

*** Russian Paper on Kim Il-song's Background**
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[Article by Leonid Vasin: "Steps Toward the Throne. Kim Il-song: Who Is He?" Names in parentheses as transliterated]

[Text] The "Great Leader" of the Korean people was created and cultivated and exists not in accordance with the wishes of the people of North Korea, but in accordance with a design of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo planned in advance and of the leader of all the peoples personally.

A whole system of authorities formed north of the 38th parallel was involved in his formation, elevation, and confirmation in the role of military commander, theorist, and leader. Here is a rough sketch of these authorities: Colonel General Shtykov, the direct representative of the Central Committee Politburo responsible for the entire situation on the ground and former secretary of the CPSU Leningrad Oblast Committee; the 25th Army's Military Council, Major General Lebedev; the 25th Army's Special Propaganda Section, Major Kovyzenko, chief, who subsequently came to be called senior official of the CPSU Central Committee; the newspaper CHOSON SINMUM; and Pyongyang Radio, whose programs were produced by representatives of our country. The University of Pyongyang, which was formed in accordance with a decision of the CPSU Central Committee, and its provost, Pak Il, a Soviet scholar. It was he who taught Kim Il-song the rudiments of Marxist-Leninist science. The Soviet military administration—Major General Romanov and Colonel Ignatov, his deputy for political affairs. And, of course, the KGB (Army counterintelligence), headed by Major General Anokhin.

Your author was working in the Army's Special Propaganda Section as assistant section chief. According to the listed establishment, this section was in wartime to work among the troops and the populace of the enemy.

The branch had 14-15 officers of Korean extraction. We created Kim Il-song from scratch, virtually, and performed this work "crudely and visibly," without embarrassment or pangs of conscience—as the party ordered. I more than others, possibly, dealt with Kim Il-song on a daily and weekly basis in the first five or six months. Then, as Terentiy Fomich Shtykov's staff grew, the section's role was scaled back. Nonetheless, the work that enabled Kim to become not only a military commander but also a leader was performed in the first two years.

The Situation From 18 Through 23 August 1945

The decree of the Japanese emperor on capitulation was announced in the morning of 15 August. Units of our 25th Army were pushing forward through Manchuria in the direction of the Korean borders. In the night of 16 August they entered Yanji, where the headquarters of the Japanese 5th Army were located. On 17 August the commander of our 25th Army, Colonel General Chistyakov, the celebrated hero of the battle of Stalingrad, accepted the surrender of the Japanese from Major General Hachiro Iketani, chief of staff of the Army. The Japanese general reported that Japan had observed all the terms of the surrender and that only one subunit was, in view of its isolation from headquarters, putting up resistance to our advance, for which General Iketani apologized.

The higher command ordered General Chistyakov personally to deplane at Pyongyang. Immediately! He ordered that the trains be loaded up and that they make full-speed for Pyongyang. Others followed at their own pace.

I know that there were no national formations in our Army's units. And had there been, we would have been well aware of it. Our section was required to look after such subunits and rely on them in its work. There was no detachment of Kim Il-song or the Chinese Wang Song on the Korean salient. This "presence" of national subunits was designed subsequently as camouflage for the future leader.

Chistyakov's aircraft touched down at Pyongyang Airport. Accompanying the general was a group of submachinegunners, a radio operator, and a signals officer. Koreans and Japanese were awaiting the appearance of the Soviet forces. Several cars were made available to Ivan Mikhaylovich, who set off directly for the residence of Shoji Furukawa, governor of the northern provinces. But this building had at four in the afternoon been taken over by a people's committee, which had arisen spontaneously. But the official acceptance of the surrender took place here, in the former office of the Japanese general.

Colonel General Chistyakov as yet knew nothing of Kim Il-song. He and many others had simply not been notified, and he acted as prudence dictated. Moscow had not yet chosen the person whom it would back.

Cho Man-sik? A leader of the national liberation movement of 1919. He had together with Syngman Rhee led the 1 March uprising. The difference between them was that Cho Man-sik had spent from 1919 through 1945 in jail. Syngman Rhee, on the other hand, had been in exile. Cho Man-sik was released from prison in accordance with the emperor's capitulation decree, and Syngman Rhee arrived in South Korea on 17 August from Hong Kong.

Representatives of the people's committees had since 21 August been coming to our command headquarters, and from there they were sent to us, to our Special Propaganda Section. People came in a stream to express gratitude for the liberation, to register, to present a complaint, to communicate something or other of importance, and so forth.

