

1980 Shadow Colors Protest At Kwangju

By Susan Chira, Special To the New York Times

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Demonstrations continued unabated today in this southwestern city, as protests across the country prompted speculation that the Government would move to quell the unrest by declaring a limited form of martial law in some cities rather than nationwide.

Tonight, as for the last few days, thousands of protesters clashed with the police in the streets of Kwangju, a symbol of resistance to the Government since May 1980, when soldiers killed many demonstrators here.

To the southeast in Pusan, South Korea's second-largest city, witnesses said huge crowds had battled policemen in several downtown areas. Clashes were also reported in Taegu and Chonju.

Speculation about the limited form of martial law, known here as garrison law, centers on Kwangju and Pusan, where some of the largest demonstrations have occurred. The imposition of garrison law would involve the army, but the Government would still stay officially in civilian hands. Crowd Stretches 2 Miles

Tonight in Kwangju, several thousand people converged on the broad tree-lined avenue leading to city hall in what began as a peaceful protest. Chanting "Nonviolence!" and singing traditional protest songs as well as the national anthem, the crowd stretched for two miles.

Riot policemen and squads of young toughs trained in martial arts tried to clear side streets by firing volleys of tear gas and leading quick charges into the crowds. They then positioned themselves at the end of the avenue and settled in for a long fight.

About 200 students at the front of the crowd began throwing stones and homemade gasoline bombs at the police, who then fired more tear gas.

For more than three hours the stones and tear gas canisters flew. Every time the police retreated, the crowd roared with delight and, clubs in hand, began banging a steady drum beat on flagpoles and street signs.

Although the police dispersed the crowd by 10 P.M., the protesters continued battling policemen throughout downtown Kwangju far into the night.

Demonstrators tore up sections of pavement, and large stones and shards of tear-gas canisters littered many downtown streets. The boom of tear-gas launchers and the shouts of the crowd resounded throughout the night. Uprising Occurred in 1980

The demonstrations in Kwangju take on special importance because of the tragedy that hangs heavy over the city. In May of 1980 a protest against the Government turned into an uprising, in which demonstrators briefly seized control of Kwangju. Army special forces were called in and along with paratroopers retook the city, killing many protesters.

How many were killed is still a matter of fierce debate. The official death toll is under 200, while families in Kwangju cite figures several times higher. The legacy is virulent anti-Government sentiment.

Although most of the stone- and bomb-throwers tonight appeared to be students, many older citizens cheered them on. People gathered on roofs and threw down buckets of water to try to damp down the swirling clouds of tear gas. Thousands Protest in Pusan

Witnesses interviewed by telephone described similar scenes in Pusan. Beginning at 2 P.M., protest erupted in one of the city's main shopping districts, a traffic circle with several arterial streets.

Thousands of demonstrators lined many of the streets, trying and failing to gather at the traffic circle. Using armored tear-gas dispensers and shoulder launchers, the police fired countless rounds of tear gas into the crowd.

Demonstrations continued into the evening despite heavy rains. But witnesses said the crowd was smaller than in previous days. Fighting was particularly vicious on Thursday, when demonstrations continued all night, continuing through the day on Friday.

On Friday evening in the central city of Taejon, according to local press reports, one policeman was killed when demonstrators commandeered a city bus and drove it into a group of policemen. Student groups at Taejon, however, said the death was an accident, caused when tear gas temporarily blinded the driver.

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