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**Note concerning the August Group, Developed on
the Basis of Party Documents, as well as on the
Basis of Unofficial Sources of Information**

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Summary:

The August Group criticizes Kim Il Sung cult of personality and many DPRK officials are removed from their positions.

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N O T E

Conc[erning] the August group, developed on the basis of party documents, as well as on the basis of unofficial sources of information.

The resolutions of the 20th Congress conc[erning] the personality cult and especially Khrushchev's speech was received in a very restrained manner by the local leadership. The details of the speech were known to a narrow group in the party leadership and were not a subject for internal discussion in the party.

Shortly after the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the 3rd Congress of the CC KWP (April 1956) took place. Dominating the congress were economic issues. Much space was devoted to the outlines of the 5-year plan, 1957-1961, in the national economy, and also an assessment of the inter-congress period was conducted.

The reporting speech, in all its extensiveness, confirmed the correctness of the CC's policies in the space of the entire period of the report, and also maintaining the collegial forms of work of the CC was stressed emphatically. The issue of the personality cult was presented in such a way that this phenomenon appeared only in relation to the person of Pak Heon-yeong [Pak Hon Yong], and one was to infer that the personality cult was eradicated at the moment that Pak Heon-yeong and his group were eradicated.

It needs to be stated in general that the 3rd Congress of the CC KWP did not at all reflect the critical conclusions stemming from the resolutions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

During the government delegation's stay in the brotherly nations with premier Kim Il Sung (June-July), the opposition group within the party leadership became active. Its main critique was directed against the cult of Kim Il Sung. After their return, the issue was presented to Kim Il Sung. It was intended to hold a plenum at the beginning of August 1956 (the delegation returned on 20 July), was put off until the end of August. In this period, allegedly those persons from among CC members who spoke in favor of the group were summoned to the CC. Pressure was exerted on them not to support the group's slogans. In August, the CC Plenum took place. The opposition group took the floor at the plenum. The plenum, including Kim Il Sung, allegedly did not permit the precise presentation of this group's position. Harsh measures were taken at this plenum. The group was labeled as anti-party and sectarian. Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik] (vice-premier and member of the Political Bureau, a Korean from China) and Pak Chang-ok [Pak Chang Ok] (vice-premier and member of the Political Bureau, a Korean from the USSR) were removed from the Political Bureau and removed from the functions of vice-premiers.

The remaining ones were removed from the party, such as:

Kim Seung-hwa [Kim Sung Hwa] construction minister, Seo Hwi [So Hwi] chairman of Trade Unions, Minister of Foreign Trade and many other persons. No sanctions were applied then against Kim Du-bong [Kim Tu Bong]. At a later time, the former DPRK ambassador to Moscow Ri Sang-jo [Ri Sang Jo] refused to return and then obtained political asylum. The view dominates here that the group could count on the support of many persons on the government level, had many supporters and sympathizers in

the ministries and institutions in Pyongyang, as well as in the provinces. Basically, Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok were condemned personally, and the rest were described generally.

A resolution was passed at the August Plenum, which apart from economic issues included the CC's stand regarding the personality cult. Solidarity with the resolutions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU was expressed in it, and reference was made to the March plenum (a special plenum, which took place a short time before the 3rd Congress of the KWP, April 1957. That Plenum was devoted to a report from the Korean delegation's stay at the 20th Congress). It was stated that the above-mentioned Plenum discussed the existing manifestations of the personality cult in the party's ideological work, that the personality cult was reflected also in the extolling of the achievements of particular persons. It was said further that it was since that plenum that steps were taken to remove the manifestations of the personality cult. Although this resolution referred to the March plenum and to the steps taken then in the sphere of overcoming the personality cult, it must be said that this issue was not the subject of broad political action after that plenum, but rather that methods of counteraction were taken from the top and not a broader ideological action. Certain administrative steps were taken, which aimed at removing the external manifestations of the personality cult. At the 3rd congress of the CC KWP, as has been mentioned a month after the March plenum, the CC officially took the stand that the party's policies in their actions had based themselves on the collective leadership, and there were no manifestations of the personality cult related to the current leadership.

