly, so there were shortage of chairs and desks for the attendees.

The education course consisted of three terms, each term was six months, so the whole course required one and a half years to complete. Class was held five days a week and two

hours a day. The level of education was middle school, which taught Korean, English, Chinese Letter, Mathematics, Science and Korean History for the first term; General Society inplaced of Science for the second term; and for the final term, General Society, Korean History, Mathematics and Composition were chosen. The first term education focused on 'education of love' which emphasized the general consciousness of human essence. The second term was 'education of critics' which emphasized the finding of oneself in social relations and development of critical thinking. The third term was the 'education of praxis(intention)' which discussed and wrote about how to live with strong conviction and responsibility. The teaching methods explicitly rejected cramming and encouraged subjectvistic positions. Thus teachers and students developed and solved problems together for future application to actual life. The document of Kwangcheon Wildfire Night School<sup>153</sup> clearly described the aim of this night school as 'problem posing education'. Of course, this school was unauthorized, no diploma was given, and no school recognition and advantages were given to the students. After finishing the three terms, students graduated from the night school singing the following graduation song.

We gathered	Lightening the wildfire
Faith in our same destiny	Brothers in struggle
Though we now	part
The wildfire forever	will burn
In deep night's darkness	The wildfire has been lighted

In love and trust	Brothers of the torch
Though we now	part
The wildfire forever	will burn

Song of Graduation of 'Wildfire' Night School<sup>154</sup>

Why did the university students establish the night school? Traditionally the student movement in South Korea had been involved in political actions and street demonstrations concerning issues of corruption, election, social justice, democracy and social inequality. Labor issues grew in importance among student groups after 1970. In the local area of Kwangju, university students seem to have been influenced by the Declaration of Our Education Guide Post by university professors on June 27, 1987 and by their readings of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire. As we saw, most teachers were freshmen during the first year(1978) of the night school and when they discussed the problem of training teachers they decided to have seminars about Pedagogy in 1978. However, according to a document, Kwangcheon Wildfire Night School, which was written a year later(September 1979) they were following Freire's arguments about Pedagogy. They had the chance to read and discuss Freire and clarify their educational purposes and methods as revealed in the 1979 document. These Night School teachers and students participated in the Kwangju Uprising. One of the teachers, Yoon, Sang-won was a member of citizen's committee, and others took part in the printing team for the publication of underground newspapers, Fighters Bulletin. Yoon, Sang-won,

who died during the final battle for the provincial office building had advised and participated in the Night School as a teacher. In addition, it was revealed that Yoon was a delegate from the Kwangju area to a secret organization of core members of the national democratic labor movement. It was not known what Yoon's strategy was in the Night School. The majority of Petty-bourgeoisie in the South Cholla area and the weak industrial base these should have affected the decisions of student activists. However, the majority of participants who suffered injuries and death were from the working class. The Night School documents little reveal an emphasis on labor organizations and union activities in workplaces. Working class consciousness had developed further than what the student and social activists expected. For the understanding of Wildfire night school, we need to talk about the Pedagogy of the Oppressed(1970) by Paulo Freire, Declaration of Our Education Guide Post(1978) by Chonnam National University Professors, The Critiques of Night School(1981?)<sup>155</sup> by an unknown author, and most importantly, three volumes of Wildfire Anthology(1978, 1979, 1980) by night school students.

(1) Pedagogy of the Oppressed(1970)

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator-expatriate, paid attention to the phenomena of the oppressor and the oppressed in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed(1970) and he traced the paths

of oppression to the basic dehumanization of man and society. He argues that the goal of humanization is man's vocation. Given a situation in which oppression exists, there can be little motivation for basic humanization and freedom. To be able to restore man to his basic sense of humanization, it is necessary to develop a pedagogy of the oppressed; and that begins with education. The purpose of education is to make the individual himself responsible for his freedom. However, freedom and humanization cannot be attained until the individual discovers the oppressive elements within himself. The role of change agent is to be an ally in this search. As he stated "the oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption"<sup>156</sup>, so all agents such as racial, ethnic, and economic self-help groups can become agents in each country's different situation. For Freire, it is through the struggle itself that true humanization takes place. On a society level, the act of liberation would also benefit the oppressor.

"It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors. The latter, as an oppressive class, can free neither others nor themselves. It is therefore essential that the oppressed wage the struggle to resolve the contradictions in which they are caught; and the contradiction will be resolved by the appearance of the new man: neither oppressor nor oppressed, but man in the process of liberation."<sup>157</sup>

In the educational process, he observes two conflicting concepts of education; the "banking concept" and "problem posing". The banking concept says the teacher is in control



of knowledge, and students become depositories of the teacher's knowledge. This is an oppression-producing system. Freire incorporates a dialogical educational system into his pedagogy of the oppressed. The problem posing process is the student and teachers becoming "critical co-investigators". Students learn from the dialogue process. In the process of involvement as equals, both the teacher and student unite in their common humanity. He calls the process of humanization, "conscientization."

Freire's method attempts to relate the relevance of this theme to the tenement dwellers and to expand their awareness of life via their own life experiences. In subsequent group dialogues, the conscientization of the situation is attempted. The role of change agent in fostering conscientization becomes one of expanding the individual or group consciousness. So the oppressed are understood in relations to change agents. The technique of conscientization depends greatly on an equality that seems difficult to establish. Without equality, dialogue cannot take place, and therefore the revolutionary qualities of a pedagogy of the oppressed are lost.

"Once more, I wish to emphasize that there is no dichotomy between dialogue and revolutionary action. There is not one stage for dialogue and another for revolution. On the contrary, dialogue is the essence of revolutionary action.<sup>158</sup>"

It is the change agent who serves as a potential revolutionary theoretician in any pedagogy of the oppressed. The change agent must be representative of true dialogue. He

writes: "only in the encounter of the people with the revolutionary leaders - in their communion, in their praxis - can this theory be built."<sup>159</sup>

(2) Declaration of Our Education Guide Post(1978)

In June 26 1978, 11 professors at Chonnam National University in Kwangju proclaimed 'Our Education Guiding Post'<sup>160</sup>. They declared their intention to carry the following points into practice: First, if we want our education to succeed, in other words, if we want people to be valued before material things and truths to be taught, our life, which is the true stage of real education, as well as our school must be humanized and liberalized. Second, as a first step in the humanization and liberalization of our schools, teachers themselves must teach with human conscience and with practical passion for democracy and learn with the students. Third, we must reject all outside interventions concerning our work in learning and teaching the truth and must protest against the sacrifice of college students as a result of such interventions. Fourth, we must faithfully carry on the spirit of 3.1(March 1, 1919) and 4.19(April 19, 1960) movements and practice the education that enhances the national capability towards free and peaceful unification which is our nation's deep-rooted wish.

Professors argued humanization, democratization, and independence of education and school for the peaceful national

reunification. This proclamation influenced the Proclamation of Democratic Students two days later.

(3) The Critiques of Night School(1981?)

After the Kwangju Uprising, several tendencies in student movement appeared; direct struggle discussion, struggle sublimation discussion, student movement abandonment discussion and preparation discussion. The struggle sublimation discussion progressively criticized the night school. The argument was based on the critiques of politically-oriented student movements in the 1960s and 1970s. They argued that the student movement has been romantic adventurism and blind submission which resulted in many sacrifices and little results. This pamphlet was used as a guide book for the night school. The present stage was not yet set for a revolutionary vanguard so it required a stage of struggle sustained by relative independence among movement groups. The student movement needed to be transformed gradually from routine struggle(campus, culture and mass struggle) to political struggle, and the labor movement should move from economic struggle to political struggle. The Night School movement should become a place of educating for political ideas and the intermediation of student and labor movements. Thus the night school took on the role of an education instrument for the formation of a political vanguard. Because of the absence of a political vanguard,

each movement functioned separately. The student movement should take leadership over the formation of the vanguard and political struggle.

Those involved in the direct struggle discussion argued, in the Prospect of Student Movement, that students could become a vanguard and lead mass movement. They insisted on political demonstrations in the street as solutions to urgent problems. The night school group was criticized as opportunist and idealist; they believed that the student movement could not be transformed into a social movement, but student movement leaders could become social movement leaders and vanguards.

(4) Wildfire Anthology(3 Volumes, 1978, 1979, 1980)

Wildfire Anthology is a collection of worker-students' writings of the Wildfire night school, which consisted of three volumes. This collections are mainly workers' essays, poems, diaries, and letters. This anthology was published annually. The first volume, published on November 20, 1978, contained 26 writings of students and teachers in 42 typed, letter size, pages. The second volume published on February 14, 1979, contained 36 writings of students and teachers. That edition includes a special section on a teacher's death by accident. The second volume was produced by stencil in 86 letter size pages. The third volume(last) published in February 1980, contained 42 writings of students and teachers.

This edition is just a xeroxed copy of the hand written writings and has sections of poems, graduation special section, essays, letters, and book reviews.

Most writings, especially poems, essays and letters, are students' writings and teachers' reports and lesson addresses. The total of 104 collected writings illustrates student-workers' thoughts, ideas, feelings, everyday lives, hope and despair, discontents, beliefs and actions. These records are the only workers' writings, I believe, which closely reflect the workers' sentiments, their lives, and actions in Kwangju of the late 1970s. Due to the unorganized labor situation, the lack of a democratic labor union, union newspaper, or union news letter other documents on workers in Kwangju were non-existent. Of course, the ideas, beliefs and life experiences of the workers in the Wildfire Anthology can't represent the whole worker views of Kwangju and South Korea. However, the night school movement was a trend in the Korean student movement in the 1970s. This shows how students were connected with workers and what the relations between them were like. The workers' views in Wildfire show advanced workers' class consciousness. This night school might be regarded as an organized labor group which shows workers' consciousness despite the teachers' vague strategies and education methods and different interests. The workers consciousness shown in the writings was not developed by student-teachers' teachings but were true reflections of

workers everyday lives and past experiences.

Students in the night school had finished the fourth term; the first term with 37 students, the second term with 50 students, the third term with 50 students. The fourth term was planned to start at February 18, 1980 and had an entrance ceremony. But exact number of students in the 4th class is unknown. Over 150 students had attended the night school and about 104 students had published their writings in Wildfire Anthology. The students and their writings are main research objects in this study but I am not arguing that the Kwangju Uprising was a result of advanced working class consciousness through education by the university students who taught in the night school. Rather, the unorganized, uneducated, selfaware workers in Kwangju rose up at the initiation of student demonstrations and reactionary military violence on the streets in the city.

The Wildfire Night School is representative of the night school movement. It was a united student movement, church movement and community movement. The university student was the main agent. Teaching industrial workers was the main objective and the night school operated with the support of churches, mutual aid associations, student circles and student bodies. A church, Kwangcheon Roman Catholic Church, offered a classroom and became the nightschool's protector from government suppression. The relations between church and

Night School were clearly stated in a quite long document.<sup>161</sup> They just borrowed a room from church. In the case of political or social trouble with the government protection was obtained from the church. The church took no responsibility for the usage of the church room except for education purposes. A head-father gave a speech of encouragement at the first entrance ceremony and several fathers wrote encouraging essays in the Wildfire anthology. The students of the night school participated in church events and social gatherings.

However, conflicts arose from teachers' ignorance of religious doctrine and the church's request that religious doctrine be taught to night school students. Students' circles in Chonnam National University and Choson University provided teachers. Also, the president of the Chonnam National University student body in early 1980 had been a teacher at the Wildfire night school. The Samhwa mutual aid association provided financial assistance and gave advise on management matters and in connection with the community movement in the Kwangcheon-dong lower-class apartment. The self-evaluation of the Night School clearly emphasized the discordance between church and night school, and denied any kind of influence from church authority or church movements.

Thus, I think the night school was an educational movement by university student groups who were influenced by Freire's Pedagogy theory and some local professors. Also it was a kind of student movement sympathetic to the working

class. However, as the Pedagogy theory lacks socio-economic understanding of society, the agents for the transformation of society were stated unclearly, in vogue terms like 'the oppressed'. Students did not understand the stage of capitalist development of South Korea in the late 1970s due to their lack of understanding of scientific theory and strategies. Their purposes and methods of activities was limited to their readings and influences from professors, senior student and community movement groups in clubs and circles. They didn't know what would happen in the near future in that city.

A dialogue of a play script which was written and performed by worker-students in a festival states clearly the purpose of the night school:

Su Nam<sup>162</sup>: I will beat them down, the bastards. How can they forsake us like dogs now that they no longer need us, when they have ensnared the poor and the uneducated to suck their blood.

Heun Jah<sup>163</sup>: As Su Nam always told us, that's the reason why we must surely learn and understand. The Company's people have money, connection and ability. We who have nothing must first learn in order to challenge them.

Su Nam: Hah! Don't make me laugh. Learning takes time. But, I don't have any time for such things. Also, what do you plan to learn? Since we are oppressed due to our ignorance are we going to learn in order to oppress other laborers? In such a case, all is for nought.

Heun Jah: (shakes head) No, No. What I mean by learning isn't that at all. I don't mean to study hard to make money or rise in social scale. (sigh) We have experiences and know more about this society than



anyone else. Haven't we learned much more from the textbooks of life which are vivid and true than the rich kids who learn only in school? What we must learn to do now is to organize and learn the methods of unfolding our hidden strength. It's not true that we don't have the time. Only, Su Nam isn't trying to utilize the time you have.

Who are the Ignorant?<sup>164</sup>

The night school identifies the factory workers as a distinctive class urging them to express their thoughts and culture. And in the absence of democratic trade unions, the night school took on the function of the department of Education and Public Relations such as came into existence in democratic trade unions after the 1987 Great Strike. However, their focus was not on the organization of democratic unions, bringing up union leaders and education on capitalist exploitation and social relations between capital and labor. Students themselves because of their own limitations could not become the main agent of social transformation, and could only prepare the way for the working class.

The teachers of the Night School emphasized that the Wildfire night school should be a communal possession working to upgrade the inhabitants' consciousness, creating democratic minded citizens as well as local development. They were a community-based social movement rather than a labor movement based on the workplace. They emphasized human relations with Kwangcheon community inhabitants and worked to take root in the community. They cooperated with the early-morning cleaning, athletic meetings, picnic parties and drinking

meetings in order to get community cooperation and active participation to the Night School. They invited community inhabitants to participate in the entrance ceremonies and made efforts at compromise between local scoundrels and night school students. Results of self-evaluation by the teachers indicates that their efforts were quite successful. One important self-evaluation says that after the President Park's assassination(Oct. 26, 1979) many teachers showed little concern for the community. Maybe university student were more concerned about political issues and focused on political democratization issues giving their attention to existing conservative political leaders. All in all, student activists in the night school led a community education movement and lacked scientific understanding of class structure and political strategies for social change.

