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By

NARS, Date

A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT ON THE CONDITIONS IN
NORTHERN KOREA

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REPORT

I left Seoul on 25 September 1946 to investigate the actual conditions in Northern Korea and returned to that city on 30 November 1946. The following are actual facts:

1. DESCRIPTION - MILITARY DEPARTMENT

The total number of army personnel is 1,000,000.

CONTENTS

- (a) Combat Squadron - 300,000.
- (b) Secret Investigation Squadron - 300,000.
(Stationed in each County in plain clothes)
- (c) Peace Preservation Squadron - 120,000.
- (d) Young Peoples Squadron - 100,000.
- (e) Volunteer Squadron - 100,000.
- (f) Others - 80,000.
(The Eighth Route Army personnel and other young people).

The 600,000 combat and secret investigating squadron is called the left line army of Kim Il Sung. The officer's training is carried on by the military department of the Pyongyang Institute. Priority is given to soldiers wishing to become officers who have previously served under Kim Il Sung and to those who have been in service over two years under the Japanese. In addition to these there are a great many low ranking soldiers who served under the Japanese Army in the areas of Manchuria and Northern China.

INTERNAL CONSTRUCTION OF EACH SQUADRON

- (a) Combat Squadron - 300,000.

This squadron, fully equipped, is drilled every day by fierce Soviet methods in the Pyongyang area and then sent to other localities, including Chinnampo, Sinuiju, Najin, Nanam, Wonsan, Hamhung and in the vicinity of the 38th Parallel North.

- (b) Secret Investigation Squadron - 300,000.

This squadron, which consists of plain clothes men, is dispatched to each county for underground work. About 80% of the young members of these squadrons have previously served under Kim Il Sung to carry out direct action.

- (c) Peace Preservation Squadron - 120,000.

This squadron, which is fully equipped, is formed of police members and the peace preservation guard. The total number of the squadron at present is about 90,000 but it will be increased to 120,000 before the end of the year. They are receiving wartime drilling in order to be ready in time of civil war.

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(d) Young People's Squadron - 100,000.

This squadron was organized with the members of the Democratic Young People's Alliance in each village and the total number is over 100,000. These members receive their training at the police stations in each locality. They snatch their compensation from prominent people in the communities or from those people who are investigated when they travel through the 38th Parallel. Whenever the members of this squadron are not fully compensated from the travellers they report the traveler to the police from whom they receive a reward.

(e) Volunteer Squadron - 80,000.

This squadron was gathered around Kanggye, North Pyongan Province and dispatched in plain clothes. They are acting similarly to the Chinese Eighth Route Army.

(f) Others - 80,000.

This squadron is formed of young people in each locality and is expected to receive some help from the Eighth Route Army. They act just as the Eighth Route Army acts.

Thus, an Army of over a million has already been formed. The ultimate purpose of this Army is to coerce them to join the Soviet Army with the aim of an American-Soviet war and a Civil War in Korea. They are spreading the usual slogan, by propaganda, of unmistakable victory through continuous and merciless war. Moreover, it was reported that the People's Committee of Northern Korea is planning to adopt a compulsory military system beginning in 1947 for those over 18 and under 40 years of age.

2. MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

With regard to military equipment, there is actual evidence of a secret contract formed in the latter part of June, 1946, with the Soviet Union and Northern Korea (with Northern Korea acting as a delegate for all of Korea). The essence of this agreement is that the total amount of one billion dollars worth of military equipment will be delivered into Northern Korea during 1946 by the Soviet Army in Korea before the Interim Government in Southern Korea is organized. Repayment of this loan is to be made to the Soviet Union over a period of years. Koreans may use this equipment freely, whenever they see fit, provided one million Koreans are enrolled into the Soviet Army prior to the formation of the Korean Interim Government. After the Interim Government is formed, if there should prove to be any obstacles in carrying out Communism in any part of Korea the entire number of one million men and the billion dollars worth of equipment will be mobilized. Then Korea will become a part of the Soviet Union. This was agreed upon in secret.

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This type of Soviet action has definitely been proved beyond any doubt to be the first step in greedy ambitions of territorial expansion. They also want to convince the general public that since the Russian Revolution, the true meaning of the Soviet slogan is to help the small nations.

