

December 17, 1957

**Notes from a Conversation between the 1st
Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK with
Comrade Pimenov, 1st Secretary of the Embassy of
the USSR**

Citation:

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Summary:

Brzezinski Henryk and Comrade Pimenov discuss the situation in the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party and the ongoing purges of the "August Group."

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Embassy of the Pyongyang, 17.XII.57
People's Republic of Poland
in Pyongyang [trans. note: tilted stamp]
No. 20/12/2421/58/tjn [trans. note: added by hand; tjn probably means tajne, secret]

SECRET [trans. note: tilted stamp]

N o t e

From conversations with Pimenov, 1st Secretary of the Embassy of the USSR, on 16.XII.1957

The conversation had as its goal gaining information about the Plenum of the CC of the Workers' Party.

Pimenov did not know about the critique of the former minister of coal industry. As for other people (see note No. 22/14/2421/58/tjn), he confirmed the facts of the critique by the plenum.

At the beginning Pimenov briefly described the speech by Kim Il Sung. He stressed that the proposals presented in the speech regarding the unification of Korea bring nothing new but represent a systematization of the total of previous proposals. (we will send the text of the speech by the next courier). A broad group of party activists were invited to the plenum. The plenum lasted two days. After Kim Il Sung's speech, Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol], vice-chairman of the party, took the floor. In a very detailed way, Pak Geum-cheol recounted his impressions from his trip to Moscow on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the revolution. He devoted a significant part of his speech to the issues of the August group. Pak Geum-cheol criticized Pak Ui-wan [Pak Ui Wan] (Ui-wan simply means the Russian name Ivan) very sharply for supporting and cooperating with the August group. For supporting former minister Kim Seung-hwa [Kim Sung Hwa] and his policies in construction. Pak Geum-cheol equally sharply criticized the former minister of purchases O Gi-seok [O Ki Sok] for his speeches against some members of the CC of the People's Party. Pimenov said that Kim Du-bong [Kim Tu Bong] was also criticized. Kim Du-bong was criticized also for wanting to send a letter to the brotherly parties asking them to grant assistance because the situation in the Workers' Party is difficult.

Kim Du-bong took part in the discussion and said that he would accept all party punishments and in the future would not spare his life for the cause of the revolution. Basically, as Pimenov said (Pimenov talked about the plenum with several persons who had been at the plenum), Kim Du-bong did not deny the accusations regarding his ties to the group. Further discussants gave examples that the group aimed to overthrow the government with the help of using force. Hence calls came from the hall to take the issue to court. Pak Ui-wan took part in the discussion twice. Pak Ui-wan's speech is considered unsuccessful. The assembly reacted to Pak Ui-wan's words unfavorably. Voices of "confess" and so forth came from the hall. Pak Ui-wan's speeches were often interrupted with various rejoinders. Pimenov did not confirm the fact of calling out "off the podium" about which I wrote in the note No. 22/14/2421/58/tjn/. Pak Ui-wan did not accept the critique. He did not agree with the accusations being made. Pak Ui-wan, after Go Bong-gi [Ko Pong Gi] (former secretary of Pyongyang) admitted that he had wrongly criticized Pak Geum-cheol and Han Sang-du [Han Sang Du] (former dir[ector] of the organizational dep[artment] of the CC, currently chairman of Trade Unions after the escape of Seo Hwi [So Hwi]).

In this particular case, the question is like this: toward the end of 1955 and in early 1956, following the correct critique (in Pimenov's opinion) of mistakes in the cultural

policies of the DPRK conducted by vice-minister Jeong Ryul [Jong Ryul] and others, this policy consisted of a mechanical copying of the cultural policy of the USSR. Funny things happened. E.g., in the geography textbooks of the USSR it was written that Mongolia lies to the south-east of the USSR, the same was copied in Korea's textbooks. If the repair of this policy was necessary and right, then in the process of change of this policy a campaign of persecuting Korean cit[izens] who had come to Korea from the USSR was developed. A wrong and broad political campaign aimed against innocent people developed. Pak Ui-wan had at one time criticized Pak Geum-cheol and Han Sang-du for taking no steps to sever this wrong and harmful campaign aimed against Korean cit[izens] who had arrived from the USSR (Pak Ui-wan also came from the USSR, he is included in the so-called Russian group. At one time in Korea one included oneself in one of the following groups: the Korean, Chinese, Russian, Kim Il Sung, Japanese - those who had come from Japan and the South Korean).

At the last plenum, Go Bong-gi said that the whole campaign had been organized by Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik] and Pak Chang-ok [Pak Chang Ok], as well as persons connected to them. At the same time, Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok collected appropriate shocking facts from this campaign and presented them to some persons from the DPRK leadership with the goal of creating discrepancy in the leadership of the DPRK. This is why Pak Ui-wan in his speech referring to facts presented by Go Bong-gi deemed criticism of him VERY UNCLEAR on the given issue by Pak Geum-cheol and Han Sang-du. Pak Ui-wan did not accept the other accusations. Pak Ui-wan reserved for himself the right to speak at the Presidium of the CC. Kim Il Sung took the floor in the discussion. This speech by Kim Il Sung was not recorded on tape. Kim Il Sung assessed the group in the following way: the group was broken up already last year. The group possessed no ideological platform, the group was guided by careerist goals. Kim Il Sung suggested interrupting the discussion about the matter of the group because it is not polite to discuss the issue of such a group at such a festive plenum. Kim Il Sung announced that the CC Presidium will examine the new facts that were presented by the plenum. On the question of assessment of the activity of the group, Kim Il Sung recommended a precise examination of the facts without any impatience and nervousness. Pimenov noticed that Kim Il Sung did not use the terms used by the press about the group, such as: traitors of the revolution, enemies, and so on. To the Soviet comrades, Kim Il Sung's assessment seems reasonable.

On the question of Kim Du-bong, Pimenov stated that Kim Du-bong had at one time been the secretary of the New Democratic Party. Kim Du-bong therefore had not been a communist.

On the matter of Con Don Thek [sic] (counselor of the M[inistry of] F[oreign] A[ffairs], Pimenov states that Jeong Dong-taek was one of the responsible employees in the sphere of culture. The party punishment which he received (about which I write in note No..... [trans. note: number not filled in] was for mistakes in cultural policy, for which he was co-guilty (Jeong Dong-taek had come from the USSR).

Pimenov stated that a few months ago the Counselor of the DPRK Embassy in Czechoslovakia had been recalled for taking an erroneous position on the question of the cult of the individual. This Counselor, Koi Jen Mien [sic] is currently working at the M[inistry of] F[oreign] A[ffairs] as a clerk.

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Dep[artment] V

1 cop[y] a/a

Brzezinski Henryk

[trans. note: followed by signature]

1st Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK