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[Hot Topics] Female Crimes for Living Resulted From Business
Jeungsan County, South Pyongan Province, an officer in a re-education center reported that the number of female prisoners has increased. Female prisoners are often charged with violating economic laws by engaging in illicit human and drugs trafficking. Since women are often in charge of their households and responsible for obtaining food rations, the number of crimes committed by women have increased. Moreover, as control over trade has been tightened during the past few years, the more female have broken the law.

Soonchun, South Pyongan Province, Suh Mi-ok (38) said, "The food my household receives last only for half of October. I should have worked in order for my family to survive, but I could not do any business this year. I used to sell cosmetics this year. I was not able to sell due to age restrictions. I was told that we are not allowed to sell industrial products starting in 2009. This can really do harm to regular people like us. If it is possible, I would even like to sell ‘Ice’ (a kind of Amphetamine) to make money." Lee Geum-hwa (43) in Hamheung, South Hamgyong Province said, "We have been suffering from hunger this year. If I have to live with only glass porridge and suffer from hunger, I will come up with ways to survive, such as going to China to sell ‘Ice’." A national security agency worker mentioned that "Women get bold to take charge of families so they do not mind breaking the laws and violating."

[Food]
South Pyongan Province, Distribution Center Out of Operation
The Distribution Center under the Local Grain Policy Enterprise (랑정사업소) of each city and county in South Pyongan Province have not yet started selling food to the residents. Upon reforming farmers' markets, the distribution centers are not allowed to sell food. Instead, the distribution center should manage food issues. The center just provided food to those who have performed distinguished service to the nation and their children. Despite the food situation getting worse, each city and county selected party members to tighten up control over the market. The party stressed the importance of enforcing the rules, especially regarding women. In the mean time, they made people to sign on the agreement that "Businessmen agree with and follow new market management systems."

Soonchun Coal Machinery Factory Distributes 7.5kg of Corn
A coal machinery factory in Soonchun City, South Pyongan Province, resumed distributing rations to a limited number of workers in the munitions department in October after a long delay. Each worker received 7.5 kg of corn and 7 kg of soybean between early October and late November. The munitions department at this factory is currently producing parts for
105mm-range guns and plans to produce additional parts for 30mm-range guns starting January.

**Refinery in Danchun City Makes Late November Distribution**
A refinery in Danchun City, South Hamgyong Province, distributed soy beans and corns in late November, following its first distribution of rations in October. However, it sent absent workers to the discipline center at the factory without distributing any food. Party Secretary at this factory collected 25,000 NK won and allowed so-called ‘8.3 workplace’ to the workers, which gives them opportunity to have other jobs for 1-2 months.

**[Economy]**

**A Monthly Fee of 15,000 NK Won for the 8.3 Factory at the Soonchun Vinalon United Enterprise**
The Vinalon* United Enterprise in Soonchun City, South Pyongan Province, operates an 8.3 Factory. However, a person is required to pay a monthly fee of 15,000 NK Won to work there. Because there are few regularly running factories, general workers, who come to work at the factories, are called out for social works. Although the Enterprise is one of the largest on the west coast, its’ workers steal and sell pieces of the factory machines as workers of regular factories do. As of December, the Enterprise has not been able to pay wages or provide its workers with any provisions.

*Vinalon: a synthetic fiber similar to cotton

**Broken Ventilation Equipment Causes Coal Production Setback at the Sanghwa Coal Mine in Onsung**
The Sanghwa Coal Mine in Onsung County of the North Hamgyong Province had to stop coal production at one of the mines for over a month due to broken ventilation equipment. Although the secretary and the manager of the mine give a daily speech on the importance of coal production, the workers still refused to dig out coal. The workers were worried that the broken ventilation equipment will cause a gas explosion or a large accident at any time. They argued that they are not willing to their lives to dig out coal. Goh Sung-gook (42 years), says, “It has already been very hard to live on dried radish leaves soup and a spoonful of corn rice. If the workers were killed in the mine due to lack of preparation for another accident, how sad would that be?” The concern of the workers grows because even when the ventilation equipment is fixed, it only lasts two days before it breaks again. The coalmine’s managers are not able to force the workers to dig out coal because if an accident, such as a gas explosion were to occur, they would be blamed for the accident. Rather, the managers criticize the equipment repairmen for being “incapable” of fixing it. The repairmen refute their claim, saying that the equipment is so old that it needs to be replaced with a new one. As the production of coal usually does not meet the planned amount of production, the mineworkers have a headache over meeting the amount of planned coal production because of the interruption of coal production over a month.

