

## Workers' Organizations

Workers' (or Labor) Organizations are all subordinate to the Korean Workers' Party. There are ten (10) Workers' Organizations directly subordinate to the Secretariat of Workers' Organizations, and each one institutionally links to respective State Ministries or departments (and corporations) subordinate to the KWP Central Committee Secretariat. They are defined as "a political organization for the working population from all walks of life. . .an organization for the ideological education of the working population [and] a 'transmission belt' between the party and public life, and a loyal assistant to the party." North Koreans who are not members of the Korean Workers' Party are compelled to join a Workers' Organization, respective of age and gender, but the leadership of organizations (at each level) are members of the KWP or are chosen by the Organization and Guidance Department. Under the Collective Principle via the *songbun* system, Workers' Organizations can serve as a feeder for KWP membership recruitment. Each Workers' Organization has local chapters, based on city district (*kuyok*), town or county with a coordinating provincial office and a central headquarters in Pyongyang.

Workers' Organizations are a tool of social control and population surveillance; the intention is to keep the people busy and in circumstances where they are subject to monitoring. The KWP Organization and Guidance Department recruits individual organization members to provide information on other members and organization leaders. Workers' Organizations' activities are linked to official propaganda lines and policy activities of the Korean Workers' Party, so there is no opportunity for an organization to act out of the interests of its membership. Each organization's local chapter has regular membership meetings. There are also national level plenary meetings of Workers' Organizations that are held in Pyongyang. Along with KWP cells and work units there is mandatory "volunteer" labor such as construction projects or They also participate in activities such as athletic competitions and larger public events such as rallies or education meetings. Local and provincial secretaries or chairs makes speeches on national holidays and publish editorials in newspapers.

It is not clear whether Workers' Organizations maintain as much social control as once they have. Party membership does not guarantee the minimal quality of life that it once ensured, and with increasingly finite material resources, it is most likely difficult for organizations to mobilize North Koreans to "volunteer" labor or political activities. That said, there was a report that a local secretary of a local Workers' Organization in North Hamgyong Province emigrated to China in the summer of 2009, and that the State Security Department viewed the case as a top priority.

The current KWP Secretary and Central Committee Department Director of Workers' Organizations is Kim Jung-rin, who has served in this position since January 1990. As evidence of the Workers' Organization's influence in population monitoring and control, one might look to Secretary Kim serving on the last two Central Election Committees, a coordinating body formed in advance of Supreme People's Assembly elections.

Workers' Organizations include:

Kim Il-sung Socialist Youth League

Korean Democratic Women's Union

General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea

Union of Agricultural Working People of Korea

Korea Democratic Lawyers' Association