Such people in our section were former members of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) who had been infiltrated into Korea in the 1930's by a decision of the Communist International Executive Committee and the Profintern. On 15 August they also had been released from prison. About 10-12 persons were the most active. They included (Pak Den Ay) (Vera Tsoy. She would subsequently become vice chairman of [Yezheni Kotton's] International Organization of Women), her husband, (Kim Yem Bom), and others. It was they and their comrades who notified all provinces that the First Communist Party of Korea Congress would be held in Pyongyang on 28 August. They themselves on the very first day went to the former governor's residence and together with Cho Man-sik joined the Provisional People's Committee of North Korea. Cho Man-sik perfectly naturally occupied the post of chairman, and he was at this time supported by the Communists.

Some special propaganda officers made, as we were told later, a mistake. They visited without permission the People's Committee building and congratulated Cho Man-sik on the liberation. This was on 21 August 1945. The mistake was caused by the fact that we did not know Moscow's intentions. Not just we, but Lebedev, member of the Military Council, did not these first two days know on whom to rely and whom to recognize and whom not to recognize.

Kim Il-Song Comes to Us

Kim Il-song showed up at our section on 22 August 1945 in the latter part of the day. He said, if I am not mistaken, that General Lebedev had recommended that he report here.

Kim arrived without any soldiers or an adjutant. Our khaki field uniform, service cap of the rifle troops, box-calf boots, and the Order of the Red Banner. The young Korean officers of the section clustered round him. Questions, cross-questioning.

Kim Il-song really was part of a guerrilla detachment operating in the areas of Manchuria bordering Korea. Prior to this he had lived in a rural locality on the

territory of China. There, according to him, he completed seven grades of a Chinese rural school. The officers of the section observed that he did not, evidently, have a great command of Korean, although they themselves were far from perfection.

As Kim himself told me, he and a group of Korean and Chinese citizens had, under pressure from Japan's punitive detachments endeavoring to clean up the rear areas in connection with the country's entry into the war against the United States, crossed our border. An international brigade, which numbered approximately 300 Chinese and Koreans, was formed from such defectors in 1942. They were quartered in the village of Vyatskoye near Khabarovsk. Kim Il-song was appointed commander of this brigade, and Wang Song, whom I had met twice, commissar. The rank of captain was established for Kim Il-song, and for Wang Song, major. According to the establishment, the brigade was called 1st Battalion, 88th Brigade.

This Korean-Chinese international subunit organized drills itself, under the supervision of counterintelligence officers. Political classes and political information sessions were held, and combat training was performed. Much time was allotted for domestic chores.

There had been no orientation toward Kim prior to the start of the war with Japan. No one knew who would be the head of a liberated Korea. Everyone was kitted out for the march. Wang Song and Kim Il-song were presented with the Order of the Red Banner. Only subsequently would these decorations be formalized by an order of General Purkayev, commander of the front (almost a week after Kim, wearing the decoration on his chest, arrived in Korea).

After General Chistyakov's departure, the headquarters staff loaded up the cars. Our section traveled in the first train. Kim Il-song and a group of Koreans, in the second train, this group having been pushed forward by the officer who had been assigned to it. The Soviet Army uniform, the decoration, and the assistance of the SMERSH officer enabled Kim to enter Pyongyang on 22 August.

The myth that he had for 14 years been in command of a large formation, kept virtually all Japanese forces in Manchuria on a state of alert, smashed enemies on land, stormed ports, and commanded an armored formation on an offensive was needed to elevate Kim to the level of hero in order to use him for work in Korea. The Soviet propaganda authorities not only did not prevent these rumors, they encouraged them and augmented them in the press and on the radio.

On 23 August 1945 Section Chief V.V. Kovyshenko received the order—disguise Kim, get the Order of the Red Banner as far away as possible.

Work was in full swing. We were rendered inestimable assistance by (Pak Den Ay) and her husband (Kim Yem Bom). They procured two suits: one was clearly too

small, the other fit. I said: "Well, try sitting down!" Kim sat down, and his pants split below the fly. (Pak Den Ay) cheered us up: "Never mind! I'll solve the problem in a flash," and she sewed up the fly. A normal, everyday occurrence.

In the yard I took a photograph of Kim Il-song in this suit, sporting a striped necktie. This was the first photograph of Kim in Korea. It was in this suit that he attended the Communist Party congress.

