



6. Mail Interceptions.

(1) Complaints of Rice Shortage Continue. Several letters were intercepted during the period, complaining that the average layman in KOREA is unable to obtain enough rice to subsist on, and stating that many are on the verge of starvation. Typical of the comments are the following extracts from a letter written by LEE, Sang Ho, 137-88 SIN SAWL CHYAWNG, SEOUL, addressed to the Free Press Company, SEOUL, date 13 February:

"Even when we were under Japanese rule we received a rice ration of almost a pint per day. But now KOREA has been liberated. We had a very abundant rice harvest last year, but in spite of that the people cannot get rice and are on the verge of starvation. Give us at least half the quantity of the rice we received from the Japanese in order to save our lives. The politicians act very indifferently about this situation. We wonder how they are living and how they secure their food."

Complaining of the difficulty encountered in obtaining rice, nine Korean employees of Civil Communications Intelligence Group, KOREA, sent a letter to the commanding officer on 23 February, stating that unless rice was obtained by the end of the month, the workers would be forced to seek employment elsewhere. The letter requested the aid of the American officer in obtaining the much needed rice.

(2) Illegal Activities Revealed. In a letter addressed to his elder brother, BAK, Byawng Sun, who is in the Department of General Business, Bureau of Communications, SEOUL, the writer, BAK, Byawng Ki, YUGU-RI (930-1520), after discussing family matters, states:

"One thing most needed by the public is carbide. It appears that carbide is not under ration or control now and it is very much in demand by those who are engaged in bootleg mining operations. Since mercury and petroleum are rationed, I do not require much of either of these, but if you can buy carbide in SEOUL I am planning to bring it here by hiding it under the mercury and petroleum. In spite of all the difficulties, I had intended to smuggle all the furniture and rice, but desisted until I could talk it over with you. It is easy to secure a truck at YUGU."

f. Telecommunications - The following telegram was sent by PAK, Yong Ki, 66 ENNAN-CHO, SHORO KU, SEOUL, addressed to KO, Zai Toku, 308 SANYO RI, YONAN (910-1680), dated 21 February:

"I know where gunpowder is sold. Come to SEOUL at once."

Investigation is being made.

4. CIVIL RELATIONS.

a. Disturbances - No civil disturbances were reported during the period.

b. Political Parties and Other Organizations.

(1) At MOKP'O (930-1300), trial of those members of the People's Committee, Comrades Young Men's Association, Young Men's Alliance, Cottonseed Oil Factory, Consumers Union, and others, including the chief of police and several government officials, who were arrested on 15 January on charges of engaging in unauthorized activities (See USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report #127) has been completed in the local court. Of the 33 persons apprehended, 14 were convicted and one was acquitted. The remainder were released for lack of evidence. Among those convicted was the former chief of the MOKP'O police who was tried on 22 February and sentenced to three years at hard labor. On announcement of the verdict, the courtroom became a bedlam, necessitating the use of force by Military Government officers and civilian

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police in the restoration of order.

(2) At YONGGWANG (952-1365), 34 policemen from KWANGJU (990-1350) were installed on 19 February, replacing policemen belonging to the People's Committee who had been misusing their official status to further their political aims. The day following the installation of the new policemen, members of the Young Men's Association distributed large numbers of handbills denouncing those who had come from KWANGJU.

c. Korean Press - For the purpose of showing matters of current public interest in KOREA, translations have been made of the headlines of the leading newspapers of all major newspapers in SEOUL and of the text of the articles considered to be of particular interest. (See Incl #1.)

d. In honor of the 27th anniversary of the declaration of Korean independence, a ceremony will be held at the CHONG NO Bell in SEOUL at 01030 March. This SAM IL Day ceremony will include appropriate speeches by General HODGE; KIM, Koo; Dr. RHEE, Syng Man; OH, Sei Chang; Dr. KIM, Kyu Sik. Representatives of the different political organizations will ring the ancient bell seven times. An honor guard of Korean Police will render appropriate honors. A copy of the speech to be delivered by General HODGE is attached hereto.

5. SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE IN ADJACENT AREAS.

According to a Korean who recently arrived in SEOUL from N of the 38th parallel, smear posters in caricature form of Dr. RHEE, Syng Man and KIM, Koo have been put up around PYONGYANG (HEIJO) (890-1820). Also, large posters containing the TASS report criticizing American activities in Southern KOREA (See USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report #134) have similarly appeared.

6. MISCELLANEOUS.

a. At the railroad station in SEOUL, a surprise search of passengers on a train which arrived from KAESONG (950-1690) at 262000 Feb resulted in the arrest of approximately 200 persons. The search, which was conducted by civil police assisted by American authorities, was for the purpose of determining whether persons arriving from the north were carrying weapons or were in possession of money in excess of 5,000 Yen. Reports are that an excess of 1,400,000 Yen was discovered. Those who violated Military Government regulations will be prosecuted.

b. The following instances involving unauthorized shipping have been reported:

(1) At INCH'ON, a Korean ship arrived from VASAN (1150-1350) on 23 February with an illegal cargo consisting of 80 bags of tangerines. American authorities impounded the ship and its cargo. The INCH'ON tangerine dealer has been apprehended, and efforts are being made to locate the dealer in VASAN.

(2) At KURYONGP'Ō-RI (1253-1457), a ship destined for P'ŌHANG-DONG (1234-1461) and carrying a cargo contraband articles, principally bicycles and grain, was detained on 21 February. The ship had left OSAKA, JAPAN on 4 February without authorization.

c. At PUSAN, 174 Japanese survivors of a shipwreck off CHEJU Island (952-1148) arrived on 21 February. These Japanese had left DAIREN, MANCHURIA on 10 January aboard a Chinese ship destined for PUSAN. While enroute, the Japanese commandeered the vessel by use of threats and ordered it to proceed directly to JAPAN. The shipwreck and subsequent rescue by a Military Government operated craft occurred on 2 February.

d. At TOKSAN (968-1539), civilian police on 24 February arrested

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a Korean who had a US Army cal. 45 pistol in his possession. He claimed to have purchased the weapon from another Korean in SEOUL. Civil police are investigating.

e. In SEOUL, a fire on 26 February completely destroyed a building housing some personnel and equipment of the US 31st Inf 7th Div. Other losses incurred include six 37-mm anti-tank guns, fourteen 1/4 ton trailers, and a small quantity of ammunition. Two US soldiers received superficial wounds. The fire was caused by an exploding space heater in the building.

f. Investigation of an intercepted letter written by LEE, Bok Chi, 42 CHASAN DONG, WASAN (1150-1350), in which the writer stated that he had a quantity of opium and other items available for sale (See USAFIK G-2 Periodic Report #118), has been made without results. A thorough search in WASAN disclosed that no such person lived at the address contained in the letter.

*Trust*

1 Incl - Translations of Daily  
Newspapers.

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