

London is destroying the 'Asian Tigers'

by Kathy Wolfe

London's currently ongoing game, of looting and ruining the "Asian Tigers," reached South Korea this past Christmas. As a result, since Jan. 14-15, when 700,000 trade unionists took to the streets for the third time since Christmas, South Korea has been gripped by an ominous political mass-strike wave echoing the situation inside a growing number of European states, including, most recently, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria.

In the case of South Korea, the trigger for the explosion of political strikes was the government's enactment of a new, anti-labor law, which President Kim Young-sam forced through the Seoul Parliament, during a rump, pre-dawn session on Dec. 26. In Seoul, the law is attributed to demands made upon President Kim by the combined forces of the London-dominated International Monetary Fund (IMF), and economists of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris.

The connection between the passage of the new Korean labor law, and the pattern of political repression against labor in Southeast Asia, was indicated by the ruling New Korea Party's chairman, Lee Hong-koo. Lee said openly, on Dec. 28, that Korea's labor law needed to be overhauled "to meet the demands of globalization and the 'Information Society.'" Similarly, Kim's Prime Minister Lee Soo-sung, in a televised speech of Dec. 30, said the law was needed to drag down Korean wages to global wage levels prevalent in poorer nations, to "keep Korean export prices competitive. . . . We chose the law to prevent our offspring from falling behind developing countries," where wages are half those in South Korea, he said.

In an interview on Jan. 15, James Gordon, a British economist at IMF headquarters in Washington, praised Korea's new labor law, and said of Korea's lifetime employment system, that "its usefulness has ended." The new labor law is good, he said, because "the unions don't gain anything until after the year 2000! Whereas the gains for employers, of being able

to lay people off, will apply immediately." Foreign bankers say it is "absolutely important" that Korea stop its lifetime secure employment, Gordon noted. He said that the OECD especially wanted freedom to fire workers in Korea. "The OECD wanted both greater democracy, and regarding the jobs-for-life policy, it may have served them well—but it's usefulness has ended. . . . They have to move on, to more flexible work practices."

The key to the escalating political mass-strike character of the present situation, is a second law, rammed through the same session, which strengthens the hated Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), power center of Rev. Sun-myung Moon and other South Korean friends of Sir George Bush. Opposition parties say it is meant to be used to crush President Kim's opponents in Korea's December 1997 Presidential election.

Korea's new law allows mass layoffs for the first time since South Korea was founded in 1953; calls for "flexible" work hours, meaning workers must accept less than a week's work; outlaws collective bargaining; and gives employers the right to replace striking workers with scabs.

IMF, bankers diktat

The new labor law was demanded by the foreign "globalist" economists of the IMF and OECD, Seoul sources told *EIR*, as a condition for Korea being granted membership in the "rich nations" OECD club in early December. Japan and now Korea are the only Asian members of the racist OECD, which is headquartered in Paris, but whose economic bureaucracy was organized by British Club of Rome founder Sir Alexander King.

"Free trade globalization demands by the IMF and the OECD are behind the new labor law," one angry Korean patriot said. "Opposition congressmen in Seoul warned that Korea could not meet the demands of the rich nations without

too much economic suffering. We need protection for our industries and our agriculture. But foreign bankers want lower wages in Korea, so measures such as this new labor law have been IMF and OECD conditions.”

As a result, since the laws were announced, over 700,000 South Korea trade unionists have been in staged protests, on the icy streets of Seoul, South Korea’s capital. On Jan. 4, the strikes were declared illegal, a new outrage. Arrest warrants were issued on Jan. 10 for all union leaders, who were camped at Seoul’s Myongdong Cathedral, protected from police by a guard of 2,000 workers. On Jan. 8, Kwon Young-kil, president of the 500,000-member Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, told the press that there would be a mass strike, starting Jan. 15, unless the repressive anti-labor laws are repealed.

On Jan. 14, Kwon Young-kil joined with Park In-sang, head of the even larger Federation of Korean Trade Unions, and the heads of Korea’s main union groups with 2 million members, in a statement that vowed that, unless President Kim repeals the law, they will bring Kim down with “the biggest strikes in history.”

Kwon has accused President Kim of “trying to crush the whole democratic labor movement.” The strikes “go beyond a demand for higher wages,” said Yi Chong-kak, a union veteran. “It’s a political fight to prevent annihilation of the labor movement.”