To go back to the stand taken by the August group. The details are being kept secret. But the group was described as anti-party and sectarian. During the duration of the August plenum, four persons from the group managed to escape to China. Among them 2 members of the CC and 1 deputy (Minister of Internal Trade, Chairman of the Trade Unions and the director of the ex-Department of Construction Materials). Supposedly these persons reached the leadership of the Communist Party of China during the 8th Congress of the CPC, which was taking place at that time. As a result of this, Mikoyan (he had been a representative at the 8th Congress in Beijing) and Peng Dehuai came to Pyongyang for an unofficial visit. Talks were conducted on the subject of the opposition that has arisen within the party leadership. Advice was given, among other things regarding the conduct toward this group.

As a result of this, a Plenum of the CC took place in September, which took a new stand toward the August group. They were described as persons who had got lost, that the issues that stemmed from this represented a dispute within the party and that one must strive to remove their mistakes through persuasion.

Such a far-reaching change in stand at the September plenum of the CC compared to the August one was incomprehensible among party members. The change in stand toward the group was explained with the fact that this change testifies to the strength of the party and that ideological persuasion is the best method of party work

After the intervention toward the August group during the unofficial visit, which has already been mentioned, an understanding was apparently reached regarding the publication in the press of both resolutions from the August and September plenums, and also that the members of the August group would not be persecuted. As a result of this, the rights of CC members were given back to the former members of the Political Bureau (Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok). The rights of party members were also given back to persons presently in China.

The CC position has changed. The Hungarian events have given rise to anxiety among the DPRK leadership and suspicions regarding the activities of the August

group. An investigation has been started regarding the persons of this group. Supposedly Choe Chang-ik and Pak Chang-ok were placed under house arrest, arrests were also conducted toward the remaining persons of the group. Following the September plenum, Minister of Construction Kim Seung-hwa was removed from his functions. In view of his popularity, he was sent to the higher party school in Moscow. Critical articles against Kim Seung-hwa began to appear in the press.

In May and June 1957, a group of professors at Kim Il Sung University took a stand expressing views approximating those of the August group, with accents of burgher-bourgeois ideology. Those who were expressing this kind of views were excluded from the party and removed from the university. The issue was not more substantially reflected among the students, supposedly did not step outside the framework of the university and did not encounter any sort of broader support. In July, a further process of escapes to China took place, a few people from the middle level of party activists in the Pyongyang Committee.

Kim Du-bong officially cut himself off from the August group and condemned it at a meeting of the activists of internal trade in January of last year. A few arrests among the technical intelligentsia were carried out in Chamhyn [sic]. In Pyongyang, arrests in the Ministry of Culture and Propaganda and in the Ministry of Construction were carried out regarding certain persons, and also dismissals from work were conducted in the above-mentioned ministries, as well as in those institutions or in the whole country in those places where doubts were had toward certain persons. Multi-week, sometimes lasting months, party meetings were also conducted, often having the character of unsophisticated critique and moral pressure. Following these meetings and appropriate investigations there were cases of a few suicides in Pyongyang and Hamheung (one of the dep[artment] dir[ectors] of the CC and an employee of film).

After the August election in 1957, people toward whom suspicions were had that they were in any way whatsoever connected to or had taken an insufficiently clear stand toward the case of the former August group did not become members of the new People's Assembly and government. E.g.: even though Kim Du-bong officially condemned all factional activity, he was not re-elected to his previous function, but [sic.] did not even become a member of the new government. As for the stand taken by the August group, it needs to be mentioned that the August group did not at the time count on the support of the party organizations in Pyongyang, Hamheung, and in case that the speech in Pyongyang had had a positive effect for the group, it intended to travel to the province of southern [Hamgyeong], which constitutes a serious industrial region (Hynnam, Hamgen, Pangu [sic]).

