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SOUTH KOREA
"Unconverted" Political
Prisoners



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INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 8DJ, UNITED KINGDOM

SOUTH KOREA

"Unconverted" Political Prisoners

Amnesty International is concerned about a number of prisoners of conscience, possible prisoners of conscience and other political prisoners, convicted under national security legislation, whose continued detention appears to be a result of their refusal to renounce their real or alleged communist views. These prisoners are known as "unconverted" political prisoners, over 40 of whom have been held for some years in Taejon Prison. It is also concerned that some of the "unconverted" political prisoners may have been convicted after an unfair trial and that some may be required to renounce a communist viewpoint which they never held. It has adopted three of the "unconverted" political prisoners as prisoners of conscience and is calling for their unconditional release.

The "unconverted" political prisoners have been held for some years in Taejon Prison but according to recent reports some may now have been transferred to other prisons. They are serving lengthy prison sentences for alleged espionage activities on behalf of North Korea and the majority were convicted under previous governments. Some came from North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War or were members of local opposition parties or resistance groups in the 1950s. Many of those arrested in later years were accused of visiting North Korea or of meeting supposed North Korean agents in Japan. Some of these prisoners claim that after their arrests they were subjected to lengthy interrogation, tortured and denied access to their families and lawyers.

The continued detention of many "unconverted" political prisoners appears to be a result of their refusal to renounce certain political beliefs. Many are serving terms of life imprisonment and some have already spent a considerable amount of time in prison. At least 30 "unconverted" political prisoners have spent more than 20 years in prison, including ten who have been held for over 30 years. Two have been in prison for over 40 years. Ordinary prisoners serving life-terms are generally released after serving between 16 and 18 years' imprisonment. While other prisoners can hope to be considered for early release by the Parole Examination Board, "unconverted" prisoners are kept outside this system, a factor which is particularly acute for those serving life terms.

Amnesty International believes that some of the "unconverted" political prisoners may never have held communist beliefs or have been involved in espionage activities. It has repeatedly urged the South Korean authorities to review the cases of some "unconverted" long-term prisoners, whom it considers may have been convicted after an unfair trial. Three of the "unconverted" political prisoners, Kim Song-man, Yu Won-ho and Chang Ui-gyun, have been adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience.

Kim Song-man, a student of political science, studied in South Korea and the USA. He also travelled to several East European countries and visited the North Korean embassies in Budapest and East Berlin. He was arrested in 1985 and sentenced to life-imprisonment under the National Security Law for passing state secrets to North Koreans he met abroad and acting under their instructions. Kim Song-man denied the charges against him and said that he met North Koreans to learn more about North Korea and to find out about the possibilities for reunification. Amnesty International has adopted Kim Song-man as a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his release as it does not believe that there is any evidence to substantiate the charges against him. Kim Song-man has argued that he should not have to "convert" because he was never involved in any spying activities. In a recent interview with his lawyer, he said:

"First of all, I believe in the principle of freedom of conscience . . . Right now, all over the world, the Cold War has ended, and even when one's ideology is different from that of others, they are still trying to seek reconciliation, so I can't agree with the proposition that I will receive special treatment only if I convert. . ."

"The true meaning of reunification [between North and South Korea] is that people with different ideologies can freely interact and travel about in public . . . Is it true that only the government can strive for reunification? I too support reunification and cannot sign something which goes counter to reunification. I should walk freely on the street without converting . . ."

Amnesty International is also calling for the release of businessman Yu Won-ho and publisher Chang Ui-gyun. Yu Won-ho was arrested in April 1989 and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment under the National Security Law for making an unauthorized visit to North Korea, together with Presbyterian minister Reverend Moon Ik-hwan. At his trial Yu Won-ho explained that he went to North Korea to advance reunification and because he did not consider North Korea to be an "anti-state" organization (the National Security Law prohibits unauthorized contact with North Korea which it defines as an "anti-state" organization). Chang Ui-gyun was arrested in July 1987 and charged under the National Security Law with meeting and passing state secrets to pro-North Koreans in Japan. Chang Ui-gyun denied the charges of espionage and said he had only met people who supported North Korea in an attempt to understand the division of the Korean peninsula and the political system in North Korea. He was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment.

Other "unconverted" political prisoners whom Amnesty International believes may have been convicted after unfair trials, include Cho Sang-nok and Shin Kui-yong. Cho Sang-nok, who was arrested in 1978 and sentenced to life imprisonment, alleges that he

was tortured in an unidentified location for 17 days after his arrest and Amnesty International is concerned that he may have been convicted on the basis of a confession extracted under torture. Shin Kui-yong was arrested in 1980 and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. His family say he was held incommunicado for 70 days after his arrest in 1980 and was forced to make a confession under torture.

The basis for the "conversion" system is contained in a regulation issued by the Ministry of Justice in 1969. The Ministry of Justice regulation classifies political and non-political prisoners into four classes. Class A includes the prisoners who can be rehabilitated; Class B includes the prisoners whose rehabilitation is considered difficult; Class C includes prisoners whose rehabilitation is deemed very difficult, including recidivists and "prisoners of conviction" who have "converted". "Prisoners of conviction" who have not "converted" belong to Class D and are not entitled to the benefits granted in the other classes.

According to testimonies of former political prisoners, in order to show they had "converted", they were required to write a statement explaining (a) how they became communists, (b) the activities they carried out to promote communism, (c) the reasons why they wanted to give up communism, and (d) what they proposed to do in the future. The prisoners then appeared before a committee of prison officials who decided whether to accept the statement as evidence of a true "conversion". Released political prisoners have testified that during the 1970s and 1980s many prisoners were tortured to force them to "convert". At present, however, the main pressure on prisoners is said to be a psychological one, including the denial of early release on parole. Prisoners who have not "converted" are also reportedly unable to receive and send regular correspondence, to meet visitors without guards being present, to have extra items of furniture in their cells, to work, watch television or to attend religious worship.

In February 1992 a group of "unconverted" political prisoners filed a petition with the Constitutional Court on the basis that the "conversion" system violates the rights to freedom of conscience and human dignity, guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic of Korea.

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SOUTH KOREA

Appeal for the Release of Pang Yang-kyun

SEPTEMBER 1992

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Pang Yang-kyun, 37-year-old secretary to a former member of the South Korean National Assembly, is serving a seven-year prison sentence on charges under the National Security Law. Amnesty International believes that Pang Yang-kyun has been imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association. It is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Pang Yang-kyun was secretary to Suh Kyung-won, an opposition member of the National Assembly, who visited North Korea in August 1988. In July 1989 he and Suh Kyung-won were arrested and charged under the National Security Law in connection with this visit. Suh Kyung-won was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for making an unauthorized trip to North Korea and passing on state secrets. Pang Yang-kyun was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for failing to report the visit and also for passing state secrets to an alleged North Korean agent in Germany. Both men have been adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience.

