

## ONE OR TWO PARTY SYSTEMS IN ASIA

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### The Roles of Organizations and Political Parties

I. Democracy cannot be conceived without an organization. Similar to other political regimes democracy proposes certain ideas which have political, social and economic goals. The organization carries out the collective will and provides a measure of social cohesion and stability. It assigns roles, responsibilities, status, power and provides security to its members. Societies live and develop according to their internal organization, and collapse often either because of the oppression of the organization or its inability to adopt itself to changing conditions.

The political party appears as one of the modern and most potent means of political and social organization. In the emerging new social order of Asia, political parties, besides responsibilities in the Parliament and government, have assumed a series of other duties towards the masses, including the achievement of transition to a new, modern social and political order.

Political parties in the developing countries of Asia are vehicles for economic development and the chief instruments capable of giving the final form to the political regime of their respective society. They are the means for building first a coherent, integrated political system which is the prerequisite condition to any modernization. The Asian nations have become party systems which is an indication of their political modernization. The political parties can mobilize the human and material resources necessary for an overall development. The methods

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and the philosophy with which this mobilization is achieved, and its ultimate goal, are in fact the very characteristics of the political regime itself. The fate of democracy in Asia, therefore, will be determined by the party system which may emerge as its permanent political feature at the end.

Each organization, and especially political parties, create in turn within their own ranks a power structure which invariably turns into what Robert Michels called the iron law of oligarchy. Michels' classical book on political parties based on his experience in the German Social Democratic Party has become one of the key works from which most of contemporary thought on political parties is derived. The international authorities on political parties, such as Maurice Duverger, Mc Kenzie, S. Lipset, give credit to Michels for his insight into the nature of these key organizations of modern society. Thus, the political party appears at the first sight as the means for and the expression of democracy, while containing also the potential power to destroy democracy. The case of Michels who went into the service of Mussolini when he became convinced that parties degenerated into instruments of power and tyranny is a telling example. He thought that the salvation was in a charismatic leader.

II. Historically speaking political parties were born in the West at the end of a lengthy historical and social evolution. In the new nations of Asia they appeared at the beginning of the movement of independence and modernization. Certainly, some sort of informal political groupings existed in all social bodies even in the old times. But the organization and recognition of new roles for parties within a modern political framework is the product of contemporary ideas and conditions. The American two party system came out in the early 19th century as response to the Jacksonian and Jeffersonian approaches to liberty and republicanism. The question was whether the growing American democracy would adopt a populist or elitist approach. In the end it was the alternate rule of parties, representing both approaches rather than the continuous policy of the single one which prevailed.

The British party system has its origin in the informal groupings of the Whigs and Tories, whereas the French party

system can trace its origin to the first Assembly which followed the Revolution of 1789. Similar historical origins can be found practically for all the party systems of Europe.

The age of industrialization, the new concepts of social and economic organization eventually reshaped the party systems of Europe both, in matters of representation and ideology. The outcome was the broadening of the social bases of political parties and the incorporation of new social, economic and cultural goals into their programs. It was the liberal thought, represented in variety of political parties, which successfully brought the Western political system into the age. It is no exaggeration to claim that the main political struggle in Europe in the 19th and early as 20th centuries took place between conservative and liberal groups organized in form of political parties. The Western experiment in political organization provides essential clues which may explain and facilitate the understanding of the emerging party systems in the developing countries of Asia.

III. The first major condition which provided the political foundation for the emergence of a viable party system in the West was the establishment of a nation and of national statehood. Nationalism, that is to say the idea of belongingness to a new cultural political group called nation, provided the means of internal cohesion and integration. Nationalism helped overcome the traditional loyalties to a region or to small ethnic or religious groups, not necessarily by destroying such loyalties but merely by incorporating them into broader and newer political and social forms, and by fostering a new sense of allegiance to them. The older loyalties survived often by finding a secondary representation in the party system and the government structure. Statehood, that is to say the exercise of authority over a given territory on behalf of a given people living on that land, and through an administrative apparatus dedicated to this purpose was the political means which consolidated the internal cohesion. Thus, the party structures of Europe evolved within a modern political framework which was instrumental in containing and channelling their activities. The political struggle in countries without commonly accepted principles and goals, and without a containing

political structure, namely the national state, tend to become destructive and divisive indeed. The idea that the era of national state is over does not seem to be supported by facts.