First Communist Party of Korea Congress

Kim's first step en route to the throne was the Communist Party of Korea congress held on 28 August 1945 in Pyongyang. For some reason or other, our historians have little to say about this congress; the Koreans, on the other hand, are simply silent.

We had not shown up in Pyongyang as yet, but the date of the congress had been fixed. Moscow knew nothing about the congress that was being convened. Those who initiated the convening of the first congress were the Communists who in the 1930's had been sent into Korea along Communist International Executive Committee, Profintern, and Communist Youth International lines. (Kim Yem Bom), Vera Tsoy, and their comrades may be put in this category. They joined this work as soon as they were released from prison, and their actions were perfectly justified; they were of the sole conviction that Korea should be together with the Soviet Union.

The Korean Communist Party had been distinguished by factionalism and was dissolved in 1919 by a decision of the Comintern Executive Committee. Now Moscow remained silent: Banning it was impossible; the mechanism of the convening of the congress had been engaged.

General Lebedev, member of the Military Council, demanded that we get Kim Il-song ready for the congress and present the Russian text of his speech on 25 August. Three days remained. We set about writing the speech. The text was ready in half a day. The approximate contents of Kim Il-song's speech which I handed over to the Korean Workers Party History Institute 40 years later are as follows: "The role of the Soviet Army in the liberation of Korea, urgent tasks of the Communists for creating and strengthening the organs of power, the land issue, and Lenin's theory of the building of socialism and its application under the conditions of the Korean revolution."

General Lebedev approved the contents. "Get Kim ready," he said. We began to translate the speech into Korean, then gave the speech to Kim for him to study it (it was approximately five typewritten pages). We were well aware that he had while in the international brigade studied Marxism-Leninism for three years and that this speech would not be very difficult for him.

The congress opened in a red-brick home. It was arranged that (Kim Yem Bom) would nominate Kim Il-song for the Presidium and give a brief description of his services to the people.

And here was Kim in the Presidium. He spoke on day two. A section officer from the ranks of our Koreans who had checked his speech against a second copy notified me: "All is in order. He interposed only a few words." I asked Kim in the future to insert fewer of his own words.

We received the instruction: No decisions to be adopted at the congress, no working bodies to be elected, elect an organizing bureau, and work on the program and rules. Kim submitted precisely these proposals. They were adopted. Moscow's hand was being felt already. Moscow's decision to form an alternative party was adopted subsequently and transmitted here, to Korea. The formation of this party was entrusted to Kim's best friend—(Tsoy Yen Gen).

Subsequently a joint congress of the two parties was convened. The Communist Party and the People's Party united. The Workers Party of Korea was formed. Kim Il-song was elected general secretary of the party.

Moscow evidently believed that by manipulating the names of the parties it could fog the brains of its ideological adversaries. Such party conversion became the fashion.

The Next Step

Following a recommendation of Vera Tsoy, in this third week of August we selected for ourselves apartments in homes that had previously belonged to Japanese.

Kim Il-song took up quarters opposite (Kim Yem Bom). My apartment—next door to Kim's—was separated from his house merely by a low fence and a slope. Further on, behind me, was (Tsoy Yen Gen)—the future minister of defense—and next to him, (Mu Den)—commander of the new military formations of Koreans. So we rubbed shoulders with the future leader daily.

Mun (I forget his last name), who had been released from prison and who had a good knowledge of Russian, became infected with the idea of the immediate formation of a youth union of Korea, although he was already around 35-40. We reported this to higher levels. Colonel General Shtykov, who had assumed the office of ruler of Korea on the part of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo, gave the go-ahead, and the work began.

I was entrusted with preparing the Democratic Youth Union Rules. I did not spend long thinking about it and took as the basis the VLKSM [All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League] Rules. Mun and I got together in my apartment, extracted from the VLKSM Rules what, in our opinion, was unnecessary, and added what could impart to the new union a national coloration. It was reported to Shtykov. He approved. We prepared a very

brief speech for Kim Il-song. It was decided: Let the delegates say all that they want.

The congress opened at the end of October (at the start of November, possibly). Mun delivered a prepared report. Then, to applause, Kim Il-song spoke. A bureau and bureau secretary—Mun—were elected. The young people accepted Kim as planned.

The press and radio gave the congress and Kim Il-song's role in the formation of the Youth Union extensive coverage. Kim Il-song ascended one further rung of his Olympus.