How did teachers try to define the objectives of the night school? According to their group dialogue in Teachers Discussion Daily Records<sup>165</sup>, they argued that the night school is a branch of the student movement and connected to other social movements; a mediator between the student movement and labor movements; working to recover from dehumanization through meetings between intellectuals and Minjung(mass); an effort with limitations; having the goal of humanization as well as labor education.

The readings by the teachers largely emphasized and focused on the Pedagogy, intellectuals and humanism. Of

course, this was due to the limited reading materials and advisers under the austere national prohibition of books; their main readings were The Pedagogy, Mass and Intellectuals, The Meaning of Humanism, Student and Social Justice, Who are Intellectuals?, How can we see a society?, Apology for Intellectuals. They planned to have seminars on labor issues, but they only managed to hold seminars on The Pedagogy.

However, whatever the students activists may have accomplished, the working class showed growing consciousness during the 1970s and participated actively in the Kwangju Uprising.

#### b. Disappearance of Intellectuals

Intellectuals appear with the division of labor into mental and physical. Intellectuals engage professionally in complex mental creative work and the development and spread of culture. The intelligentsia is capable of serious independent thinking. Nevertheless, the intelligentsia is not homogeneous. It belongs to or sides with various social classes, whose interests it interprets, serves and expresses. So intellectuals can work for either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

Intellectuals couldn't exist independently in Korean society. While government tried to force intellectuals to support the state's policies and ideologies, they could agree

to those policies regardless of their own beliefs and conscience, or they could follow their own consciences. Thus, the intellectuals worked either for the ruling groups and capitalists or for the oppressed groups and exploited working class. There was no middle ground.

The student group which organized 'Wildfire' night school can termed an intellectual group. Most of them had petty bourgeoisie family background. The student-teachers wanted to serve the workers' interests through education. However, there existed discrepancies between students' independent thinking and workers' responses.

Paulo Freire's oppressor in the Pedagogy was embodied in the rich in night school workers' writing and they identified themselves as the poor oppressed:

You who have gathered under the Wildfire are the poor oppressed and scorned by society but united under the same idea. The more we have people with the same ideas, the better the society will become for sure. The rich will not do it for us. We all must strive to make the society right.

On leaving the Night School<sup>166</sup>

Worker's thinking and beliefs came from real experiences:

I know very well what misery is. I endure misery daily... The miserable hates everything. I have experienced too much misfortune.

.....

Happiness means experiencing love from your parents, eating all you like, and clothed to your heart's desire. These things constitute happiness. I believe happiness means nothing other than the above. I can't understand why God gave me such misery and pain. Sometimes I hate God very much.

Happiness and Misery<sup>167</sup>

For the workers, the world was viewed as being divided into two parties:

What is true life? Why are people divided between the rich and the poor? Also why must we live on under physical and spiritual miseries?

The Days Past<sup>168</sup>

Workers' world view seems to be based on their understandings of what's going on around them:

After uneventful days we were faced with a big ordeal. The ordeal came in the form of the government's continuing pressure to close the night school. Daily, cops hung around the night school checking on what was taught, and who came to the school to teach. Not satisfied with that, they visited the student-teachers' home spreading false propaganda and threatening the parents to stop the student-teachers from going to the night school. ... going around telling nonsense.

....  
That year students declined drastically and barely 7-8 persons came to classes... But we made an oath that we will overcome someday and we will become a wildfire that will not be broken.

In Retrospect of the Past Year and a Half<sup>169</sup>

And workers know how they are controlled through ideological deceptions:

As the world changes and the mind becomes more complex, speculations rather than laws are common. Excessive illusion-like vanities lines the way. The weak resigns, but the powerful steps on morality and spits out vulgar laughter. .... I wish to believe that we will succeed in straightening out our lost society.

Our Future<sup>170</sup>

Paulo Freire's role of change agent, the intellectuals', in fostering 'conscientization' depends on an equality between the agent and the oppressed. This equality seems difficult to establish and it was criticized by workers themselves in their group dialogical process:

Lee Yang Shim : At first I got a bad impression when labor problems were discussed and had wanted to quit the night school. But, now I am graduating.

Kim Sung Seup: One tangible fact that I learned as a laborer is that we must not be boastful but act decidedly with pride.

Shin Byung kwan: As the student-teachers are the learned, I wish they have correct attitudes towards the labor we are employed in.

#### A Symposium: A Pleasant Discussion<sup>171</sup>

In advance, workers suggest what they should do:

Let us strive to destroy this society that has no love, no equality. When all become a bird flying the skies free, then we can also cry equality and love, flying the clear and beautiful skies crying, crying.

#### A Word to Those Leaving<sup>172</sup>

The difficulty of being equals between student-teachers and workers lay mainly in the problem of dialectics, during conversations held with the aim of arriving at the truth. The student-teachers didn't know how to ask questions and give answers and couldn't suggest a definition of a thing or phenomenon after confronting all possible objections. So, they couldn't reveal the truth of labor and couldn't justify

their theoretical knowledge and couldn't suggest alternatives.

Freire's dialogical method seems to be based on dialectics. Dialectics is a method of holding a conversation, of attempting to find the truth by comparing opposite opinions, analyzing and refuting them. For Freire, dialogical process is aimed at finding the truth with the help of the philosophical art of argument. That means that student-teachers should acknowledge that they know nothing. For workers, arriving at the truth is to know the objective reality existing outside and independent of given consciousness and reflected by it.

The probleming-posing, as shown in Appendix II, was asking just simple questions. Student-teachers were required to ask questions, refute answers, suggest variants, express doubt and reveal the contradictions in the views of worker-students. Lack of these capabilities made the teachers suspect in the workers' mind.

### c. Radical Culture

For Thompson, the origins of radical culture was not in the factory proletariat but rather among the artisans and craftsmen of the lower middle class. Radicalism was the culture of the small producers with their values of sturdy individualism and independence in 18th century. The worth of every individual laborer was asserted which diffused the

hostility to expropriation and the commercial system.<sup>173</sup>

The Late Industrialization of South Korea gave birth to cultural contradictions. The new mass consumer culture and individualism collided with the traditional culture of familism and communalism. In addition, historical traditions of resistance added to the economic and political alienation, and helped to develop the consciousness of regional defeatism due to capitalist unequal development. More importantly, it should be emphasized that the radical culture, historical traditions of resistance, music and literature traditions, rural populist culture, and historical cultural peculiarities of the community overcame the problem posed by the relatively low number and percentage of the working class in the class composition in Cholla province as well as Kwangju (see Table 8-b & 9). Cultural influences on class formation, consciousness, traditions of struggle and the communication of experiences are absolutely important to the understanding of the city struggle. 'Pansori' in music, 'Namhwa' in art, 'Han' in common sentiment and 'Tonghak'<sup>174</sup> in religion should be focused on this argument. This could be a main reason for the armed uprising in Kwangju. The business class of Kwangju also felt alienation from the center of the economy and politics. However, the business class left the city with hidden money and precious metals or hiding themselves in the underground during the uprising<sup>175</sup>.



I try to discover good things about my company. However, I could be a strange kid trying to discover good things in a company that has more bad than good things. The many incidents that pass through my mind during work hours. How does society treat me?....

I wish society would treat me like a human being. It is not only I who have such feelings. Thus, I work hard to learn. Why does society always demand prestige? Those who had a lot of education get more pay. However, if one due to circumstances enter a company without a degree, it is just the opposite. The pay is low and you don't get treated humanly. Why is society made this way?

Why Does Society?<sup>176</sup>

Traditionally education was emphasized in Korean society because of acceptance of confucian ideas and social hierarchies. Good education guaranteed a job as a state official and contributed to prestige among kin in a highly centralized bureaucratic society. Marriage could bring blood related kinship connections in economics and politics. Therefore, there existed a path of success: education + marriage = success. In capitalist development, however, the education system has only reproduced the existing social structure. The poor scarcely have the opportunity to succeed. In addition, higher education did not always guaranteed success because of the society's limited employment opportunities. A worker in Kwangju wrote:

People, whether one is learned or not, whether one is smart or not, are all the same. However, why do we all (of the wildfire night school) suffer so much? I thought. All people come to this world empty handed and die empty handed. And, yet, why is it that some, thanks to their parents, live well eat well, and get plenty of education while others because of unfortunate parents or just bad luck have to drag their tired bodies from a day's work to

school to study without sleep in hope of living well.

The Meaning of Education<sup>177</sup>

A student leader, who had served in the Wildfire Night School and became elected as the president of Chonnam National University student body in 1980, had given-up his dream of becoming a judge by taking a state exam. He confessed that after abandoning his dream and experiencing the workers' daily life, he realized that he might have a worker for a wife<sup>178</sup>. However, he escaped from the bloody city and later regretted his conduct and died of hunger strike in jail.

Culture is also emphasized by proponents of Minjung(mass or people) movements. Their cultural explanation of Korean people's radicalism is quite plausible. However, they did not see the consequences of different cultures among different Korean groups. My difference with the Minjung advocates is that I think different Korean groups should be distinguished by class categories. The concept of Minjung is not the same as the class concept I defined earlier. Minjung may have various meanings according to its users.

Minjung among the Christian activists meant traditional shamanism or folk tales or peasant rebellion, and they used it as a unique form of Korean liberation theology. Minjung became a protest myth, a moral story of bondage and liberation. Action comes first to them rather than their Christian faith. The concept of Minjung was used among conservative politicians to symbolize legitimacy, and each

insists only he himself is their legitimate representative. At the same time Minjung was used as a method of resistance against illegitimate power. Minjung among scholars seems to be used as a historical subject in the Korean history. All of them, however, explicitly avoids linking Minjung to Marxist class terminology. Minjung is more of a cultural term than an economic definition.

Minjung started to be used in the 1960s by the theologians trying to fulfill the Christian duty of witnessing, or understanding, the suffering of the poor by working in factories and living with workers. The Urban Industrial Mission(UIM), founded by American George Ogle in 1961, made serving time in the factories a condition of ministry. Their example later inspired university students to work in factories and this time to try to spread a more politically charged gospel to the workers. UIM and the students' activities inflamed the authorities, who feared that the government's low wage policy would be endangered by outside organizers.

After the October Revitalising Reforms(1972), the student activists turned to the church for refuge in the 1970s. Political dissent in the 1970s was centered around the church. While Christian activists form the core of the dissident movement, conservative evangelicals were predominant among South Korea's more than 10 million Christians.

The emphasis on culture has fed anti-Western xenophobia.

The Minjung activists rejected Latin American liberation theology. They emphasized Korean experiences of suffering under foreign powers such as the Chinese and Japanese, and the new American and Soviet threats. They believed Koreans need to rediscover their true, unalloyed heritage. Confucianism is accused of being an elitist, hierarchical system which oppressed the masses. Thus they applauded the Tonghak idea and the peasants uprising of 1894. They believed Koreans must also reject American foreign culture and develop Korean's own culture. Without foreign influences, they argue Korean culture would have developed differently.

The heart of Minjung is Han. "Han is a sense of unresolved resentment against injustices suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against one, a feeling of total abandonment, a feeling of acute pain in one's guts and bowels making the whole body wriggle, and an obstinate urge to take revenge and to right the wrong - all this combined."<sup>179</sup>

It looks like a cultural chauvinism of Minjung activists who argued that Koreans should maintain that modernization and industrialization do not mean becoming westernized. Among South Korean students, traditional religions, such as Cheungsando, Chondokyo, Tonghak, Tangungyo and Wonbulgyo, were viewed as having sprang into existence towards the late 19th century as a remedial response to the crumbling of traditional values as a result of the influx of Western thought. They

questioned why South Korea must remain a cultural midget, constantly laboring under the long shadow of the West. Thus, it is important to emphasize the fact that their arguments are distant from any material concern.

The sources of the Korean workers' radicalism, however, came from the culture formed in concrete social realities and material bases.

The street was becoming dark and bright lights in every store beautify the night street. Waves of blue, red, and yellow color dance as if to show off its beauty. Music sounds ringing, pop music nobody understands (because of english pop song), soft music among them sounding faint. Out of sudden loneliness I moved to where the music was coming from. I went into a cafe that was packed with people. In the corner seats of the smoke filled room, couples were sitting face to face talking. I immediately regretted entering the cafe but took a seat at the remotest corner. After a cup of barley tea (free served water), I noticed that everyone had a smiling and happy face. I suddenly felt shabby and embarrassed. At the sudden urge to get out I left without drinking any coffee or tea (must pay). Outside, the fresh air revived me. I thought as I walked; what are those people doing in those smoke filled cafes? I felt an urge to chase them out of there. Their view of life must be different from us who work by day and try to learn by night. When one remembers that one is not treated like a man, even though he works hard all day, the sight of such people makes one bitter at all the unfairness. Those who argue useless logic in the corners of smoke filled cafes while others work hard, filled with authoritative ideas and look down on workers; I believe all those young people who don't know themselves and, are filled with illusions, must deeply reexamine themselves.

A Certain Day<sup>180</sup>

Radical culture is neither nationalistic, sentimental, chauvinistic, nor romantic. The peculiar radical traditions of Cholla province are deeply rooted in its historical

traditions. The people of Cholla province were seen by other South Koreans as being "emotional, musical and charming at times, but tough, rebellious and individualistic."<sup>181</sup> "Servants from Cholla always steal something, even something small."<sup>182</sup> Such prejudices were prevalent among the rich in Seoul. Those from the south west are regarded as artistic and creative, but often untrustworthy, which led some from the region to conceal their roots.

The Cholla Province, southwestern corner of the peninsula, has long been home to rice and rebellion. South Cholla had a tradition of rebelliousness. From the seventh century, Shilla dynasty, to the 20th century, central rulers, Japanese colonialists, and invaders have been lured by the Cholla region's fertile rice paddies. For example, the prosperous city under Japanese rule, Mokpo, is still living on memories of its past grandeur, memories of a time when cargo ships brimming with rice left for Japan. Historically, the west coast enjoyed links with China. The bitterness in Cholla Province deepened during industrialization, and prejudice against the region is open today even among educated Koreans.

#### d. Labor Consciousness

The labor in rural area was mainly concerned with rice paddy field work and cultivating grain. The work of cultivating the field for grain was the main source of income

for farmers. However, the labor culture of the Korean farmer is not necessarily based on profit. Farmers' labor has been rooted in more fatalistic values and humanistic preconditions. Traditionally, cultivating work had predominance in social recognition over handicraft work and market work. Craftsmen and merchants ranked lower than farmers in the Confucian order of society. It was said that peasants are the great foundation of the state and human morality. Farm by day and study by night was the highest value in the traditional Confucianist society. Traditionally agricultural society, and specially the South Cholla area has been the largest grain producer.