**Closed People’s Coal Mine Reopened with Increasing Demand for Coal**
As the temperature drops drastically, residents of the North Hamgyong Province coal mine region reopened the Land Management Department (국토관리부) controlled closed mine with an increasing demand for coal. A group of two or three work together, but in most cases a family works as a team. Everyone work as late as 2 am including children and elders. The coal digging takes place during night hours because they have to work during the daytime. Some residents commented, “We try to take it easy during the daytime at our work place but we work so much harder at night when we are trying to dig up the coal.”

**Minimum of 20,000 NK Won Spent per Household on Coal for Cooking and Heating**

During the cold winter, the heating cost creates a heavy burden on the residents. The residents spend at least 20,000 NK won on coal in regions like Saebul County, Onsung County, and Eunduk County because they are colder than other areas. It costs as much as 35,000 NK won to purchase firewood and coal for heating in areas without coalmines. However, the families burning coal are considered well off. There are still families worrying about putting food on the table. Those families do not even have the luxury of worrying about the heating cost and are busy collecting dry grass, corn stems, corn roots and leaves for cooking purposes.

**[Politics]**

**Residents in Sepo County in working clothes to avoid beggars asking for money**

A Police Station in Sepo County of Kangwon Province has been collecting money from its residents to repair buildings and set up intramural facilities in order to be awarded the “Three Revolution Red Flag Winning Movement” (대혁명 붉은기쟁취운동). However, the office realized that the required standard from the Cultural Revolution is too high for them to achieve with the current level of funding. For that reason, they started collecting money from individual residents and even requesting larger amounts from the wealthy (돈주). Those who are in poor clothes are being asked for about 1,000 NK won, whereas those who are neatly dressed are asked to give about 4,000 to 5,000 NK won. As this kind of word spreads, people mind their clothes when they pass by or go into and out of police stations. This has noticeably increased the number of people wearing work clothes to make themselves look poor.

**[Society]**

**Historic Exploration Campsite of Kangye City Supply Wild Boar to Troops**

Historic exploration campsite of Kangye City, Jagang Province sent a wild boar caught in a mountain to the troops as support pork. Each Historic exploration camp of a City or County has taken part in supplying support pork for the troops dedicated to them by the factories, public enterprise, workers, members of Democratic Women’s Union (DWU), and farmers. The historic exploration campsite of Kangye City distributed part of the support pork for troops to employees and sent wild boar with general pork together to the troops. Shingye County of North Hwanghae Province sent goats that died of hunger instead pork as part of the support-planned amount. As a standard, factory workers, employees of public enterprises, and members of the DWU are required to supply 1kg of
pork or 5000 NK won in cash to support the people’s army. Farmers are expected to provide 5kg each. As for farmers, they can give division food when they accomplish their planned amount in some regions.

**Munitions Factory Worker in Kangye City Severely Punished for Cutting Telephone Wire**

Last November 6, two workers at the Munitions factory, which produces shell in Kangye City of Jagang Province, were caught red-handed cutting copper. They had cut about 150 meter of copper wire in three telegraph poles in the factory. In the midst of cutting, the factory night patrol discovered them and immediately arrested them. Meanwhile, the factory has not been able to give rations since last October when they gave out corn for 15 days. Workers say, “Even though it’s fall already, it is more difficult to live than early spring.”