The other important aspect of Western party system lies in its representational nature, socially and politically. The political parties of most European countries - except for those with extreme ideological orientation - if looked upon as a whole represent a conglomeration of occupational, social, ethnic, regional, religious interests and groups. But these parties, once in power conform to the requirements of nationhood, and place priority not on their group origin or interest but rather on national goals. Yet, the political parties in the West, if studied on a comparative basis, offer striking differences. The English and the American two-party systems, although belonging to two countries with similar cultural background (language and law) are as different from each other as they are from the German, Italian and French systems. Nevertheless, these Western political parties possess common characteristics. Besides their representational nature (social and political) they are the competitive means for control and change of government. The emphasis here should be placed on **competition and control**.

IV. The situation of parties in developing Asia, is quite different. The differences are historical, ideological, structural and functional. Some of the major political parties of Asia, especially those in power, were born directly from the movement of national independence and in many cases were instrumental in achieving it. Originally the Indian National Congress (1885), the Muslim League (Pakistan), and the Ceylon National Congress began organizing as small, narrowly based interest groups which represented the small intelligentsia of their respective countries. The early conflicts in these three countries, ruled as colonies by the British, began chiefly because of the limited civil service posts open to the native-intelligentsia. Eventually these movements began to acquire nationalist features and to orient themselves towards the masses when both, terrorism and constitutionalism failed to achieve the desired ends. The organizations established branches in districts, provinces, and towns and began to agitate for civil diso-



bedience, Satyagrah, which was denounced and abandoned after independence. These became now broadly based nationalist movements which in addition to the demands for independence began to nurture also the hopes for the material betterment of the dissatisfied groups. A sense of nationality rooted in a vague territorial understanding of nationhood began to emerge above group allegiance.

The pattern of colonial administration, as well as the national cultural background of the ruling colonial powers had considerable impact in determining the territory and the type of nationalism in the new nations. The Japanese occupation of South East Asia in 1941-45 added a special anti-Western flavor to this nationalism. However, all these outside forces did not prevent indigenous historical, religious, ethnic and communal influences to bear their impact upon the eventual shape and feature of the emerging national state. But independence carried with it also implicit promises for material welfare. Eventually after achieving independence social and economic considerations became the overriding purpose of political action.

In South East Asia the political parties began organize largely but not exclusively under the impact of nationalist currents. Some started often as religious associations, such as the **Serekat Islam** in Indonesia and the Young Men's Buddhist Association in Burma. The Nationalist Party (P.N.I.) of Indonesia came out of the **Serekat Islam** and adopted a nationalist platform, whereas the **Mascumi** (Moslem) Party which absorbed the **Nahadat ul ulema** (Moslem Teachers) in 1945 represented the religious viewpoint. The Communists and the Socialists (the latter was the Party of the Westernized intellectuals) were the other parties of Indonesia. The Communists appeared after independence as the best organized and richest party of Indonesia. They captured 39 seats out of 226 seats in Parliament in 1955 elections (P.N.I. 51 seats). Burma as an exception won independence without a major opposition nationalist party although its Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, dominated by Marxists, played some part in it. The League was a conglomeration of religious, professional and political groupings, including the All Burma Fire Brigade. It

eventually split into two rival factions but without affecting the extraordinarily strong position of local leaders.

In South Vietnam former President Ngo Dinh Diem forced various organizations into his own Movement for National Revolution which remained a rather ineffective group, and least of all a democratic one. In the Philippines the personality-dominated political parties had limited contribution in achieving independence from the United States. In Ceylon independence was won with relatively no struggle.

Thus, one may say that the party systems of Asia can be classified from historical viewpoint into two categories. First as parties which led the movement of independence and were instrumental in achieving it, and second as parties which had limited roles in it. The parties in the first category can claim to have created among the populace a sense of national identity, direction and purpose, as well as a degree of personal identification with the national territory. The parties whose contribution to national independence was limited seem to command lesser voluntarily accepted authority. They also seem to inspire less confidence and find fewer followers since their relations with the masses are tenuous. The sense of identity and symbolism is absent for the party and the masses have little in common.