During a drought, a female farmer was seen pumping water into her small dried up patches of paddy field using an expensive electric motor pump. She was questioned by a professor who seeing the unbalanced equilibrium between investment and production, asked how she could make her ends meet. The woman simply replied, "but how could I see the burning rice plants on this paddy field."<sup>183</sup> It represents a cultivator's inherent affection for her product; her labor and toil is rewarded not by economic surplus but by creative work and effort. This well represents the labor culture among Korean farmers. This way of life has also conditioned human relations.

Industrialization and urbanization have changed Korean's work opportunities and forced many farmers to leave the rural

area and work in urban factories. Traditional values and morality, however, are also influential in the labor culture and labor consciousness of the modern factory. The history of industrialization in Korea was not a distant story but a recent one going back only one or two generations. A survey of the Kwangju area in 1979<sup>184</sup> showed that the heritage of workers was not from factory working class parents in a continuity of factory culture. About 52% of workers had farmer parents, 11% of them had unemployed parents and only about 10% of them were second generation factory workers. More than half of factory workers had rural background with bad life conditions. Especially the majority of the female workers were from the rural area.

It is now important to examine how the traditional farmers' labor cultures changed in the industrial age and how it appeared in the factory labor cultures. A woman factory worker of Kwangju writes about her efforts to survive:

I strived to become an essential person to my company. But when I grind the steel, my whole body becomes tired and my hands are filled with blisters. I sometimes hit my fingers by mistake while hammering the dirt away. Sometimes the back of my hand get all blue with bruises. Everything is bruises. it was terrible to drag the burrowful of steel products. What is more difficult is polishing beside the latrine. From the polisher which is made of cloth the dirt settles with the blue polish. And the stench is unbearable. I become totally black sitting there. Black dirt comes out of my nose. Nevertheless I volunteered to go there to polish.

.....  
 One day I asked a man if I am the worst worker in the factory. He smiled and replied, "You, Mee Rhan, are the best." I asked "why then I receive a small salary and am



treated with hate." He told me that no matter how many times you ask for a raise, you are just ignored. A fellow worker beside me asked him to speak well for us. He replied that it is useless to put in good words for us since they don't trust us. Everyone merely throws in a light word of consolation. And when I work night shifts, the image of my wretchedness pains my heart. When everyone is asleep, the poor angels shaking from poverty, work hard till ten at night determined to earn a little more. What is money that it makes people so miserable and wretched?

Loveless Society<sup>185</sup>

A male worker sings about his independence from the dominating capitalist culture and values. He is proud of his moral values as well as his position as a laborer. However, he does not have a conception of capitalist production relations but rather shows traditional fatalistic sentiments.

Able to feel both happiness and sadness  
Able to distinguish right from wrong  
We are we are laborers with ideas.

Your shoes and your clothes  
are coated with by our sweat and blood  
And so filled with fulfillment  
Working diligently with full hearts  
We are we are industrious laborers.

Worries of food and fuel  
Increases the wrinkles on our mothers' forehead  
Because of shrinking livelihood  
Sometimes tears wet our eyes  
But we smile smile and smile  
We are we are smiling laborers.

In every hands we hold, affections flow  
In every smile we face, there is love  
So though the road is rough and desolate  
We no worry have  
We are we are love overflowing  
Laborers with beautiful hearts.

Brothers! our brothers!

Come come quickly  
 So mothers fathers can smile  
 Without envy of the rich  
 One by one, let's cultivate ourselves by learning  
 We are we are  
 Proud laborers of our country

Our Name is Laborer<sup>186</sup>

Of course, the old fashioned traditions of diligence, thrift, self-discipline, plain hard work, docility and obedience could be found in Korean work culture in modern factories. Some theorist<sup>187</sup> tried to find out the characters of East Asian industrial capitalism in the heritages of Confucianism, others<sup>188</sup> in the same context picked out the adaptability and flexibility from "vulgar confucianism." But both views scarcely show the historical developments of peasantry uprisings and rebellions in rural area and urban uprisings in industrial sites in East Asian society. In addition, those views scarcely recognize the fact that the radical culture had developed in that society from the inside.

Workers in Kwangju did not merely resort to the company's mercy or individual endeavors for the better life but were advanced enough to realize the necessity of democratic unions and the social relation between workers and employers. Writings by workers in Kwangju reveals the discontent towards the labor conditions and expectation of coming struggle for a better life:

Our company pays us so little and yet they boast that our pay is better than others and that we have a labor

union<sup>189</sup> with guaranteed livelihood and that we should encourage others to come to our company. With the so-called labor union we don't get to rest even on national holidays and they take away the union fees without any benefits in return. We who work under such an owner have no where to complain. Sometimes, people come out from the union but they are of no use and when we complain to them the boss takes care of it discreetly. It is a wretched feeling to think how far this society will go with people like our boss in it. The good days when laborers can work freely must come soon.

Fire<sup>190</sup>

The river flows tainted with T.B.  
 Wrinkled time passing by my side  
 Between the refreshing green valley  
 A speck of hope flows  
 Past time runs away relentlessly  
 without fear, boldly  
 Yet, it stops abruptly  
 Now nothing remains in the refreshing green valley  
 The fallen time arises  
 The vast amount of time touched by phlegm  
 Returns spilling blood all over.

River<sup>191</sup>

## 2. Workers Acted at Kwangju

The Following is an examination of the consciousness of the industrial workers during the armed urban struggle, comparing the behavioral differences among workers, student groups, intellectuals, lumpenproletariat, and other various movement groups. The points of interest are the political implications of the various groups' participation in the struggle. Who really acted during the urban struggle and with what consciousness toward social changes.

a. Rediscovery of Working Class

An American anthropologist<sup>192</sup> who observed the Kwangju Uprising pointed out significant characteristics in the rebellion; general citizenry involvement, non-violence against private property, limited stakes, backward glances, violence against government and a low level of ideology. And she traced the categorization of actor changes in the following progression; from students to parents, general citizenry and mass participation. She added that the actors were not limited to urban laborers and that the destruction of private property was not involved. The establishment of democratic government and the abolishment of brutality in the government was the major aim. She emphasized the popular nature of the Uprising but added an important observation; "some people did choose to leave the city to avoid the appearance of participation, to dissociate themselves from the event, rather than from disagreement with the sentiments of the rebellious populace."<sup>193</sup> Then she raised 'the more interesting question'; "who did not participate, and why?"

We can here analyze who participated and who did not participate and who left the city during the uprising by examining the number of daily participant demonstrators and class structure of the city (Table 9). According to a Chronology, the daily participants were from 50,000 (May 15th) to 200,000 (May 21st).<sup>194</sup> Table 9 shows that the capitalist



class formed 1%, petty bourgeoisie 36.5% and working class 62.1% of the total population of 727,627 in 1980 (see Appendix Table 1). We need to categorize the participants and non-participants in the Kwangju uprising. Urban workers, it is argued, were not the only actors during the urban struggle. In other words, urban workers were only one of the many participants such as students, general citizenry, and mass in the uprising. But this categorization is unclear and can not explain why they acted together during the uprising process. The emergence of citizen's army is an important happening in the uprising and workers were the main forces in the citizen's army. Therefore, it is necessary to look into the workers' conditions in the city in the late 1970s.

The industrialization in Kwangju was first by demand for better clothing and household metal implements by a prospering class of land owners, and this gave impetus to the textiles, metal processing and coal industries.

The first industrial estate in Kwangju, Kwangju Industrial Estate(1969), had mainly metal and machinery processing and textile industries. However, because of petty capital, small markets, vulnerable location of industry, and lack of social indirect capital and supporting facilities, industry in the city was weak. The Research Report of Kwangju Industrial Estate Situations(1979) written by founders and participants in the Wildfire Night School includes lots of raw

data related to the industry and labor situations in Kwangju Industrial Estate in the late 1970s. This survey report, I believe, was the only research which dealt with labor issues and conditions in the Kwangju area in 1979. This report has many raw tables which show labor conditions, worker situations, labor issues, and worker consciousness.

According to the research report, about 63 factories in the Kwangju Industrial Estate employed about 5,000 workers in 1979. The sex ratio in manufacturing workers of male to female was 6 to 4. In workers age distribution, 18-21 ages formed 41% of total manufacturing workers, while 14-17 ages comprised 11%. In education background, about 50% of the workers were graduates of or experienced middle school, 20% elementary school, 25% high school. About 67% of them did not have any special skills and they did simple manual work, only 24% seemed to have some skills. The turnover was very frequent, 44% of the manufacturing workers had experienced working for at least 2 different factories, and 26% of them was students, 12 % were unemployed.

Most factory workers were educated, young and simple workers without any special skills, so they frequently moved between factories for more favorable payment and better working conditions. Male workers were more frequent in turnover than female workers. Workers' incentives were mainly family support(41%) and getting skills(19%). However, only 1% of female workers wanted to get skills which posed a serious

problem. The workers got employment through family, relatives and acquaintances more than through open employment opportunities such as post bulletin, newspaper ads., and vocational brokerage.

In 1977, FKTU announced the minimum monthly subsistence expenses of a household with 5 family members as Won 137,532. However, without considering the inflation and GNP growth, the average wage of below Won 120,000 occupied 85% of the Kwangju factory workers in 1979. The workers in Kwangju area experienced intolerable life conditions far below the national average. The basic average monthly wage was Won 35,073 in 1979 and average number of family members was six, while minimum average monthly subsistence expenses was Won 72,410 for the factory workers in Kwangju industrial estate. In comparison the national average monthly wage was Won 74,121 and real national average subsistence wage level was Won 190,687.

Therefore, workers needed to do overtime, night work and special work just to earn minimum subsistence expenses. In addition, about 21% of the overwork payment was unpaid in 1979 and the wage was paid regularly to only 59% of the workers. The main problem was the payment system; 75% of the workers were under the daily allowance system and only 21% worked on a monthly salary system. There were strict categorizations of wage and hours one had to work according to educational background and skill. The wages of high school graduates was



136 and middle school graduates 112 when the wage of elementary graduates worker was calculated as 100. The weekly working hours of elementary school level workers was 65 hours, middle school 63, highschool 59 and university 56 in 1977. The highly skilled workers received 2.2 times the wage of simple workers.

According to a survey(1979), there was no report yet about special occupation disease in Kwangju area, however, 70% of workers claimed some kind of physical difficulties; vision problems by metal machinery and food industry workers; headaches by textile and chemical workers. The industrial injury medical insurance system was grossly lacking, over half(56%) of workers complained about the medical insurance system. Lateness and absence were reflected in their pay and sometimes they were fired from their companies. About 10% of workers experienced physical abuse from their employers or supervisors and 35% had experiences of abusive languages in workplaces. About 78% of the workers had openly expressed their dissatisfaction towards their wage. Workers who thought the wage was decided by the company's financial situation (29%), workers' abilities (25%), owners' consciousness(20%) and government policy(10%). The owner's efforts to persuade the workers by emphasizing bad financial situation (paternalism) were quite effective. The most emphasized change requirements in factories were wages(32%), human treatments(19%), working conditions(15%), and working

hours(10%). Most workers(54%) thought that other area industrial estates had better wages and working conditions than the Kwangju area.

Industrial workers' top 10 social concerns in Kwangju in early 1979 were: 1. inflation, 2. Cha, Bum-geun, a soccer player plays for a Germany club, 3. release of Kim, Dae-jung, a dissident political leader, 4. the 10th parliamentary election, 5. agricultural crop damages, 6. U.S.-China amity, 7. Iranian Revolution, 8. land speculation, 9. Seong, Nak-hyon, a parliamentary member's rape scandal, 10. best singer of the year. Workers showed concern for socio-economic issues such as inflation, rural damage, and illegal land speculation. However, they were deeply engrossed in sports and entertainment culture. The political concerns showed worker's sympathetic expectations and sensitivities against politicians and liberal elections.

The labor movement in the Kwangju area was almost non-existent. The labor union was organized in 10 out of the 63 companies in Kwangju industrial estate in 1979. However, labor union activities were weak and most of the unions were procompany, so there was no democratic union. Some unions were in existence but most workers were unaware of them and even if they knew of their existence, no one attended the general meetings. Some company's union dues were paid by the employers, companies which collected union dues from workers' payment were criticized by the workers because of their lack

of activities and bargaining power. However, as shown in the Asia Motor Co., the union grew into a rank and file movement during union disputes in May 1980<sup>195</sup>. The union became an opportunity for leader's individual promotion and economic success. Democratic union was a request by most workers (64%).

In the first quarter of 1980, the Korean economy registered negative growth for the first time in 16 years. Unemployment had risen to 5.6% and was expected to pass 7% by the end of year. Inflation seemed certain to soar well above 20%, and the country might not find the \$2 billion it needed to borrow from private banks in 1980.

The protests in Kwangju, at the beginning, were aimed against the martial law and started by university student marches. "Lift martial law!" "Death to General Chun" shouted the demonstrators. They demanded a "quick end to martial law and the speedy fulfillment of promises of political stabilization"<sup>196</sup> in South Korea. This included constitutional change, free general election and democratization. However, martial law was intensified and paratroopers deployed to suppress demonstrators. People of Kwangju felt that the army treated them as if they were the enemy. Many residents appeared stunned as they saw what had happened. A report describes the appearance of workers in the struggle: "For the four days (18-21 May) crowds of students and workmen clashed with police and paratroops in the streets of

Kwangju.<sup>197</sup>" Another report says, "30,000 demonstrators, mainly students and workers, marched in groups and that some battled a division-strength army unit."<sup>198</sup> The report continues saying that most of demonstrators were 'ordinary citizens rather than students.' On the afternoon of 21 May, enraged protestors armed themselves with M1 rifles, carbines, M16, ammunition, APCs, army jeeps and dynamite<sup>199</sup> instead of wooden staves, iron bars, pitchforks, and stones. "Soon the protesters, waving rifles, iron bars and stones, took the control of the city."<sup>200</sup> The first identified dead was "Kim, Chae Su, a 26 year-old worker."<sup>201</sup>

Workers<sup>202</sup> were seen in the streets waving arms and driving military vehicles, buses and bulldozers, which had been produced by themselves. Time magazine reports:

The city's youth reigned supreme. Tens of thousands were roaming around town, driving or boarding army trucks, jeeps, buses, even bulldozers. Chanting hoarsely, the youths banged on the sides of their vehicles with sticks or metal pipes. In the turbulent heart of Kwangju, I flagged down a jeep for a ride. It stopped, but its seven occupants stared at me suspiciously. 'What the hell do you want?' said one. When I explained, they grinned and were more than willing to oblige. One was a 20-year-old lathe operator, another a candy store employee. The five others were friends from a neighborhood auto repair shop. One of my erstwhile hosts, the lathe operator, from time to time would playfully take aim at me with his M-16. Another kept grabbing his hand grenade and explaining to me how the pin could be removed. I pleaded with them to discontinue their antics, since the driver, a speed maniac who for reasons best known to himself wore a gas mask, kept zooming at 40 m.p.h. through alleys full of shouting humanity. I felt like one of G.I.'s who rode through liberated Paris or Rome during World War II. Kwangju, after all, had been 'liberated' by its youth power. My ride ended at last at the top of Mudung, a

mountain behind Kwangju. The leader of my group pointed to the panoramic view of the city below and said 'Look. We all love this city.' Then he shook hands, raced back to his jeep and sped away.<sup>203</sup>

As the situation gradually became seriously, most of the city's young people became involved in the street demonstrations armed with weapons. Even though the age of the participants varied from below 10 to over 60, most of the active participants was young people in their the twenties. Table 11 shows over 60% of the dead, the injured or the arrested during the uprising were the youths in the 20s. However, their behavior and actions were not distinguishable through their age, but by their social positions and their backgrounds. The main differences was in the use of arms and the compromise process with army authority. The severe differences were between student groups and young workers. Finally, student groups retreated from the frontline and civilians and workers took their places.