3. ARMY PROVISIONS.

No one seems to know how the products which have been collected in the form of tax, at a rate of 25% by merchandise, were consumed. On the tenth of November, 1946, after the mission of Lee Kee Young to Soviet Russia returned to Korea, a resolution was made in the Assembly of North Korea People's Committee, in cooperation with social organizations and each political party, to render authority to the Central Committee of North Korea's Consumer Association to purchase 200,000 tons of grain products other than the products collected in the form of taxes. Each locality is to purchase the given ratio of grain products regardless of the means. The people are not told that the grain products are for Army provisions. This matter is kept secret in the Assembly and it is announced that this grain is for the food rationing. This immediate plan was adopted right after the mission to Russia returned. Consequently it is generally recognized that every attitude taken now indicates preparation for another war.

4. THE EIGHTH ROUTE ARMY.

The Chinese Eighth Route Army is concentrated around the areas of Kanggye of North Pyongan Province and the total number was 36,000 at the end of September 1946, but this number has increased to 60,000 at the end of October 1946. This Eighth Route Army has passed over the Korean boundary line north of the 38th Parallel. New Army buildings are under construction at present in the areas of Chongju and Sonchon for the Eighth Route Army and a volunteer squadron.

On November 23, 1946, the Sunaiju police station sent all their trucks to Andonghyon at 6 p.m. and carried in, at about 5 o'clock the following morning, arms and other stuffs which were previously owned by the Japanese. At 6 o'clock on November 24th, the following day, the police station sent their trucks again to transport the supplies. However, on November 25, 1946, the entire number of the defeated Eighth Route Army entered into Siniuju and Kanggye and the North Pyongan Province Area from Andong in plain clothes. The supplies and soldiers were brought in at night in order not to let the people know. And they were distributed to each locality to be used for the execution of their policy.

The people in Andong are suffering greatly due to lack of drinking water and light, because the Eighth Route Army destroyed the water system and electric works as they retreated from the Chinese Nationalist Army. Since then a five gallon can of drinking water costs 25 to 50 yen and one candle is priced at 15 to 30 yen, - a record for high prices.

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The true patriots in Northern Korea are eagerly and happily waiting to see the success of Dr. Rhee and Chairman Kim Koo's efforts in Southern Korea because they believe that the Communism and the fate of the Soviet will not last too long. The authorities in the North prohibit the publication of the incidents of the Eighth Route Army because they know that the general public is not with them.

5. THE AIR CORPS.

The Air Corps has organized an aviation school in Kyomipo and is training pilots. The exact number of planes is not known but it is believed that they have approximately 235 planes in that area.

6. NAVAL PROBLEMS.

Naval problems are not known. The Military Commander in Northern Korea who commands the Navy, Army and Air Force is Choi Yong Kuen (this is not known to the general public).

7. NO PEDESTRIANS ARE PERMITTED.

After 10 p.m. no one is allowed to go anywhere. In reality this is the time for secret maneuvers. They are very busy making contact with the areas of Sadong and Yulli by means of Army vehicles; and they utilize the evening hours for the allocation of Army munitions, for the transportation of Army provisions, for sending out grain products to Soviet proper and for other secret maneuvers.

8. The Soviet is preparing a Naval and Military Base around the area of Chango Mountain and Vladivostok to complete the necessary establishments. The Soviet type of military training is given to the 700,000 prisoners of war, including the former Japanese Kwantung Army with an excellent preparation for the purpose of future American-Russian War.

9. The Soviet Army is policing the entire area of the 38th Parallel line, placing machine guns in the vicinity of the Haeju and other important sections. The Coast Guard has increased by two Korean companies during the latter part of November.

10. Under the supervision of the Russian Army ammunition is produced in the Communist Headquarters and Haeju Gun Powder Company but the amount of production is not known since this is done in absolute secrecy.

11. The Northern Korea People's Committee was ordered, through district and county heads, to assemble 100,000 citizens of Pyonyang on September 21, 1946, to call a city-wide demonstration. The purpose of this demonstration is a drive against the American Military Government, the cancellation of the order to arrest Park Heun Yong, Lee Kang Suk and Lee Chy Ha, to attack Dr. Syngman Rhee and Kim Koo and to advocate absolute support of the North People's Committee. This demonstration was called on the initiative of Park Heun Yong with the knowledge of Soviet Military Headquarters. It was observed that the railway strike and other direct revolts in Southern Korea were related to this action.