The National Security Law imposes long sentences of imprisonment or the death penalty for anti-state activities and contacts with anti-state organizations (including the North Korean Government). Over the years the law has been used widely to imprison people who visited North Korea without government authorization, people who met North Koreans or alleged North Korean agents abroad and people who expressed support for North Korea or whose views were similar to positions also taken by the North. In past years the courts have ruled that any information which could be useful to North Korea, even if it were publicly available, qualified as a state secret.

Amnesty International believes that Pang Yang-kyun's failure to report Suh Kyung-won's visit to North Korea cannot justify imprisonment. Pang Yang-kyun denied the charges of passing information to a North Korean agent in Germany and Amnesty International believes no evidence has been presented to support these accusations.

KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / CLERICAL WORKERS / POLITICALLY
MOTIVATED CRIMINAL CHARGES / ESPIONAGE / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / BANNING
/ CENSORSHIP /

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During his trial Pang Yang-kyun said that he had been subjected to beatings, death threats and sleep deprivation while under investigation by the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) and the prosecution. He also said that he had been forced under torture to sign a statement agreeing not to disclose his treatment by the ANSP. He is said to have suffered ill-health in prison as a result of this torture. In its verdict the court conceded that:

"In Pang Yang-kyun's case the court cannot rule out the possibility that he was tortured while being interrogated at the ANSP. But it cannot be viewed that such duress continued while he confessed to prosecutors".

In a written response to Amnesty International in January 1991, the South Korean authorities said that Pang Yang-kyun had admitted to the charges against him and denied ill-treatment in the presence of his defence lawyer. It said, "During the court proceeding he admitted most of the major criminal acts and his admission proves that the confession he made at the investigation is true and correct." Amnesty International is concerned that the authorities do not appear to have conducted an impartial investigation into Pang Yang-kyun's claims that he was tortured.

Both international and South Korean law forbid the use of testimony obtained under torture. Article 15 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment prohibits the use in legal proceedings of a statement made under torture. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by South Korea in April 1990, prohibits torture and also states that a defendant should not be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt. In a recent report, submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee, the South Korean Government states that these rights are guaranteed by Article 12 of the South Korean Constitution. Amnesty International is concerned that they appear to have been disregarded in the case of Pang Yang-kyun.

Pang Yang-kyun is married and has three young children. He has been in prison for three years and is currently held in Chonju Prison.

ACTION REQUESTED: Please send appeals to Mr Kim Ki-Choon, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, 1 Chungang-dong, Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun, Kyonggi Province, Republic of Korea.

- Seek the immediate and unconditional release of Pang Yang-kyun and express concern at claims that he was tortured during interrogation.

- Urge the South Korean Government to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

FURTHER INFORMATION: For further information about Amnesty International's concerns in South Korea, see the following Amnesty International documents: *South Korea, Prisoners Held for National Security Offences (ASA 25/25/91)*; *South Korea, Amnesty International's Concerns (ASA 25/14/92)*.

KEYWORDS: PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE / CLERICAL WORKERS / POLITICALLY
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SOUTH KOREA

Concern about the treatment of alleged spies

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On 10 September 1992 Amnesty International wrote to the South Korean authorities expressing concern about the treatment of Kim Nak-jung who is reported to have been held incommunicado following his arrest under the National Security Law on 25 August. It urged the authorities to ensure that Kim Nak-jung is accorded his full rights, guaranteed by both international and domestic law, relating to the arrest and interrogation of prisoners. Amnesty International is also concerned about the treatment of Shim Keum-sup, Kwon Du-young and Noh Jong-sun who were arrested two days later. It is urging the South Korean authorities to ensure that their rights to a fair trial are fully ensured.

Kim Nak-jung, aged 58, was arrested on 25 August along with his 52-year-old wife and his two daughters, aged 24 and 22. According to information received by Amnesty International, the family was arrested without a warrant of arrest and held incommunicado for 10 days by the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP). During this time lawyers requested but were refused access to Kim Nak-jung. On 3 September Kim Nak-jung's wife and two daughters were released. Lawyers who were permitted to interview Kim Nak-jung on 7 September said that he had been beaten and deprived of sleep. They were not permitted to hold a private interview with their client.

On 27 August three more men were arrested in this case and are currently held by the ANSP. They are Shim Keum-sup, aged 58, Kwon Du-young, aged 64 and Noh Jong-sun, aged 53. Amnesty International is concerned at reports that these three prisoners were also detained without warrants of arrest, denied access to their lawyers and that they were beaten and deprived of sleep during interrogation. When asked to comment on the arrests, a senior official of the ANSP is reported to have said that prisoners suspected of espionage should not have the right to legal assistance during interrogation.

International human rights standards require that all detainees are brought promptly before a judge, granted immediate access to lawyers, and promptly informed of the

reasons for their arrest and the charges against them. They also prohibit the use of torture and ill-treatment. These rights are guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which was ratified by the Republic of Korea in April 1990. Amnesty International is concerned that these rights may not have been accorded to these four prisoners.

On 7 September the Agency for National Security Planning announced that the four men had been part of a pro-North Korean spy ring. It said they had contacted North Korean agents and received considerable sums of money to finance their espionage activities. The ANSP announced that over 40 people had been investigated in connection with this case, including several leading members of the former *Minjung* Party and members of *Minsahyop* (Council for Democratic Reform and Social Progress). Opposition groups and family members have denied that the men were involved in espionage activities.

Amnesty International is concerned that the four prisoners may be held for the peaceful exercise of their political views. The National Security Law prohibits unauthorized contact with "anti-state" organizations (including the North Korean Government). Over the years, Amnesty International believes that the law has been widely used to imprison people who visited North Korea without government authorization, people who met North Koreans or alleged North Korean agents abroad and people who expressed support for North Korea or whose views were similar to positions also taken by the North. In past years the courts have ruled that any information, even if it were publicly available, which could be useful to North Korea, qualified as a "state secret". Amnesty International believes that some prisoners convicted of espionage activities are in fact held for the peaceful exercise of their political views.

During the 1960s and early 1970s Kim Nak-jung lectured on economic history at Korea University. In 1955 he visited North Korea to submit a reunification plan to the North Korean Government but was arrested by the North Korean authorities and imprisoned for one year. In 1956 he was returned to South Korea where he was arrested by the South Korean authorities on charges of spying. He was released from prison in 1960 but was arrested again in 1973 for his involvement in the student movement and alleged espionage activities. After his release in 1980 he joined a number of groups supporting reunification including the National Centre for the Promotion of Korean Reunification and the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice. In 1990 he joined and became co-president of the *Minjung* Party, a political party which was established in November 1990 with a moderate left-wing platform. In 1991 he founded the Research Group for Peaceful Reunification which is said to have been a centre for the discussion and analysis of reunification issues. The three other prisoners were also associated with this group. Kim Nak-jung has written five books about Korean reunification and the labour movement in South Korea.

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SOUTH KOREA

Appeal on behalf of Park Dong-oon

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Park Dong-oon is serving a term of life imprisonment for alleged espionage activities on behalf of North Korea. Amnesty International believes that Park Dong-oon may have been convicted on the basis of confessions made under torture. It is urging the South Korean authorities to review his case.