Table 11: Age Distributions of the Dead, the Injured and the Arrested in the Kwangju Uprising

division age	dead		injured		arrested		Total	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
under 18	26	12	50	8	17	5	93	8
18 - 23	74	33	238	37	142	42	454	38
24 - 29	52	24	160	25	104	31	316	26
30 - 35	20	9	67	10	37	11	124	10
over 36	48	22	129	20	37	11	214	18
Total	220	100	644	100	337	100	1,201	100

Source: original data sources came from Hwang, Sok-Young., 1985, pp. 261-291 & 292-309. Chung, Sang Yong, etal., Kwangju Minjung(Mass) Struggle, Appendix 4, Dolbaege Press, 1990.

During the height of the bloodshed and confusion and instability, "one university demonstrators shook his head with fear and disbelief. 'This', he said, 'is something we never intended'."<sup>204</sup> This represents the difference between the students and the workers in confronting the situations. The Citizens and Students Coping Committees were organized by students and democratic citizen leaders. New York Times reports, "when the trouble began, many police officers changed their uniforms for civilian clothes and vanished into the crowds. Many of the demonstrators also took refuge in the province's wooded valleys and thatched-roof villages, fearing that the rebellion would end with heavy bloodshed when government troops attacked."<sup>205</sup> Independently, a Citizen's Army was organized by fighters who fought in the front of street demonstrations and armed battles.<sup>206</sup> They organized a Situation Controlling Center, Guard Squad, and Intelligence Squad. The citizens army in collaboration with student radicals reorganized the committee, excluding democratic citizen leaders and other student leaders.<sup>207</sup>

The compositions of the dead, the injured, the arrested or the Mobile Strike Task Force indicate who really fought against military dictatorship at Kwangju.

Table 12: The Class Stratification of the Injured\*, the Dead\*\*, the Arrested\*\*\*, and the Mobile Strike Task Forces\*\*\*\* during the Kwangju Uprising

(unit= person, %)

division stratification	injured		dead		arrested		task force	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	number	%
Working Class								
productive	98	23.2	53	28.0	142	36.1	19	63.4
office	37	8.7	10	5.3	30	7.6	1	3.3
service	46	10.8	30	15.9	23	5.9	3	10.0
Peasants	23	5.4	4	2.1	33	8.4	1	3.3
Unemployed	50	11.8	15	7.9	-	-	-	-
Petty merchants	15	3.5	21	11.1	13	3.3	2	6.7
Public employee	4	0.9	5	2.6	1	0.3	-	-
Professional	6	1.4	-	-	10	2.5	-	-
Housewife	5	1.2	1	0.5	2	0.5	-	-
Soldier	11	2.6	4	2.1	9	2.3	1	3.3
Student	129	30.5	46	24.3	130	33.1	3	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

\* The Class Stratification of the Injured during the Kwangju Uprising(identified 424 out of total 722 injuries).

Source: original data sources come from Hwang, Sok-Young., 1985, pp. 261-291.

\*\* The Class Stratification of the occupation-confirmed Dead during the Kwangju Uprising(identified 189 out of 235 deaths).

Source: original data comes from Chung, Sang Yong, etal., Kwangju Minjung(Mass) Struggle, Appendix 4, Dolbaege Press, 1990.

\*\*\* Class Stratification of the Arrested in the Kwangju Uprising(identified 393 out of 421 arrested)

Source: Hwang, Sok-Young., 1985, pp. 292-309.

\*\*\*\* The Class Stratification of Arrested Mobile Strike Task Force(identified 30 out of about 70 members).

Productive: shell worker(3), carpenter(2), shoemaker(3), day worker(2), tailor(1), tiler(1), mason(1), furniture maker(1), welder(1), shasi worker (2), assistant driver (1), ceramist(1)

Office: company employee(1)

Service: restaurant worker(2), tea room(1)

Small retailer: radio(1), record(1)  
 Soldier: homeland defense army(1)  
 Student: highschool(2), repeater(1)

Source: I reorganized the Government announcement data.  
 Chung, Sang Yong, etal., Kwangju Minjung(Mass)  
Struggle, Dolbaege Press, 1990, pp. 325-326.  
 Park, Nam Seon., That Day in May, 1988, p. 54.

In Table 12, the working class including peasants and unemployed persons amounted to 59.9% of the injured, 59.2% of the dead, 58% of the arrested, and 80% of the Mobile Strike Task Force. While petty bourgeoisie occupied 5.8% of the injured, 13.7% of the dead, 6.1% of the dead and 6.7% of the Mobile Strike Task Force. Housewife, soldiers and students are difficult to classify into a class category. Students occupied 30.5% of the injured, 24.3% of the dead, 33.1% of the restrained, and 10% of the Mobile Strike Task Force. However, it should be considered that students are more easily identified because of their school records and identifications, while most unidentified persons goes into other categories, especially lumpenproletariats, unemployed, or workers.

There are many opinions about how many people died during this city struggle: "only a handful of the estimated 290 dead were soldiers. The rest were civilians, shot down by the military<sup>208</sup>," "no less than one thousand," "few thousands were killed," or 193 according to official Government announcement. Therefore, the classification in Table 12 is only a tentative one and subject to change by further evidence.



The Kwangju Uprising spread to the rest of Cholla provinces including Mokpo city and other many towns and counties.<sup>209</sup> The struggles ended in the capture of the local government office building by armed military attack. Eight years later, a woman writer who experienced the city struggle wrote as follows:

"Remember well those who remained at the provincial government office building to the last. We must remember those who joined this struggle to fight and die.".....  
"Then, you will understand who makes history....that knowledge will become your strength."

Banner<sup>210</sup>

#### b. Female Workers' Outrage

Industrialization and modernization and the subsequent battering of Korean society's strict Confucian dictates by changing lifestyles and family patterns have forced a rethinking of the conventional view concerning a woman's place in the home. Traditionally, cloistered behind high stone walls, women sought a way of catching sight of the outside world. In the acceleration of industrialization, female workers had more serious subsistence problems and had to get a job to support their families.

The statistics of female employment in the industries in Kwangju shows overall increases in female employment especially in the manufacturing sector. As shown in the Table

13, about 40% of the industry's total employees was female as compared to mid-30% of the manufacturing workers in the 1970s. In manufacturing industries, the percentage of female workers was decreasing in the early 1970s because of the long-term policy of industry restructuring from light industry to heavy chemical industry. The majority of female manufacturing workers in Kwangju was employed in textile, clothing, and food industries. Kwangju became a migration center from surrounding rural area of South Cholla Province. Those who got a job in the city of Kwangju were very lucky, or they had to migrate to other provincial cities for jobs.

Table 13: Persons Employed by Industry and Sex in Kwangju

(unit= person, %)

year	industry total				manufacturing			
	total	male	female	%*	total	male	female	%**
1963	97,265	59,656	37,609	39	5,244	2,883	2,361	45
1964	85,670	57,909	27,761	32	4,723	2,754	1,969	42
1965	95,548	60,181	35,367	37	2,144	1,762	382	18
1967	114,655	75,357	39,298	34	10,825	5,877	4,948	46
1968	122,965	79,038	43,927	36	12,706	6,720	5,986	47
1969	145,900	83,600	62,300	43	31,700	16,300	15,400	49
1970	146,025	93,650	52,375	36	33,325	19,725	13,600	41
1971	153,500	97,400	56,100	37	40,400	22,600	17,800	44
1972	189,000	117,000	72,000	38	45,800	31,600	14,200	31
1973	198,200	122,700	75,500	38	48,500	33,200	15,300	32
1974	218,100	132,353	85,747	39	53,900	36,900	17,000	32

\* rate of female workers in industry total workers.

\*\* rate of female workers in manufacturing workers.

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Kwangju, The City of Kwangju, 1963-1974.

According to a survey<sup>211</sup> on sex and age ratios, 35% of male worker were between the age of 18-21, while about 78% of female workers were between the age of 14-21. Male workers mainly worked at metal and machinery factories and female workers worked at textile and food factories. Female workers over 26 ages were scarce in manufacturing factories, due to cultural factors particularly marriage. The total wage difference between gender groups was severe; female workers received 57% of the male workers average wage; Won 60,536 for male workers to Won 34,529 for female workers.

A girl worker's essay in 'Wildfire Anthology' shows the unbearable economic burdens and her desperation:

The girl reflects, on the life ahead, the education of her younger brothers, the things she has to do, the life of her mother, everything seems so oh! so bleak. However, this girl, determined never to despair and live diligently for all to see, moved to a better job. The girl, noted for her diligence since childhood, worked hard in her new factory. As a result within a year and a half, she was given the important responsibility of a foreperson despite her young age. The girl worked hard despite having little educational background to gain respect by fulfilling her responsibilities. It was to her a sort of chance she wanted. To her who loved reading tremendously and endeavoured to learn, it was a really great opportunity. She remembered the shame she felt when she saw her friends in their neat uniforms while she went to work daily. However, even though there is no uniform to wear, the home of learning, where we, the poor, help and love each other working by day and learning by night, your very name shines brightly, you the "wildfire night school."

A Girl's Memo<sup>212</sup>

The labor force participation rate was particularly high

among the young(14-21 age), single, widowed, and divorced women. The breakdown of the extended families, rural migration into urban areas, successful family planning measures, and a highly educated female population resulted in a large pool of women in their late 20s and early 30s who resume careers abandoned for marriage according to custom, both for the sake of self-fulfillment and economic necessity. Since 1970, the labor force participation rate for women has increased from 39% to 43%, but the growing number of economically active women belies the fact that the female labor force still remains largely concentrated at the low end of the occupational scale. The pool of cheap, female semi-skilled labor that fueled the rise of the textile and garment industries in the early 1970s was being rechanneled into the growing electronics industry. The biggest occupational gains for women during the past decade have been in the expanding service industry sector - a broad ranging category that includes entertainment, food and drink establishments as well as more recently established enterprises such as advertising, marketing, and finance. As women's role in the society expanded, the abuse of women, especially in the sex trade, became less tolerable. In 1980, two-thirds fell into the two lowest paid occupational categories of industrial and agricultural production. There were about 6.5 million women in the workforce, with one-quarter in manufacturing. More recent available data shows that female workers earned an

average of US\$1.07 an hour, while men earned US\$2.26 in 1987. Overall, women made up 36% of the total work force, and earned an average 43% of men's wages, while working 10-15 hours longer a week in 1988 ILO report. About half were employed on farms and in factories in 1988.

There remains a prevailing cultural expectation that rearing a family should be a woman's primary responsibility within the traditional division of labor. In cases where economic necessity compels a second source of income, this means that a double burden is placed on working wives, some of whom work eight to 10 hours shifts in factories, in addition to managing a household. The Equal Opportunity Employment Act legislated in April 1988, reiterates the constitutional guarantee against sexual discrimination in the workplace. However, the law is lacking in penalty clauses for discrimination and makes no explicit mention of hiring, wage, and benefit inequalities. While employers typically discouraged married women from employment by paying them 20% lower wages and assigning them less desirable tasks, they are being forced to hire them because of the shortage of high school graduates among the 18-25 age range who are increasingly unwilling to endure long hours, low pay and difficult work conditions.

I never experienced a sense of fulfillment in my work. Why is it that man were born equally empty-handed and yet some have to suffer and the so-called rich people live in such luxury? Doesn't everyone know that you can't buy

happiness with money or property? It is because we know that rich man's home is filled with emptiness and unhappiness. We realize that, but when one passes by such luxurious homes, we dream of how happy we would be living there. Why must people be born to such misery? Why don't man, who once born predestined to die, have equality?

Sense of Fulfillment<sup>213</sup>

Women in Kwangju did not know what they could do in the uprising. In the street "a hysterical woman stopped a car in armed fighters and cried 'What can we do? They are killing every one.' The fighters didn't have much to say. They drove on."<sup>214</sup> Women served as cooks in provincial office building, cleaning and wrapping dead bodies in shrouds, donating blood and broadcasting messages and propagandizing warfare<sup>215</sup>. A young woman militant in a loudspeaker-equipped car deplored that "too many people died" and moved through the streets proclaiming: "there are guns at Kwangju Park. Those who want guns, go to Kwangju Park."<sup>216</sup> On the dawn of the last day a woman grabbed a loudspeaker and repeatedly shouted into the night: "all citizens and students of Kwangju, let's stand up and protect our lives and property."<sup>217</sup>

The female rate among confirmed dead during the uprising was 9.4%(21 out of 224 sex identified deaths)<sup>218</sup>. The sex identification of the injured and the arrested was unknown among the available sources. Women's participation appears more clearly in videorecording data sources and interviews. Women workers stood in the battlefront with seized guns and helmets<sup>219</sup>, and helped to print out 'Fighters Bulletin' and

its wide distribution<sup>220</sup>. Woman students, workers and housewives bravely made complaint speeches in out-door mass meetings.<sup>221</sup>

### c. Different Lumpenproletariat

In the historical study of actor problem in social change, Marx, in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1963) argues that it was the big bourgeoisie that moved to destroy democracy and replaced it with a reactionary dictatorship; it was the financial and industrial bourgeoisie, not the petty bourgeoisie. The counterrevolutionary dictatorship of Louis Bonaparte found its mass base above all and most unconditionally in the lumpenproletariat - "vagabonds, discharged jailbirds, discharged soldiers, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, lazzaroni, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, maquereaus, brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ-grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars, in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass,"<sup>222</sup> not the lower middle class. Of course, Marx finds the peasantry supported Bonaparte. For Marx, the counter-revolutionary forces consisted of the big bourgeoisie allied with the peasantry and the lumpenproletariat; the petty bourgeoisie was on the other side of the barricades, allied with the proletariat.