**[Women/Children/Education]**

**DWU Members Suffer Due To the Mobilization for New Year’s Farming Preparation**

A supporting bureau of one public enterprise in Hamju County, South Hamgyong Province, is mobilizing members of the DWU to plow the paddy and dry fields claiming to prepare for farming in the New Year. In the maze fields, corn roots must be pulled out and then the soil evened. The roots, which also function as precious firewood, must be collected and given to the public enterprise. Even though the work is said to be done in relatively gentle weather, the earth is often frozen and the labor is painful making the overall work slow in progress. As a desperate countermeasure, each person is assigned to a task with the demand to finish the daily quota by any means necessary. Women are suffering to fulfill this demand. They continue working even after dark if the assignment is unfinished. Weak women start from early morning and continue until late night, shivering in the chill. Cold, hunger and the harsh labor is causing some women plop down on the ground in tears. A 2,000 NK won fee is levied if one does not show up for the mobilization, and 500 NK won if one could not finish the assigned daily quota. In some cases, the women are told falsely that they will be sent the discipline center, and hence their husband and young children sometimes come out to help. DWU’s members say, "We may not be in discipline centers, but we are definitely living like we are".

**[Accidents]**

**In Jungpyung County, the National Flag of North Korea Was Destroyed**

On December 1, the police station of Goochang-ri, Jungpyong County, South Hamgyong Province, was in an awful mess because the national flag of North Korea in this office was destroyed. Someone scratched and removed the red star, and carved ‘X’ on the flag which was engraved on the wall of the front door of the station. The police station began an investigation immediately, but they have not found any clues as to the identity of the offender. Residents said that since the authorities have strictly controlled trade in markets, people go to the station to get back their forfeited items, and maybe some of them conducted this crime accidentally. On the day when the incident occurred, traders who wanted to get back their items stood in a long line in front of the station from early morning to night. The officers
have examined people who were on the location, but they have not found any evidence so far. According to a witness, they examined a person who cried out; “If I have a grenade, I will blow up the police station,” but they did not find any clear evidence from him. With this news, many residents said, “They should have reasonably regulated trade in the marketplace. They have made this problem by following only the Central Party’s strong order. Most people know that when they forfeited items, they embezzled them. Who cannot be angry in this situation? They should regulate the trade fairly; it should be organized appropriately in any case. Too much is as bad as too little.”

[Commentary]

Women Should Not be Driven to Commit Crimes Related to Livelihood
The news of increasing numbers of women going to jail due to crimes related to livelihood is a clear example of the seriousness of the difficulties people are facing.

First, the increase in crimes related to livelihood is a clear indication of the worsening food shortage in North Korea. Although some areas and enterprises are giving out some food rations after the harvest is over, the majority of people are having difficulties with purchasing food. As a result, those without means of subsistence are driven out to a situation where they have to survive indiscriminately, even breaking the boundaries of the law and social norms.

Second, the reason why the proportion of women prisoners is high is because mothers rather than fathers are taking care of the livelihood of the families. The adult male centered social control system, where the men have to go to work everyday even when they do not receive ration or salary, shows the tendency of transferring the responsibility of supporting the family to women. However, it is not easy for women to take care of the sustenance of the family within legal boundaries.

Third, the incidents of the wives of urban laborers who have lost sustenance getting into illegal business, such as human trafficking and drug trafficking for survival, are on the rise as a result of severe enforcement of market trading business. Currently, the authorities are reducing the hours of the trading market, and conducting a large-scale enforcement on food and industrial goods. In case of breach, they impose fines and confiscate goods. As such, more and more women who have to sell goods for survival feel they would rather engage in some business that has bigger potential for profit, and make it worthwhile, because they have to take the risk of doing business against government enforcement.

An official in charge of public safety contends we are deeply concerned about the prospect that crimes committed by women will continue to rise. The food shortage problem is not something that can be resolved in a short time. In addition, the resolution of the problem seems hard to obtain as long as the North Korean government maintains its strong will to enforce trading markets, which people use as means to subsistence. This type of clear contradiction is exactly why North Korean women are driven to commit crimes related to livelihood, by engaging in illegal trading business, hiding from the eyes of the enforcement agents, and getting into illegal activities because of desperate situations.
After all, the North Korean government should come up with measures that will allow people to survive by resolving the food shortage problem through expanding the food distribution to the vulnerable classes. If that is not possible, they should allow people to trade for a while so that they can make a living by themselves. Only then, will they be able to improve the current condition that drives women into crime. This also is an agenda North Korean women have persistently petitioned to the government. We urge the North Korean government to proactively use policies for the people to live up to the name of the country, “People’s Republic of Korea.”