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12. Since the American Military Government ordered the arrest of Park Heun Yong, Park has escaped to Northern Korea, but returned on two occasions. It is believed that he is in Seoul at present although this is a secret even in Northern Korea.

13. TAXES PAID BY AGRICULTURAL CROPS.

Though the rate of taxes runs a little over 25% of the production, 70 to 80 percent of the total amount is collected in some localities. The actual average rate is over 50%. The only people who pay 25% of taxes are the district heads and those who are related with the distribution of land. Iwon County in Ham Kyong Province, for example, is an extreme case where the people have to pay the entire amount of the harvest, yet they are short by 25% of the tax they must pay in the future. The rate of this drastic tax levy was reduced after the people protested in groups. Up to the end of October there was no food to ration for the workers and clerical workers in spite of the fact that over 50% of this drastic crop tax was collected at that time. In addition to this, most of the warehouses are empty. No one seems to know the reason for this action or what disposition was made of these grain products.

It is generally expected that the people may start some kind of action in the near future. The authorities claim that the food rationing will be sufficient during the month of November but no one knows what the complete outcome will be. In reality, the grain products and the grain flour manufactured in the factories of Chinampo Flour Manufacturing Company have been sent to the Soviet proper, in the evening, through Chongin, Majin and other important ports. The quantity of the shipments cannot be accurately estimated. A directive has been distributed to each organization and to the officials of the labor party which provides that anyone who discloses this information will be given a heavy penalty. The officials of the labor party are spreading false propaganda through their local organization denying the shipments of grain to Soviet Russia and urging their members to behave themselves, since secrecy is the life of the organization and all these things are for the reconstruction of their country. The general public, however, is well-informed on these matters and is waiting for the time of uprising, although the police are working very hard to check the spreading of the true story.

At the time of the farm land distribution the farmers were rather puzzled and extremely angry about the administration of Northern Korea at the time of harvest because of the collection of excessive agricultural crop tax. Riots started particularly in the area of Iwon, South Ham Kyong Province and in the vicinity of Kanggye, North Hamkyong Province, because of the fantastic amount of crop tax. Although this riot was stopped by the drastic action of the Soviet Army and the police force, I firmly believe that a real riot will start before next spring because of the acute shortage of necessary food. A great number of people will be starved and many people will be frozen to death before next spring because even in the harvest season in October, potatoes were substituted for grains, and the people are almost bare-bodied without any clothing.

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14. LIVING CONDITIONS AND ANTIPATHY OF FACTORY WORKERS AND CLERKS.

Generally speaking, about 20% of the people who are not even grammar school graduates, or are absolutely ignorant, are supporting The People's Committee of North Korea. They cannot reveal their dissatisfaction. They just follow them blindly. A small number of better than high school graduates are keeping silent about their dissatisfaction. Other patriots are forced to join the labor party in order to make a minimum living. Thus, more than 80% of laborers and clerks are in reality extremely antagonistic to this administration, although, on the surface, they appear to be satisfied. They are eagerly awaiting the success of the real patriots who are sacrificing everything for the country. They are anxious to have Dr. Rhee and Kim Koo in power. Even among the members of the labor party about seventy to eighty percent are not members in the true sense, but just have a semblance of labor party membership.

The Koreans in the North have recently created a few new slang expressions. When they meet they ask each other, "Are you 'Danggun'?" which means a red beet; or "Are you 'Hong Daegun'?" which is a radish, red on the outside, but white on the inside. By this they discover if the other is really red, a party member in the true sense or whether he is just pretending to be red because of circumstances.

The total number of employees of factories and other companies has doubled during the war, yet the production has been reduced to one-half. Consequently, it is not only difficult to operate the factories but there is absolutely no hope of developing them in the future.

15. MINING.

According to the investigation the food ration for the miners is relatively liberal. The amount of gold production, however, is an absolute secret, particularly the gold mine formerly owned by Choi Chang Hak located in Kusong County, North Pyongan Province which employs 520 people under the supervision of the local government of North Pyongan Province. The inspectors are Russians. The mined gold is handled by persons who are appointed by the Russians and who know how to speak the Russian language well. Ordinarily, employees are not allowed to handle the gold and no one knows where this gold is transported.

