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Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 24 October 1957

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Summary:

Nam Il informs the ambassadors of the results of the October KWP CC Plenum and expresses confident in sharp turn to be made in construction.

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Nam Il gathered all the ambassadors and at the instruction of the KWP CC Presidium informed us about the results of the October KWP CC Plenum.

"The main issue at the Plenum", said Nam Il, "was the issue of improving capital construction. Construction is one of backward sectors of work for us. The plan of construction and installation work of the first six months has only been 89% fulfilled, and for local construction, 67%. The KWP CC is concerned about the unfortunate situation created in construction. According to the draft of the plan for the first five-year plan we intend to invest up to 150 billion won in capital construction, including 101 billion won for industrial construction, 22.5 billion won for housing construction, and nine billion won for agricultural construction (irrigation construction).

Why is construction a backward sector and the established work plan not being fulfilled?

The main reason is that construction is being done by obsolete methods; almost no precast construction is employed and the level of mechanization is low. Some leaders of construction organizations have not been carrying out the KWP CC instructions about the employment of new industrial construction methods. They were headed by leaders who intentionally did not follow the Party line; I mean former Minister of Construction Kim Seung-hwa and former Chief of the Department of Construction Materials Ri Pil-gyu. They did not engage in construction, but were clearly hindering the Party line. At the present time the eradication of the consequences of the damage is being insufficiently pursued.

Three sections were created to discuss the report of Pak Geum-cheol: industrial construction, urban and housing construction, and agricultural construction. Up to 600 people participated in the work of the sections. Sixty people spoke.

What are the main tasks set by the CC Plenum?

To introduce advanced methods into construction, precast construction. This means to bring its share to 40% by the end of the five-year plan. Serious attention in the decision is being devoted to questions of standardizing designs, the mechanization of construction work, increasing labor productivity (by 150% during the five-year plan), reducing prime cost (by 28%), the production of standard structural elements, and training and increasing the skills of construction personnel. It is intended to build 720,000 square meters of housing in cities and 200,000 homes in the countryside. Of the nine billion won budgeted for agricultural construction by the state the main part (no less than 60%) will be directed at irrigation construction so as to provide an increase of 60,000 hectares of irrigated area. In addition, it means that agricultural cooperatives will budget seven billion won for irrigation construction, which will provide an opportunity to obtain up to 40,000 hectares of newly-irrigated land. The state will help agricultural cooperatives with cement and other construction materials. By the end of the five-year plan it is intended to bring the production of reinforced concrete to 435,000 cubic meters and up to 40,000 pillars. It is intended to mechanize 55% of excavation work, 80% of shipments, and 82% of manual transport.

After Nam Il's information about this issue GDR Ambassador Richard Fischer asked, is it correct that some people are saying that there are no conditions in the DPRK for adopting industrial construction and that, they say, these conditions will only [exist] in 10 years?

Nam Il replied that the Plenum condemned such a point of view by several senior officials. Former Minister of Construction Kim Seung-hwa went to the Soviet Union to familiarize himself with an advanced construction method. On return he gave a good report about this to the CC, but afterwards he himself began to obstruct the introduction of advanced methods of construction in the DPRK.

According to Nam Il's information about organizational issues the Plenum examined the following:

Concerning the anti-Party activity of former Ambassador to the USSR Ri Sang-jo. By making use of his position, Ri Sang-jo caused our Party great harm. He was in communication with Choe Chang-ik, Pak Chang-ok, and other factionalists, and denied all the successes which our country has achieved. He considered the leadership of the Party and the Party line to be incorrect. After the August CC Plenum we advised him to come to us in the DPRK, renounce his incorrect views, and work with us. Ri Sang-jo refused to return to the Motherland and, in spite of a CC warning, continued anti-Party activity. He spread all sorts of fabrications against the KWP CC leadership and against individual CC leaders among Korean students in Moscow. Before the Plenum the CC again invited Ri Sang-jo to participate in the Plenum. Ri Sang-jo did not come. The CC Plenum unanimously expelled Ri Sang-jo from candidate membership and expelled him from the Party;

The Plenum decided to convene a Party conference at the beginning of 1958 to discuss the draft target figures of the first five-year plan. The Plenum charged the CC Presidium with setting a date for the convening of the conference and the rules of representation;

The Plenum decided to create a united front department in the KWP CC;

The Plenum elected Kim Chang-man a member of the Presidium and Chairman of the CC of United Trade Unions Han Sung-do as a candidate member of the Presidium, releasing him from the responsibilities of Chief of the Organization Department and member of the CC Organization Committee.

The Plenum released Pak Hun-il from the work of Chief of the CC Agriculture Department and approved Hyun Mu-gwang, Chairman of the People's Committee of South Hamgyeong, as Chairman of the CC Agriculture Department.

The Plenum released Heo Seong-taek from the responsibilities of Deputy Chairman of the CC Party Control Committee in connection with his appointment as Minister of the Coal Industry and Yun In Nyul [sic] in connection with his appointment as Deputy Administrator of Affairs of the Cabinet of Ministers.

In conclusion Nam Il said that the Plenum took place in a businesslike atmosphere and displayed its solidarity. All Plenum decisions were adopted unanimously. We are confident that a sharp turn will be made in construction and new industrial construction methods will be employed.