Acc[ording to] unofficial data, at the December plenum (1957), devoted to the report from the party-government delegation's stay at the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the October revolution, the issue of the August group was brought up again. The general speech devoted to the significance of the 40th anniversary was made by Kim Il Sung. The August group was discussed by Pak Geum-cheol [Pak Kum Chol] (vice-chairman of the CC KWP). Criticized, among others, was Kim Du-bong, he was reproached for dishonesty in his critique of the August group. It was said that the group had planned the retention of Kim Du-bong in the function of chairman of the presidium. He was also criticized for attempting to send a letter to the fraternal countries asking for assistance, since the situation in the workers' party was difficult (there is a lack of more precise data on this topic). Kim Du-bong did not deny the accusations regarding his ties to the group. He stated in the discussion that he would accept any party punishment and in the future would not spare his life for the cause of the revolution. Further accusations were of an unserious character. (After this plenum, the 2nd Congress of the United Fatherland Front took place. Kim Du-bong was elected a member of the CC UFF).

A fact that deserves attention is that during the whole period of the campaign condemning the August group, Kim Du-bong was not included in it. A sharp critique

was conducted at the plenum against Pak Ui-wan (he was still serving as vice-premier at that time; he was dismissed from this position and expelled from the party after the party conference in March 1958).

Accusations were made against Pak Ui-wan and the former minister of the coal industry Yi Songwook [sic] that they had possessed ties to and supported the August group. It was stated that Pak Ui-wan had met with Ri Sang-jo in Moscow (former DPRK ambassador in the USSR) and that he supported him. It was reproached that he had also supported the minister of construction Kim Seung-hwa and his policies in the sphere of construction. Pak Ui-wan did not accept the critique and reserved for himself the right to speak at the presidium of the CC.

Kim Il Sung spoke up in the discussion (the speech was not published). He assessed the group in the following way: the group had been dispersed already in 1956. It possessed no ideological platform. The group was guided by careerist goals. Kim Il Sung proposed interrupting the discussion in view of the ceremonial nature of the plenum. An examination of the given facts by the Presidium of the CC was announced. It is characteristic that the assessment of the group done by Kim Il Sung during the discussion was different from the official one given in the press and in the speech itself made at the plenum by Kim Il Sung. In the speech, the group was described, among other things, as "they fell under the influence of revisionism, and, on the other hand, notwithstanding the experience of the difficulty of the revolutionary struggle, they entered the road of rightist capitulationism, and also in the end went on the road of treason of the party and the revolution."

In March 1958, a general party conference took place, at which the 5-year plan (1957-1961) was presented. The order of the day also included the issue of party unity and cohesiveness. The August group was discussed against the background of the development of the revolutionary movement in Korea. In connection with the issue of factional disputes, which existed from the dawn of the creation of the communist party in Korea. This party leadership [in Korea] described the August group in the following way, in the information relayed by Kim Il Sung to the accredited Ambassadors: The August group was a manifestation of revisionism, its activity appeared in the period of the reaction's attacks against the international workers' movement and against the USSR. For reasons of ideology, it was stated that the factionalists negated the party's leading role in favor of the Front of National Unity and the Trade Unions. The example was given that they assumed that the decisive authority for the army is the FNU, and not the party. They spoke up against the excessive interference by the party in affairs of state, technology and learning. They spoke up against the implementation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They pulled former landowners and kulaks into the state apparatus. In the justice system, [people] were allowed to get away with political crimes, excusing the guilty with an absence of political upbringing, the escapes of soldiers to the south were given as an example. Furthermore, the information was given that the August group had at first been taken for a political faction. Later, it was determined that there had also been preparations for the use of armed force. At the conference, the principle was adopted of supervising and critiquing severely, of punishing magnanimously. But to treat people in responsible positions differently, i.e., severely. In cases of this kind, a lack of consciousness is out of the question. The most guilty will be directed to the courts.

9 persons were removed from the CC and the party, including Kim Du-bong and Pak Ui-wan. In their places, a new 9, including 3 military, were elected: the Head of the Political Council, the Head of the Air Force and the c[ommand]er of the 2nd Army. 8 new candidates were elected, including the current Ambassador to the USSR was elected. The audit committee was also strengthened, the vice-minister of foreign affairs [Ri Dong-geon] was among those who went into it. Kim Il Sung chairman of the KWP and Ha Ang-cheon [Ha Ang Chon], director of the CC science department, were brought into the Presidium.

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