

**September 1, 1956**

**Diary of Ambassador of the USSR to the DPRK V.I.  
Ivanov for the period from 29 August to 14  
September 1956**

**Citation:**

"Diary of Ambassador of the USSR to the DPRK V.I. Ivanov for the period from 29 August to 14 September 1956", September 1, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 410, Listi 319-321. Obtained by James F. Person and translated by Gary Goldberg. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/114136>

**Summary:**

Kim Il Sung, in conversation with Ivanov, expresses his concerns about assignment of personnel and the cult of personality in North Korea.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK Top Secret  
No. 251 Copy No. 3  
"15" September 1956

DIARY

Ambassador of the USSR to the DPRK V.I. Ivanov for the period from 29 August to 14 September 1956

Pyeongyang  
1 September

Today Kim Il Sung invited me and told me about the results of the KWP Plenum which was held 30-31 August.

Kim said that in personal conversations during the course of the preparations for the Plenum with Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik], [Trade Union Federation Central Committee Chairman] Seo Hwi [So Hwi], and others dissatisfied with the KWP leadership, the issues which they were bringing up were identified: the incorrect assignment of personnel, the cult of personality, and some others. As a result of the exchange of opinions in the private conversations and the discussion of pressing issues in the Presidium we have come to a unanimous opinion and no contentious issues remained.

They decided to hold the Plenum with a report about the trip of the government delegation to the USSR and countries of the people's democracies. The report included the issues about the results of the trip of the government delegation; the economic situation in the DPRK in light of the economic policy experience of fraternal republics; and the improvement of party work in the KWP. The report covered the issues of the cult of personality, the improvement of intra-party democracy, the struggle against bureaucratism, and the improvement of intra-Party work. Choe Chang-ik even thought that the issue of the cult of personality had been formulated very strongly. [Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly] Kim Du-bong [Kim Tu Pong] agreed with the content of the report.

The central issue of the Plenum was that of personnel, not the cult of personality. During study of this issue it turned out that the arguments of the discontented personnel were not well-founded. The accusations against Pak Jeong-ae [Pak Jong Ae] and [Chief of the Party Cadre Department] Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol] were not borne out. Therefore Kim Du-bong [Kim Tu Bong], who had raised the issue about personnel, agreed not to raise it for plenum discussion. The Central Committee Presidium came to the conclusion that the accusations against the individuals had been directed at undermining the leadership. Kim further said: taking advantage of your presence, I would like to tell you that in a conversation with me, Kim Du-bong referred to the fact that a fraternal communist party shares the formulation of the question about personnel. In response to my question about which communist party he was talking about, Kim Il Sung replied that Kim Du-bong did not say, but commented that "don't think anything bad about the Soviet Embassy." Kim Il Sung allegedly explained to Kim Du-bong that the fraternal communist party is sending its opinion to us [Translator's note: "us" was not specified, but only makes sense here if it means the Koreans] officially.

At the Plenum, after the report, the question of [Minister of Trade] Yun Gong-heum [Yun Kong Hum] arose. In his speech he brought accusations that the Workers' Party had rejected the decisions of the Twentieth Congress and does not follow the principles of Marxism-Leninism; he described matters such that the very serious consequences of the cult of personality are being retained inside the KWP and had repudiated the general line of the party.

In Kim's words, the participants of the plenum were outraged at the provocative nature of Yun's speech at the plenum and demanded that the floor be taken away from him. Choe Chang-ik supported Yun. Others who spoke exposed the anti-party nature of Yun's speech at the plenum and cited instances of his anti-party conduct before the plenum.

Seo Hwi, Li Pilgyu [Ri Pil Kyu], and Deputy Minister of Culture Kim Chang-il [Kim Chang Il] who, according to Kim's statement, left the plenum, crossed the border, and at the present time are being detained by Chinese border guards and are in Andong [Dandong], had engaged in behind the scenes anti-party activity along with Yun.

Seo Hwi, Yun Gong-heum, Li Pil-gyu, and Kim Chang-il have been expelled from the party for anti-party activity. Choe Chang-ik has been removed from the Central Committee Presidium. Pak Chang-ok has been removed from the post of Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and removed from membership in the Central Committee. The question about him has been referred to the Central Committee Party Commission for a decision. At this point Kim declared that the party leadership had not intended to take such steps with respect to Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok; however, having exposed their anti-party activity, the participants of the Plenum demanded that organizational conclusions be adopted with respect to these officials.

With regard to Kim Du-bong, Kim Il Sung said that they think that, having been deceived, he was under the influence of this anti-Party group. At the present time Kim Du-bong holds correct Party positions and proof of this is allegedly Kim Du-bong's demand for the removal of Choe Chang-ik from CC membership which he made even before the Plenum, to which Kim Il Sung then did not agree.

Kim Il Sung then declared that, having studied the activities of the anti-Party group, we could not have acted otherwise and think that our decision was correct. We have consolidated our forces in this struggle and achieved Party unity. Thus the complex issues which surfaced in our Party are now solved.

The state of health care was examined at the Plenum where the issues of public health education, the construction of a network of medical institutions, and the improvement of medical work were discussed.

In conclusion Kim Il Sung pointed out that during a meeting with Embassy Counselor Petrov on 2 August the latter expressed the concern which the CPSU CC is displaying in connection with the situation in the KWP. Kim Il Sung asked that the CPSU CC be informed of the decisions that were adopted. The report and the decisions will be sent to the Embassy after they are translated.

In connection with Kim Il Sung's report concerning Kim Du-bong's comment about a fraternal Communist Party, [Vice Premier and Minister of Light Industry] Pak Ui-wan explained to us that Kim Du-bong's remark in the Presidium had been distorted by Kim Il Sung. Kim Du-bong only said that it was not imperative to engage in questioning witnesses at the Presidium and that Kim Il Sung could be charged with talking with them; such methods are feasible and they are employed in fraternal Parties.

Ambassador of the USSR in the DPRK  
/V. IVANOV/

4 Copies issued

No. 1-cde. Shepilov  
No. 2-cde. Federenko  
No. 3-cde. Kurdyukov  
No. 4- to the files  
Drafted by Ivanov  
Typed by Alekseev  
No. 940