The same criterium applies to the Middle East. Turkey achieved independence on her own by fighting for the liberation of the national soil through genuine national organizations. She then could establish a political party which assembled together the leading groups in the country and represented the national goals of sovereignty, democracy and modernism. The People's Republican Party, established on the foundations laid by the Defense of Rights Associations (1918-1922) commanded certain popular loyalty which facilitated its task in creating a new nation. The Arab world on the other with the exception of Algeria and Tunisia's Neo Dustur achieved independence not through the organized efforts of political groups but largely due to the forces of international circumstances and the pressure of some small groups in the country. The officers' movement in Egypt which ousted King Faruk in 1952, and brought eventually Nasser to power was

backed by the Muslim Brethren. These were eventually disbanded but not totally destroyed. Deprived of a supporting organization, Nasser has vainly sought to establish first a National Union and finally a Socialist Union in order to perpetuate the new regime. If Nasser fails to transfer his power to a political organization which would stand as the symbol of the revolution and as the means to carry further on its goals, personal rule in Egypt may continue for long.

The parties which contributed to the attainment of national independence usually had mass organizations which reached even the villages. These became channels of communications through which new concepts of social and political organization, and new ideas about the world in general penetrated the lower layers of Asian society. But it was also through such mass parties that the real or potential danger of one party dictatorship arose. There is no derogatory intention in dividing the Asian political parties into two categories according to their contribution to national independence. The purpose is to describe the conditions in which independence was achieved and which determined partly the dominant type of party systems in Asia. But the attainment of national independence and of national statehood, now achieved by all countries of Asia, was the first step towards democracy and not democracy itself as it is often implied.

V. The next major problem connected with the political systems of Asia concerns the social and economic foundations of democracy. The problem is whether a sound, truly representative democratic system can be established without a sustaining modern social foundation. In other words the fundamental question arises whether a society without a large number of well organized occupational and interest groups can indeed adopt the multi-party or two-party systems of the West? The question tends to lead to a rather negative answer if one considers both the pluralist foundations and the variety of forces and interest which balance and support the democratic political systems in the West. The Western political parties today represent to a large extent the diversified occupational and professional groups and interests of their respective societies. Some of the Western parties are the exclusive product of indus-

trialization, a social and political response to its pressing needs for new ideas and an adequate social order. For the time being Asia as a whole does not possess, yet, a balancedly developed, organized and sufficiently large middle class, labor or professional groups. Few of the customary prerequisites of democracy seem to exist. These conditions seem to have given special strength to the argument that rapid development and the establishment of a modern government apparatus in Asia, in other words the very foundations of democracy, call for the establishment of a strong regime. But such anti-democratic arguments stem from an ideological bias which narrows the political system and the policy for economic development to a single choice. Moreover, such an argument calls for the total elimination of groups and interests which do not fit into the totalitarian pattern of modernization.

The total reliance on social structure as the only determining factor of democracy reflects a limited, narrow and deterministic philosophy which analyzes political history only in terms of classes and groups. Political system and political parties must be regarded also as the product of philosophies, of values and beliefs rooted not only in the experiences and traditions of the past but in the hopes for the future. The eternal struggle of mankind, and of the individual in general in Asia or in Europe, has been a continuous search for means to contain and control authority and use it for man's own good. The traditional religious and communal system of Asia developed a series of restraining forces which mellowed considerably the power of the ruling groups. The Western philosopher, accustomed to judge human freedom and the controls forced upon governments from an individualistic viewpoint, fails to understand that the Asian society also tried to secure the same ends by placing priority on the community and by trying to secure the individual's political safety within the framework of a communal system. The great abuses of authority and the annihilation of individual largely since the 18th century came about after the traditional organization of Asian society broke down and undermined along the existing systems of authority controls.