[Investigative Report] Reading New Year’s Combined Editorial 2009 (1)

“Let the New Year Shine as a Year of Revolutionary Climax, Heralded by Martial Bugle Calls”

Composition of New Year’s Combined Editorial 2009

- Overall Summary of Accomplishments in 2008 (10%)
- Ideological Mobilization 2009 (40%)
- Sectional Assigned Tasks (10%)
- Assigned Task of Military under the Ideology of Military First (10%)
- Appeals to Workers in Party, Administration, Labor, Youth and Workshop Union (20%)
- Relationship with South Korea and International Relationships (10%)

2008’s Failures

“The Dawn of Juche 98 (Year 2009) has arrived with new hopes that it will be a historical watershed in establishing our revolution and a strong nation”

The New Year’s Combined Editorial 2009 begins with a declaration that the new year will be a year of ‘historical watershed’ different from any previous years. This declares that the New Year will bring a new history in establishing a strong nation even though many problems have not been resolved so far.

“The Previous Year Juche 97(Year 2008) Was a Year of Historical Transformation in a Victorious Chapter of Our Republic of 60 Proud Years”

Prior to listing the detailed tasks to be accomplished in the historical watershed that will be 2009, the accomplishments in 2008 are first summarized.

“Our Beloved Leader with His Unlimited Spirit and Stamina Wisely Led Our Military and People in a Struggle toward Establishing a Strong Nation”
With a claim that the greatest accomplishments in 2008 began with the site counsels of the Chairman of the National Defense Committee, a substantial portion of the Editorial is allocated to a discussion of those counsels. Many decorative expressions such as “Unlimited Spirit and Stamina”, “Legendary Forceful March”, “Long March of Patriotic Dedication Unprecedented in History” and “Undefeatable Journey” are used to describe how vigorously his site counsels were extended. Words of respect and admiration are added, “The result of Chairman Kim’s site counsels led to glorious victories on the frontlines of struggles in political ideology and anti-imperialist militarism.” This portion of the Editorial could be interpreted as a response to the rumors of Chairman Kim’s ill health. It tries to prevent domestic spreading of the rumors that started outside. It tries to emphasize that he carried out vigorous activities even more often than he has in the past. He annually used to do around eighty site counsels, and in the previous year he did more than ninety, ten more than the previous year. His vigorous site counsels led the people in the struggle to unite political ideology (domestic tasks) and confronted ‘the South Korean puppets’ and ‘U.S. Imperialists’ in the struggle of anti-imperialist militarism (external tasks). Consequently, the year 2008 could not have been anything except ‘a year of historical transformation.’ This was the greatest accomplishment in 2008.

The cited accomplishments are rather abstract and without any substance. Claims are made, such as, “Amazing transformations have occurred in all aspects.” Cited as accomplishments are the modernization of enterprises and many factories including Chollima United Steel Enterprise, the completion of large projects such as the ‘Yesung River Youth #1 Plant’, ‘Wonsan Youth Plant’ and ‘Yungwon Plant’ and the enhancements to the Daehongdan, Migok Cooperative Farm and the City of Pyongyang.

However, the cited accomplishments are rather poor examples. For instance, the ‘Yesung River Youth #1 Plant’ barely generates 100,000 KW. The ‘Wonsan Youth Plant’ and ‘Yungwon Plant’ generate less than 10,000 KW each. These are ‘small’ and ‘intermediate’ size plants, not really worthy of being cited as major accomplishments. How about the Chollima United Steel Enterprise (Kngsun Steel Mill) which is the original place of the Chollima Movement and is also expected to signal the resurrection of the Chollima Movement? Chairman Kim visited this enterprise for a site counsel on December 24, 2008. This enterprise, as with every other enterprise, had a very poor record of food rationing for the workers, which caused many difficulties in production schedules. “North Korea Today” (No. 164) reported that a complete stoppage of food rationing forced workers to survive on grass porridge for all three meals from November 2007 to June 2008.