KGB General Anokhin Made the Decision

A prominent place in the history of the national liberation movement of Korea belongs not to Kim Il-song but to Cho Man-sik, whom Lieutenant General Furukawa, fulfilling the decree of Emperor Hirohito, had been forced to release from confinement.

General Chistyakov accepted the surrender in premises in which the occupant for four days had been Cho Man-sik. The faith in him and the respect for him were noticeable. By the end of August the Pyongyang People's Committee had become the central committee and had brought all the provincial committees under its jurisdiction. The question arose: Whom to support? Moscow finally rested its choice on Kim Il-song, and to firmly establish Kim Il-song the machinery of the KGB was set in motion.

General Lebedev proposed that I present myself to Major General Anokhin, chief of counterintelligence of the 25th Army: "He has something going on there. He is requesting assistance in work with the captive Lieutenant General Furukawa." I reported to General Anokhin; he was interrogating Furukawa. Anokhin was seeking an answer to the question of how Cho Man-sik was released. The Japanese general had allegedly told Cho Man-sik: "People's committees are already being organized there. Go and take the position of committee chairman."

I expressed doubt. Furukawa had simply let fall the words: "People's committees are being formed there." "I will write down," Anokhin told me, "that Furukawa installed Cho Man-sik as chairman of the Pyongyang People's Committee." I did not at that time believe that the KGB could operate so crudely. This is precisely what happened. After this entry, Moscow sent for Furukawa, and Cho Man-sik was declared an agent of Japanese imperialism. Thus began the displacement of the hero of the national liberation movement.

It subsequently became known that Cho Man-sik had in recent days been conversing by telephone with Southern Korea, Seoul, Syngman Rhee, his associate in the struggle. All this was in the press and on radio. The hero of Korea had become its enemy, and Kim Il-song, whom we had installed, a hero.

In the latter half of October (?) Cho Man-sik was placed under house arrest, and I do not know what happened to him subsequently, but it is firmly believed that he was removed as an obstacle to the development of our candidates.

All means were employed to discredit a person who had lost his health and who had renounced all earthly blessings for the sake of the freedom of Korea. It was impossible for anyone to raise a voice of protest. The KGB operated crudely, but productively.

Kim Il-song stepped over the rung over which the corpse of Cho Man-sik was draped and ascended to a third, higher rung. Moscow's will was done.

The Main Test for the Office of 'Great Leader'

The decision was made at the top: Prepare and stage a mass meeting, at which Kim Il-song is presented to the entire Korean people. This meeting was scheduled for 14 October 1945. Its venue—the stadium at the foot of Mount Moranpong. All the provinces were invited.

It was necessary by the time of this meeting:

- to have shown that Kim Il-song was a real person, that Paektu Mountain tiger about which the press was speaking;
- to have widely publicized the venality of Cho Man-sik;
- to have staged a meeting between Kim and his relatives (to have found them, wherever they were, and to have brought them to the village of [Mangende], which is 13-14 km from Pyongyang);
- to have exposed the "false" information of the South Korean press and radio to the effect that Kim Il-song was not Kim Il-song but someone else—a figurehead;
- to have proven that Kim had been engaged in active fighting against the Japanese aggressors and had liberated the motherland. To have shown at the same time that Syngman Rhee was a puppet of the United States and lackey of the American imperialists.

There was a great deal of work—the entire machinery had no time off. There were sleepless nights also, but we coped and sharpened the teeth of the Paektu Mountain tiger.

In the embassy lobby, (Kwon Ki-chen), ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the DPRK in the USSR, showed me a huge portrait of Kim painted on the wall. Alongside was a blue lake, and behind the lake there was a village with little houses in the style of a Buddhist retrospective. I said that I had not seen anything like that at that time. "This is Mangyongdae!" he said. I visited this Mangyongdae twice. Some relatives were brought to the village, correspondents were summoned, and the squalid peasant houses were photographed. This went on until 14 October 1945. We asked our superiors: "What should we do? They are putting Kim's portraits in the

columns in front of Stalin's." "Let them put them in front of Marx's, even," was the response.

I would like to explain in advance that my comrades and I, everyone who worked with Kim Il-song at that time, did their duty knowingly and with a will on preparing him for work—it was impossible to do otherwise. In addition, our attitude toward him, as a person for whom it was difficult getting into the part, was good!