“North Korea is agitating workers to topple the government,” South Korean state prosecutor Choi Byung-kook said Jan. 15, trying to blame Communism for his own government’s policy, and ordered the arrest of Kwon and other union officials. Riot police on Jan. 16 forced their way through the crowd of workers and students at Myongdong Cathedral, but failed in efforts to drag union leaders off to jail.

Those who see the IMF demands in their proper context, see this law as sending Korea to join the ranks of the already doomed “Asian Tigers” of Southeast Asia, who have adopted similar anti-labor policies, which, unless reversed, will lead to the early doom of their economic and political security. Notably, in Korea, as in the states of Southeast Asia’s so-called “Tigers,” as in Central Africa, former U.S. President Sir George Bush has put himself at the forefront of the IMF drive to loot and destroy nation-states and the living standards of their people.

Nasty echoes inside Washington

Thus, South Korea’s President Kim’s capitulation to the new law, as demanded by British-led financier circles, has become a source of political embarrassment to U.S. President Bill Clinton, and a liability to vital, global U.S. security interests. Clinton has been pressing, against British counter-measures, for peace agreements in the Middle East, Ireland, Korea, and other hot spots. Yet, President Kim has stalled North-South Korean talks with his constant invective against Pyongyang. Notably, in a Jan. 7 New Year’s national TV address, Kim coupled confrontation and ultimata to the South

Korean unions, with provocative, gratuitous insults to the North.

Sir George Bush’s year 2000 election-plans for his son, Texas Governor George W. Bush, come into play. President Clinton is now faced with a new political threat to U.S. Korea policy from among Bush’s cronies inside the U.S. Congress’s Republican majorities. These Republican congressmen continue to operate as de facto allies of imperial London, with their persistent efforts to destroy stable relations with China, and their efforts to thwart U.S. efforts to secure peace in such areas of strategically ominous conflicts such as the Middle East and the Pacific and Indian Ocean rim of Asia.

As President Kim calls up the bogeyman of “Communism” from its grave, in the course of his political attacks and physical threats against trade-unions, he is appealing to the Reverend Moon-linked hard core of the Bush league on Capitol Hill; Kim’s utterances have the effect of daring these knee-jerk Bush-leaguers to accuse President Clinton of “abandoning our ally South Korea.” Republicans’ threats to cut U.S. funding for Clinton’s nuclear peace agreement with the North, would be repeated, threatening to collapse the agreement, which might lead to military conflicts, and would certainly ruin the efforts toward reconciliation of the two parts of divided Korea.

“Thatcherism,” not “Communism,” however, is the issue of these strikes.

U.S. AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney has led a worldwide trade union attack on President Kim’s new labor law. “On Dec. 26, the ruling New Korea Party, using completely undemocratic methods reminiscent of Korea’s former military governments,” Sweeney said in a Dec. 27 statement, “adopted a new labor law which turns back the clock on democratic reform and fundamentally undermines workers’ rights.” The AFL-CIO held a spirited rally against the new Korean labor law on Jan. 10 at the South Korean Embassy in Washington.

With strong AFL support, leaders of the International Confederation of Trade Unions flew to Seoul on Jan. 11 and visited South Korea’s strike headquarters at Seoul’s Myongdong Cathedral. Marcello Malantacchi, secretary general of the International Metalworkers’ Federation, attacked the law as “an offensive by the Korean government on human and trade union rights.” Guy Rider, who heads the Geneva office of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, attacked the bill as an assault on fundamental rights. “What we’re doing here is adding to worldwide reaction against the offensive by the Korean government on human and trade union rights,” Rider said. “It is very rare that an attack on unions brings the type of international reaction that we have seen here.”

The AFL’s Sweeney has vowed to send American trade union leaders to Seoul as well, “if the situation deteriorates.” Criticism by the U.S. AFL-CIO chief and European unionists of the Korean law has even forced OECD officials to back down. Paris-based OECD chief Donald Johnston said on Jan.

10 that he was “worried about the turmoil”; he had reminded Seoul’s envoy in Paris that the OECD is, after all, “committed to human rights.” An OECD statement said that Johnston, at his first meeting with the new South Korean envoy, had expressed the concern and dismay of other members. The OECD would review the law on Jan. 22. OECD members have previously protested against the imprisonment in South Korea of union leaders.