Thompson argues that the labor movement had its origins

not in the factory proletariat but rather among the artisans and craftsmen of the lower middle class. Radicalism was "the ideology of the small producers" with their "values of sturdy individualism and independence.....assertion of the worth of every individual labourer.....diffuse hostility to 'speculation' and the commercial system".<sup>223</sup>

Objective status is not sufficient in itself to bring about accurate subjective class identification; it is the sharing of a common experience with others of the same status that leads a 'class in itself' to become a 'class for itself.' Marx, in The Eighteenth Brumaire, underlies the importance he assigned to social relationships as a major intervening variable between objective and subjective class.

The lumpenproletariat has been explained in various ways: 'indefinite, disintegrated mass' (p. 75) of 'parasites and self-indulgent drones' in The Eighteenth (1963); "'dangerous class' the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society" (p. 92) in the Communist Manifesto (1967); 'this scum of the depraved elements of all classes' (p. 646) in The Peasant War in Germany (1966); "in all big towns form a mass strictly differentiated from the industrial proletariat, a recruiting ground for thieves and criminals of all kinds, living on the crumbs of society, people without a definite trade, vagabonds, gens sans feu et sans aveu (folk without fire and without faith, i.e., rabble), with differences according to the degree of civilization of



the nation to which they belong, but never renouncing their lazzaroni(hoboes of Naples) character"(p.50) in The Class Struggles in France(1964).

The lumpenproletariat does not engage in productive labor, and is therefore not exploited by the industry. It is principally supported by the labor of the productive class, and its relationship to the proletariat is therefore inherently parasitic. Its members comes from all classes<sup>224</sup>, and they have ceased to be members of those other classes because of a combination of two conditions, one objective, the other subjective - they no longer have the same relationship to the means of production and they no longer have any loyalty to their former class. The lumpenproletariat contains more varied forms of consciousness than any other class in society, for the previous experience of the individuals within it will be most varied and their present precarious means of existence will throw them into many different forms of contact with all the other classes. So the role of the lumpenproletariat is inherently unpredictable both strategically during at each and every movement<sup>225</sup>.

Lenin, Mao and Fanon developed the Marx's saying in The Class Struggle in France, the lumpenproletariat is "thoroughly malleable, as capable of the most heroic deeds and the most exalted sacrifices as of the basest banditry and the dirtiest corruption."<sup>226</sup> Frantz Fanon, especially, emphasized the role of lumpenproletariat in social change. It was seen as made up

of almost exclusively of landless peasants in The Wretched of the Earth(1967). Fanon argues that they are ready to fight. They therefore provide the way by which the revolutionary forces of the countryside enter the city. If they are not fighting on the side of the revolution, they will be fighting against it.

Peter Worsely(1972) argues that it is time to abandon the highly insulting, inaccurate and analytically befogging Marxist term lumpenproletariat which is so commonly used. "Underclass" or "subproletariat" would seem much more apt characterizations of these victims of 'urbanization without industrialization'<sup>27</sup>.

It is difficult to categorize the lumpenproletariat among the population of Kwangju. However, city data has the section of "status of relief object citizens", which includes relief objects in dwelling houses, 65 years and over, under 18 years, deformed, and poor persons(see Table 14). This category is closest to the lumpenproletariat.

Table 14: Status of Relief Object Citizens in Kwangju

(unit= person)

year	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
objects	59,688	32,275	19,833	15,114	12,160	29,216	40,401
year	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	
objects	22,541	29,978	31,238	37,462	37,527	61,390	

Source: Kwangju Statistical Year Book, The City of Kwangju, 1976 & 1984.

However, Table 14 doesn't show the increase or decrease of the real number of the relief object citizens in Kwangju. Because the actual number of relief persons in each year is decided within the limit of allocated budgetary appropriation. For example, the big jump in numbers between 1982 and 1983 seems due to diverted national donation funds to relief funds. Table 14 just implies that considerable number of relief objects existed in the city of Kwangju.

Words of lumpenproletariat's activity in the Kwangju Uprising was described by word of mouth, but it cannot be substantiated. Shoeblacks, guttersnipes, beggars, hoodlums, gangsters, ragpickers, prostitutes and orphans etc. fought against the paratroopers in Kwangju<sup>228</sup>. The Head Quarters of Army announced that the unemployed, ragpickers, factory workers, scoundrels led the Kwangju incident.<sup>229</sup> Most of the 13 unidentified dead<sup>230</sup> and majority of the hidden missing persons (numerical differences from the various estimated dead) might be lumpenproletariats. Especially the unidentified 40 fighters of the Mobile Strike Task Force in Table 12 could be lumpenproletariats. Some prostitutes worked cleaning and wrapping the dead body in shrouds<sup>231</sup> and they participated in donation of blood. Nevertheless, there were no groups or associations seeking lumpen's rights in the uprising (see Appendix Table 4).

d. Uncoming Dawn of History and After

All the facts and results of the Kwangju uprising points to an absolute tragedy. Marx wrote: "men make their own history, but they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."<sup>22</sup> The so-called rebels of Kwangju were confronted with the dawn of death through their own choice, at the same time, however, their action was compelled by their past life experiences.

"Hey! Why is the time so slow?"

"We need the daybreak to arrive quickly!"

"Indeed, then, people will come out and help us!"

"The daybreak will come eventually if we hold on!"

The time was passing by as usual but tonight, everyone felt that the time was too slow and the men of the citizen's army were praying for daybreak. However, the dawn did not come early as we hoped for. Only the "serpents" in camouflage were watching us with their tongues sticking out. The dawn ominously did not arrive and we were not to know that all our hope, our wishes were to fall apart without seeing the dawn. And, though the dawn comes to us daily, today was not one of those mornings. The dawn for the people of Kwangju, our dawn, the dawn that rises with new pride and hope was far away from us. That realization unwittingly brought me tears. We have lived gently but the dawn did not come to us, who have lived being oppressed and suffered in this land, but only death came. The dawn seemed just about to rise but it never came. The dawn forever died away.

.....

The past few days we all worked for the good days to come. For us it was just a few days of pain and effort. But others have worked for it for thousands, tens of thousand of years. Yet our dream hasn't been realized only on the verge of being destroyed once again.

That day in May<sup>23</sup>

At 3:30 a.m. the final battle started<sup>234</sup>. In less than two hours, about 17,000 soldiers<sup>235</sup> had put down the uprising in Kwangju. As the sun rose over the city, troopers fanned out into the streets to collar every youngster in sight as a suspected rebel. A Korean said in sign language "all gone, all finished".<sup>236</sup> But participants of the uprising realized the invisible demarcation between students, intellectuals, democratic movement activists, and workers. Dialogues among the detainees reveal that:

"Damn! Comrades my foot! Dogs! When we drove the Martial troops out they came out of hiding to display pretensions and got caught out of bad luck, cursed fools! Just wait till I get out. I will break open your brains!"

"That's why you can't trust those who became learned fools thanks to their parents. Ultimately, all the student and democratic movements are for their own benefits, not for us outcasts!"

"Damn! They all ran like hell when the paratroops came in! And, when we the poor and the uneducated drove the paratroops out with our lives, they slid back to pretend about principles and only to slide away when they heard the troops were coming back!"

"You just wait and see. After a while, those who acted brave just for a couple of hours and ran away will scream that they were the ones who defended Kwangju!"

"Only the dead are to be pitied!"

"Outcasts are always outcasts!"

That day in May<sup>237</sup>

Crowds of workers' were again found in every industrial sites save governmental office buildings each early morning. They had returned to their work places as before. However they were not the same as before. They realized what they must do and they looked more hopeful and energetic than before

the Kwangju experience.

"Ran and ran, cutting the morning air. Exhaling streams of breath like the steams coming from a locomotive that runs hard. The hair blew in the wind. The uniforms wore by workers flapped. Becoming ever more distant, only the flapping of the cloth could be seen in the morning light. It was a countless number of flappings. It was the banner."

Banner<sup>238</sup>

At this moment we confront the historical lessons from the Paris Commune experience in France. Marx, six months before the Commune, gave a direct warning to the French workers: "Don't take up arms." He warned in advance the possible revival of the nationalistic illusions of previous movements. He thought this movement should not be merely a transferring of the bureaucratic military state machinery to different hands but should be an attempt to smash the machinery. According to Arrighi's(1990) explanation, Marx realized the negative correlation between the social power of labor(movement) and its socialist revolutionary predispositions(goal) had already appeared to Marx at the time of the Paris Commune(1871). The undesirable matches between goal(reformist vs. revolutionary) and movement(strong vs. weak) in Britain and France had forced Marx to warn of the insurrection as an 'act of desperate folly'. Lenin highly evaluated Marx's views about the 'technique of the higher forms of revolutionary struggle' against the social democrats like Plekhanov. Marx actually praised the heroic Paris

workers led by the Proudhonists and Blanquists: "What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! ... History has no like example of a like greatness."<sup>239</sup>

As an American anthropologist observed of the Kwangju Uprising, there were tactical disagreements among radicals and moderates in the Citizen's Committee over negotiations with the military and the fundamental righteousness of the rebellion itself including disarmament issues and the abstract political goal of the establishment of a democratic government.<sup>240</sup> The radical groups, mainly workers and radical students kept their arms and faced the dawn of the last day. This seemed to show the low level of ideology, lack of tactics of revolutionary struggle and the popular nature of the revolt. The participants were "recruited individually and were not participating through channels of previously experienced collective action."<sup>241</sup>

However, Marx showed insight into history in appreciating that "there are moments in history when a desperate struggle of the masses, even for a hopeless cause, is essential for the further schooling of these masses and their training for the next struggle."<sup>242</sup> Marx wrote to Dr. Kugelmann, "if they (Parisians) are defeated only their 'good nature' will be to blame" and he argued this struggle can not compare with petty-bourgeoisie demonstrations. Marx continues:

World history would indeed be very easy to make, if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favorable chances. It would, on the other hand, be of a very mystical nature, if 'accidents' played no part. These accidents themselves fall naturally into the general course of development and are compensated again by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very dependent upon such 'accidents' which include the "accident" of the character of those who at first stand at the head of the movement.<sup>243</sup>

### **3. Assaults on the Trench City of Kwangju**

#### **a. Rehidden Class Conflict**

The resolutions and understandings of the Kwangju Uprising were different according to each class position. Politicians, to resolve the Kwangju problem, called loudly for free elections, lawful compensations to the families, genuine democracy, ascertaining truth and retrieving honor.

The Democratization and Reconciliation Council(1988) was formed by President Rho, successor to Chun, who served as a major-general commander of the Seoul garrison in 1980. The Council acknowledged the excessive use of force by the martial-law forces at Kwangju and recommended reinterpreting the uprising as part of the struggle for democratization and called for a full apology, both for the bloodshed itself and for the government's failure to pay compensation to the families of the victims.<sup>244</sup>



The National Assembly formed seven panels to look into corrupt and other illegal practices during the Fifth Republic, the circumstances behind the bloody 1980 Kwangju uprising, alleged computer fraud in 1987 Presidential election, regional antagonism, the repeal or revision of undemocratic laws, North-South reunification, and Olympic Games planning.

Parliamentary public hearing on Kwangju started on Nov. 1988 for a period of two months and televised about 22 witnesses' testimony in investigating the Kwangju massacre. This hearing, repeated over many long intercessions, finally ended on the last day of 1989. However, holes in Defense Ministry records, contradictions in testimony, memory lapses and stone-walling by key-witnesses, and the refusal of former presidents Chun and Choi to give evidence have confounded investigators. The opposition parties have focused on the issue of who ordered troops to open fire<sup>245</sup>.

The Kwangju Uprising related organizations have been organized since 1980. According to Kwangju City Hall, there are 13 organizations(see Appendix Table 4). The City authority distinguished those organizations by moderate and hard-line groups. Five of six hard-line organizations are regarded as pure civil organizations for the memorial of the Kwangju Uprising.<sup>246</sup> However, there is no organization serving the interests of workers, woman workers and lumpenproletariat. At least, there has not been any political demands for the working class stemming from the Kwangju

Uprising.<sup>247</sup> The Commander of the citizen army during the Uprising and author of That Day in May, Park, Nam-seon, lamented the difficulties of organizing the uneducated and poor people.<sup>248</sup> The intensity of social movements in Kwangju didn't deter some groups from changing the essence of the Kwangju Uprising to meet their interests.

The history of the several decades(1960s-1980s), before and after the Kwangju Uprising, has shown that seemingly nothing has been changed besides the growing self-consciousness of the working class. The workers have started to create their own labor culture in order to defeat the bourgeoisie and foreign culture. The working class has started to organize militant democratic unions, industrial or company united trade unions. The working class has started to express its political dispositions in class terms. This is a great transformation from a defeated culture to a defeating worker's culture.

Class politics focus on the issues of common interests and struggles of the working class as a subject of social changes in capitalist society. The main argument is that a desirable society can't be built by extending bourgeoisie democratic forms and by passing the direct opposition between capital and labor. This is the lesson of the social movements of the people of Kwangju and their search for 'democracies'. The social movements which are not based on class politics will eventually succumb or conform to reformistic changes or

quasi-reforms, like the June, 29 Democracy Declaration in 1987 by South Korea's president. Real social change in capitalist society is possible only through the abolition of the contradictions between capital and labor, in the form of labor emancipation, and it must be acted out by workers themselves. Because the working class is the class that produces capital, it has a revolutionary potential.

The wildcat strikes, sit-down strikes, the militant democratic unions, and united democratic unionism have spread like wildfire throughout Korea since July 1987. After the Great Strike, another sequence of struggles haunted by Kwangju, movements groups achieved free direct elections. The 1987 presidential election had shown how electoral politics can moderate the militancy of workers, and how it can deter the development of class consciousness.

The massive spontaneous wildcats strikes in the summer of 1987, like most labor actions in the past were led by dissident trade unionists who would like to see more local coordination. Dissident trade unionists attacked the FKTU for its cosy relationship with the government, whose close ties to the government were most vividly demonstrated in April 1987 when FKTU supported President Chun's controversial decision to suspend talks on constitutional revisions. The existing FKTU leadership was challenged by white-collar financial workers along with taxi drivers, hospital workers and Seoul's subway workers but had little support from blue-collar trade

unionists. The FKTU was made up of more than 3,500 enterprise unions, with a total of almost 1.2 million workers in 1987. Unions were generally limited to representing workers at only one company. Each of the enterprise unions must belong to one of the federation's 16 industrial unions. Unions at some of the country's major business groups have started swapping information, within the same group, and coordinating bargaining on an inter-company basis. The labor law makes coordinated actions difficult through its insistence on individual unions for each company. Most unions are inexperienced in the skills of collective bargaining, and execution of the abolition of compulsory arbitration under the amended labor law of October 1987, and request of an end of restriction on union's political activities and involvements. The prevention of intervening in a labor dispute as a "third party", is a legal restriction which has effectively prevented most outside help for striking workers since 1980.

