

*Maybe on World Service Wire*  
APR 112

## KOREAN COMMENT

BY BEVERLY DEEPE

SEOUL, MAY 20 (AP)--KOREANS WITH WHOM I TALKED SATURDAY SEEMED TO GREET THE MILITARY COUP D'ETAT WITH GENUINE RELIEF. BUT THEY ALSO REFLECTED AN INCREASING SENSE OF INSECURITY MIXED WITH INFLATED HOPES FOR THE FUTURE.

SOME PERSONS STANDING ALONG THE TRAFFIC-FRENZIED STREETS WERE EAGER TO DISCUSS THE LATEST HAPPENINGS. THEY JUSTIFIED THE MILITARY SEIZURE IN A NEGATIVE WAY--BY VOICING MULTIPLE CHARGES OF CORRUPTION, WEAKNESS AND INEFFICIENCY AGAINST OUSTED PREMIER JOHN M. CHANG.

NONE I TALKED WITH CRITICIZED HIM FOR BEING TOO SOFT ON COMMUNISM.

"THE PEOPLE DON'T GIVE A TOOT FOR THE MILITARY," SAID ONE STUDENT. "WE JUST FIGURE IT CAN'T BE ANY WORSE THAN IT WAS WITH CHANG AS PREMIER."

A SECOND SAID: "JOHN CHANG WAS SO WEAK. HE WAS JUST AN EXTENSION OF THE (SYNGMAN) RHEE ADMINISTRATION. IF THE MILITARY HADN'T GOTTEN RID OF HIM. THE STUDENTS WOULD HAVE DEMONSTRATED AGAIN."

STUDENT LED DEMONSTRATIONS BROUGHT THE DOWNFALL OF THE RHEE REQUIRE IN APRIL, 1960.

SOME PERSONS WERE FEARFUL OF EXPRESSING THEMSELVES FREELY.

"IT'S BETTER FOR ME IF I KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT," SAID ONE YOUNG STUDENT IN A DIMLY LIGHTED TEA ROOM.

AND AS A YOUNG OFFICER WORKER USHERED ME TO A COFFEE SHOP, HE SAID, "YOU NEVER KNOW WHO'S BEHIND YOU. YOU HAVE TO GET OFF THE STREET. MARTIAL LAW IS IN FORCE NOW, YOU KNOW."

THE HIGH HOPES THE PEOPLE HOLD FOR THE FUTURE SEEM TO DUPLICATE THEIR UNATTAINABLE EXPECTATIONS AFTER THE APRIL, 1960, REVOLUTION, WHEN AS ONE MISSIONARY EXPRESSED IT, "IN SEVERAL WEEKS THEY EXPECTED KOREA TO TURN INTO HEAVEN."



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SEOUL--FIRST ADD KOREAN COMMENT X X X INTO HEAVEN."

MOST PEOPLE SEEMED TO ASSUME THAT THE NEW MILITARY REGIME WOULD SHORTLY HOLD FREE ELECTIONS RETURNING THE GOVERNMENT TO CIVIL CONTROL. ONE MAN THOUGHT THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD IN A MONTH, A SECOND SAID IN JULY, A THIRD SAID IN SEPTEMBER.

BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THEY EXPECT A SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED WAY OF LIFE. THOUGH THEY ARE OFTEN VAGUE ABOUT THIS, THEY SEEMED TO BELIEVE THAT CURBING CORRUPTION IN THE GOVERNMENT INSURES THE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT OF THE PEOPLE AND GREATER EFFICIENCY OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN AID DOLLAR IN KOREA.

CHARGES OF CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT ARE UNDISPUTED BY EITHER KOREANS OR AMERICANS WORKING HERE. BUT THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE POOR AGRICULTURAL COUNTRY SEEM A FORMIDABLE TASK EVEN FOR AN EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT.

"OUR COMPANY NEVER BENEFITED FROM THE (JOHN M.) CHANG GOVERNMENT," SAID AN OFFICE WORKER IN AN IMPORT-EXPORT FIRM.

"IT TOOK TWO DAYS TO GET A PERMIT FROM THE GOVERNMENT. APPROVAL BY THE SECTION CHIEF, THE BUREAU CHIEF AND THE VICE MINISTER WAS NECESSARY AND THERE WAS ALWAYS BRIBERY ALONG THE WAY."

