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b. Elections in South KOREA

(1) Results - The first general election in the history of South KOREA for representatives of the Interim Legislative Assembly resulted in a landslide for the extreme Right Wing groups. From the forty-five seats up for election, the HANKOOK Democratic Party captured fifteen, the National Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence took fourteen. Twelve representatives were listed as without political affiliation. The Korean Independence Party gained only two seats, and the Leftist People's Committee of CHEJU-DO took the provincial quota of two representatives. The results of the election were published in the SEOUL newspapers on 3 November 46.

(2) Reaction to the Elected Representatives - The left and the moderate Rightists received the result of the elections with a mixed feeling of regret, bitter disappointment, and charges of political skulduggery. A good number of the representatives were accused of being former pro-Japanese collaborators who were elected in violation of Ordinance No. 113. There seems to be some ground for the charge with respect to a certain number of the newly-elected representatives. In the city of SEOUL, the notorious pro-Japanese CHANG, Duk Soo of the HANKOOK Democratic Party manipulated his way to a seat in the Assembly. His name-too-innocent party member and chairman, KIM, Sung Soo, emerged victorious also.

There were demands in political circles that the elections be declared null and void. On 1 November 46, the Coalition Committee, alarmed over the trend of the elections, warned that if some pro-Japanese Koreans are elected for membership in the Interim Legislative Assembly, they would be ousted by the assembly itself. Having a great deal at stake, the HANKOOK Democratic Party countered the growing tide of resentment by stating that the election of the legislative members does not call for any criticism because it was "the will of the people" which was reflected in the election.

(3) Causes for Election Trend - The Left took exception to the short notice given for the elections, claiming their organizations in the provinces were unprepared for campaigning, that their leaders were under detention by, or hiding from, the police in connection with the recent disorders. They claimed also that the provinces were too disturbed to allow for orderly elections and asked for postponement. Because of the pressing need to convene an assembly of some kind, because the spadework for the elections had already been done sometime previously by Military Government, and because the first Assembly is required by the ordinance immediately to enact a law to replace itself by early general elections according to more formal and representative procedures, the request was not granted.

It should be remembered that the administrative officials of Military Government, because of the antagonism to MG by the Left from the very beginning, are predominantly Rightists. Thus

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the administrative preparations for the elections have been largely in their hands. Because of the Rightists' tendency toward partisanship on the one hand and the disorganization and studied absence of interest in the elections by most of the local Leftists, on the other hand, it was a foregone conclusion that an overwhelming majority of Rightists members would be elected.

Under the best of conditions, it is believed that the Leftists could not have materially affected the outcome of the election. In the final analysis, such a result, as did occur, would be acceptable to the majority of Koreans, except for one factor; the caliber of the elected representatives, a portion of them being tainted with the stigma of Japanese collaboration, leaves much to be desired and has aroused the resentment of the average Korea. The results of the election would indicate that the storm raised by Koreans over Article VII (Qualification of Members) when the Ordinance first appeared was perhaps justified (See W/S #58, par 6b). Apparently Article VII did not have enough teeth in it to keep out certain undesirable elements. Consequently, the hot issue of pro-Japanese collaboration has been thrown into the lap of the American Command which now is faced with a crucial decision.

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