There is no reason to advocate the revival of the traditional systems of control in Asia. The forces which undermined



these systems are powerful as to make impossible the return to the past. It is necessary, however, to point out that a spiritual sense of value, loyalties, and allegiances which are not derived from economic relations survives in the Asian society. And it is this spiritual essences which gives to democracy its inner power. The communal values of Asia can provide some of the spiritual ingredients necessary for the 20th century democracy. It is indeed regrettable that often the Asian intellectual, subjected for so long to the abusive belittling of his way of life in the past, turns into the bitterest prosecutor of his own society. Yet, the victory of democracy in Asia calls for the establishment of a balance, of a harmonious relationship between native values and those of the West, to complement each other. The true understanding of the West, of its political and social life is possible only when the people of Asia acquire the proper understanding and respect for their own cultures. This is the only way, indeed the only way possible to absorb the individualistic values of democracy itself.

### **The One-Party Systems**

The preceding remarks provide some information on the background of political parties in Asia. The present thinking on political parties can be understood better if the arguments in favor of one party and of the two or multi-party systems were briefly reviewed. One must state from the beginning that many of the recent studies on political parties in the new nations of Asia have tended to emphasize their modernizing roles and less their contribution to democracy. We shall start first by analyzing the arguments put forth in favor of one party system.

I. The apologists for the one party regime advance a series of strong arguments based on the practical advantages of this system. As a technique, efficient organization, determined leadership and as an ideology, the one party system offers several attractive advantages. It can mobilize and organize rapidly the available resources and initiate rapid development. It can undertake forced savings, it can freeze the living standards, divert to and utilize capital in critical areas without the risk of opposition or inquiry. The one party government dedicated

to development can train the personnel in needed areas and use efficiently their administrative and social talents without fear of infringing upon old traditions or the interest of various groups.

Furthermore, in the view of its supporters, the one party may achieve some spectacular advances in short time in some fields, notably in industry, which could be favorably compared with the accomplishments of the most advanced nations.

II. As an ideology the one party system can foster a sense of unity, belongingness, national self-pride and dedication, often by capitalizing on accumulated social or political resentments. In fact the existence of one party depends on an exclusive, all embracing and self righteous philosophy which offers also a sense of security to the traditionalist societies crumbling before the assault of the forces of change. Intellectuals in developing countries of Asia seem to have developed keen interest in ideologies supporting one party systems. Rightists and leftists appear in agreement over efficiency of one party systems. The first regard it as a necessary means to maintain law and security and to safeguard the existing social order against the forces of changes. The second look upon one party ideology as the means to eliminate the old order and install a new one suitable to contemporary needs. The response to the ideology of socialism and communism appears thus not as a scientific critique of capitalism but rather as a utopian solution to modern problems. Capitalism is condemned primarily because of its social and political consequences, namely for its supposed inability to achieve social justice, and for its reliance on privileged power and interest groups. Socialism and communism are visualized in utopian manner as the magic panacea for all problems besetting the contemporary Asian Society.

The Asian intellectuals' interest in ideologies, most of which originated in Europe at the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, is rather perplexing at this period when the Western and the Eastern blocs seem to have abandoned their rigid ideological stands. Capitalism or private enterprise

is evolving towards the welfare state and planned economy. Many of the socialist parties in Europe on the other hand have moved away from nationalization and authoritarian planning towards the welfare state and democratic planning in which proper place is given to some sort of private enterprise. Thus, ideological discussions in Asia appear ultimately as arguments necessary to justify the power ambitions of the new elites rather than well thought scientific methods capable of meeting economic and social needs. The discussions on development revolve chiefly around power politics and far less around concrete problems connected with production and individual welfare.

III. The one party structures have been often justified as the response to the need for a strong, *efficient executive* capable of undertaking swift modernizing actions. The strong executive in turn was described as an essential condition for establishing an effective modern state apparatus. The former Premier of south Vietnam, Diem declared that "a weak and powerless executive will bring about discontent and indignation ... a strong and efficient executive organization capable of solving the complex and urgent problems is a guarantee for democratic regimes".

It is true that an efficient executive accounts for much of Western progress. The American Constitution which makes the President, the most powerful man in the world, and lately the French system which gave extensive powers to the Chief Executive tend to lend support to the idea of modernization based on a powerful executive. Moreover, the British Executive (the Cabinet) certainly has far more power than most governments in Asia. However, the Western Executives operate within established traditions of democracy, and a system of legislative and judiciary checks. These contain the executive and regulate its functions within a pre-determined framework. Such a channeling system has not been developed in Asia yet.