The OECD has now been forced to admit, that the free-trade demands it placed upon Korea, have resulted in such outrages against trade unionism that U.S. and European unions can’t tolerate it. “The Korean government undertook to reform its legislation in line with internationally accepted standards, including such basic rights as freedom of association and collective bargaining,” the OECD statement added.

‘No more Japans’

As London has always hated Alexander Hamilton, Henry Carey, Friedrich List, and Germany’s high-technology tool-making sector, so it has hated the so-called “economic miracles” of Japan and South Korea. However, as long as the nuclear balance of power between Moscow and the Atlantic powers persisted, the industrial potential of Japan and Korea, like that of post-World-War-II Germany, was tolerated, for strategic reasons.

From the time, in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, when Benjamin Franklin, personally, organized the first industrial development in England, there has never been any significant investment in scientific and technological economic progress inside the United Kingdom, except during those periods the British Empire was either fighting a major war, or preparing for one. Similarly, since British financier interests seized a dominant position, above government, inside the U.S.A., with the assassination of President William McKinley, the only periods during which the U.S. economy has not been in a deep recession, or depression, were those times the British Empire required large-scale military and related logistical support from its “American cousins.”

So, the 1989-91 dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union, brought to an end London’s, and George Bush’s wont to continuing tolerating the preservation of either nation-states, or viable national economies, within any part of the planet.

Just as Bertrand Russell wrote in his 1923 *The Prospects of Industrial Civilization*: “. . . the white population of the world will soon cease to increase. The Asiatic races will be longer, and the negroes still longer, before their birth rate falls sufficiently to make their numbers stable without help of war and pestilence. . . . Until that happens . . . the less prolific races will have to defend themselves against the more prolific by methods which are disgusting even if they are necessary.” Self-avowed British foreign-service agent Henry A. Kissinger, said much the same thing, as U.S. secretary of state, in his 1974 National Security Study Memorandum 200.

The “Cold War” is past. It is time for Kissinger and his London masters to become truly disgusting. Time to reduce the populations of the world’s “non-Anglo-Saxons.”

At the 1953 division of Korea, most industry was in the North, and the South was a peasant backwater turned into a rubble field by war. In the few years from 1960 to 1975, South Korean planners created a full industrial economy, publicly basing themselves on the writings of Germany’s Friedrich List. List, who worked with Lincoln’s economists in America, pioneered the use of government credit and protective tariffs to create new industries. With help from Japanese producers, Korea built steel, petrochemical, auto, ship-building, machinery, and construction sectors.

At first wages were low, but following the “harmony of interests” model of List’s U.S. ally, Henry C. Carey, there was lifetime job security. Gradually, wages rose, as employers moved to pay workers enough to buy the cars they were building. Since 1987, when South Korean workers first won the right to strike, Seoul’s unions have grown powerful enough to secure pay increases averaging 15% per year.

Since the “Plaza Accords” of the 1980s, the fellow-travelers of the Mont Pelerin Society-trained musical-hall nanny, Margaret Thatcher, have demanded that Japan and Korea give up the ideas of List. In the name of “competing with global wages,” the IMF now demands Korean workers experience the slave wages and total lack of job security of Mexico’s *maquiladoras* and the prostitution, disease, and the now-emerging financial and economic collapse spreading among the Southeast Asia “Tigers.”

To understand the willingness of powerful, London-coordinated forces, to force South Korea’s President Kim to risk political and economic suicide of the Korea peninsula, consider the exemplary role of the Sir George Bush whose principal current sponsors are the notorious, vastly rich cult of Korea’s notorious Reverend Moon, and the British Commonwealth’s Barrick Gold. In South Korea, as in Africa, and in Southeast Asia, Bush and his sponsors have no desire to perpetuate the continued existence of nation-states or national economies. As in Bush’s use of his political clout to bludgeon Indonesia into delivering an otherwise unearned rich colonialist concession to Bush’s Barrick Gold, in the genocide-stricken Great Lakes region of Central Africa, and in Asia generally, ex-President Sir George Bush and his sleazy get-rich cronies have been feverishly occupied in raw materials grabs of petroleum and strategic minerals, on a vast scale, in all continents.

Sir George, like his London buddies, is committed to seizing that power over international food supplies and strategic natural resources, which will ensure their pirate-like power over this planet during the early years ahead, when the present financial system, and most presently existing nation-states, have been wiped from the political map by the presently ongoing disintegration of the world’s financial and monetary systems.