Park Dong-oon lived with several family members on Chin Island and was employed by the Chindo Myon Agricultural Cooperative. In March 1981 he and several other members of his family were arrested under the National Security Law on charges of belonging to the "Chindo Permanent Spy Ring" and of spying for North Korea. Park Dong-oon was accused of making two visits to North Korea where he is alleged to have met members of the North Korean workers' party and to have received espionage training. The authorities claimed that he met his father who had been missing since the Korean War and is alleged to have returned to South Korea as a North Korean spy and to have met with members of his family.

Park Dong-oon was sentenced to death but this was later commuted to life imprisonment. Three other family members were sentenced to prison terms ranging from three and a half years' to seven years' imprisonment and have now been released.

Park Dong-oon's family say that several family members were tortured for 60 days to force them to make a false confession stating that Park Dong-oon had gone to North Korea and engaged in espionage activities. They said that witnesses at the trial were

intimidated by intelligence agencies into not supporting Park Dong-oon's alibi for the dates he was accused of travelling to North Korea. The only evidence of contacts between Park Dong-oon and his father were the statements made by other family members during their interrogation.

Several members of Park Dong-oon's family have written appeals about the case. Park Dong-oon's uncle wrote:

"My household, which consists of five family members including me was forcefully taken . . . without our having committed any crimes and without knowing why. For sixty days, we were illegally detained and went through horrible murderous torture and terror."

Park Dong-oon's brother wrote:

"With the help of endless torture the security department transformed the whole family into spies over 60 days. Instead of catching spies, they were creating spies. . . All of my family went through humiliation and pain and I cannot find words to describe them. How long do you think a human being can put up with torture? One month, two months or several months? It is only a matter of time. Nobody can endure it forever."

ACTION REQUESTED

Please write appeals to the South Korean Minister of Justice expressing concern that Park Dong-oon may have been convicted after an unfair trial and urging the authorities to review his case.

Address

Mr Kim Ki-choon, Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
1 Chungang-dong
Kwachon-myon
Shihung-gun
Kyonggi Province
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

KEYWORDS: LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT / ESPIONAGE / CONFESSIONS / TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT / TRIALS / WITNESSES / PEASANTS / FAMILIES / POLICE / PHOTOGRAPHS /

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STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL NETWORK ON KOREA (EUKONET) AT THE MEETING ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, 13 FEBRUARY 1992

The Role of the Churches in the Struggle for human rights in Korea.

Over the past twenty to thirty years, the growth of the Christian Churches in Korea has been an important phenomenon. 30% of the population is now Christian. During this time, the Korean Churches have played both a pastoral and prophetic role.

In terms of the churches' prophetic role, Christians have helped to lead the way in the struggle for human rights. During the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) they were often to be found in the forefront of the anti-colonial, pro-democratic movements. They continue to be part of the movement for democracy within the Republic of Korea. They have demonstrated against repression and many have been imprisoned for this show of resistance. Prayer meetings have been held for those imprisoned, and these meetings have led to debate, the passing of resolutions and the development of social action. They have also worked alongside the downtrodden urban-industrial workers in Korea's factories in the Urban Industrial mission movement (Protestant) and the (Catholic) Labour Apostolate.

To take one example: In 1974 when emergency decrees made it a crime to criticize the Yushin Constitution, eleven clergy issued a statement against the emergency decrees requesting discussion of the constitution and a return to democracy. They were arrested and sentenced. They showed the Christian community what they felt the church had to do. Many more were arrested subsequently.

In Korea, *Minjung* is a term for those who are oppressed politically, exploited economically, alienated sociologically, and kept uneducated in cultural and intellectual matters. Minjung Theology grew out of the Christian experience in the political struggle for justice in the 1970s. It is a theology of the oppressed in the Korean political situation. Christians have reflected on their Christian commitment to justice in their prison cells.

On December 3 1991 the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) Human Rights Committee published its annual Human Rights Declaration which made the following point:

The National Security Law, the unjust Labour Laws, and various other laws which are being utilized to imprison righteous persons, must be abolished, and all 1,200 prisoners of conscience released. 400 of these persons are in jail under the NSL which should more accurately be called the 'government security law'.

According to the NCCCK, at present there are more political prisoners at the present time than at any time during the reign of President Chun Do Hwan, who was ousted from power in 1987.

The European Ecumenical Network on Korea (EUKONET) brings together the staff

of European Churches and organisations who are responsible for relations with Korea.

EUKONET was set up in 1987 as an ecumenical network on justice peace and human rights in Korea in view of the Olympic Games in Seoul. At its first meeting the network agreed that it would act on its own behalf and as an agent of partners in Korea's churches in a one-world perspective. At this meeting action was decided in the following ways: to take up particular cases of individuals; to apply public pressure on the judicial system; to expose abuses of human rights and to conscientize the public. It was decided to take up the case of a particular prisoner, and to draw attention to the injustice of the house arrest of Kim Dae Jung.

EUKONET has met several times since then and has always had human rights on its agenda. Amnesty International has sent representatives to EUKONET meetings and reported on the latest human rights situation.

More recently EUKONET has taken up action in support of the following prisoners:

KIM MYONG SHIK, Director of the Asia Africa Latin America Research Institute was arrested after AALARI published research into the People's Uprising on Cheju Island in 1948.

HONG SONG DAM, artist was accused of praising and benefitting North Korea through his paintings and articles, and of spying for North Korea by sending books to an alleged North Korean agent in Germany.

REV LEE HAE HAK, REV CHO YONG SUL AND MR CHO SUNG WOO were arrested on their return to Korea after a meeting in Berlin called by the Pan National Alliance for Reunification.

REV HONG KEUN SOO was accused of praising North Korea in his sermons and of having spoken in favour of reunification during a TV debate on television and of publishing a collection of his writing entitled 'Now is the time to Realise National Reunification'.

EUKONET has also tried to draw attention to the Korean peoples' deep desire for the reunification of their divided country. We have attempted to publicise the statements made by Christians from North and South who have over the last few years met in a series of meetings outside Korea facilitated by the World Council of Churches. This issue above all underpins the desire of Koreans for democracy and human rights.

Lastly, EUKONET has attempted to draw particular attention to the concerns of Korean women. We have looked at women's issues in a Korean context, and assisted Korean women's organisations in their research into the causes of prostitution and other forms of women's exploitation.

We in EUKONET feel we have to respond to the call of our sisters and brothers in Korea to raise the Churches' concern for human rights wherever possible. We welcome this opportunity to use this meeting at the European Parliament to do this, a forum to which our partners in Korea would not have immediate access. We therefore request those in the European Parliament to take any action possible in the struggle for justice and human rights in the Republic of Korea.

SEMINAR ON THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH KOREA)

AT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, STRASBOURG, ON 13 FEBRUARY 1992

Statement of Amnesty International, delivered by its representative, Ms Gabriella-Maria van den Bosch, of The Netherlands Section of Amnesty International

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have personally been campaigning for the release of prisoners of conscience and an end to other human rights abuses in South Korea for 15 years. Those years saw major political changes; in some respects the human rights situation has changed for the better, in other respects, nothing has changed.