HE WAS CONFIDENT THE MILITARY RULE WOULD MAKE THE WORK OF HIS COMPANY SIMPLER AND LESS EXPENSIVE. BUT SOME PEOPLE EXPRESSED DOUBTS ALONG THESE LINES:

"THE MILITARY IS TRYING TO STOP CORRUPTION AND INJUSTICE--BUT THEY ARE AS CORRUPT AS THE GOVERNMENT. WHO'S WRONG?

"THE MILITARY MEN RISKED THEIR LIVES FOR THEMSELVES--NOT THE COUNTRY. THESE YOUNG COLONELS FIGURE THEY'LL GET A STAR. BUT THEY HAVE NO PRINCIPLES."

CONCERN AND UNEASINESS SEEMS TO BE MOUNTING.

"THIS IS THE BEGINNING--NOT THE END," SAID ONE YOUNG MAN. "THERE WILL BE BLOOD PURGES. THE MILITARY ISN'T UNIFIED."

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APR 11A

SEOUL--SECOND ADD KOREAN COMMENT X X X ISN'T UNIFIED.

A SECOND SAID: "THIS WON'T SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS. ONE REVOLUTION BREEDS ANOTHER. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN KOREA HISTORY WE'VE HAD A KOREAN MILITARY JUNTA RULE US."

A THIRD SAID "KOREA NEEDS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT TO SEE IF GENERAL CHANG GIVES IT TO US. IT DEPENDS ON WHAT KIND OF MAN HE IS."

MILITARY RESTRICTIONS PROVED INCONVENIENT AND FRUSTRATING TO THE DAILY LIVES OF THE KOREANS, THOUGH SOME SAID THAT "SMALL TROUBLES SHOULD BE SACRIFICED FOR GREATER THINGS."

"I FEEL LIKE I'M IN A CAGE IN A ZOO," SAID ONE YOUNG WOMAN "I WANT TO DO SOMETHING AND THEY SAY NO, NO."

THE 10 P.M. CURFEW HAS BEEN THE MOST RESTRICTIVE MEASURE ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN PUT ON A GREEN ALERT, CONFINING THEM TO THEIR QUARTERS.

BUSINESS HAS BEEN AFFECTED. SHIPMENTS OF IMPORT-EXPORT TRADE WERE DETAINED BECAUSE OF BLOCKADES AGAINST DOMESTIC SHIPPING LINES. TOURIST BUSINESS FOR BOTH FOREIGNERS AND KOREANS HAS BEEN HIT.

THE PRICE OF RICE SKYROCKETED THE DAY AFTER THE REVOLUTION FROM 19,500 HWAN TO 22,000 FOR A STRAW BAG OF 137 POUNDS. THE OFFICIAL RATE OF EXCHANGE IS 1,300 HWAN TO ONE U.S. DOLLAR.

A 55-YEAR-OLD RICE DEALER SAID THE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS THE DAY AFTER THE REVOLUTION WAS ALMOST THREE TIMES MORE THAN ORDINARY DAYS BECAUSE PEOPLE WERE AFRAID OF A RICE SHORTAGE.

THE RICE PRICE NOW HAS BEGUN LEVELLING OFF. THE MILITARY ANNOUNCED SEVERE PENALTIES FOR PERSONS RAISING PRICES DURING THE NATIONAL CRISIS AND IT HAS RELEASED TO THE MARKET GOVERNMENT-HELD RICE.

THE MILITARY-CENSORED PRESS REPORTED THAT SATURDAY'S RICE PRICE OF 19,500 HWAN WAS THE SAME AS THAT OF MAY 15. HOWEVER, THE ACTUAL PRICE IN THE MARKET PLACES WAS 20,500--A DIFFERENCE OF 1,000 HWAN.

THE ACTUAL PRICE OF OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES--SALT, SUGAR, BARLEY, SOYBEANS AND WHEAT FLOUR--WAS UP MODERATELY OVER THE PRICES PUBLISHED IN THE MAY 15TH ISSUES OF KOREAN NEWSPAPERS.



ASKED ABOUT FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, MOST PEOPLE SEEMED TO ASSUME CONTINUED AMERICAN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT.

"I DON'T EXPECT AMERICAN AID TO STOP," SAID ONE OFFICE WORKER. "IF IT DOES, IT MEANS AMERICA HAS GIVEN UP A FREEDOM-LOVING NATION."

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