As of 1 October, it was announced on the radio several times a day that a meeting would be held at Moranpong Stadium. The words: "It is possible that Kim Il-song will be present at the meeting!" "It is possible that Kim Il-song, the leader of our people, will be present at the meeting!" "It is possible that our legendary hero will be present at the meeting!" and so forth, were inserted in every announcement here.

The speech, on which not only we but also the superior authorities worked, was of a program nature. It was not one of those hastily concocted speeches that our section used to prepare, but a considered, serious speech, which had even been perused in Moscow, possibly. The meeting was more than successful. We had taken a larger step toward Kim Il-song's ultimate assumption of the office of chairman of the People's Committee. Cho Man-sik had gone. In two months we had made Kim the leader, and subsequently, several years later, he would become "Great."

The Grenade's Flight Trajectory

One further large-scale political demonstration was planned: holding a mass meeting devoted to the friendship of the Korean and Soviet peoples. It was decided to time it to coincide with National Liberation Day.

In the columns, on the viewing stand, and on the buildings adjoining the railroad station were appeals for the eternal friendship of the two peoples. A letter from the Korean people to the Soviet people was read out from the stand. It contained, as we had thought when we were preparing this letter, the felicitous thought suggested by Senior Lieutenant Cho Ki-chong, who worked on the newspaper CHOSON SINMUM: "As long as the shining waters of the Tumen River flow and as long as the magnificent Paektu Mountain stands, the friendship of the Korean and Soviet peoples will grow and strengthen."

I wrote in my recollections for the Workers Party of Korea History Institute: "I was getting ready to take my amateur closeup. I heard a hissing and saw smoke. A grenade, which by chance did not make it into this shot, in which representatives of the province of Sinuiju were seated on the steps of the viewing stand, was flying toward the stand. Junior Lieutenant Ya.T. Novichenko, who had with his platoon been assigned to the detail maintaining order and looking out for the security of the persons on the viewing stand, was standing next to me. In a split second he had climbed over the two steps and grabbed the grenade, but was not in time to hurl it away

from the stand. The grenade exploded. He survived. I raised up him slightly. Two soldiers of the Korean People's Army and his platoon sergeant took hold of the wounded man and dispatched him to the hospital.

The viewing stand was no less than 30 meters long. Section Chief V.V. Kovyzenko was standing on the platform three meters from the explosion. The authorities, including Kim Il-song, were 30 meters away, in front of the left microphone. This explosion of the home-made grenade could be heard by a negligible part of the participants in the meeting standing in front of the platform. The powerful voice of (Kim Yem-bom) conveyed this incident to the inhabitants of the whole city. The entire blame was heaped on Syngman Rhee and the American imperialists. The explosion of the grenade added, as it were, to our arguments in the anti-American propaganda.

Illustrating this action earlier had been impossible. Everything was classified. The propaganda wave was raised later. Particularly when Kim Il-song made his first tour of the countries of the socialist camp from 16 May through 1 July 1984.

Novichenko's exploit became an exploit in the name of Kim Il-song and the salvation of Kim Il-song.

It was written that Novichenko, standing on the platform, had jumped up and grabbed the grenade, which was allegedly flying toward the place where Kim Il-song was standing. I looked into this version with Yakov Tikhonovich himself: We established that there had been no such trajectory—the grenade was flying toward the area in front of the stand, to its right. It was then that doubts and questions arose with us:

Why had we stuck to the version to the effect that the grenade was flying straight toward Kim Il-song and that the junior lieutenant had leaped up (Colonel General Chistyakov, commander of the Army, was not present on the viewing stand but describes the scene such as to indicate that he saw the way the grenade was flying and how Novichenko had leaped up)?

Why was the home-made grenade thrown by the agents of American imperialism so feeble? If it had not been picked up, the officer could have gotten away with a lighter wound. A woman standing alongside sustained a slight leg wound, and elderly people sitting next to her, back injuries, but those who were two or three strides away on the viewing stand (Major Kovyzenko included) were not injured. There was no intention to shoot to kill, evidently.

Were the opponents of the new system unable to find if only one real grenade for Kim Il-song?

There is no clear proof that the explosion was staged. Nor was this in any way apropos at that time. The trajectory was changed. Was this really important? What

was important was that the trajectory of the entire course of social development of the DPRK was warped, just like that of the grenade.

