

**January 5, 1958**

**Notes from a Conversation between the 1st  
Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK with the  
Director of a Department in One of the Ministries**

**Citation:**

"Notes from a Conversation between the 1st Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK with the Director of a Department in One of the Ministries", January 5, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained by Jakub Poprocki and translated by Maya Latynski.

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**Summary:**

Brzezinski Henryk reports on Kim Il Sung's cult of personality and the cadre system inside of North Korea.

**Original Language:**

Polish

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Pyongyang, 5.I.1958

Embassy of the

People's Republic of Poland

in Pyongyang [trans. note: stamp]

No. 14/6/2421/58/tjn [trans. note: added by hand; tjn probably means tajne, secret]

Top secret [trans. note: added by hand]

N o t e

From a conversation with the director of a department in one of the ministries on 5.I.1958\*

The director, in the course of our conversation, following my report on the subject of democratic centralism in our party, told me about the relations existing among the Korean comrades. The director stated that both at a course in the CC and in individual conversations among Korean comrades, language and formulations from Kim Il Sung's speeches or articles in the newspapers are used most of all. At the course in the CC one must strongly follow the official formulations, and in no case may one use one's own words even while maintaining the official contents, if one does not want to be exposed to harsh criticism. From the top, the director asserted, great stress is placed on using the very political language that is included in official speeches or in the press. An independent way of thinking and one's own interpretation of particular political theses is sharply criticized and viewed badly. The atmosphere is of the kind that the comrades closely watch their own remarks in conversations among themselves. In case of deviation from official pronouncement, the case is brought up at a meeting of the party organization or, as is the case at the course in the CC, at party workshops. There are quite common cases of comrades taking notes on such individual conversations and, if a gaffe is noticed, the matter is placed before a party meeting. There is no freedom in conversations with comrades, claimed the director. This situation is difficult. People do not like this situation. Not liking this situation especially are those who by nature are more open? In the party and in private life it would be unthought-of to express the smallest critique or to express doubts regarding the correctness of this or that party directive from the party or the government.

If one does critique, then along the lines of the formulations used in official speeches. I.e., first one needs to point to a large number of achievements and then criticize what is officially being criticized. If one does not want to be deprived of the means of support and of all perspectives for the future, including removal from Pyongyang, one must act this way only. The director gave the example of a professor from the pedagogical institute, who spoke out with his own interpretation (which was in accordance in content with the officially given thought) of some political theses; he was removed from his work, and a great problem of the improper behavior by the professor was created. For this reason, as the director stated, he does not speak freely on political subjects with his own wife, fearing that these issues may go further.

The director, who has been a party member for 7 years, stated that the foundation of the case which is decisive in the promotion of a given worker to a responsible position is membership in the Workers' Party. And also, for higher positions one must have party service going back to 1945 or 1948 or 1947.

In the ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK, with the exception of a few technical employees, all are party members.

\* for details see document No. 38/1/2421/58/tjn.

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2 cop[ies] MSZ [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Dep[artment] V

1 cop[y] a/a

Brzezinski Henryk

[trans. note: followed by signature]

1st Secretary of the PRL [People's Republic of Poland] Embassy in the DPRK