

in trying to extend and strengthen the constituting vision of CALC through *American Report*. To be sure, the effort failed, but it most emphatically had to do with setting "editorial policy." Mr. Bland would do well to hie himself to Swarthmore College in order to check out those files before carrying his revisionist history any further.

As editor during its final phase Mr. Hoyt can speak with authority about *American Report*, and his letter is, I believe, a fair representation of the posture that, in part, contributed to the paper's demise. To my knowledge no one wanted AR to report on denominational comings and goings. But the richness and diversity of religious thought, life, and social action in America warranted more than an irregular column "on the religious scene" in the back of the paper. "In the religious purview survival is not the ultimate value." Right on, as they used to say at AR. But we were talking about accuracy, fairness, and editorial judgment, which are about as ultimate as you can get in terms of the values of journalism, including religious journalism. Not every failure is a consequence of radical commitment.

Finally, I agree wholeheartedly with Richard Fernandez, long-time director of CALC. What went wrong with AR is symptomatic of larger scale distortions which afflicted the "religious and social change" scene in the last decade and are still too much with us. The aim of my original remarks was not to assign blame but to suggest some lessons to be drawn from our common experience. There is more than enough blame to go around. One wishes the self-critical spirit evident in Mr. Fernandez's letter was as generously distributed.

Our "Friend" in Korea

To the Editors: Some thoughts about Donald Kirk's "America's 'Friend' in Korea" (*Worldview*, February).

America has, since World War II, spent millions propping up corrupt despots all over the world. We have also tried, with less success, however, to export the U.S. model of

democracy. Of late this latter policy seems to have caused some soul-searching. Perhaps a model that works, however haltingly, for those who have undergone a prolonged industrial revolution is just not suited for emerging nations, whose peoples are fired with the desire to leap several hundreds of years of growing pains.

I submit that we must also ask ourselves whether we are not just as inappropriately attempting to judge our allies by our cultural norms. Yes, we can condemn Park Chung Hee. But we are condemning him for being a Korean's Kbrean.

In a society where people are under severe pressures just to survive, where competition is always fierce and unfair, and the spoils go to the clever and the strong, many traditional patterns of behavior are the product of socioeconomic factors which do not exist, or at least not in the same intensities, in our Western culture. Face is all-important. Flattery, graft, and calculated gift-giving are ways of life. Government is a natural evil and exists for the benefit of the governors. Bribery and power are all-important, and only one's family can be trusted. *Caveat emptor* is the rule in business. Honesty is a luxury that cannot be afforded, and majority rule still seems ridiculous to most Koreans.

In Korea one is guilty until proven innocent, and an "unperson" may be kicked, beaten, or tortured. The Korean lives for the day when he too can be "King of the Mountain," but to be "King" one must survive. And one does what one must to survive, including collaborating with the Japanese or North Koreans, as the situation may dictate.

In retrospect, I am not taking issue with anything that Mr. Kirk has said, but am, rather, wondering aloud why such policies should come as a surprise to so many supposedly educated Americans. Syngman Rhee was no George Washington or Thomas Jefferson when Harry Truman sent the U.S. 24th Infantry Division dashing to his rescue in June of 1950. Perhaps it's time we were completely honest, even if we only look in the mirror just this once.

The U.S. went into Korea in 1950 because Harry Truman was convinced that it was in America's best interests to do so. And we support Park Chung Hee today, not because of what he is or isn't, but because someone in our government has decided that it is in the interest of the United States to continue to do so.

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To the Editors: The shallowness of this man Park frightens me. This was the chill I had after reading Donald Kirk's article "America's 'Friend' in Korea." Kirk correctly observed Park Chung Hee's character in terms of "the agility with which he has switched allegiances and alliances as the moment dictates." Indeed, Park is a man without ideology, whose respect for terror is to reaffirm "his own supremacy over his people." The cruel techniques of torture and his cunning play of factions for preserving his position clearly indicate how shallow and insecure the man is. It is really frightening that such a man of ideological peregrination and cruelty should lead a nation of 33 million people.

Kirk cites his informant as saying that tortures, mass arrests, and other repressive measures Park practices are based on his thesis that "the only thing that Koreans seem to respect is force or terror—that is his philosophy." This is a correct assessment of Park's "philosophy," and such a nonsensical "thesis" exposes how shallow the man's knowledge of Korean people and Korean history is. It is true that Koreans have suffered throughout their long history of repressive rules and social conflicts, especially during the period of Japanese colonial rule, the Post-Liberation Military Occupation, and the Korean War. However, it is a totally erroneous notion that human suffering breeds respect for terror and force. The country has been traditionally called "*Cho-son*," which means "the land of morning calm." This symbolizes the peace-loving nature of