I would observe that at meetings held prior to this the leadership had always been at the center of the platform. On this occasion it was for some reason or other on the left side of the lengthy stand. And the grenade was thrown at the right side of the stand, where the guests or minor officials were positioned. So the action did not pursue the aim of assassination of the "leader of the Korean people," the aim was to create a big political outburst among the people and rouse them to hatred of the American and Syngman Rhee regimes. And, of course, to exalt Kim Il-song. The KGB's action produced "positive" results.

The explosion of hatred for the Syngman Rhee regime in Korea was for our country undoubtedly more valuable than the right hand of a junior lieutenant.

How the 'Great' Kim Il-song and K.U. Chernenko, General Secretary of the CPSU, Made a Film About the Great Friendship

From May through July 1984 Kim Il-song paid visits to all countries of the socialist camp. A meeting with Yakov Novichenko had been prepared for him on the platform of Novosibirsk Station. "He warmly embraced the Siberian" and... "called him a symbol of Korean-Soviet friendship." Prior to this, a decree on the conferment on him of the title of Hero of Labor of the DPRK had been registered.

At the talks with Chernenko, Kim Il-song proposed the shooting of a two-part feature film, the basis of which was to be Novichenko's exploit. The proposal was joyfully accepted, and...the wheels were set in motion. Features on Yakov Tikhonovich's exploit had appeared in SELSKAYA ZHIZN, SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, and KRASNAYA ZVEZDA by this time. The shooting of the film was entrusted at the Mosfilm [Moscow Feature Film Studio] to the famous director Eldor Urazbayev.

Since it was impossible for the film not to contain operations of our troops in the liberation of Korea, I expressed my doubts in a letter to Shauro, head of the CPSU Central Committee Culture Department, dated 23 January 1985 as to the possibility of a correct illustration of our Army's operations and declared plainly that Korea would in the film, evidently, be liberated by Kim Il-song himself. I received a reply, the meaning of which was that it was not my business and that I should keep my nose out of these matters. But since my brief essays had been carried in two newspapers, Mosfilm decided to invite me for a consultation. At an enlarged session of the Mosfilm Party Committee, I and Novichenko were asked many questions about Kim Il-song and the action of Yakov Tikhonovich. In the end I declared: "The film will not be a success. Our Korean comrades will make it such as to suit Kim Il-song."

In a private conversation with Director Urazbayev, I had asked that the filming of the mass meeting show hanging on the viewing stand a poster about Korean-Soviet friendship, although I knew in advance that it would not contain even this trifle either. Kim Il-song's national socialism expressed in his Chuche philosophy was too strong.

The film was made. Kim Il-song routs the Japanese forces on land and at sea. The Soviet Army appears indistinctly somewhere here and there. He fights his way to Pyongyang. Victory! The shots of the operations of our troops and others taken by Urazbayev were not found suitable.

Who Are These 'Bad People' and How Many Are There of Them

At a dinner given by (Kwon Ki-chen), ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the DPRK in the USSR, the guests and the host were seated at a round table. Behind each guest was a young Korean woman in national dress. Accompanying us was an agent of the KGB. This had long been the custom, evidently—any visit to any embassy would be accompanied by the attachment to the guests of a KGB agent. In this case he was called a representative of Mosfilm.

In the course of the dinner, the ambassador invited us into the film hall to view a film on the great leader's visit to the socialist countries. In color and with skillfully chosen camera angles, it made a dispiriting impression on me. Kim Il-song in splendor, one foot forward, his face radiant, his mouth, as always, half-open, his service jacket of the Stalin-Mao Zedong cut. Chernenko looked frail and bowed. He looked the same next to Honecker, Zhivkov, Ceausescu, and others.

At table, after the showing, I was asked: "Whom else did you know?" I replied: (Kim Yem-bom, Pak Den-ay). "They are bad people!" (Kwon Ki-chen) said. I recall Kim Tu-pong, who became chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly Presidium. "What do you mean, what do you mean? He is a bad person!" the ambassador said. All right, I thought, I'll talk about (Tsoy Yen-chen), Kim's best friend. They ate cabbage soup together for three years at Khabarovsk, and, in addition, in the Korean adventure of 1950-1953 he held the position of secretary for defense.... He proved to be a "bad person" also.

"And what did you like in the field of art and culture?" I recalled a wonderful ballerina, about whom our press was writing at that time—(Tsoy Sin-ki). I attended her concerts. Star of the East was what she was called even in Southern Korea. I had not finished speaking about her before the embassy secretary interrupted: "No, no! She is an enemy!"

No one knows how many "bad people" there were in the DPRK. Perhaps there were even more relative to its population of 11 million than with us.