Management cooptation of union leadership has been a perennial problem for South Korea's union movement and the demand for democratic unions was the leading issue during most of 1987's disputes. The persistent problems are; the rules for resolving disputes are inadequate; there are no legitimate parties to act as mediators between workers and employers; and there is an absence of rational procedures to settle disputes.

Business class and labor law argues that there is a harmony of interest between management and workers. So the

purpose of the labor law is to prevent disputes arising between employee and employer.

The government and business class argue that higher labor costs will give another nudge to inflation and pay increases will mean loss of the country's international competitiveness. Labor costs rates have risen by an average of double-digit figure since 1987, while productivity stayed at one-digit or less than pay increases. Industries such as footwear, toys, shipbuilding, clothing and textile manufacturing were hurt. While real wages increased slightly faster than productivity in the 1970s, in 1980-81 the increase in real wages lagged behind productivity increases by about 36%. From 1982-86 the gap was about 16%.

A new minimum wage law, the first ever in Korean history, has established basic monthly wages of between Won 111,000 (US \$148) and Won 117,000 (\$156), depending on the industry's competitiveness. The 35,000-plus workers, mostly young women in textile, garment and electronic-assembly factories, who currently earn less than Won 100,000 a month were the most obvious beneficiaries. Although the Labor Ministry has had the power to impose a minimum wage law since 1963, it passed the National Assembly Law only in the late 1986, which finally forced the ministry to act in 1987. The country's labor-standards law, which was revised in October 1987, prohibited an average work week of more than 62 hours<sup>29</sup>. The trade union law still forbids a "third party" from intervening in

collective bargaining or a strike.

As for intellectuals, they repeated their mistakes and offered mental excuses. The intellectual poet, Kim, Chi-ha, who I have quoted has declared that he also has been a thief.<sup>250</sup> He confessed that his behavior was similar to those criticized as five thieves in a poem. Unlike his previous reputations and recognitions, he never took part in student demonstrations in the 1960 Student Revolution, he did not write the well known 'Declaration of Conscience' by himself, he exploited prostitutes as sexual desires, he had some connections with government officers of the Fifth Republic, and he acted as if he were a mental leader in the democratization movements.

Now, in advance, he suggests a Mental Revolution which is targeted for the construction of new values of life and world view. Because, he argues, the power changes (from liberal democracy to grass roots democracy) are not the issues of political systems and social structures. The values of life and existence must have priority to economic value. He suggested a confession movement for the construction of a civil self-management society. He is becoming more abstract than before. His argument is similar to Bahro's cultural revolution by surplus consciousness. Thus the repentant intellectual leader requests surplus consciousness from the masses. Cultural revolution is a comprehensive re-orientation that goes beyond the political and institutional, and includes

the daily life-style of the masses, a radical change in both individual and collective habits and mentalities. Bahro rejects the traditional concept of working class as outdated, and substitutes a broad alliance of all the bearers of what he terms "surplus consciousness", which is the energetic and creative elements in all strata and areas of society, of all people in whose individuality the emancipatory interest predominates.<sup>251</sup>

However, workers don't have anything to confess and no excuses in their everyday lives unlike the intellectual. A woman worker says about her life sincerely:

What is life that  
 It is followed by empty hands and suffering  
 Watching the world with open eyes  
 I have no place to stand, no welcoming place  
 Only poor souls  
 Cry out in suffering, no one caring  
 Only dark picture of life  
 Comes into my views  
 I come to hate the desolate life  
 Only dark side of desolate life  
 fills my heart  
 My hating life ever more

Life<sup>252</sup>

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

### **1. Conclusion**

This study has treated Korean history in the twentieth century as a capitalist road to development. Several shorter, significant periods within this era also have been analyzed: Japanese colonialism(1910-1945), the American military government (1945-1948) and the aid economy in the 1950s, free planned state capitalism in the 1960s, state monopoly capitalism in the 1970s and 1980s. This chronology is also linked to stages in the world political economy: the second World War, Cold War prosperity, the first oil crisis, the second oil crisis, and the new conservatism.

The case study of Kwangju enabled us to see national development processes that had a real impact on the everyday lives of Korean people in a particular locality. Focusing on the local level allowed us to identify class patterns and behaviors in an urban struggle. These conflicts were going on the national level too, but it is difficult to portray these conflicts at the level of the nation as a whole. The case of Kwangju does not show simple the unique experience of one city but the national experience of South Korea in the twentieth century marked by class formation and renewal.

The existence of Korean workers under the Japanese colonial rule and the influx of repatriate workers from Japan



and Manchuria after World War II, established a politically conscious working class. However, US military rule, the Korean war and anti-Communist ideology constrained workers consciousness and South Korea entered into a long reform process under military authoritarian regimes. But Korean working class consciousness reasserted itself under the intensified labor exploitation and accumulation crises of the capitalist development process.

The business class survived by collaborating with Japanese colonialists and made itself strong through possession of Japanese-owned properties after the war. This class was welcomed by the US military government, and Korea's civil and military dictatorships. This business class organized into big conglomerates, Chaebols, under the auspices of a strong state and monopolized the South Korean economy in the collaboration with domestic military and foreign imperialist powers.

The city of Kwangju had a weak economic and political capacity, however, and this brought deep feelings of frustration to Kwangju citizens. Their wish to make their lives in the city as prosperous as the rest of the nation resulted in a more radical petty bourgeoisie, students, lumpenproletariat and working class in the city than in any other area in South Korea.

The newly risen working class consciousness invoked a traditional radical culture, including a conflictual labor

attitude toward capitalist production, feelings of alienation from their products, and oppositional culture conflicts reflected in music, art, religion, and national sentiments. This radical culture compensated for the shortage of scientific understanding of the capitalist labor process, and the absence of a vanguard group, a workers' political party, and democratic union organizations.

Thus working class consciousness in Kwangju, at least in the matter of organization and solidarity, was quite low and undeveloped because there was no democratic union or worker solidarity. Instead petty bourgeoisie initiated democratic social movements sought democratization, human rights, and equal opportunity. These movement forces were made up of groups of opposition political leaders, social activists, religious activists, intellectuals and students.

Student groups emerged as the main ally of the workers. However, students showed their limitations as replacements for workers class' interests and class action. The armed Kwangju Uprising illustrated this point. The various social movements in Korean society are based upon territoriality, regional and community, and are romantic and sentimental. The main social contradiction in South Korean society could not be solved by these social movements.

The bourgeoisie and conservative political parties sought to solve the social contradiction through liberal electoral politics. The political reform agenda reflects the interests

of the dominant class and the nature of its class position.

Movement activists and theorists demonstrated a principled involvement in politics. They paid attention to the links between organization and politics. They offered a new political paradigm which tried to explain changes in social movements in the context of broader changes in late twentieth century society. The movement activists took nonviolent direct action and were influenced by the new trends in the advanced capitalist states - the environmental, gender, ethnic, and peace movements - that have relied tactically on mass civil-disobedience actions, adhering to the principles of nonviolence, and insisting on an internally egalitarian and decentralized organizational structure, including a process of decision-making by consensus. Their goal was to create the values of a new society. Their images of a better society was intensely nationalist. They were concerned about the goals people were actually fighting for, and they offered tough criticisms of ideologies and conventional class analysis. The autonomous role of the state, democratic government, human relationships, gender issues and nationalism were emphasized in their arguments. However, they never found a common ground for their multiple views and interests which could be used for a united radical attack on their opponents. Social movement groups have continued to meet and part according to their different interest bases and political purposes.

The limitations of the Kwangju Uprising can, first of

all, be found in the lack of organized power of the working class and peasantry and a leadership which is based on class theory and practical experiences. In South Cholla province, the peasantry occupied over 60% of the total population; in the city of Kwangju, modern factory workers numbered only about 24,000 (see Table 10). However, most cities in South Cholla Province had working class accounting for 50-60% of the population and a petty bourgeoisie of 20-30% in 1980.<sup>253</sup> The Government-sanctioned FKTU was the only workers organization. Secondly, the contradictions between capital and labor expressed in the gap between poverty and the accumulated economic surplus in Korean society were easily explained as a regional or territorial problem<sup>254</sup> by the dominant ideology. Regionalism prevented the formation of workers' advanced consciousness. Thirdly, the social movements which were initiated by students, intellectuals, religionists and political dissidents in the 1960s and 1970s had regional and community-based limitations. Fourthly, student movements, the main organizations behind change also had their limitations. Finally, the lack of social change and supporting class theories prevented the hegemony of the working class. Regionally, the working class was less developed and the small-medium business class was relatively dominant in the local economy,<sup>255</sup> thereby refuting the idea of workers' hegemony in the social change process.

Then, why did the city of Kwangju emerge as a site of

class conflict with the kind of class-conscious culture that is characteristic of industrial capitalist cities? It is because there existed a working class in Kwangju, which occupied about 62% of Kwangju people (Table 9). Traditional radical culture promoted working class consciousness. However, workers couldn't seize hegemony in the city struggle because workers' participation was not based on organizations but on individuals.

The important historical lesson of the Kwangju Uprising for all social change forces in South Korea is in the area of political strategy; indicating the importance of class politics rather than electoral politics. Class politics is critical of the revisionists' electoral politics, what Wood (1986) calls a 'new' true socialism. This has been the main disagreements between new social movement and class struggle positions since the late 1970s.

Electoral politics are designed to gain votes rather than present socialist criticisms of the inequalities of the capitalist system and offer alternative socialist policies. Electoral strategies dissociate politics from the interests and struggles of the working class. It is believed that socialism can be built by the extension of bourgeoisie-democratic reforms, bypassing the direct opposition between capital and labor. Democracy is conceived as a philosophy and a way of life which embodies fundamental moral principles. Humanism is an essential element of socialism. Theorists of

electoral politics appeal to moral values, reason, and make other non-materialist argument. Discourse at the level of ideology replaces struggle at the level of class cleavages.

In summary, the constitutive principles of electoral politics emphasize the independence of economics and politics, the advantage of political democracy, the importance for socialist parties to attract people from different social groups and to form alliances with them, the possibility of achieving socialism through normal processes of democracy, and the essential role of 'discourse', notions of 'equivalence', and 'democracy' and other such abstractions.

According to Wood's application, class politics argues the significance and the validity of many tenets historically held by socialism, especially in its Marxist form, such as the working class as a revolutionary force in the struggle of capital and labor, the class struggle, the causal relationship between economics and politics, the exploitation of workers, the role of the state as an organ of class oppression, and other factors and relations flowing from these. The working class has the central role in the social change process because of its structural position as the class that produces capital giving it a unique revolutionary potential. Wood argues that exploitation is a structural characteristic of the capitalist mode of production. The extraction of surplus labor in the form of surplus value from wage laborers cannot be abolished without abolishing the capitalist mode of

production itself. Furthermore, the working class is important for the socialist project, because only the emancipation of the working class can bring the abolition of all classes and only the working class can be the agent of its own emancipation.

In summary, class politics is based on two claims: first, that the core elements of Marx's analysis of capitalism - class, mode of production, and the materialist conception of history - should be kept. Second, social change can only be achieved through the agency of the working class because no other group has equivalent interests or potential leverage.

The Kwangju uprising shows the conflict between the petty bourgeoisie movement forces and worker groups. The Kwangju Uprising started with petty-bourgeoisie movements with strong political orientations toward governmental changes, but also the emergence of the working class in the process of the armed uprising and as a participant in compromises with the ruling class. In other words, the Kwangju uprising had the character of petty bourgeoisie movement but also showed the strong potentiality of working class in social change.

In the case study of Kwangju, I looked into the industrialization process by showing the development of manufacturing factories and companies. In Katznelson's analytical framework, the corporation is excluded, while the analysis of Kwangju has shown its importance in the conflict. Corporations have been important in as organizers of work

places and in promoting some ideological claims. Corporations in Katznelson's study were treated as on the side of the bourgeoisie business class. Corporations are treated as an independent institution in American history. In Korea, the corporation is treated as on the side of the government. Corporations seem to be subordinated to government and the political system. However, there exists some conflicts and a division of institutional functions between government and corporations. In the high economic growth era, corporations had an immense impact on traditional values and behaviors through their relation to the government and political system in the pursuit of profit and efficiency.

Tracing the development of companies reveals the underlying dynamics of capital accumulation. It appears in urban spatial change including urban decentralization. Land use, the spatial separation of workplace and residential area, transportation and communication development transforms urban structure in time and space.

Another institution is the school system. The student role in social movements must be investigated by analyzing education institutions. School system establishes social values and behaviors. For Katznelson, education was a kind of governmental social policy and service. However, in Korea, the education system is more important as an institution which influences the formation of social values and activities. Educational institutions transmit traditional values and



instill new social values which sustain the political system.<sup>256</sup>

Thus the application of an analytical framework which came from case studies of the United States to South Korea has some problems. First, the U.S. and South Korea have different social development processes and historical experiences. America has developed into an advanced stage of capitalism, while Korea, a third world country, just got independence in the 1940s and only then entered into a democratic republic political system and capitalist economic development. Second, The Korean experience has been influenced by Japanese and American politics and economics during the postwar period. Third, in South Korea as compared to the United States, labor has been unorganized, the political system highly centralized, and the economy extremely concentrated and centralized. American society has shown a political and cultural shift to fragmentation, individualism, and atomization. Fourth, although E. P. Thompson's class concept is useful and the social movement approach stemming from that concept seems to offer a powerful historical framework for the analysis of social conflicts and change. I think there is a need to develop a specific analytical framework for the study of the Korean case. Different auxiliary concepts and factors need to be introduced for conceptualization of the social experiences of Korea in the second half of the 20th century. In the analysis of the Kwangju case, I have argued that corporations

and school institutions were especially important for the understanding of class formation and urban struggle.

