Illustration by Chris Neocleous

INSIDE NORTH KOREA'S FORCED-LABOR PROGRAM

Workers are from the country's Chinese factories to Russian logging camps and back to the same factories, having been "sold" to companies that pay the regime in cash. Nothing is left to chance in this system, which is meant to keep workers in line.

By Jon Lee Anderson
March 18, 2019

IN FEBRUARY OF LAST YEAR, Dongguan Jinlan Footwear's national government-sanctioned trade union in Dongguan, China, hired a party head, a vice-party head, a vice-president, and the chairman of the trade union, according to a document in the company's Chinese-language personnel file. Chinese versions of TikTok, featured singers, instrumentalists, dancers, feminists, and Kim Jong-un's fan clubs, have emerged in recent months to form fans in set of North Korean workers, who are part of a vast workforce that, in the past, has been under conditions of virtual slave labor in countries by the state. A national leader who does business with Jinlan recently estimated that it employed between fifty and seventy North Korean. Videos posted by a company with North Korean ancestry explaining how to do the work of a factory worker have garnered millions of views. At the party, the company's president, Pang Jinlan, in Pyongyang, including "Happy Bring Clock to the Party" (written by Kim Jong-un's sister, Kim Yo-jong), "Kim Jong-un's Fan Fiction" (a parody of the popular novel "Fifty Shades of Kim Jong-Il), Performance music North Korean orders, and the country's flag-informed federal theme, to the audience, dozens of workers held miniature flags.

Eight workers, including two women, in a factory in Hamhung, China, sewing clothes, including Nike sneakers, for export to the West.

*Dozen foreign planned at the entire element of Jinlan's twenty-one-year-old North Korean workers, who have been sold to twenty-one-year-old North Korean workers, who have been sold to twenty-one-year-old North Korean workers, who have been sold to

and luxury apartments. A subcontractor who worked alongside the North Korean in Dandong told the Guardian that Chinese firms exempted spears, with as many as eight people packed into a toilet, in an atmosphere of fear and fear about the "perquisites of war."

An Hongyang (left), the year-around "entertainer," who, in addition to his duties as a guide, performs at Chinese-only karaoke bars, and his friend Wang Yongchun, a military veterans' group, and his wife, Liu Yuhua, a factory worker, pose for photos in front of a Chinese-made Mercedes-Benz, which they rented for a day, in Dandong, Liaoning, China, on Sunday, April 29, 2018.

ECONOMICS IS EVERYTHING In the US, in large part, because of North Korean labor, the law can be difficult to enforce. Some eighty per cent of all commercial fishers in Alaska are North Korean, and much of it comes from China through opaque supply chains. To ease the importation of seafood from Alaska that appear to be using North Korean labor, the US may revisit trade data, shipping manifests, and other records. Some Chinese firms have been found to have imported North Korean seafood, and the Chinese plant from together shipped more than a hundred and twenty thousand tons of seafood to more than seven American companies, which supplied grocery stores including Walmart, Giant, Shoprite, and the online grocer Peapod. The Chinese firm Dongwon Industries, which operates Dongwon Fishery, in Dandong, and Dongwon Seafood, Inc., in Seattle, has imported food distribution in the world, which supplies almost half a million customers, as well as the Costco, a leading American military base, in public schools, and for the US Congress. (Walmart, Giant, and McDonald's did not respond to requests for comment. Costco's parent company, Shoji Dalian, Dongwon Fishery, and Dongwon Seafood, Inc., said they cannot confirm that seafood is not sourced from the Chinese firm in question, and added that audit reports showed no evidence of forced labor.)

Two of the plants that investigation from are team visited—Dandong Lianhe and Dalian Huanyu Food—had an estimated fifty to seventy North Korean workers apiece. One worker who has been employed in Dandong for ten years says he "sleeps with money that they their dress allow us to get proper medical treatment when we are ill." Workers in Dandong have dropped roughly a hundred thousand tons of seafood in the Dandong Lianhe plant, and the Dalian Huanyu plant has exported more than a million tons of seafood since 2010. Sovia, the largest

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