The need for strong efficient executive in Asian countries, which serves as argument for one party rule, poses one of the greatest challenges for democracy. Yet, one cannot afford to condemn the emergence of strong executives without searching for its causes. The truth is that most of the Asian soci-

eties have not developed the local, voluntary type of organizations which could assume some of the functions performed or expected to be performed by governments. Modernization has created a series of complex problems in every field of activity. The surviving traditional organizations due to their narrow and religious-communal orientation remain alien to these problems. The modern civic, professional and business groups fail to assume social and civic responsibilities similar to their counterparts in the West. Their functions are limited strictly to defending their interests, often without due regard for public and national goals. Thus, short of voluntary initiative and action at social level the government is compelled to take over most of the public functions and exercises them on behalf of welfare, progress and modernism. Once the government through its supporting party organization assumes such functions it is quite easy to regiment or absorb the professional organizations and interest groups into its own structure. Even the democratic minded Congress party of India is becoming a conglomeration of groups, including professional interests, which in exchange for economic or political advantages have found it expedient to sacrifice or at least to compromise their independence. In the long run this process may have perhaps the advantage of forcing upon a variety of professional and interest groups national goals and, unwittingly perhaps, compel them to become identified with the idea of belongingness to one common nation.

The incorporation of civic and professional groups into a single political party may speed up the process of national integration, and achieve a sense of national identity by submerging in it religious, communal and tribe loyalties. But this very process of integration, desirable as it may be, provides the major argument for the one party rule and for the rejection of classical democracy.

**IV.** The above situation is intimately connected with the role of local government and voluntary organizations in maintaining a democratic order. Certainly one of the bases of democracy and chief condition for its efficiency is the existence of local government and voluntary organization. The latter arises often as the citizens' spontaneous reaction to new conditions.



The one party system does not permit local rule, and hence deprives society of one of the most efficient means of self-administration. It is true that often local government in Asia is in the hands of powerful, traditionalist landlord groups, religious leaders and the like. These often use the local organization as instruments for defending their interests against the power of the central government. Yet, it is an accepted truth that totalitarian system in the West in the past, and in Asia today, were consolidated only after local rule was destroyed or rendered powerless. Sultan Mahmud II (1807-1839) who annihilated the power of local lords, eventually brought about his absolute rule and that of his bureaucracy.

Consequently the process of modernization in the Ottoman Empire after the 1850es and in the early days of the Republic appeared chiefly in the form of a struggle for power among the older ruling groups and the newly rising ones. Eventually this power struggle caused the economic and social problems to be pushed into the background and delayed the true progress and emancipation of the masses. The vicious circle of struggle among ruling power groups was broken in 1945-6, when Turkey finally embarked on a process of true democratization and together with it achieved economic and social progress.

Naturally one cannot ignore the dangers involved in strong local rule which perpetuates the absolute rule of landlords, chieftains and communal heads. This in turn amounts to the denial of democracy and provides expedient justification for the establishment of extreme leftist regimes.

V. The lack of consensus on political matters, the diffuse, communal basis of associations and vast differences in living standards in Asia provide for dedicated leaders a unique field to recruit followers. Rapid economic development and its implicit promise of higher material comforts appear as the sole reward for supporting the one party. Thus, the one party structures, regardless of the fact whether they are **mass or cadre** organizations appear to have abandoned their democratic functions of representing the citizen and of enabling him to control and change the government. They have lost therefore their competitive role which is the distinguishing character of political democracy.

The one party government appearing either as a marxist mass organization or as the veiled dictatorship of the old traditionalist ruling circles, has prevailed in most of Asia. These regimes are described as "guided democracies" or "socialisms" and are justified as expedient measures, rendered necessary by the need to achieve the transition from traditionalism to modernism. Even intellectuals in the remaining countries with democratic regimes, clamor vociferously for strict political rule to achieve rapid progress which is often measured according to the Western level of consumption. The individual with his basic rights and freedoms is all but forgotten, since development under the one party system is conceived in the exclusive limits of economic, materialist orthodoxy.