## ENDNOTES

1. Callinicos, Alex., *Making History*, 1987, p.35-36.
2. Marx, Karl., *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1963, p. 15.
3. Cohen, G. A., a proponent of analytical Marxism, sticks to this position: he argues, "a person's class is established by nothing but his objective place in the network of ownership relations, however difficult it may be to identify such places neatly. His consciousness, culture, and politics do not enter the definition of his class position." in *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, 1978, p. 73.
4. Marx, Karl., *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1963, p. 124. Lenin and Lukacs' class consciousness is in this line but it distinguished from empirical class psychology of workers.
5. Thompson, E. P., *The Making of the English Working Class*, 1966, p. 10-13.
6. *ibid.*, p. 9.
7. Thompson, E. P., *The Poverty of Theory*, 1978, p. 295.
8. Edsforth, Ronald., 1987, p. 9.
9. Thompson, E. P., 1966, p. 11.
10. *ibid.*, p. 10.
11. Katznelson(1981) distinction of class: class1 (experience-distant, logical-structural class structure, class in-itself); class2 (experience-near, experimental level of class, objective classificatory schemes); class3 (happening, revolutionary consciousness) in *City Trenches* p. 202-203.
12. Dawley, Alan., 1976, p. 219.
13. Wood, 1986, p. 88.
14. Burawoy, Michael., 1989, p. 761.
15. Skocpol, Theda., 1984, p. 363.
16. Burawoy, 1989, p. 764.
17. Katznelson, 1981, p. 206.

18. Gramsci, Antonio argues that "'civil society' has become a very much complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic incursions' of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc). The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare." in Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 1971, p. 235.
19. Katznelson, Ira., 1981, p. 6.
20. *ibid.*, p. 19.
21. *ibid.*, p. 55.
22. Korean Textile Association 20 Year History, Korean Textile Association, p. 130.
23. Cumings, Bruce., 1981, p. 281, Table 13.
24. *ibid.*, p. 289, Table 17.
25. Lee, Ki-baik., A New History of Korea, 1984, p. 360.
26. Henderson, Gregory., Korea: The Politics of Vortex, 1968.
27. There were also other work stoppages; Pusan dockworkers in 1921 and Seoul female rubber workers in 1923. see Lee, Ki-baik., A New History of Korea, 1984, pp. 360-1.
28. Workers Beneficial Association in 1920 was succeeded in the Korean Workers Alliance in 1922. see Lee, Ki-baik, 1984, p. 360.
29. "Written Declaration", in The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. II, The City of Kwangju, 1982, p. 311.
30. The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. II, p. 314-315.
31. Unit of Volume; 5.12 US Bushels.
32. The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. II, p. 335.
33. The History of the City of Kwangju, p.225.
34. "The Singanhoe dispatched an investigation team and demonstrated its sympathy for the student activists by such other means as holding mass protest meetings." see Lee, Ki-baik, 1984, p. 362.
35. The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. II, pp. 354-360.

36. The 40% of whole nation was organized into People's Committee, according to a video documents, Korea: The Unknown War, [Videorecording], narrator. But another study shows that the People's Committee was organized in the 94% of total counties (126 of 134 total counties) in South Korea at the end of Nov. 1948. see An, Jong-chul., "The History of Self-Governing Power After Independence," The Chonnam National University Weekly, May 18, 1989.
37. Cumings, 1981, p. 295 & Lee, Ki-baik, 1984, p. 318-9.
38. Cumings, Bruce., The Origins of the Korean War, 1981, pp. 295-296.
39. Far Eastern Economic review, Dec. 29, 1949, p. 824.
40. The Production Urbanization Movement in Kwangju Area, 1987, p. 535.
41. Far eastern Economic Review, January 5, 1949, p. 28.
42. Cumings, 1981, p. 273.
43. The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. III, The City of Kwangju, 1982, p. 1.
44. The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. 3, 1982, p. 2.
45. Korea: The Unknown War [Videorecording], Part 1: Many Roads to War, 1988, Donald Macdonald, US Military Gov't, South Korea, statements.
46. Cumings, Bruce., 1981, p. 198.
47. Cumings, Bruce., 1981, p. 289.
48. Korea: The Unknown War, [Videorecording], Bruce Cumings statements.
49. A Life of Kim, Hyong-nam : A Grain of Wheat., Soong Jeon University, 1985, p. 128.
50. Korea: the Unknown War, [Videorecording], Part 1: Many Roads to War, 1988, Prof. Chong-Sik Lee statements, co-author: Communism in Korea.
51. ibid., Col. Francis Gillette, Provisional Military Gov't 1945-1948, statements.
52. Korea: The Unknown War, [Videorecording], part 1; Many Roads to War, 1988, Narrator.

53. Cumings, Bruce., 1981, Table 8, p. 166.

54. The police was targeted by student demonstrators, while military was regarded as a student's side in 1960 student revolution. A document(The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. III, p. 620) shows what happened in the city of Kwangju in 1960:

"Meanwhile, the party(student demonstrators) returning from their raid on Ke Rhim police station was passing through the Geum Nam street and nearing the Counter Intelligence Corps(CIC) when, to someone's shout of, 'Let's sack the CIC,' they surrounded the CIC building. However, when a highschool student dissuaded the crowd saying, 'Don't touch the army! They are on our side,' they turned back. At this point when another student shouted, 'Let's destroy the police station,' all agreed saying, 'Right,' and rushed to the police station like a crowd of bees. It was half past eight at the time and the crowd joined together numbered 10,000. It wasn't formed solely by students but many civilians also joined in making it a tense moment.

'Kill the police hooligans!'

'Attack the anti-democratic police!'"

55. Korea: The Unknown War, [Videorecording], part 1; Many Roads to War, 1988, Gregory Henderson, US Vice Consul, Korea 1948-1950, statements.

56. Clear evidence will be the Yosu & Sunchon Rebellion by military force in 1948, the curses of police were used to instigate soldiers.

57. Far Eastern Economic Review, Nov. 3, 1960, p. 206.

58. see the Figure 2.

59. Class Stratification of 7 Deaths

stratification	student	unemployment	worker	carpenter	total
number	3	2	1	1	7

Class Stratification of 73 Injuries

stratification	number
student	38
unemployment	28
local congress	1
shopkeeper	1
small merchants	1
factory hand	1

laborer	2
barber	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

Sources come from The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. III, 1982, p. 622-623.

60. The City Distribution of Deaths at 1960 Student Movement

(including police deaths)

city	Seoul	Pusan	Masan	Kwangju	Kumchon	Total
number	149	17	15	8	2	191

61. Mollenkopf, John., "Community and Accumulation" in Dear and Scott, (ed.) Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society, 1981, pp. 319-337.

62. Katznelson, Ira., "The Crisis of the Capitalist City: Urban Politics and Social Control" in Hawley. Willis., et al., Theoretical Perspectives on Urban Politics, 1976, pp. 214-229.

63. Amsden, Alice H., Asia's Next Giant, part II, 1989.

64. Small and medium sized companies employed 57.3% of the labor force in South Korea, compared with 66.5 % in Taiwan and 71.8 % in Japan. They produces the 38.9% of GNP compares with 41.9% in Taiwan and 54.9% in Japan. see Far Eastern Economic Review, March 17, 1988, p. 67.

65. Amsden shows the top ten Chaebol accounted for only 15.1 % of GNP in 1974, but over 67% by 1984. see Amsden, 1989, p. 116.

66. There has been 13 parliamentary elections since 1948. 32 parliamentary members were elected in Kwangju; eight(25%) of them were ruling party candidates, 22(69%) were opposition party candidates and two(6%) were independents.

67. Far Eastern Economic Review, "Ghosts from the Past", 7 July, 1988.

68. The Korea Times Chicago Daily, "Documentary: The Blue House", April 16, 1991.

69. For instances, according to FKTU reports, in 1963 there reported 89 cases with 168,843 workers participants in unorganized forms. And, in 1968 there reported 112 cases with

205,941 participants. However, these cases are not led by democratic unions and there were no strikes.

70. Organized Labor Disputes in the 1970s in Lee, Tae-ho., Recent Labor Movement Documents, 1986, p. 11. This data is based on FKTU's annual report.

year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1977	1978	1979
cases	165	1,656	346	367	666	80	69	631

The active labor disputes in the early 1970s were suppressed by the 1972 October Revitalizing Reform, then showed revival in the late 1970s.

71. see the section VI-1-a: 'Wildfire' Night School and Workers.

72. see the section VI-1-c: Radical Culture.

73. Kim, Chi-ha, originally from Mokpo, South Cholla province, is well known his literatures, Five Thieves and Declaration of Conscience, and activism. He is one of intellectual activists, and represented the conscience of the Korean intellectuals in the 1970s.

74. Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 August, 1987, p. 33.

75. Anderson, Perry., Arguments Within English Marxism, pp. 32-35.

76. Kaye, Harvey., 1984, p. 183.

77. *ibid.*, p. 183.

78. Deyo, Frederick C., The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialism, 1987, pp. 16-20. Deyo pointed out the role of the state strategy in East Asian development: the importance of consistent, developmentalist, state-led strategy for economic growth and restructuring in East Asian countries, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea. They are state coalitional autonomy, institutional consolidation, temporal sequence and nature of political and economic linkages to core societies.

79. Amsden, 1989, p. v.

80. For instance, in Kwangju county the Japanese privately owned 26.1% of total land in 1931, according to The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. II, p. 226. The Japanese Government



-General held the 40% of the total land area in Korea in 1930.  
see Lee, Ki-baik, 1984, p. 319.

81. "Aide Memoire on Economic Reform Measures in Korea," South Korean Government, Far Eastern Economic Review, Oct. 27, 1960, pp. 160-169.

82. Far Eastern Economic Review, May 15, 1971.

83. The Fifth Republic, [Videorecording], Part 1; Politics and Economics Connections, KBS, 1989.

84. Amsden, Alice H., 1989, p. 139.

85. Far Eastern Economic Review, March 13, 1971, p. 52.

86. Far Eastern Economic Review, May 15, 1971, p. 16.

87. Far Eastern Economic Review, May 15, 1971, p. 16.

88. see Barrett & Soomi Chin, 1987, in Deyo, F. (ed.), 1987, pp. 29-30.

89. Far Eastern Economic Review, "Blue-Ribbon Discussions", 16 June, 1988, p. 109.

90. Gramsci, Antonio., Selections from the Prison Notebooks, 1971, p. 235.

91. Katznelson, Ira., 1981, p. 19.

92. Dawley, Alan., 1976, p. 70.

93. *ibid.*, p. 72.

94. *ibid.*, p. 201.

95. *ibid.*, p. 216.

96. *ibid.*, p. 235.

97. Far Eastern Economic Review, April 17, 1971, p. 17.

98. Far Eastern Economic Review, Nov. 4, 1972, p. 18.

99. The voting rates were usually high in Korean elections:  
79.5% in Local Parliamentary election of 1956;  
78.9% in Local Parliamentary Election of 1960;  
78.1% in electoral body election of 1981;  
84.6% in General Election of 1985;  
89.2% in Presidential Election of 1987;  
75.8% in General Election of 1988.

100. Far Eastern Economic Review, May 16, 1975, p. 30 & May 23, 1975, p. 38.
101. Far Eastern Economic Review, May 16, 1975, p. 30.
102. Shin, Dong-Yeup., Cotton River, 1967, long epic poem, in Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 August, 1987, p. 34.
103. A university student, Kim, Sang-jin, killed himself in 1975, Far Eastern Economic Review, June 20, 1975, p. 33.
104. Far Eastern Economic Review, "Radical Resurgence", 27 April, 1989, p. 10.
105. Kim, Dae-jung, the opposition presidential candidate in 1971 election and most well-known political dissident in South Korea.
106. Far Eastern Economic Review, "Move to the Centre", 11 May, 1989, p. 29.
107. March 21, 1989 speech in Far Eastern Economic Review, "Move to the Centre", 11 May, 1989, p. 29.
108. Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 August 1987, p. 34.
109. Far Eastern Economic Review, August 6, 1987, p. 34.
110. Far Eastern Economic Review, 6 August 1987, p. 35.
111. Far Eastern Economic Review, August 5, 1972, pp. 20-21.
112. Ji, Hae-Bum., "A Study of the Urban Poor", Monthly Chosun, November, 1988, p. 296.
113. Far Eastern Economic Review, July 9, 1982, p. 50.
114. Kwangju Ilbo(daily newspaper), April 29, 1981.
115. Seoul 20.1, Daegu 21.0, Daejon 20.9, Incheon 13.4.
116. Statistical Yearbook of Kwangju, the City of Kwangju, 1980.
117. Report on Mining and Manufacturing Census(Survey), Economic Planning Board, Republic of Korea, 1980.
118. Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement, Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1987.

119. The Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement is proclaimed on a memorial inscription in front of the office building of Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Upon the plains of Mt. Mu Deung, new history has opened. Formed by our own commercial and industrial people, Following Bon Chon and Song Am industrial estates, at Ha Nam a huge industrial estate is coming into place. Now our hope of having a five million Pyong\*, the size of whole Kwangju, industrial estate is being fulfilled. That is the way for agricultural-industrial advancement of South Cholla's bright tomorrow. It is a strong single record of Kwangju's transformation as a production city. We are proud of the fact that factories symbolizing employment and increase of income is being constructed at Kwangju through the inspiration of our commercial and industrial people. Kwangju's past as a consumer city is being transformed. Collecting the lights of Mt. Mu Deung, Kwangju is alive and breathing. Kwangju is taking a giant step towards tomorrow's life as a thriving production city.

Dec. 22, 1985

\*: a unit of area, a land measure of six square chuck.

120. Far Eastern Economic Review, "Less of the Same", 16, July 1987, p. 53.

121. Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement, The Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1987, pp. 565-583.

122. Shin, Tae-ho., Preface of the "Report of Study for Economic Order Establishment Promotion Program" in Appendix of Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement, Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1987, p. 565-566.

123. Madae School Foundation which has Kwangduk middle school and Kwangduk highschool has established at May 15, 1980 and opened schools on March 2, 1981.

124. Kwangju Area Production Urbanization Movement, The Kwangju Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1987, pp. 473-562.

125. Kwangju Ilbo(Daily Newspaper), April 28, 1981.

126. Wood, 1982, p. 62-63.

127. Marx, Karl., The Poverty of Philosophy, collected works, Vol. 6, p. 211.

128. Seo, Kwan-mo., **Class Composition and Class Differentiation of Modern Korean Society**, Korean Sociological Association, 1984, p. 95.
129. Marx, Karl, 1963, p. 124.
130. Dos Santos., **"The Concept of Social Classes"**, *Science and Society*, 34, 1970, p.181.
131. Lukacs, 1968, p. 51.
132. A unit of volume; 5.12 bushels, 47.6 U.S. gallons.
133. A stop sign plate at a street pedestrian crossing.
134. One of main east-west streets in Seoul.
135. One of four gates in Seoul, which is located at the entrance of Chong Roh street, eastern part of Seoul.
136. The name of a county in North Choong Cheong province, which is located at Mt. Sok Rhee. It is one of undeveloped and isolated from industrialization and modernization areas in South Korea.
137. The name of a county in South Cholla province, which has many fishing villages and well-known for sweet potato.
138. A central street's name which runs south-north of Seoul. Most busy street and many tall buildings are located around this street.
139. A part of Manchuria
140. A unit of distance; 10 Lee = 4 km.
141. Shin, Dong-Yeup., **"Chong Roh The Fifth Street"**, Dongseo ChoonChu, June, 1967.
142. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, **"Long-term Peace Prospects Look Poor"**, 19 July, 1984, p. 74.
143. see Endnote # xx.
144. Shin, Il Seup., **"Climbing the Stairs"**, *Wildfire Anthology*, Volume I, Nov. 1978, pp. 25-27.
145. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 5, 1972, p. 20.
146. Hong, Hee-dam., **Banner**, novel, Jeongeumsa, 1988, p. 19.
147. **Song of Mother**, [Videorecording].

