

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN KOREA  
Department of Public Information  
Seoul, Korea

4 April 1946

SUBJECT: Public opinion in Seoul relative to the food crisis.

TO : Director, Department of Public Information

1. On 3 April 1946 interviewers from the Opinion Sampling Section circulated among the people of Seoul collecting information on starvation and any rumors of pending violence. The following information was reported.

2. Danger of riots. A committee for taking measures to meet the food crisis was organized by the representatives of 300 chung offices of Seoul. This committee undertook to plan a demonstration. The scheme was detected by the staff of the Chongno police station. Whereupon, the police visited each chung leader and persuaded him to wait three or four days. Some chung leaders told them that if no effective plan is enforced by Military Government within the next few days, there would be considerable violence and rioting, and specifically, that some individuals might attack the capital building or the City Hall. No rumors of any arms to be used in the coming "attack" have been picked up.

3. Danger of assassination. If the food crisis grows worse, it is generally felt by the public that some of the Korean employees of Military Government will be killed. The feeling does not seem to be directed against any particular employees, but against all in general. No evidence has been uncovered of any organized plot in back of this talk.

4. Starvation. Two additional cases of starvation were located. (Six were reported on 2 April 1946 by this office.) The names and addresses of these two are:

PAK, (Surname is unknown)	524-55 Sang Wangsibri chung
LEE, Chung Kun	6 Chungwoon chung

Pak was living with her son, an employee of a printing office. They were living on the salary which the son received from the office, ₩990.00 a month, with which they could not purchase sufficient food. One month ago they were reduced to eating on bowl of soup a day, plus a little rice which they had saved. Twenty days ago the rice ran out, and they commenced living...

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on the soup. On 22 March the mother died of starvation.

LEE, Chung Koon was a day laborer. Five days ago his money ran out, and he could afford to buy no more food. A few days later he died of starvation.

5. Distribution to the destitute. Each chung office is distributing rice to the destitute at the rate of 2 hop a day. It is reported that there are many who, though not actually poor, make false statements at the chung offices. Some of these people are actually receiving rations. This is causing considerable trouble for the staffs of the chung offices. As far as the destitute are concerned the system is believed to be effective. However, the general public believes the system to be ineffective because there is no provision for those people who have a job but not sufficient money with which to feed their families.

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