When I am asked to summarize Amnesty International's concerns in South Korea, I still say, as before, "we call for the release of prisoners of conscience, a review of the cases of political prisoners who claim they were convicted after unfair trials; an end to torture and ill-treatment of all prisoners (those held on political as well as on criminal charges) and an end to the use of the death penalty."

The current government in South Korea has dealt, albeit incompletely, with the legacy of human rights violations of previous decades. It has released most of the prisoners arrested in the 1970s and early 1980s whom Amnesty International considered to be prisoners of conscience.

But around 50 prisoners convicted of national security offences under previous governments are still imprisoned. For many years the fate of the longer-serving prisoners among them was unknown to human rights groups and even today their cases are still not well documented. Some of these prisoners came from North Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War, others were members of local opposition parties or armed resistance groups in the 1950s. Those arrested in later years were accused of visiting North Korea, usually via Japan, and of meeting Koreans in Japan said to belong to a pro-Pyongyang organization. The cases all follow the same pattern. I will illustrate this by giving you an outline of the case of Park Dong-oon. Park

Dong-oon and several relatives who have now been released were convicted of belonging to the "Chindo Permanent Spy Ring" and accused of spying for North Korea. Park Dong-oon was arrested in 1981 and was accused of visiting North Korea in 1965 and 1971 where he allegedly received espionage training and instructions. He is also accused of meeting his father (missing since the Korean War) on several occasions when the latter allegedly returned to the south on spying missions. Park Dong-oon was first sentenced to death but his sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment. His relatives testified to being tortured physically and mentally for lengthy periods. Witnesses at the trial were reportedly intimidated by intelligence agencies into not confirming Park's alibi for the dates he was accused of travelling to North Korea. The only evidence about meeting his father was in the prisoners' confessions.

Amnesty International has been calling on the authorities to review the cases of these prisoners. Their convictions appear to rest on the prisoners' confessions and there is little other evidence to support the charges. Former prisoners have testified to Amnesty International about the investigation methods used in these cases and it is unlikely that any of these prisoners would not have been tortured. Procedural irregularities were common : arrests without warrants, interrogation for longer than permitted by law (under the National Security Law interrogation can last for 50 days), and detention without access to lawyers and relatives. And in the cases where the prisoners have indeed met people in Japan or other countries who support North Korea, whether they did indeed spy for North Korea is a matter of definition. The South Korean courts consider as state secret any information that may be useful to North Korea, even if is freely available.

In other cases more information is available and Amnesty International is confident that it can declare the prisoner to be a prisoner of conscience, detained for the peaceful exercise of the right of freedom of expression and association. Hwang Tae-kwon is one such prisoner. He has been in detention since June 1985. He was 30 years old when he was arrested as he returned for a vacation from the university in the USA where he was studying politics. In the USA he met other Koreans and is believed to have contributed articles reflecting anti-government and

anti-US views in a Korean newspaper. He was accused of meeting North Korean agents in the USA and of being a communist. First he was sentenced to life imprisonment, the sentence was later reduced to twenty years. In a letter from prison he wrote " ... after 60 days of torture and beatings in the basement of the Agency for National Security Planning and after three years of imprisonment for a crime I did not commit, ... I hope my story will expose the crimes that were committed against me ... in order to extract my [so-called] 'confession'. I am also hoping to restore my own human dignity which has been ruthlessly trampled upon during the interrogation and imprisonment." [In a recent letter to one of the Amnesty International groups working for his release he said : "We were taught to hate people in the North... To try to know, let alone meet "North Koreans" was regarded as an unforgivable sin. How many people died because of this "crime"! How many more people [were] imprisoned because of this "terrible crime"!!" Several years ago Hwang Tae-kwon was not allowed to correspond with friends abroad and the fact that he now can write to an Amnesty International member is evidence that his conditions of detention have improved]. However in Amnesty International's view he should be immediately and unconditionally released.

What prevents the South Korean Government from reviewing the cases of the prisoners arrested by previous administrations, so that prisoners of conscience are released and those sentenced after unfair trials can seek redress? In many cases it is the prisoners' refusal to recant their political views, to "convert", that prevents their release. Prisoners convicted of national security offences are required to change their political views. If they don't, they are denied benefits granted to other prisoners such as the rights to work, to receive additional food, and most importantly to be released on parole. Political prisoners are required to write a statement explaining how they became communists and the activities they carried out to promote communism, why they now want to give up communism and what their future plans are. A committee of prison officials then decides whether to accept the statement as evidence of a true conversion. Released political prisoners have testified that during the 1970s and early 1980s many prisoners were tortured to force them to convert. At present the main pressure on the prisoners is psychological: they know they are unlikely to be released on parole if they do not

convert. For those sentenced to life imprisonment, the problem is very acute indeed. Two "unconverted" political prisoners have already been in prison for over 40 years, 12 for over 30 years and 35 for over 20 years.

I mentioned earlier that a large number of political prisoners claim that they were tortured during their interrogation. The South Korean Government stated in its report last year to the United Nations Human Rights Committee that 29 officials had been prosecuted in the years 1986 to 1990 for torturing prisoners. At the end of January 1992 a Seoul court awarded damages to Kim Keun-tae, a prominent dissident, for the torture he underwent at the hands of the "anti-communist" police in 1985. The judge apparently commented that officials had attempted to cover up the case and had destroyed evidence of Kim Keun-tae's torture. In 1987 in another case senior police officials were also found guilty of attempting to cover up the cause of the death of student Park Chong-chol who died from torture. Amnesty International believes that the authorities should investigate all claims of torture in spite of difficulties in gathering evidence and official attempts at covering up.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The South Korean Government ought to rectify these legacies of the past, but what of the human rights situation today?

Political life is certainly freer today than it was before, but with severe restrictions on the expression of certain political views and the conduct of certain activities. Here are a few examples :

On 10th January four men were arrested under the National Security Law for attempting to form the "Korea Labour Party" and field 30 candidates in the elections for the National Assembly scheduled for March. Support for the new party is thought to come from trade union leaders and student activists. Its platform is said to call for the dissolution of the chaebols, the large conglomerates that control vast sectors of the economy, and an end to the opening of Korean markets to agricultural imports. The party would have had a clearly leftist/socialist colour. The four men are reported to have been charged with trying to form an anti-state organisation aimed at establishing a communist government in South Korea.

Several artists were arrested last year and are currently serving prison terms of between 18 months and two years under the National Security Law. The charges against them are that they had in their possession books and documents on socialism and North Korea, promoted socialist realism in art, praised North Korea and incited opposition to the government. Hong Song-dam, another artist, is serving a sentence of three years' imprisonment for praising North Korea in his paintings and in articles. With other artists he had created a large mural entitled History of the People's Liberation Movement of which he sent photographic slides to North Korea to be displayed at a youth festival in 1989.

