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**Record of a Conversation with Cde. Kim Gyu-yeop,
Director of the Pyongyang Children's Theater**

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Summary:

Andreyev and Kim Gyu-yeop converse about the Pyongyang children's theater and the issues of concern to writers in the Union of Korean Writers.

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Cde. KIM GYU-YEOP, director
of the Pyongyang children's theater

26 May 1955

[handwritten in the left margin: "to Cde. V. I. Petrukhov"; another person's name
below was crossed out]

While on a business trip I got to know Cde. Kim Gyu-yeop, director of the Pyongyang children's theater and member of the Union of Korean Writers, in a Hamheung hotel and had a conversation with him.

Kim said that the children's theater presented its first play in April of this year. The second play, "Pavlik Morozov", which the theater had been preparing for production for six months, was removed from the repertory by decision of the KWP CC Agitprop Department for the following reasons: first, the content of this play does not correspond to Korean reality since for Koreans it seems unrealistic that a son would act against his father; second, they think that at the present time it is necessary to focus attention not on internal class struggle but on exposing the reality of South Korea. However, said Kim, this issue was recently reexamined and the theater received the right to present the play, "Pavlik Morozov".

"Sem'ya [Family]", a play by the Korean writer Seo Man-il prepared by the theater, was removed from the repertory because much attention in it was devoted to the reality of one of the security detachments (chkhmanta) created in North Korea during the temporary occupation by the supporters of Syngman Rhee and to the love of a Korean woman for the head of this detachment, and also because in the play a policy is pursued of slighting old specialists who received education under the Japanese. Kim said, at the present time the theater is preparing a play by Marshak, "Dvenadtsat' Mesyatev [The Twelve Months]".

In reply to my question how the policy of the Worker's Party on the issue of the cooperation of agriculture finds reflection in the works of Korean writers, Kim replied that the Union of Korean Writers sent 30 writers to rural regions in order for them to write works on the theme of the creation of collective farms in North Korea. Kim said that the same number of writers was sent to industrial enterprises.

Kim reported that kulak elements in the countryside are resisting cooperation and spreading all sorts of rumors among the peasants. They are calling upon peasants not to join agricultural cooperatives, trying to convince them that the peasants will supposedly get nothing for their work since the entire harvest will be taken from them by the state, that a peasant can work flooded plots himself better than a tractor and will thus get a richer harvest compared to what he will get with the distribution of labor days in a cooperative. They are still agitating for peasants not to join cooperatives because cooperation supposedly leads to wife-sharing [obshchnost' zhen]. Those kulak elements who join cooperatives kill their cattle for some reasons under various pretexts (they break the legs and inflict other bodily injuries). There are many cases when subversive work is being done in cooperatives.

Kim shared his creative ideas. He plans to write a story by the end of this year under

the name of "Fakel [Torch]". The basis of the story will be subversive activity of a former member of the reactionary South Korean youth organization "sobuktan" [sic] in one agricultural cooperative, where this actually took place.

In reply to my question, about what issues do they hold writers' discussions in the Union of Korean Writers, Kim answered the following. Before the second congress of Soviet writers the most contentious issue was the issue of socialist realism. One group of writers headed by Ri Gi-yeong, Han Seol-ya and Hong Sun-cheol upheld the method of socialist realism in Korean literature; another group of writers considers it premature inasmuch as a socialist society has not yet been constructed in Korea. As a result of not understanding the method of socialist realism these writers have created a number of works in which elements of formalism and naturalism are clearly displayed. Such works include "Novyy Den' [New Day]" by Ri Buk-Myeong, "Koks [Coke]" by Ri Gap-gi, "Na Rel'sakh [On the Tracks]" by Kim Sung-gi [sic], "Yablonya [The Apple Trees]" by Kim Man-sun [sic], and others. The above works were criticized. However, their authors continue to keep their positions.

The conversation lasted more than an hour. We arranged to meet in Pyongyang at the beginning of June when he has returned from a business trip.

□□EMBASSY ATTACHÉ [signature] (Andreyev)

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