Whether the cited projects, such as the enhancements of the Daehongdan, Migok Cooperative Farm and City of Pyongyang are worthy of being part of the ‘year of historical transformation’ is debatable.

The above concludes the Overall Summary of the Accomplishments in 2008. However, nowhere are mentioned the ambitious goals for the ‘Year of Joys’ following the principle of ‘People’s Lives First’.
“The path of ‘Military First’ led by our party is the genuine socialist path that will bring happiness and prosperity to generations of people to come and our forceful march toward establishing a strong nation will cannot be stopped by any obstacles. This is the overall summary of accomplishments in 2008.”

In the end, North Korean authorities claimed that ‘the path of Military First led by the party’ is the ‘proud overall summary of accomplishments in 2008’. Has there ever been such a poor example of productive accomplishments? There are no citable accomplishments in 2008. There are only accomplishments embellished with decorative words.

**Year 2009, Toward the Second Chollima Movement**

Year 2008, a year identified as the ‘Year of Historical Transformation,’ although there was no clear reason for doing so, has ended. What now awaits the country?

“The whole nation should be united under the leadership of the party as it was during the Chollima Movement at its height after the war. We should start a total warfare moving forcefully toward opening the gate of a strong nation with the bugle sounds of a marching army.”

This is the appeal to return to the Chollima Movement in order to build a year of ‘heightened revolution for historical leap forward,’ with the goal of building a strong nation. This portion is mainly concerned with ideological appeals for greater mobilization.

“Today we are at a historical crossroad very important to carrying out our party’s revolutionary tasks.” The main theme here is that heightening the Chollima Movement should be vigorously implemented at a time when the nation is at a critical point between success and failure. This year’s aggressive slogan is “Let’s Start the Most Prosperous Period in Our Country of ‘Military First’ with the Great Tradition of Heightened Revolution”.

They claim to have their secret prescription, the ‘Dragon Horse.’ They propose ideological warfare, starting with the power of ideology, then whole-hearted unity, patriotism, and lastly, rejection of imperialist ideo-cultural invasion and psychological conspiracy. More specifically, they propose methods of ‘collectivism and self-sustainment’ and ‘full marching speed worthy of the principle of Military First (speedy warfare).’

Firstly, ‘the power of ideology’ refers to the principle of Military First and Juche ideology. The claim is that solid faith in the principle of independence and politics based on the principle of Military First will lead to an establishment of socialism. Secondly, ‘whole-hearted unity’ means that the whole nation should have consensus and assurance in the principle of Military First and Juche ideology. Thirdly, ‘patriotism,’ a newly introduced expression, refers to an order ‘to love the socialist fatherland as you would your own life, without any limitations.’

Fourthly, ‘rejection of imperialist ideo-cultural invasion and psychological conspiracy’ refers to a request ‘to reject yellowishness’ and ‘to thoroughly establish a socialist life style.’
The above are four varieties of the same ‘ideological warfare.’ ‘Collectivism’ ‘self-sustainment’ and ‘speedy warfare’ are nothing new. The authors use many lengthy expressions in describing these terms. However, it can all be summarized to mean that the New Year’s Combined Editorial 2009 amounts to a redoubling of the methods of the Chollima Movement with an added arsenal for ideological warfare. So far, the first half of the Combined Editorial has been presented. Our next edition will deal with the rest of the Editorial, that is, Sectional Assigned Tasks, Assigned Tasks for the Military under the Ideology of Military First, Appeals to Workers in the Party, Administration, Labor, Youth and Workshop Union, and the Relationship with South Korea and International Relationships.
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2) investigating current situations of North Korean refugees in China, and providing protections and aids for them.

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