Parameters of Honor and Conscience

In 1946 at mass meetings in Pyongyang in honor of May Day and the anniversary of the Great October, balconies, fences, and walls of houses were covered with posters devoted to the 20 years of generalship of Kim Il-song. We subtract from 1946 the year in which Kim Il-song was born. We are left with 34. We take 20 from 34 and are left with 14. This is the age at which the military commander was born. In our times he is a generalissimo.... Mankind has yet to devise a higher rank for Kim Il-song. But what is most interesting is that at the age of 14 he had not even completed the seventh grade of the Chinese rural school and could not read and write properly.

I have in front of me a work of his son, Kim Chong-il, written on 17 October 1982, a work of that same Kim Chong-il, who, still in short pants and seated on his father's lap, took aim at me with a pistol in 1946. The work is called "The Workers Party of Korea—the Chuche Revolutionary Party—Inheritor of the Glorious Traditions of the Anti-Imperialist Alliance." This "study" was devoted to the "56th anniversary of the founding by Comrade Kim Il-song, the great leader, of the Anti-Imperialist Alliance—AIA."

We subtract 56 from 1982. We are left with 26. We subtract the year in which Kim Il-song was born, we are left with that same 14. He was at this 14, apparently, not only a military commander but also a great politician. Where did Kim get all this from? It all came from us. We taught him to lie. In 1945 he was unable to put together decent notes for a speech at the political classes, despite the program's demands for the study of Russian, and had not in three years mastered the basics of Marxism-Leninism, and 19 years before this he was the outstanding founder of the AIA.

"In 1926, having formed the AIA, he took" (as his son's work says) "the helm of the revolution and transformed Northern Korea into a country of model socialism."

In the meager pamphlet Kim Chong-il calls his father the "Great Leader" 60 times. In an illustrated magazine in Russian—KOREYA—the authors of various articles call the leader's son, Kim Chong-il, "beloved leader" 40 times.

They outdid us. We had this also, but somewhat less. They are from that same CPSU Central Committee Politburo mold loaded with the ready-made cadres necessary for the victory of communism throughout the world.

Speaking about the role of the philosophy of Chuche, Kim Chong-il, the son of the great one, writes: "It is essential that we continue to move steadfastly forward along the revolutionary path, which starts from Paektu Mountain, and brilliantly complete the Chuche revolutionary cause, the cause of socialism and communism."

In addition, Chuche philosophy, in the opinion of the son, "should be the theoretical basis for the victory of communism worldwide and should raise the value of man to the highest level" (Kim Chong-il. "Conversation with party officials dealing with questions of theory, 2 April 1974").

What, in fact, is the point of reproaching Kim Il-song and gauging the parameters of his honor and conscience? He is, after all, copied from us. He is as we used to be. We had the same military commanders and theorists. We extolled him and praised him in such a way that he did in actual fact decide that he was great. It is hard now to persuade him that he with his mumbo-jumbo—Chuche philosophy—is an ignoramus.

General Shtykov ordered me by telephone to take in at my quarters Kim's friend—Wang Song, commissar of the international brigade—and not let him out. But Wang kept asking and asking to see Kim. I reported to the general that Wang was dying to see Kim. "All right," the general said, "take him, but have him back by nightfall."

...We drank vodka, then wine, by the glass. We switched to tumblers. Kim's wife and soldiers served appetizers. At my request we all switched to Russian. Wang, a head shorter than Kim, animated, agile, spare, drank and did not become intoxicated. But Kim turned sour.... "They will get to know about us yet.... We will be appreciated yet!" he said. He was not mistaken. We got to know, we cultivated, and we appreciated. So who is he? Not, of course, a military commander, not a theorist, and not a philosopher, and a leader in the broad meaning of this word even less. A simple and obedient border-crosser who came within the sights of our intelligence authorities. More precisely, he was more obliging, far from having any ideas of his own, and capable of repeating what was suggested to him.

In the European socialist countries, the leaders were selected the same way. If they went wrong, they were replaced, and new ones were picked and installed. But here, forever, and with Asian singularities and brutality.

In Korea we were frequently asked about other Kims, and names were cited. But this was no longer any use to anyone. The choice had been made. The raw "product" was polished up and brought to a shine. And, as you can see, we produced quite a shine!

Well, all right, I thought at that time, we have glorified him in order to have our man in foreign parts. But we now we must stop. Let his own nation, his own people, appreciate him.