Since 1990 South Koreans have been able to apply to their government for permission to visit North Korea or to meet North Koreans abroad. Unauthorized contacts continue to be punished by imprisonment. There are now five people serving jail sentences of between five and ten years for illegally visiting North Korea, in most instances quite openly. They include a student, a businessman, a former member of the National Assembly and two clergymen. About ten other people are currently serving shorter sentences of up to two years for meeting or seeking to establish contact with North Koreans, without government authorization. Amnesty International believes that the mere fact of travelling to North Korea or contacting North Koreans without evidence either of espionage activities or of the use or advocacy of violence does not justify imprisonment and regard these prisoners as prisoners of conscience.

The people I have just mentioned were all arrested and tried under the National Security Law. The purpose of this law is to control "anti-state" activities which endanger national security but it has, and continues to be used, to punish with imprisonment the expression of socialist or pro-communist views and unauthorized contacts with North Korea. The National Security Law was amended in May 1991 but it has continued to be used in broadly similar cases. It is under the amended law that six social science research students spent up to six months in detention last year for possessing and publishing books and articles praising North Korea. In fact these were mostly academic publications and university theses and the arrests caused great concern in academic circles.

Clearly the National Security Law needs further revision if it is to fulfil the expectations raised by the clause inserted in last year's amendments that it was not to unreasonably restrict the basic rights of citizens.

Inside The current administration in South Korea has carried out limited legislative reforms. The Public Security Law of 1975 which allowed the Minister of Justice to hold prisoners convicted of national security offences in preventive detention after they had completed their sentences was abolished in May 1989 and all the prisoners held under the law were released. But restrictions remain on the freedom of released prisoners. A new law, the Social Surveillance Law, was promulgated the same year and allows the imprisonment of former prisoners who fail to abide by orders not to associate with some people or to report to the police about their political activities.

Foreign The Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations was amended in April 1989. The previous law of the same name banned "demonstrations likely to cause social unrest". The new law authorizes anti-government demonstrations so long as "public order and security are protected". In practice this has made little difference. The organizers of demonstrations must obtain prior police permission but trades unions and dissident leaders often organize street demonstrations without seeking police approval because they are never granted permission.

Internal Freedom of expression and association of workers is restricted in various ways, most importantly from Amnesty International's point of view, by the prohibition on third party intervention and by prohibition on all government workers to organize trade unions. "Third party intervention" refers to the involvement of people not directly connected with the employees or employers of the workplace. The Labour Union Law and the Labour Dispute Mediation Law effectively prevent non-recognized labour federations or labour advisers from intervening in trade union activities and industrial disputes. People have been arrested for activities such as distributing leaflets and other documents giving advice to trade union members about their rights and about the conduct of wage negotiation. In March 1990 the National Assembly voted to repeal the prohibition on third party intervention, but this was vetoed by the President.

The right of government workers to organize is restricted by Constitution itself. This has affected teachers from both public and private schools who in 1989 formed the National Council of Teachers. The authorities immediately declared it an illegal organisation and the union's leaders have since been repeatedly arrested.

The various laws I have mentioned need to be amended so that there is no possibility for people to be arrested under such provisions for activities which simply amount to the exercise of the rights of freedom of expression and association.

I named earlier several prisoners who claim that they were tortured after their arrest under previous governments. Fortunately, a few serious cases of torture where prisoners were subjected to electric shock and water torture were given wide publicity in South Korea itself in recent years forcing the government to do something about this problem. Amnesty International has not received recent reports of such methods being used on political prisoners, although some people arrested on criminal charges have alleged that they were subjected to water torture. But ill-treatment of political prisoners has not ceased; only the methods have changed. Now Amnesty International receives reports of beatings, sleep deprivation and psychological pressure being used. Park Deuk-joon is a 27-year-old university graduate and a worker in the pharmaceutical industry who was arrested in March 1991 under the National Security Law. He was interrogated by the Agency for National Security Planning and testified at his trial that his interrogators had stripped him naked and forced him to kneel on the floor when he refused to comply with their request that he confess to the charges against him. He was ordered to do press-ups and to repeat the words "bad conscience" while he was beaten on his heels with a piece of wood. He said they threatened to kill him and to give him electric torture. After he agreed to write a confession, he was not beaten again but he was deprived of sleep. He was forced to stand beside a wall and to do press-ups if he fell asleep. To Amnesty International's knowledge his claims of torture have not been investigated by the authorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the short time I have been given to speak to you today I hope I have been able to draw your attention to the continuing human rights violations in South Korea. Some are a legacy of the past government, some took place under the current government. I have explained that a number of prisoners have been released in recent years, that some relevant laws were partially amended, and that some past abuses have been investigated. But today there are still in South Korean prisons people arrested for the peaceful exercise of their rights of freedom of expression and association, prisoners who were denied a fair trial, prisoners who were tortured or ill-treated. The laws which restrict basic freedoms should be urgently amended, effective measures should be implemented to prevent torture and ill-treatment of detainees, and thorough and impartial investigations should be carried out into all claims of torture and ill-treatment. Lastly the trend in recent years which saw an increase in executions for ordinary criminal offences should be reversed (there were no executions between June 1987 and August 1989 but around 25 since then) and the death penalty should be abolished.

Thank you.

The Koreans in Europe

1. History of the Koreans in West Germany

- The Beginning -

Around 1920 the first Koreans came to Europe; their number, however, was negligible. Most of them were students.

In the early 1960's West Germany experienced a rapid economic growth leading to an acute labor shortage. So in 1962 the first Korean workers came to Germany. They were mostly women and worked in hospitals. Altogether, about 12,000 (male and female) nurses came to West Germany according to a treaty between the German Hospital Society and the Korean Overseas Development Corporation.

Three years later, since 1965, Korean mine workers came to Germany. Between 1965 and 1976 4500 Korean workers worked in German mines. The employment time of the Koreans was limited to 59 months, but often the employment contracts were not prolonged after the first three years and they had to return to their home country.

The number of Korean workers in Germany peaked in 1975 at 14,500, including 9000 women. After 1975/76 the number of Koreans in Germany decreased since Germany restricted further immigration of Koreans due to its own growing unemployment.

Currently there are about 30,000 Koreans living in Germany. 3000 are students living temporarily in Germany.

2. The development of the Korean Community in Germany

2.1 First political actions against the planned deportation of Koreans from Germany

In 1977, the West German government ordered a reduction of the number of foreign workers to curb domestic unemployment. It was stated »who has no work permit will get no residence permit«. Foreign workers from the Third World were primarily affected.

This included Korean nurses that came in their early twenties to Germany and had worked there more than 10 years. In the meantime, they had married and had established families. For them, a new start in Korea was a far too uncertain perspective. So they started to collect signatures against this directive. »Who has worked and lived 5 years here, should have a right to an indefinite residence and work permit. Who has worked and lived 8 years here, should have a permanent right to live here.« Various media reported about this actions. They succeeded in collecting 11,000 signatures within 15 months.

2.2 Founding of various organisation

The political situation in Korea and the global situation in the early 1970's had an impact on the Korean workers in Germany as well. The new dictatorial constitution in South Korea, the inhuman working conditions in South Korea, the Vietnam war, Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik etc were the most important events, to name just a few.

