

April 20, 1960
Journal of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A.M.
Puzanov for 20 April 1960

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Summary:

Pak Gwang-seon discusses the growing protest movement in South Korea, while Pak Seong-cheol and Puzanov exchange opinions on the causes of the political turmoil in the ROK.

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[Handwritten notations:
to [[illegible name] and
G. Ye. Samsonov]

JOURNAL

of Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK A. M. PUZANOV for the period
12 April through 27 April 1960

Pyongyang

[...]

20 April 1960

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Pak Gwang-seon informed the ambassadors about the further progress of events in South Korea. The substance of his information basically comes down to the following.

In recent days the struggle of the South Korean population has expanded considerably. On 18 April a student demonstration occurred in Seoul (40,000 people), Busan (1,300), Jeonju (about 1,000), and other cities. The demonstrations in Seoul were held under the slogans, "Down with rotten democracy!", "We demand new elections!", "Down with the dirty government!". Ten people were killed in clashes between demonstrators and police.

On 19 April a 30,000-person demonstration continued in Seoul. Participants of the demonstration broke into the building of Syngman Rhee's residence, burned the premises of the Seoul Sinmun [Seoul Daily] and Korean Republic newspaper offices, attacked police stations, set them on fire, and seized weapons. Up to 70,000 took part in the demonstration in the city of Busan. They demanded the release of the students arrested in Masan and that the policemen who committed outrages against the students be held criminally responsible. Mass demonstrations took place in the cities of Gwangju, Taegu, and Incheon. Eighty-one demonstrators have been killed and up to 300 injured by the police in South Korea. Characteristic features of the South Korean events are: the simultaneity of their appearance in several cities; the ever-expanding groups of the population involved in the demonstrations; and the greatest activity of the student population in the events. The South Korean authorities are bringing military units into combat readiness. To do this, with the knowledge and consent of the American command, the government has withdrawn from the line of demarcation the most reactionary-minded 15th division, which has been brought into Seoul along with a tank battalion. A state of siege has been introduced in the cities of Seoul, Daegu, Daejeon, Busan, and Gwangju. Song Yo-chan, the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, has been entrusted with the command of the troops in this region.

The South Korean authorities have also prohibited the transmission of information about events in South Korea except the broadcast of official reports.

Pak Gwang-seon said, at the instruction of the KWP CC a 300,000-person rally of the capital's population is being conducted in Pyongyang right now. Ri He Sun [sic], Chairman of the CC of the United Trade Unions of Korea and Chairman of the KWP City Party Committee, is giving a report. Today mass rallies and demonstrations of DPRK workers are being held in support of the struggle of the South Korean population in all the provincial capitals.

At the end of the briefing Pak Gwang-seon expressed the hope that public opinion of the fraternal socialist countries will support the population of South Korea in the struggle against the reactionary Syngman Rhee regime in one form or another.

For my part I informed Pak Gwang-seon and those present that the Soviet press and radio are widely covering the events in South Korea.

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...In a conversation held with Pak Seong-cheol [Pak Song Chol] before [a showing of a Lenin film at the Soviet Embassy] opinions were exchanged about the events in South Korea. I told the Minister that the Soviet press and especially radio are covering the events in South Korea very widely and in detail, pointing to the fact that they are the result of the colonial dominance of the American imperialists who have led the country to economic collapse and complete suppression of the population's rights...

[...]

USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE DPRK

[signature] (A. PUZANOV)

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