There is, however, one essential point concerning the mass one party systems. They do succeed in imparting a degree of political education, a sense of organization and system to the masses which produce democratic effects only when some liberalization occurs. But the question is whether one can still discuss the merits of democracy if the basic principles of democracy are sacrificed in order to meet the immediate challenge of modernization. Moreover, the argument that one must distinguish between the democratic minded and the totalitarian minded one party systems does not have much substance. The democratic system, as mentioned earlier, stands on the freedom of choice of competitive issues, and these cannot be represented in a one party system, unless the very meaning of democracy is totally changed.

### **Democracy and the Multi-Party Systems**

I. The case for two or multi-party systems can be argued first from the viewpoint of the weaknesses inherent in the one party rule which is utterly incompatible with long range human goals and historical evolution. The two and the multi-party systems are the recent products of social and economic evolution. They emerged as the modern means to control authority and to better man's fate, after mankind lived for thousands of years under the yoke of tyrants and despots who represented the one party rule of their times. (The question whether a two-party or multi-party system is preferable is irrelevant as far as basic democ-

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racy is concerned. Both can provide means for competitive choice of government. Both allow for an opposition and control of government. But from the viewpoint of the Asian countries it may be argued that a sound two-party system is preferable. It offers the theoretical advantage of being suitable to the representation of two views: the modernist and the conservative, both of which can best express the prevailing currents of thought in their society and advance solutions to its problems.)

It is necessary to view democracy and its party system as the products of modernization; the necessary results arising from a higher level of integrated economic development and political sophistication. The emergence of a party democracy in the West changed in turn the nature of government and authority. These ceased to be regarded in terms of symbols and loyalties and began to be looked upon as working organizations connected with the structure, practice, attitude and interests of human societies. Economic and social development has broadened the scope of democracy but without altering its philosophical and human foundations. These are basic problems inherent in any human society. Economic development, regardless of the methods used to achieve it, does not supersede but eventually renders more acute the need to establish limits to government authority in order to safeguard the individual's freedom and dignity.

The single party systems in economically more advanced countries have proved increasingly incapable of dealing with the political and social consequences of development which bring the individual in direct conflict with the ruling groups. Such problems have been easily solved in the advanced democratic systems.

II. The growth in non-economic sectors under the one party systems is generally slow. Various social organizations weaken and disintegrate, and undermine in turn man's creative ability which can develop only in an atmosphere of freedom and security. The forces which induce man to create and produce are based on a mutual interplay of material and moral incentives, individual and collective symbols which can operate only in a dualist political system. The one party system by its very nature can offer only a limited number of incentives. Short of

other inducements it is compelled to use force to maintain the slowing pace of economic development, and muffle the rising demands for freedom of expression and thought.

The one party system, whatever its ideology and goals, relies ultimately on a small group of bureaucrats. These become sooner or later an interest group whose high living standard and power stands in sharp contrast with the political impotence of the masses. The large group of technicians and professionals in turn find themselves dominated by a political elite headed often by a charismatic leader not too different from the ancient oligarchs. The economic development itself, after an initial, accelerated rate of industrial growth, bogs down in bureaucratic red tape and waste which cannot be concealed even by the most refined propaganda. The political regimes of single or quasi-single party structures in Asia are already facing these difficulties which ultimately may point towards democracy and multi-party systems as better alternatives for integrated economic and political development.

III. The democratic party systems of Asia suffer presently of a number of shortcomings which call for quick remedy. A variety of interest and communal groups with traditional bases tend to organize themselves in form of political groupings in order to perpetuate their social and economic status often by rejecting planning, system and organization. (The political parties in the pre-war Middle East had hardly any connection with the structure, interests or aspirations of their respective societies.) Some of the interest groups in Asia originating in the trade or agrarian policies imposed by the dominating Western powers in the past, are regarded as the vestiges of a discredited past. Businessmen and especially landlords are condemned by the new groups of intellectuals as motivated by self-interest, and as alien to national goals, although very often some of these groups, especially businessmen, were associated with the liberation movements. The bureaucrats in the planning offices become so disdainful of these groups as to ignore totally their possible contribution to development. The fact that higher rates of taxation necessary for capital accumulation are opposed in legislatures is used as a pretext to picture the political parties as devoid of public responsibility. Today the cases of India and



Turkey are the most relevant examples to illustrate the frustrating struggle of interest groups against those which champion the cause of economic development and total modernization.