1974 the first Korean political organisation as established in Germany. The »Forum for Democracy in Korea« had the following aims: »removal of the dictatorship, re-establishment of a democratic order, establishment of an independent economy, guarantees for a minimum existence for every citizen and democratic and peaceful reunification of Korea«. Its members were students, workers, religious activists etc.

1975 the second organisation followed, the »Korean Workers Association«. It worked not only for the interests of the Korean workers in West Germany, but also for solidarity with their colleagues in South Korea.

The nurses that had come together to collect signatures against their deportation also formed an organisation. The »Korean women's Group in West Germany and West Berlin« was established in 1978 after a collection of donations for female workers of Flair Fashion, a South Korean textile factory, that were laid off.

The activity of these political organisations of Koreans in Germany focused on political education and organization of Korean workers by seminars and meetings on the one hand, and solidarity actions for the South Korean democracy and workers movements. The Korean Women's Group's action for the Flair Fashion workers in Korea initiated a wide public discussion about the participation of German companies in this multinational exploitation.

2.3 1980-1986

After the death of South Korea's longtime dictator Park Chung Hee many members of political organisations in Germany returned between 1980 and 1986 to Korea.

This led to a serious backlash for the »Forum for Democracy in Korea« and the »Korean Workers Association« both in terms of membership and activities. Only the »Korean Women's Group« continued its development and organised big cultural and political events. In this period of stagnation the founding of a regional Korean workers association in Berlin was a rather exotic event.

3. 1987 - turning point for »democratisation« in South Korea and establishment of an umbrella organisation in Germany

In 1987 the struggle for democracy in South Korea reached its peak. In June, the democratic forces in the country forced concessions from the regime and ultimately its resignation.

In South Korea, democratic trade unions mushroomed. Under this impression, the politically active Koreans in Germany tried to overcome the stagnation of their political activities and get new impulses from the new political situation at home.

Therefore the various organisations merged into one. The founding of the »Association for Democracy in Korea« (Minhyop) took place in November 1987. One year later it was registered as an association. The »Association for Democracy in Korea« strives for »democracy and reunification in Korea« but as well for the »interests of the Koreans living in Europe«, in cooperation with other Korean organisations abroad.

4. 1987 to today

Currently, South Korea's democracy is seriously threatened. Human rights violations increase in every walks of life. Arrests of political and trade union activists happen every day. The statistics prove the increase of political detainees: on average, 5 people are arrested every day for political reasons.

Therefore, international organisations and personalities that have been watching developments in South Korea for a long time are on alert nowadays.

We, the Koreans in Europe, prepare in this desperate situation a hearing as a contribution for the struggle for democracy in Korea. we hope the European Parliament will do what is appropriate.

Examples for humanrights violations regarding the LABOR MOVEMENT

1.
On April 30, 1991, the Ministry for the Economy threatened sanctions like interfering in international exchange transactions or withholding loans to companies that violate the government's decree on labor contracts (no work no payment, wage increases less than 10 percent). However, should companies be affected by strikes because they stick to the decree, the ministry announced these companies will get preferential supplies of raw materials.

The government has increased its repression against the labor movement since its electoral victory in the regional elections on June 21, 1991. Right after the elections there was a total of 180 strikes nationwide. Compared to the same time a year before, the strikes decreased by 27 percent. In 140 strikes an agreement was reached. 40 strikes were ended by the police arresting almost all striking workers (Hankyore Times July 16, 1991). The government launched a large-scale wave of arrests and searches against the labor movement.

Table 1:

Year	1988	1989	1990	till June 1991
Number of strikes	1875	1616	322	187
Number of arrested people	79	601	482	282
Arrested persons per strike	0.04	0.37	1.5	1.51

The figure of arrested persons per strike have increased since 1988 (when Roh came to power). The total is 1539; alone in June 1991 there were 143 arrests (per day 4.8 persons).

2.
The repeated repression against the labor moevemnt demonstrates an increased cooperation between government and companies. This impression is confirmed by the following incident: During a meeting of employers and city administration in Inchon on June 22, 1991, dealing with a coordinated approach to strikes in local factories, secret servicemen from both the Agency for National Security Planning and the Army Security Command were present (Hankyore Times July 16, 1991). Statistics about workers arrests also show clearly that the government defends the interests of the employers. The major part of workers were arrested because of »obstructing the business of the company« rather than because of violating the »Labor Dispute Mediation Act« (KNCC Human Rights Report, July 17, 1991).

The following tables show the increasing repression against the labor movement and the degree of support for the employers by the government:

Table 2:
for the year 1990

Number of companies covered: 31,951 (100.00 percent)

Number of companies that referred to the »Labor Laws« to solve labor conflicts: 27,530 (86.2 percent)

Violation of

* Labor Laws: 21,062 (87.0 percent)

* Obligation to cooperate: 2,861 (8.03 percent)

* Labor Dispute Mediation Act: 450 (1.8 percent)

Source: Workers Times April 19, 1991

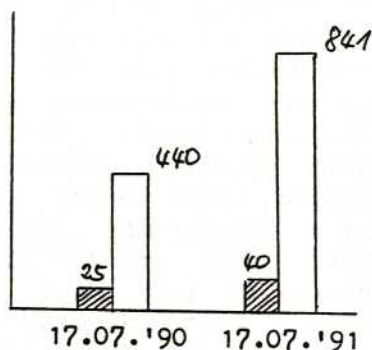
Table 3:

for the Incheon region:

arrests

imprisonments

Source: Hankyore Times July 18, 1991



The close cooperation between state and business is also underlined by the result of a questionnaire. 700 trade unionists were asked how they evaluate the labor policies of the government. 5.4 percent of those questioned said they believed the government's labor policies are impartial. On the other hand, 86.4 percent said, the government clearly supported the interests of the employers (Workers Times May 10, 1991).

3.

In the Fifth Republic the share of arrested trade unionists was not more than 10 percent of all political prisoners (i.e. about 100 persons). This share increased rapidly in the Sixth Republic; in the first half of 1991 the share of trade unionists in political prisoners was 24 percent (i.e. 397 persons).

The government's hard approach against the labor movement is focused particularly at

a) organisations like Chonnohyop (National Council of Trade Unions), a solidarity committee of trade unions in large companies - exactly those free and democratic unions that demand the basic labor rights like freedom of association, right to strike and autonomy of wage settlements between employer and unions, free activities of trade unions and participation of workers in political decisions.

b) The government further intends with this current wave of repression to weaken the minjung movement to secure its victory in the parliamentary elections in 1992 and the presidential elections in 1993.

4.

The situation of the workers in South Korea is seen increasingly critically abroad. In the annual report of of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and in the evaluation of U.S. Office for Private Investment in foreign Countries (OPIC) South Korea is named as »repressive country of workers« (Hankyore Times August 22, 1991). Should South Korea's government strive to join the ILO after its admission to the United Nations, the ILO would have to refuse its admission: in South Korea neither the freedom to form trade unions nor the free decision about the organisation of a trade union are guaranteed, as stated in §87 of the ILO charter.

What is to be done ?

