



24 HOUR WORKERS' PARTY PEOPLE



Over the course of 6 trips to North Korea, I have collected pictures depicting the ways in which the Workers' Party governs the daily lives of North Koreans.
The Workers's Party is like Big Brother: everywhere.



Out of a population of 25 million, 4 to 5 million people are Party members and are organized into 200,000 cells. Every year, a mass dance takes place in front of the WPK headquarters in Kim Il Sung square in Pyongyang with thousands of north koreans.



All North Korean adults wear the badges adorned with the Leaders' faces. Some of these badges include the symbol of the Workers' Party: a hammer, a sickle and a calligraphy brush. The hammer and the sickle represent the workers and the farmers while the brush stands for the intellectuals. Only Party members own the badges with this symbol emblazoned on them.

혁명적 동지애에 기초한



The Party is governed by commandments.

The first one is:

"Fight, with all your strength, to transform all of society into the Kimilsung-Kimjongilist one."

일심단결을 더욱 강화하자



Party membership is the key to acquiring jobs and social status in North Korea. It is impossible to raise one's social status without becoming a Party member first.



A young woman holding the WPK flag in Pyongyang. The North Korean elite is working hard to protect the regime and their privileges. As long as they demonstrate complete loyalty to Kim Jong Un, they are rewarded with housing, education, cars, food or even trips for the luckiest ones (in China or even in Europe)...



Party membership allows for better access to hospitals in North Korea as all doctors and surgeons are also Party members. Bribes can also help.



Once you become a Party member, you will continue to demonstrate your loyalty to the regime in order to acquire the luxury items that all North Koreans dream of: a television, a computer, Western clothes, food rations, a car, and for the elite, an apartment in the new buildings that have running water.

All these things can hardly be purchased on a North Korean salary.



More than any other, "songbun" is the most important criteria to be considered in the decision to allow someone into the Party. Songbun means social stature – all North Koreans are organized into an official caste system from the moment they are born. The best one is the "special class" while the worst is being classified as "hostile to the regime."



Translating the Party slogans seen on the many propaganda billboards in the streets will always be a headache for your North Korean guide.

This one says something like: "To all successful people: We must go to the Square of 10 October to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the foundation of the Worker's Party."

정신력을 총 발동하여 선군
과 위력을 더 높이 펼쳐자!



A shipyard in the town of Nampo. I was lucky enough to visit this area and chat with these steel factory workers. I did not see the WPK pins on their jackets.

*"- Are you a member of the People's Party?
- No.
- Why not?
- You don't choose to be in the Party. The Party chooses you."*

In fact, to have a chance to be admitted into the Party, you need to have recommendations from existing members and to receive the green light from the local committee. Then, you will only receive a one-year provisional membership as a test to ascertain that you do deserve to become a full-time member of the Party.

영

예



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최현



기계공부 1학년
최현



기계공부 1학년
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Workers are always depicted as the pillar of society. This billboard celebrates the best workers at a major construction site for new buildings in Pyongyang. The project was scheduled for completion in 2012, for the 100th anniversary of Kim Il Sung's birth. But the buildings were finished with a delay and one of them collapsed, resulting in many deaths in 2014...



All North Koreans wish to be Party members because it would allow them to have a better life in a country where everything is controlled.

The Workers' Party bestows benefits to everyone... except the workers who still lead miserable lives, in old houses and with little food rations, lives that are entirely devoted to productivity while using outdated equipment and machinery.



The Party decides also if you are allow to trade in the growing private sector and become wealthy.



WPK members are everywhere in North Korea, in the cities as well as in remote areas.

All Army officers are members of the Party. It would be impossible to attain a high-level position without being a Party member.

General Pak Shan Su, a North Korean hero who fought the United States, wears the WPK badge with pride.



The best way to become a Party member is to join the military. This demands a lot of patience as several years of commitment in the army are required before admission into the Party. After becoming a Party member, you will become one of the few North Koreans with access to food – soldiers are always the first to receive food, even from the international aid, since their support is vital to the regime.



Conversation with my guide:

"- When someone wants to get married, do they have to ask for the parents' permission?"

- It is better if they ask for the permission of the Workers' Party delegate in their village."

In North Korea, there is no honeymoon for the newly weds. You get married and you go to work the next day. You cannot marry on 15 April and 16 February, the respective birthdays of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.



The Party includes a great number of internal organizations, some of which are in charge of propaganda for instance. One such organization is called the "Catholic Confederation" and it monitors the local churches and temples approved by the regime.

On the left, this is the Party representative in charge of the Pyongyang Church. On the right, the Party supervisor is shown sleeping during Sunday Mass at the Pyongyang Protestant Temple.



The Party owns the Rodong newspaper, which can be found inside all metro stations. All the stories published highlight the great actions of Kim dynasty, past and present. There are also some articles on the evil actions of the South Korean government or the aggressive policies of the American imperialists. Some people also read the Rodong to find out the latest football scores.



North Korean little children are always visiting their country's famous monuments and posing in front of them. This boy was celebrating his birthday in front of the Juche Tower and a statue of the Party.

The North Korean education system is steeped in the official ideology of the State and, as soon as they are able to speak, the children learn all about the Leaders' glorious lives.



All North Korean children aged between 7 and 13 must join the "Korea Youth Corps" before joining the "Youth Confederation" from 14 to their early 20s. They will learn all about the Party as well as loyalty to the regime. It is easy to recognize the Pioneers as they wear a red neckerchief, like in the USSR.



Like their adult counterparts, the Pioneers march through town on 1st May. It is a great honor to be the group leader on that special day. Children are encouraged very early to compete and to have an extensive knowledge of North Korean history.



At school, the best pupils are rewarded with badges when they work well and are good leaders. The educational system is designed to train the future elite Party members.



A good way to demonstrate your love for your country is to work as a “volunteer” in the fields to help farmers or to clean the Mansudae area like these students. This will help you climb the hierarchy in your unit or at school and will also provide you with a very good argument when you apply to join the Party.



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한마을 우리러 영광 드리자



영원히
한길을 가리라

The Party's symbol during the Arirang mass show in Pyongyang, one of most acclaimed moments in the show at the Kim Il Sung giant stadium. The Arirang show is no longer performed, too expensive to run, but it was a great opportunity to invite to the capital Party members from all over the country as a reward.















The Monument of the Party's Founding in Pyongyang is 50 meters high to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea. The inscription on the outer belt reads "Long Live the Workers' Party of Korea, the organizer and guide of all the Korean people's victories."



Once a year, North Koreans will wait in line for hours while entertained by musicians playing live. The line starts from the Monument of the Party's Founding to an exhibition hall. This is in order to visit the Festival of Kimjongilias and Kimilsungias, the flowers named after the late North Korean leaders. Musicians play to entertain the people queueing.

NEW BOOKS

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>위대한 수령
김일성동지락전</p> |  | <p>KIM JONG IL
Biography (1-3)</p> |
|  | <p>The leader and
the people</p> |  | <p>KIM IL SUNG
Works (1-47)</p> |
|  | <p>Kim Il Sung - The great
man of the century</p> |  | <p>On Juche
in our revolution</p> |
|  | <p>Glorious 50 years</p> |  | <p>KIM IL SUNG
condensed biography</p> |
|  | <p>With the century
(1 - 8)</p> |  | <p>On the building of the
Worker's Party of Korea</p> |
|  | <p>광명백과사전</p> |  | <p>조선력사상식</p> |

Party culture is ubiquitous in North Korea, with lots of official publications that can be found at the local bookstores.

In all villages, the Party organizes meetings during which the latest propaganda is relayed in boring speeches.

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