The question remains whether the local groups, e.g., civic, and professional organizations can be rendered sufficiently articulate and educated as to become the channels of communication between the citizen at large and the government at the top, and assume actively modern roles. Short of such modern functions, the government party alone will soon appear as the sole representative, the symbol of modernism and progress. It can then rightly accuse the religious, interest or communal groups as being obstacles to rapid development and liquidate them. The question, therefore, is to view the existing traditional groups in an objective fashion, accept the fact that they are the representatives of legitimate ideas or views, and finally incorporate them into the new state structure by giving them some modern functions. In the West innumerable associations of the past co-existed with those generated by the forces of modern age largely because the old institutions were brought into the age by compelling them to perform modern functions. In conclusion it can be said that the fate of democracy in Asia depends on a social and political education capable of converting the existing traditional organizations and local governments into vehicles of progress.

It is necessary to point out that the formal abolition of all traditional groups and institutions does not necessarily change the society's attitudes and ways of thinking overnight and transfer it into a modern one. Societies preserve much of their ancient philosophy and attitudes even though the institutions and groups representing them might have been destroyed. One can see even the most extreme socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union and China, an entire series of attitudes and ideas inherited from their ancient societies sanctified and preserved through some ideological reinterpretation. The political institutions which represented the previous regimes were liquidated but the majority of the human beings who carried out day to day work in them survived to do the same in the new institutions. The continuity of culture and society eventually bears its impact on the new poli-

tical structures. To know and admit this is not evidence of reaction but wisdom and foresight.

IV. Much of the confusion concerning politics and democracy in Asia results from erroneous concepts concerning planning, democracy and political parties. Economic development is considered as dependent solely on state planning which in turn is considered a matter of erudition and mathematical skill rather than common sense and growth from below. Consequently problems of economic development and planning are kept away from the public.

Political parties are visualized in the light of traditional concepts of social organization as involving an exclusive choice between different ways of life. The party ideology is often portrayed as a *Weltanschauung*, a world view which covers the entire range of human goals and relations, the meaning of reality and human experience. Thus membership in a political party may be regarded as a total philosophical and ideological commitment to a way of life, rather than a limited political accomodation for some worldly pursuits. Consequently basic roles of political parties are ignored as connecting ties between individuals, groups and the government, and as channels of communication between the official and non - official holders of power. Formal government structures may achieve organized control over the means of power. But far greater power, diffused in a variety of groups and interests, rests in the social body. Consequently, the question is not to annihilate all these groups as a potential threat to central authority and opposition to economic progress - an impossible task anyway - but to organize and represent them within the framework of political organizations.

Economic development in Asia, if carried out within the framework of a dualist political order, may create social and economic diversification and a variety of new interest groups. In this way some of the existing interest groups surviving from the traditionalist agricultural past can be balanced and challenged by farmers, workers and professional groups. A large labor group can be a great asset to democracy if democracy provides him the means to defend his interest as a worker both, against the state and the private employer. A working

class accustomed to secure easily its demands as a favor from the state, partly as patronage and partly as bribe, will soon lose its personality and even its incentive to produce.

The role of a modern political party is to provide equal opportunities and representation for all groups, and permit them to articulate their opinions and demands without the obligation to conform to an exclusive ideology. The modern political party is an aggregate of groups and interests which balance each other - and although these groups are often non-democratic in their respective internal organization, they arrive at democratic results by exercising control over the government.

V. It is generally accepted that the Asian political system will have certain ideological features of its own. The proper regulation of diverse new and traditional forces under a democratic party system should be possible. Democracy certainly is not a rigid system but a set of relativist, utilitarian concepts which expand and adapt themselves to changing conditions, always preserving their basic individualistic, libertarian nature. A political system with at least two political parties provides competitive choice between issues, goals, as well as ways and methods to achieve them. In such a system the political party would reflect accurately the structure of its society, problems and aspirations. The economic and social progress of Europe was greatly enhanced when the nature of political parties and their potential contribution to development was realistically appraised.