We have seen some examples for typical violations of human rights. These examples, however, are just the tip of an iceberg. We try to draw consequences anyway. Guarantees of basic rights in South Korea have essentially been prevented by the NSL in the framework of the confrontation with North Korea. If the relationship to North Korea is continuing to improve, the government can no longer delay the abolition of this illegitimate law. After the liberation from the Japanese oppression we have suffered already three times from the typical »Korean« dictators. All three have something in common: the real power base is the military, spreading a permanent war paranoia under the pretense of the division, even contrary to global trends to co-existence and peace, with its ideology of the Cold War and blind anti-communism. The current system was maintained by permanent violation of basic human rights.

The dictators always had close contacts to the monopoly companies, who supported the governments with money and who represent a privileged class.

The division of the country is not only connected to domestic politics, but also to the political and economic interests of foreign powers (United States, Japan). Who is striving for human rights and peace can no longer ignore the human rights violations in South Korea.

The following demands are essential for the realisation of human rights:

- We demand an independent press.

The executive committee of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) had stated in June 1991 that the press in South Korea had given up its responsibility and is now merely serving as a servant for the government. It was reported that the press lacks independence and does not play a role as guardian of democracy. It rather has lost the confidence of the people by one-sided representation of the government's interests, being itself privileged. Asia Watch reports that the government itself is shaping the news by »Orders to Report« and is suppressing the freedom of the press by strict surveillance.

Parts of the press are working for »self-purification«; there are still court cases where the legality of journalist's unions is at stake. Government and media companies are creating obstacles by labor laws and dismissals.

- We demand guarantees for the freedom of association and free activity of trade unions.

Currently an independent and democratic trade union cannot be established due to the labor laws. The labor laws, for instance, prohibit two unions in one company or interference of »third parties« in a labor dispute. President Roh in 1988 vetoed a law extending the rights and freedoms of trade unions. South Korea is considered by the OPIC as one of »10 internationally recognized countries repressing workers«. South Korea entered the ILO with a reservation against paragraphs 87 and 98 that state the freedom of founding trade unions.

reservation against paragraphs 87 and 98 that state the freedom of founding trade unions.

- With the admission of Korea into the United Nations we demand:

- * Recognition of North Korea
- * Abolition of the National Security Law defining North Korea as enemy of the state and organization hostile to the state.
- * Dissolution of the National Security Planning intelligence agency (NSP; former KCIA) and of the Military Disciplinary Service who use torture and violence against democrats.
- * Ending of government surveillance of its own people and violation of privacy; destruction of the »black lists«
- * Guarantees for the freedom of opinion and freedom to travel, according to the United Nations statutes.
- * Freedom for all prisoners of conscience and long-term prisoners
- * Freedom for all North Korea visitors, particularly Rev. Moon Ik-Hwan, student representative Im Su-Kyung, Rev. Moon Kyu-Hyun, former MP Seo Kyung-Won and entrepreneur Yoo Won-Mo.
- * Ending the ideology of Cold War and anticommunism.

PS: A former secretary of ex-dictator Chun Doo-Hwan published that the June Manifesto (Declaration for Democratisation) in 1987 that helped Roh to win the presidential elections in reality stems from Chun and therefore was electoral manipulation. Roh himself partly even opposed it. The Sixth Republic that was seen as particularly progressive and democratic started as farce.

-end-



De Europæiske Fællesskaber
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EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT
Ευρωπαϊκές Κοινότητες
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ

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Comunidades Europeas
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Communautés Européennes
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN

Comunità Europee
PARLAMENTO EUROPEO
Europese Gemeenschappen
EUROPEES PARLEMENT
Comunidades Europeas
PARLAMENTO EUROPEU

Jan. 19, 1992

Invitation to a

HEARING ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH)

Ladies and gentlemen,

the European Community is an important trade partner of South Korea. However, in South Korea human rights are still regularly violated by the government of President Roh Tae Woo. But human rights also play an increasingly important role in the foreign economic relations of the EC and its member nations. Contrary to the image the South Korean government tries to create, the human rights situation has not improved under the current president. On the contrary, the number of political prisoners has increased to about 1300, according to the Korean Bar Association and the Korean Association of Relatives of Political Prisoners. The main instrument for this repression is the notorious »National Security Law« that defines almost any opposition activity as »benefiting the enemy«. The »enemy« is North Korea. South Koreans are still jailed under the NSL for any unauthorized contacts with North Korea, though the Korean people, both in the north and south, share a common desire for national reunification.

The governments of North and South Korea have recently held various talks on the level of the prime ministers, and both have joined the United Nations in September 1991. North Korea has now accepted international inspection of its nuclear installations, the U.S. has declared it withdrew its nuclear weapons from the South. North and South Korea have signed a treaty declaring the Korean peninsula a Nuclear-Free Zone, and a treaty on reconciliation and mutual cooperation.

It is high time to end the Cold War within the Korean societies as well. North Korea's people live in almost total isolation from the outside world - not only because of their own government, but also because South Korea's National Security Law bans all contacts of South Koreans with the North. South Korea's people are still denied basic human rights that the European Community constantly has demanded from Eastern European governments. In December 1991, while the treaty with North Korea was signed, in South Korea several people were arrested because of »activities promoting socialism« and because of »unauthorized« contacts with North Korea.

The abolition of the South Korea's National Security Law is essential not only for establishing democracy in South Korea, but also a condition to lead North Korea out of its total isolation.

This hearing will focus on this anti-democratic law in South Korea, its impact on South Korean society and why the European Communities have a responsibility to link its trade policies with the human rights situation in South Korea.

To underline this, we have the pleasure to invite you to a hearing on the human rights situation in South Korea on February 13, 1992 in the Palais de l'Europe at Strasbourg. The hearing scheduled for 3:00 pm, but it is advisable to arrive at 2 pm due to the security checks at the entrance. It is sponsored by the Green Group in the European Parliament and members of the Socialist Group, with the support of the Association for Democracy in Korea (Minhyop) Berlin, the Korea Coordination Conference (KoKoKo) Germany, the Korea Ecumenical Education Programme (KEEP) of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland on behalf of the European Korea Network of Churches (EUKONET), the Korean Women's Group in Germany and the Support Group for Political Prisoners in Korea (Cologne).

To facilitate your entry into the Palais de l'Europe, please register your participation with the Korea Verband, Schöneberger Ufer 53, 1000 Berlin 30, Germany, fax (49)-30-262-8970. Please indicate as well if you need accomodation. We would be glad if you could register until February 7.

Yours sincerely
Wilfried Telkämper MEP
Gordon Adam MEP

The May 18th Kwangju Uprising
and
Mangwol Cemetery

		//

Kwangju: Mecca of Democracy



*The torch of democracy is still burning:
people surrounding the fountain in front
of the Provincial Capital Building.*

Citizen's Solidarity of KWANG-JU



Kindergarten Children at Mangwol-dong Cemetery: The lofty ideal of the Kwangju Uprising is inherited to the younger generation

1. Mecca of Democracy

In May of 1980, the torch of democracy was glaring in the peaceful city of Kwangju, located in the southwestern part of the Korean peninsula. For ten days, from May 18th to the 27th, the citizens of Kwangju protected the torch of democracy at the cost of their lives. Although the suffering of the city Kwangju still continues, her solemn struggle for the democracy has moved the hearts of people across the world who have truly loved peace and freedom. Kwangju has been praised as one of the meccas of democracy, along with the Paris Commune and Auschwitz. It attracts a large number of visitors from many parts of the world in remembrance of the sacrificed lives. People will remember Kwangju forever as a torch for freedom, peace, and equality which are universal virtues of mankind.