16. SOVIET MISSION OF LEE KEE YONG AND OTHERS.

The Soviet Mission has returned to Pyonyang after a two months' stay in Russia. The prime objective was to purchase 200,000 tons of grain and to expand the military establishments. They claim, through the labor party, that with the outbreak of a Russian-American war in the near future, the 38th Parallel will be abolished. They also claim that the Atomic Bomb cannot be used because it is only a nominal thing and

though it is not to be announced, if the United States should use the atomic bomb, everything is ready for defense against it. Therefore, there is no need to worry about that. The authorities in the Northern Korea area tell the people that they are going to occupy the Southern part. With this in mind they are making a supreme effort to unite the people in the North. They leave the people in the dark by completely controlling the newspapers, radios and other informatory records, and by telling them falsehoods.

17. Although the statistical figures are not available at present, the financial condition in Northern Korea is exceedingly difficult. In North Pyongyang Province, for example, the local government was not able to pay the wages of their employees during the months of August, September and October. In addition to this, neither the Provincial Government nor the North Korea People's Committee have any way to pay out the deficit of 70,000,000 yen.

18. ELECTION.

Forty-one members of The Special City Committee in Pyongyang were appointed by The National Unification Front. The number of voting places is 450 (total numbers are not listed). Forty thousand people were distributed to each locality to carry out the campaign. The campaign slogans are: 1- to antagonize the people against the American Military Government policy; 2- to support railway and other factory strikes and 3- to insult Dr. Rhee and Chairman Kim Koo and to attack their followers. A donation was collected by the high school and grade school children on the trains, stations and streets and each factory worker and clerk was forced to work an extra hour in order to donate the amount of extra wages to help out the hungry strikers in Southern Korea. The voters must support the candidates appointed by The National Unification Front. Otherwise the authorities say that the voters will be punished with a heavy penalty.

In the voting place the pictures of Stalin and Kim Il Sung are posted in each locality, from September 25 to November 3, and the people are told that this is the first democratic election in Korea's history. On November 3, 1946, a number of patriots were arrested in order to prevent an uprising. On the same day at 12 noon, November 3rd, a bomb was exploded in Kangso County while the voting was going on.

On November 2, 1946, Kim Il Sung was forced to call 100,000 people to a mass meeting to celebrate the election results. He read a document at Kim Il Sung Square called "A Report on Korean People". The document concerned the antagonistic policy of the American Military Government (in Korea) and proposed merciless fighting against the national traitors and the reactionary elements.

19. A total number of 385 students were selected (two labor party members from each county) and have left for Moscow to study.

20. Forty-five students who were recommended by each Province have started to study the Russian Constitution at the Law Institute of Pyongyang City from September to the end of November, 1946. Upon their completion the students will be sent back to each Province.

21. THE NUMBER OF THE POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERS IN NORTH KOREA.

1. Democratic Party - - 450,000.
2. Young Comrade Party - - 300,000.
3. Labor Party - - 700,000 to 800,000.

Many people have joined the Democratic Party recently after leaving the Labor Party.

22. The vicinity of Haeju area is observed as secret territory. No one is allowed even to open train windows while passing through this area.

23. True patriots are called traitors. Whenever these "traitors" are found the authorities send them to Moscow, or hang them. No one seems to know the whereabouts of the 13 prisoners arrested by the authorities last spring during the student incident which occurred in Siniuja, North Pyongan Province.

24. It is well known that Messrs. Hong Kee Whang and Lee Tong Young, true patriots were elected as Pongyang City Committee against their will. In the beginning they flatly rejected their candidacies but many people urged them to accept the posts, in fear of the retaliatory measures against them as traitors.

25. There was no trouble on November 7th, an anniversary of Soviet Revolution. However, special guards, which consisted of the Soviet Army, the Eighth Route Army and the Korean police, were sent to the vicinity of the 38th Parallel.

26. Posters were distributed in every locality in the Northern Korea area to denounce Dr. Rhee and Chairman Kim Koo as leaders of traitors, exiles, arsonists and robbers. Wherever people assembled these words are called slogans.

27. The farmers are getting to be lazy and selfish and stealing is not uncommon.

28. Many secret ships, with the permission of North Korea People's Committee come to South Korea. The chief aims are to communicate with the labor party members and to establish sound public financing and to take in scarce products from the South to the North. It is requested that strong police power is needed for Southern Korea.

--THE END--