148. Kwangju Speaks, [Videorecording].
149. Wildfire Anthology, Vol. 1, Kwangcheon Roman Catholic Church Wildfire Night School, November 1978, p. 3.
150. Introduction of Teachers' History, a document.
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institution	sector	location	conflict activities
political party	politics	community	election, suffrage

government	policy	home	economic activities
trade union	work	workplace	government policy
school	education	home	ideology
corporation	economy	community	values

## **APPENDICIES**

## APPENDIX I

Table 1: Population, Employees by Industry, and Unemployment Rate of the City of Kwangju

year	Population	employees(%)				unemployment rate(%)
		primary	secondary	tertiary	other	
1912	10,432(1,955)					
1915	10,605(2,392)					
1916	10,860(2,593)					
1921	12,533(2,847)					
1925	23,197(4,362)					
1930	33,000					
1931	33,480(6,655)					
1937	57,000					
1940	64,000					
1941	74,000					
1945	83,000					
1950	125,000					
1956	214,000					
1960	309,000					
1963	334,259	28.8	5.4	65.8		
1964	343,193	25.8	5.5	68.4		
1965	365,611	25.6	2.2	72.2		
1967	432,552	21.2	9.4	69.4		
1967	432,552	21.0	13.9	61.7	3.4	4.2
1968	461,368	22.2	13.5	64.3		6.6
1970	502,703	9.6	24.4	66.0		
1971	520,399	4.0	26.4	69.6		1.0
1972	538,049	4.9	32.2	62.9		2.8
1973	552,432	4.7	24.9	70.4		2.1
1974	588,662	4.7	25.1	70.2		3.4(?)
1975	607,058					
1976	625,007					
1977	657,455					
1978	694,646					
1979	732,584	4.4	25.1	70.5*		
1980	727,627					
1981	769,777					
1982	813,722					
1983	843,465					
1984	869,874					
1985	906,129					
1986	928,851					4.8**
1987	952,884					
1988	1,116,332					

Source: 1912-1950: The History of the City of Kwangju, Vol. II. The City of Kwangju, 1982, p. 225.  
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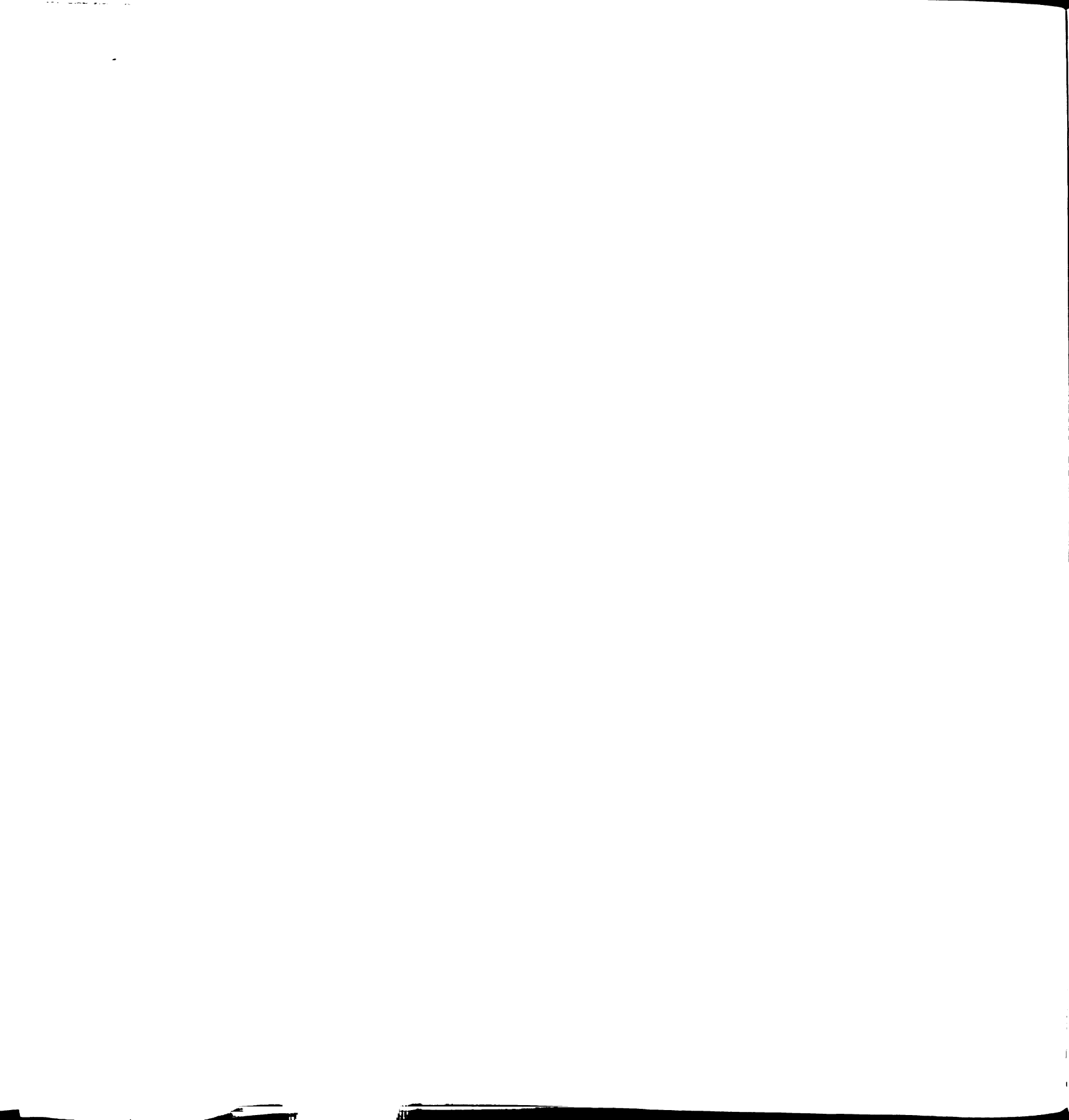


Table 2: The Trend of Class Structure of National and South Cholla Province  
(unit= thousand, %)

year	1960		1966		1975		1980	
region	nat	cho	nat	cho	nat	cho	nat	cho
p.o.f.	15,391	2,180	16,108	2,187	21,827	2,345	24,848	2,379
e.a.p.	7,488	1,289	8,654	1,291	13,351	1,592	13,595	1,498
e.p.	6,973	1,245	7,963	1,230	12,682	1,545	12,682	1,418
<b>A.capita-</b> <b>list</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>
1.co.owner	0.9	0.5	0.3	0.08	0.5	0.17	0.6	0.2
2.executive manager co.	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.02	0.4	0.09
3.officials	0.14	0.1	0.15	0.02	0.15	0.01	0.18	0.01
<b>B.petty-bou</b> <b>rgeoisie</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>83.7</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>76.4</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>76.0</b>
4.rural	58.1	75.3	47.5	63.3	42.3	66.6	34.0	63.8
5.urban	13.1	8.3	14.2	12.7	13.0	9.5	17.6	11.8
a.production &transp&simp	5.3	3.8	4.6	6.6	3.0	2.3	5.6	3.7
b. sales	7.1	4.3	8.6	5.8	8.0	5.4	9.2	6.1
c.service	0.7	0.2	1.0	0.3	2.0	1.8	2.8	2.0
family serv.	1.6	1.4	3.2	4.6	2.7	2.1	2.6	2.4
6.professionals &technicians	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4
<b>C.working</b> <b>class</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>22.4</b>
7.salry man	4.4	2.5	6.1	3.8	8.6	5.2	12.2	7.4
d.professo- nals & te- chnicians	1.9	1.2	2.2	1.7	2.6	2.0	3.7	2.9
e.office	2.5	1.3	3.9	2.1	6.0	3.2	8.5	4.5
8.productive worker	10.5	6.4	17.7	12.1	22.8	11.2	21.7	9.1
f.agricul & fishery	3.5	3.7	4.8	5.8	4.1	4.5	1.1	1.3
g.production & transport simple	7.0	2.7	12.9	6.3	18.7	6.7	20.6	7.8
9.unproduct ive worker	4.7	2.7	5.2	2.9	6.1	3.4	6.0	1.8
h.sles prson	0.6	0.3	1.3	0.9	2.0	1.0	2.2	0.8
i.service	4.1	2.4	3.9	2.0	4.1	2.4	3.8	1.0
10unemployed	6.9	5.0	8.0	4.7	5.0	3.0	6.7	4.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>99.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>98.7</b>



nat : national total  
cho : South Cholla Province  
p.o.f. : population over fifteen years old  
e.a.p. : economic activities population  
e.p. : employed person

Source: National Data: Seo, Kwan-Mo., Class Composition and Class Differentiation of Modern Korean Society, Korean Sociological Association, 1984, p. 36.

Cholla Province Data: Kim, Dong-Uk., "Struggle Subjects and Contradictory Structure of Korean Capitalism", in The Study of Kwangju Minjung(Mass) Struggle, Sakyejol Press, Seoul, 1990, p. 105.

Table 3: Class Structure of National Cities in 1980  
(unit= thousand, %)

region	national city	Kwangju	Seoul	Daegu	Pusan
p.o.f.	14,487	479	5,749	1,099	2,127
e.a.p.	7,138	208	2,826	525	1,088
e.p.	6,416	182	2,559	479	977
<b>A.capita- list</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>
1.co. owner	1.1	0.7	1.7	0.9	0.9
2.executive manager co.	0.6		1.1	0.3	0.3
3.officials	0.02	0.3	0.01	0.01	0.01
<b>B.petty-bou rgeoisie</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>25.2</b>
4.rural	3.2	6.4	0.7	1.4	1.7
5.urban	25.0	29.0	26.2	28.5	22.7
a.production & trans simple	7.9	8.9	7.8	9.1	6.8
b. sales	13.3	15.0	14.8	15.0	12.4
c.family service	3.8	5.1	3.6	4.4	3.4
6.professio- nals & te- chnicians	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.8
<b>C.working class</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>73.5</b>
7.salary man	18.6	19.4	22.7	15.4	15.0
d.professo- nals & te- chnicians	5.3	8.4	5.8	4.9	4.0
e.office	13.3	11.0	16.9	10.5	10.9
8.productive worker	31.0	21.9	25.6	35.1	39.8
f.agricul & fishery	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.5
g.production & transport simple	30.5	21.5	25.4	34.8	39.3
9.unproducti- ve worker	9.4	9.1	11.4	8.8	8.5
h.sales persn	3.6	3.5	4.7	3.6	3.3
i.service	5.8	5.6	6.7	5.2	5.2
10.unemployed	10.1	11.7	9.3	8.7	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

p.o.f. : population over fifteen years old  
e.a.p. : economic activities population  
e.p. : employed person

Source: Kim, Dong-Uk., "Struggle Subjects and Contradictory Structure of Korean Capitalism", in The Study of Kwangju Minjung (Mass) Struggle, Sakyejol Press, Seoul, 1990, p. 107.

Table 4: Kwangju Uprising Related Organizations(13)

name	purpose	No.	date	character
5.18 Bereaved Family	damage compensation	44	5/29/80	moderate
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Struggle Bereaved Family Org.	fact finding	80	7/ /80	hard line
5.18 Kwangju Heroic Deed Injured Person	damage compensation	170	10/18/82	moderate
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Struggle Injured Person Comrade Org.	fact finding	50	2/14/88	hard line
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Struggle Restrainer Comrade Org.	fact finding & rehabilitation	120	8/30/87	hard line
5.18 Missing Person Family	"	32	4/9/89	recognition
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Struggle Dead after Injured Bereaved Fam.	early compensation	62	6/1/89	moderate
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Struggle Democratic Driver Comrade Org.	"	30	6/1/89	moderate
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Revolution Victim Cenotaph Construction & Memorial Work National Movement Promotion Committee	memorial work promotion	100	5/11/85	hard line
5.18 Kwangju Minjung Struggle YouthComrade	worthy undertaking	30	4/5/86	hard line
5.18 Minjung Struggle Comrade Org.	worthy undertaking	200	11/8/87	hard line
5.18 Missing Person Family Org.	missing person compensation	38	5/10/88	unrecognition
5.18 Kwangju Jail Survivor Comrade Org.	"	10	"	moderate

Source: Kwangju City Hall, Department of Support, August 1990.

## APPENDIX II

In a textbook of the Wildfire Night School, Chinese, the teachers have posed the following problems and questions in order to make a worker himself/herself responsible for his/her freedom. And they wanted to help the workers to find out the oppressive elements within themselves.

Do you think our object of achieving pay-raise will be accomplished with only words or when all seeks their own interests at the time when we as laborers desperately needs pay-raise? (Chinese, p.16)

1. Aren't you accepting your life as a poor laborer as fate?
2. Have you ever anguished over ways to overcome the poverty and feeling of inferiority you were born with?
3. Did you ever feel fearful of joining the awareness movement or such group activities even though you wanted to live a better life? If you were reluctant, what was your reason?
4. Do you feel you have the courage to break away from your erroneous thoughts in order to enjoy truth and your rights? (Chinese, p. 25)

1. Do you feel you have the rightful recognition as the hero of production form your employees or superiors?
2. Have you ever felt pride in yourself as laborer and as the hero of production?
3. Please relate specific instances of the above two items.
4. Do you as a laborer, recognize how noble and sacred labor is? Also, do you feel you are well treated for your labors?
5. If you find problems among the items illustrated above, how would you find the method of correcting them? (Chinese, p.29)

1. Has your company held discussions with either you or your representatives concerning the management policies, production planning and achievements?
2. Does your labor representatives respect your wishes in determining the activities of the labor union such as project planning, budget etc. ?
3. Have you ever been completely ignored by your company or your labor union representatives in expressing your rightful opinions?
4. Have you ever been unlawfully deprived of your freedom to express your conscience and opinion by either the company or the labor union representatives and forced upon you one-sided obedience? (Chinese, p. 34)

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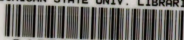
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