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**Report of the Hungarian Embassy in Pyongyang to the foreign minister
31 May 1975**

**Embassy of the Hungarian
People's Republic**

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Ambassador

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To Comrade Minister Frigyes Puja
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Budapest

I have received the following information from the Polish Ambassador:

The Polish embassy employed several Korean skilled workers. One Polish worker of the embassy got in contact with one of the Korean workers. The Korean worker is a member of the party. He had worked for some years in the Soviet Union before, so he speaks Russian. He first got married there, in the Soviet Union, but when he returned he left behind his wife and child. He does not know anything about his family and maintains no contact with them.

The relationship of the Polish and the Korean worker was based on the request of the latter who had asked the Pole to buy various goods for him in the store reserved for diplomats. At first the embassy though it was a provocation, but after careful examination it turned out that it was not; it was the natural human need of a very simple worker. The relationship lasted only up to the point when the job for which the Korean worker had been hired was completed.

The Korean worker told his Polish friend that by the end of every month they ran out of their food ration, the kids were crying all through the night, saying that they were hungry. Therefore, he first asked his Polish colleague to buy some rice, meat, brandy and sugar for them, and later a watch and several fine suits and leather goods. He said they had plenty of money but they could not spend it. Although there were some restaurants where they could freely buy 250 gm of brandy and 200 gm of food for 6 wons, they were not allowed to enter these places with children.

What did this simple worker say about himself? Here, in DPRL, he got married (for the second time) and has now six children. Four of them go to school. His monthly salary is 150 wons, his wife's is 70 wons. For one day he, as the head of the family is entitled to have 700 gm of rice, his wife 50 gm and his children 600 gm each. Every month the family is given only 110 kg of rice altogether (55 kg twice), the rest, part of the rice allowance of the children is given to the school that they go to. For 1 kg of rice he pays 8 chons. The rice can be traded in for flour. /1 kg of rice = 400 gm of flour./ Every month the family is given 10 eggs per head, each for 17 chons. 1 kg of apples costs 1.5 wons. These figures are the prices of food stuff by the ration coupons. They can also buy kimchi; the monthly cost of kimchi for the family amounts to 30 wons. 1 kg of fish costs 30 chons. They can buy fish and apples without any limitation, if the stores have any. They can buy 10 packets of cigarettes every month for 35 chons for a packet. The family is given 2 kg of pork a month for 8 wons per kg.

The kinds get 200 gm of milk and 200 gm of bread a day at school. The family pays 20 chons per day for the meals per child. As a stipend, the students get 40 wons per month and free articles of clothing, like shoes, underwear and cloths. Free clothing is provided for smaller children too. Every worker gets a uniform suit ever year and a pair of rubber shoes for 3 months. For leather shoes, they have to pay 17 wons.

On the birthday of Kim Il Sung families receive 1 kg of meat, 1 kg of apples and 1 kg of sweets free. On this day they can also buy an additional 300 gm of sugar per head, 1 bottle of brandy (25% alcohol content) and 2 bottles of beer per family.

The Polish worker asked whether they were allowed to have any contact with foreigners.

The Korean worker said that any unauthorized contact with foreigners was punished by 7-10 years of imprisonment and hard labor. Koreans were allowed to speak with foreigners only in the presence of two other Koreans. Every Korean citizen who works at a foreign embassy or a similar place is required to report every day either verbally or in writing (on what they saw or heard). The atmosphere is extremely distrustful; one Korean would report another one under any circumstances. He said that if his father learned how he had now received some rice, he would immediately report it to the authorities. People do not trust even their brothers and sisters, their parents, wife or children.

Young people are all armed with the ideas of Kim Il Sung, though 3 out of 10 elder Koreans still do not follow him in everything without reservations. This does not mean confrontation with or being against the regime but simply the conservative cautiousness of elderly people.

Judicial courts work in order everywhere in the country. As an example, he said that for robbery the punishment was at least 10 years of imprisonment. Pickpockets have become a growing danger recently, and the authorities have called the attention of the public to it. For rape the punishment is also 10 years.

According to the personal experience of the Korean worker every second adult is member of the party at workplaces. The main criterion of becoming a party member is hard work. Local party organizations have meetings twice a month. There is no criticism raised at the party meetings, and any criticism outside of party meetings is severely punished. Ideological issues are very seldom discussed at party meetings. At higher level meetings much more ideological topics are raised. The everyday party member is only given the floor to speak when he or she wants to make an offer to raise his or her production norm. At meetings where ideological issues are discussed, people often cite Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, but mostly Kim Il Sung.

People talk about the socialist countries as equal and uniform states. There is no preferred country. For example, with respect to the European socialist countries they say: in these countries the working class works well, the party supports Koreans and the people stand by the party. However, there is a petite bourgeois class in these countries whose members live without work and exploit working-class people.

It is known by everybody in Korea that the successor of Kim Il Sung will be his son. People speak of the son only in good terms. They know that the son will bring changes. The May 1 of this year should be credited to him already. The sporting competition of ambassadors was also initiated by the son to improve relations with diplomatic bodies.

Koreans do not believe that there will be war between the North and the South. They are convinced that the two Koreas will be united and Kim Il Sung will gradually line up all Koreans by his side.

The conversation took place under quiet circumstances, showing no sign of dissatisfaction with the current regime by the Korean worker. As for Kim Il Sung, the worker said he was a mart and good man who was respected by the people.

/Ferenc Szabó/
Ambassador