2. Reservoir of Democracy

The military dictatorship that lasted for 19 years came to an end with the assassination of Park Chong-hee by one of his subordinates who headed the KCIA. Under the long military dictatorship, Korean society suffered from growing structural contradictions such as the increasing economic disparity between the wealthy elite and the general populous and the corruption of those in power. The demands for the democratic change sprang up around the country. Laborers in Pusan and Masan staged violent demonstrations on October 16th, 1979 ultimately triggering conflicts within the ruling dictatorship which in turn caused the assassination of Park Chong-hee. The ultimate result of his death was the collapse of the ruling military dictatorship.

3. Righteous City of Art

In the early 1980s when people embraced the 'Spring of Democracy,' Kwangju citizens appealed for political freedom and the remodeling of the undemocratic social system. They protested in peaceful rallies and demonstrations like citizens of other cities. However, because of regional discrimination in the national government's policy-making, the economical development of Kwangju had been neglected to a greater degree than that of other areas. The city was still known not only as the "Home of Art" for its love of literature, arts, and music but also as the "righteous city" for its brave defensive uprisings in time of danger caused by external invasions. The citizens of Kwangju, who cherished the patriotic tradition such as Gabo Peasants' Revolution(1894), the Independence Movement of the March 1st(1919), and the Kwangju Students' Independence Movement (1929), stood up against the coup by the new military powers, headed by Gen. Chun Doo-hwan, in the May of 1980.

4. Lofty Victory

From May 14th to the 16th, students held a large meeting in front of the Provincial Capital Building to discuss the present political situation. As a group they decided to



take a "wait and see" approach to the new dictatorship's actions. The students agreed to meet there again if anything dramatic or unusual happened. On May 18th, the government proclaimed that martial law would be nationally enforced and ordered the temporary closing of all the schools. Three or four hundred students gathered in front of the school insisting to enter the University, but the paratroopers blockaded the students and other people in front of the Main Gate to the Chonnam National University on the morning of May 18th, 1980. Despite the peaceful demonstration demanding the rescinding of the unnecessary martial law, the paratroopers cruelly suppressed the gathering by beating them with clubs and bayonets. These actions angered the citizens of Kwangju and escalated the peaceful demonstration into an increasingly violent situation. On May 21th, the army turn it guns on he citizens killing a lot of innocent young demonstrators. Angry citizens organized themselves into a Citizens' Army, arming

themselves with guns and swords and risking their lives. At last, the Citizens' Army succeeded in expelling the army from Kwangju and achieved a short heart-filled victory. On the dawn of May 27th, the Citizen's army took control of Kwangju. During the next six days, Kwangju was an ideal democratic republic; with peace, order and warm-heartedness. The citizens cleared the streets and elected new representatives who discussed and solved important matters with consensus. Kwangju was a democratic city where the spirit of communal living was realized.

5. Last Struggle

Refusing to surrender, Kwangju citizens struggled against the military power of the new ruling dictatorship to the end. The national army marched towards the Chonnam Provincial Capital Building armed with tanks on the dawn of May 27th. The Citizen's Army, comprised of some 500 citizens, fought bravely against them to protect their headquarters. An unknown number of citizens were killed in this last struggle and they are now buried in Mangwol Cemetery. The democratic ideals that this citizens army represented throughout the struggle were never defeated even though the overwhelmingly cruel national military force was ultimately victorious.

6. The City of Anti-Americanism

After the Uprising in May of 1980, Kwangju became the center of the anti-American movement on the Korean peninsula. This came about because of the widespread believe that the suppressive army and new dictatorship was possible only under the consent of the United States, for it was in charge of the strategic command of the Korean army. President Reagan also became the target of criticism from the Korean people for his allowing of Gen. Chun Doo-hwan to lead the military coup and then to violently suppress the May Uprising by force.

Ruthless Paratroopers



The Mangwol Cemetery: *Mecca of Democracy*

1. Tombs of 130 Victims

Mangwol Cemetery, which commemorates the sacrifices of the May Kwangju Minjung Uprising, has the tombs of some 130 victims of the uprising. On May 29th, paratroopers brought 126 corpses in garbage trucks to a corner of the Kwangju Municipal Cemetery. The dead were falsely accused as "mobsters". Aside from the tombs of the citizen soldiers in the cemetery, there are the tombs of pregnant women, middle school students, high school students, and nameless tombs for those who had gone "missing" during and after the uprising. The possibilities of secret burials and cremation have also been continually questioned but this silent cemetery only knows the cruelty of the suppressive army.

2. Military Regime's Attempt to the Graveyard That Failed

since May of 1980, Mangwol Cemetery has been the target of continuous pressure from the military regime that took power at the expense of citizens of Kwangju.



An Innocent boy with a picture of his deceased father

The victims' families could not even hold memorial services at the cemetery and many visitors were taken away by the police every time they tried to assemble. New organizations were also established (by the authorities) to deter the association of the families of the victims and the injured.

In addition, the government planned to move the graveyard of the victims to another location in order to attenuate the spirit of the May Uprising. In 1983, the victims' families were forced to, or coerced by money, to move the tombs. As a result, 26 tombs were relocated elsewhere. Despite all these attempts to close the cemetery, most of the families of the victims remained united and succeeded in protecting the graveyard in Mangwol Cemetery. It now attracts lots of visitors from all over the world.

3. Mecca of Democratization Movements

In Mangwol Cemetery, there are also 31 additional bodies of those who sacrificed themselves or were victimized in the democratization movements during the latter half of the 1980s. Many young men and women were sacrificed in the movement to clarify the truth of the Kwangju massacre, and others also perished in continuing anti-American or labor movements. Their families preferred to have them buried there in memory of their struggle and personal sacrifices. The burial of these victims, of the on going democratization movement proves that Mangwol Cemetery is an everlasting shrine of democracy that breathes dynamically with the history.

4. May, It is Not Finished Yet!

The political achievement of the Korean Minjung, or people, through the uprising in June of 1987 shed a warm light over the Mangwol Cemetery. The National Assembly opened a series of public hearings to clarify the truth of the Kwangju massacre. The sanctification of Mangwol Cemetery is under way, following the establishment of the civilian government in 1992. Several civilian organizations have also initiated a movement to pile stones around the graveyard in Mangwol Cemetery to honor the buried and to forever enshrine the spirit of the May Uprising.

However, only a part of the commemorative project has been achieved. The truth of the uprising and the punishment of persons in charge of the massacre, which are the core parts of the project, show no progress even under the civilian, or non-military, government.

Mangwol Cemetery covered with snow

