

May 12, 1957

**Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 12 May 1957**

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Summary:

During a one-on-one conversation between Puzanov and Pak Jeong-ae, Pak justifies North Korea's efforts in agricultural collectivization and claims that the KWP CC is not waging a campaign against Soviet Koreans. Then the two discuss prominent DPRK officials and how they are assessed in the party.

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The Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV
for the period 6 through 29 May 1957

Pyongyang

[...]

12 May 1957

In a conversation which took place Pak Jeong-ae [Pak Jong Ae] touched on several issues concerning the visit to the Soviet Union by a DPRK government delegation in 1956. She said that during a conversation with the CPSU CC and Soviet government leadership in a statement by Cde. Ponomarev our attention was directed to the fact that we were stepping up the collectivization of agriculture and waging a campaign against Soviet Koreans.

With regard to collectivization, said Pak Jeong-ae, we thought and [continue] to think that we acted correctly. The situation in agriculture which developed after the conclusion of the armistice was extremely difficult: there was a shortage of labor, an acute shortage of draft animals, the irrigation systems were badly damaged and ruined, there weren't enough farm implements and seeds, and there was no mineral fertilizer. In such conditions it was difficult for us to restore agricultural production on individual, private farmer foundations. Therefore we considered it more correct and advisable for the majority of the peasantry to unite agriculture into cooperatives. The results of the work which has been done over three years show that thanks to the agricultural cooperatives in 1956 the DPRK managed to reach and even somewhat exceed the gross grain output of prewar 1949. More than 85% of our peasant farms have been unified into cooperatives and right now the main thing for us is strengthening the economic management of agricultural cooperatives. It seems to us that those comments which were expressed by Cde. Ponomarev were based on a lack of knowledge of the actual state of affairs.

Our delegation also did not agree that the KWP CC was allegedly waging a campaign against Soviet Koreans. Therefore in his speech Kim Il Sung said that if Soviet Koreans had committed and are making mistakes then they ought to be corrected and, if necessary, punished. The KWP CC, said Pak Jeong-ae, has not organized any campaign against Soviet Koreans. With respect to Kim Il Sung, he paid very close attention these issues and always directed the attention of Presidium members to the

fact that it would be incorrect to stir up these issues and turn them into some kind of a campaign. But much pressure was organized against Kim Il Sung on this issue by a number of Presidium members. From the facts which have recently become known to us one can say that a campaign against Soviet Koreans was organized primarily by those people who then found themselves in the anti-Party group at the August KWP CC plenum. They, said Pak Jeong-ae, wanted to provoke discontent and set us against the Soviet Union. Essentially the actual leaders of this campaign were Choe Chang-ik and Chairman of the Pyongyang City Committee, Go Bong-gi.

In return, I noted that any official, regardless of his origin, ought to be corrected and called to order if he commits mistakes or shortcomings in work, that it is necessary to select personnel according to professional and Party criteria. However, in questions about Soviet Koreans serious shortcomings and mistakes were made because both in the press and in many meetings issues were examined not about the individual mistakes of particular officials, including the Soviet Koreans, but the matter was turned [into one] about the incorrect actions of Soviet Koreans. Pak Jeong-ae agreed that there were not a few such cases but that this was not the policy of the KWP CC Presidium and its leadership.

I asked Pak Jeong-ae to inform me of how the CC Presidium is thinking of deciding the issue of abolishing [the practice of] one person holding several senior state and Party posts.

Pak Jeong-ae covered this question in sufficient detail, saying that Kim Il Sung is very concerned and thinks much about how to solve this problem correctly. Choe Yong-geon [Choe Yong Gon] was approved as Deputy Chairman of the KWP CC and Deputy Premier with this goal. The Presidium wanted to raise the authority of Choe Yong-geon, intending to subsequently examine the issue of appointing him as Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers. However, said Pak Jeong-ae, these calculations were not justified. Choe Yong-geon not only did not raise his own authority but on the contrary lowered it, since he is not doing any work as Deputy Chairman of the KWP CC, and not much of his work is evident even in the Cabinet of Ministers, and has very little authority among senior officials.

In reply to my question of how Kim Il is assessed, Pak Jeong-ae said that he is a capable and energetic official, and enjoys great authority among senior officials and activists. Pak Jeong-ae then noted that Koreans have become accustomed to people heading the government and Party who are quite authoritative and well-known for their great past activity.

Characterizing Kim Du-bong, Pak Jeong-ae said that on a number of issues he has behaved flippantly and frivolously. As an example she cited the fact that, in spite of his advanced age (68), he enjoys dances very much and there are many cases when he continues them all night.

Characterizing Pak [Yi Wan] Pak Jeong-ae noted he is a quite energetic and capable official, but he does not always approach the solution of large state and political issues deeply and seriously.

The conversation was between the two of us...

[...]

SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK

[signature] (A. PUZANOV)

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