The Asian society has started its drive towards modernization by taking only partial account of the Western economic and political experience. When the results fell short of expectations, the architects of modernization in Asia reached the conclusion that neither the political nor the economic system of the West offered solutions for rapid modernization. Few seemed to bother with the fact that politics and economics in the West are the common concern of the worker, farmer, planner, merchant, professor etc., and that all share in its making and rewards. A better realistic understanding of political parties and of their development potentialities will certainly strengthen the chances of democracy in Asia. One must know in depth the nature and function of political parties. There is no question of imita-



ting the Western party system but of understanding its history and functions. Such an understanding could greatly facilitate the task of democracy in Asia and bring about a realistic understanding of the party roles.

The establishment of a democratic party system in Asia is intimately related to the original philosophy and the basic assumptions on which the political regime stands. Those countries, not committed to a single party system or to marxist ideology, and possessing a degree of political stability and security have preserved their democratic orientation, especially when development was not presented as an exclusive choice between economic welfare and political democracy. Moreover, the total reliance on bureaucracy and the intelligentsia for development seem to weaken the chances of a representative system. Finally the countries with large sectors of the economy owned by the government found it more difficult to adapt themselves to the economic requirements of democracy or to a multi-party system. The resistance came largely from administering managerial groups, lest their inefficiency become public.

There are in Asia a few regimes with democratic orientation, which have begun to reshape their party structure according to the requirements of age. Thus, farmers, merchants, laborers, students, and even refugee organizations have been given representation on the party not only for the sake of votes but also for basic democratic education. Party meetings have been held with the purpose of imparting knowledge about economic plans, and for securing popular participation in and support for development plans. As a consequence the groups thus persuaded accepted their new economic and social roles created by change and modernization, and performed more efficiently their tasks.

VI. The arguments advanced in the preceding pages about a party democracy and its ability to meet the challenge of economic development and modernization can be backed with an example taken from Asia itself. The history of Japan is an outstanding example. The Japanese progress, modernization and democracy are as much the result of a number of background traditional forces as they are the product of modern



conditions. Japan was made a nation by her insularity which prevented for long interference from outside. The Japanese feudal system created a sense of hierarchy and an internal system and organization which were gradually modernized and utilized in the service of modern administration and industrialization. The Emperor's authority, although exercised by the Shoguns, for very long, was not destroyed but used to provide the uniting link among various groups.

The party system in the late 19th century and early 20th century came about as an answer to the needs for broader social representation and for a voice in the government. The militarist fascist regime which emerged in the 20th century, especially after the 1st World War, was a reaction to the emergence of a big labor class and to its political demands. Eventually the democratic constitution of 1945, gave voice to the unrepresented groups and produced not only a more advanced democracy but also economic development.

The Japanese democracy and development was the result of pragmatic social and political planning. Instead of destroying all traditional groups and forms of organization the Japanese preserved many of them and gave them modern roles. Those organizations for which society had no demand eventually faded away. Moreover, the Japanese did not destroy all the old symbols, or institutions representing authority but gradually brought them in line with the requirements of modern age and democracy. In some ways the evolution of Japan may be compared to that of England even though they are located at the opposite ends of the globe. In any case Japan is a modern country at the extreme East of Asia. It is as much Asiatic as it is "Western" and these two features complement each other.

**VII.** Thus, both development and democracy are two interrelated problems which could be fruitfully served by a properly understood party system. Democratic education through theory and practice may achieve it. The full expansion of universal suffrage, intensive communication can and should play their part in changing political behaviour and attitudes in conformity with the requirements of democracy.

The West itself could provide a helpful stimulus by strongly reasserting its faith in its own democratic values. Streams of

writings in the West idealize material comforts. Scholarly works praise the virtue of elite rule, of military dictatorship and bureaucratic controls as short cuts to modernization. Many Western writers are so preoccupied with techniques and methods that they have lost light of basic principles. Such an atmosphere certainly does not augur well for the future of democracy in developing Asia. Finally it is urgently necessary to give to the truly productive groups, ranging from worker to the businessman, the possibilities to assert their views on an intellectual level comparable to that of the ruling circles. Value conscious Asian societies accustomed to special patterns of communication, and respect for intellectual elites, would expect any group claiming leadership to conform to these standards. Liberal ideas with their blend of wisdom derived from past experience and planning for the future can perform in Asia the same constructive role as performed in Europe in securing the society's transition to a more democratic and advanced order.