

A FEW PROBLEMS ARISING IN FILM PRODUCTION

Speech to Scriptwriters and Directors
February 12, 1971

Today I intend to speak about a few problems arising in film production.

Scriptwriting should be kept well in advance of film-making.

I have been guiding the production of films for several years, and in the course of this I have reached the conclusion that the making of good films presupposes good scriptwriting. Scripts are artistic works of a peculiar character different to that of novels or dramas; they form the ideological basis for films. Therefore, it is impossible to produce good films without giving priority to scriptwriting over film-making. As the creators have decided, in order to produce many films in 1973 you should write 60 scripts by April 15 next year. Only then will it be possible to maintain a supply of scripts from April next year on and put film production on a steady basis. If these scripts are written, we will form production units and press on with making revolutionary films, which are to be produced in celebration of the 60th birthday of the great leader.

Making films is no easy job, but there is nothing mysterious about it either. With good scripts we shall be able to make many good films. From now on you scriptwriters should work hard, each finishing two scripts this year. If each of you who are present here writes two, we will have 16 in all. Scriptwriters should not fail to fulfil their quota of scripts this year.

As the Korean saying goes, the tame hawk which does not catch pheasants is useless. In other words, the end justifies the means, so scriptwriters should produce many scenarios. The Party will ensure that all your desires are satisfied: it will give you each a separate room if you wish and will put beds in your studies if this is what you want.

We are going to provide novelists with good conditions for writing as well and encourage them to write good novels in commemoration of the 60th birthday of the great leader. As he has said, scripts must be based on good novels.

In order to ensure that works are created in commemoration of the great leader's 60th birthday, the Party calls upon scriptwriters and novelists to launch a socialist emulation drive.

In the creation of works commemorating this birthday scriptwriters should take the lead over novelists.

This year you should produce high-quality works that can be made into films. So far the standard of the scripts written by those in the Scriptwriting Company has been low. Even those written by scriptwriters who were said to be good writers hardly passed initial

examination.

However, you should not give up writing, claiming that if your scripts cannot be made into films then they should be published in magazines, as some scriptwriters do. The purpose of writing scripts lies not in contribution to magazines, but in making films. Therefore, you should work with the intention of turning your scripts into films. If it is impossible to use them for films because their quality is poor then they must not be published in magazines either. Scriptwriters should guard fully against the practice of producing works in a happy-go-lucky way, not caring about whether or not they can be made into films.

If you are to write good scripts, you must find the right central ideas for them.

The core ideas in art and literature in our country are a matter of importance and relate to the basic problems of humanics in our society, which takes the great Juche idea as its philosophical basis. A work should have a unique core that has been selected and nurtured by the writer, a seed from which a beautiful and fresh flower of representation should bloom.

It is only when writers select the right core ideas that they can clearly convey their ideological and aesthetic intentions and guarantee the philosophical depth of their work. If they fail to do this, and show off only their literary talent in order to develop sensational stories, they cannot produce good works.

It is also imperative for you to select the right central ideas if you are to create fine works through the speed campaign⁹.

Writers must not wield their pens aimlessly, driven by the desire for fame and failing to choose the right core ideas for their work.

In your work you should choose the ideas that meet the requirements of Party policy.

Nowadays some writers are trying to depict real lives in their scripts, but they are failing to see matters from the angle of Party policy and, for this reason, they more often than not depict matters contrary to the demands of the Party.

The script of *Rainbow Down to the Village* is devoted to portraying partial and inessential matters; it does not view problems clearly from the angle of Party policy and this, in the final analysis, distorts the lives being portrayed. The work depicts the distress of a character related to a man who was drawn into the 'peace keeping corps'¹⁰ during the temporary retreat, but not many people in real life are suffering agony because their relatives have served in the 'peace keeping corps'. Even though such a person may exist, he is by no means typical in society.

For the script *Rainbow Down to the Village* to become a work of value, the writer should have tackled this problem by identifying the effort to revolutionize the peasants as his core idea.

When selecting core ideas, writers must think deeply about what political effect their works will have on the audience.

They should also choose ideas that make people aware of the fresh intentions and pursuits of the author, ideas that have a unique and

fresh flavour.

The core idea of the script *The Girl Barber* is good.

This work deals with making a family revolutionary by showing noble and humble jobs. In this way it encourages the people working in public service under our socialist system to take pride and honour in their work.

At first, this script dealt with the topic of members of the younger generation going to work after leaving school, as many other works do. The original screenplay began with a scene in which the heroine plays a kayagum at the students and children's palace. This was truly lamentable: The writer could not even present the ideological essence of what is a good job from a new angle.

This year you scriptwriters should write scripts by choosing as your core ideas matters that are fresh and unique.

In order to write good scripts you should also have a correct understanding of the dramatic qualities of a film.

The great leader has said that if creators worry too much about the dramatic quality of works they cannot portray lives truthfully. You should discover the dramatic angle for your film in real life. The details of human relations in various lives may seem commonplace, but in fact are dramatic.

Some creators found fault with the film *Rainbow Down to the Village*, saying that it lacked dramatic quality because it dealt with an ordinary life in an ordinary farm village. Probably, these creators learnt a serious lesson from what the great leader said after watching the film *The Story of a Nurse* recently.

This film shows the struggle of an ordinary nurse, but its dramatic quality is great.

The great leader has said that *The Story of a Nurse* is the best of all our films and that it is the best work for Party members and other working people to see to temper their Party loyalty.

As he has said, it is an excellent film for the education of Party members and working people. Not only is each of its scenes good, but also the film presents the problem of what a Party member is and how he should lead his life. Its artistic delineation is excellent.

Writers should not, on the pretext of discovering dramatic quality in life, try to deal with sensational events alone. Sensational events do not always give rise to a strong dramatic sense or produce a good film. The films *The Sea of Blood* and *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man*, adapted from classics by the same names, do not deal with sensational events but contain a strong dramatic sense and profound thought.

Writers should not engage in empty talk about what dramatic quality is and where it exists; they should clearly show the variety and abundance in life from different angles and describe them skillfully. They should not invent stirring events or produce works by using conventional outworn formulae and dramaturgy. They should reflect lives truthfully in their screenplays.

The film based on the life of heroine Jo Ok Hui¹¹ failed to give any depiction of life, of the people in wartime. It depicted war merely

showing black smoke spreading. This is not justifiable simply because it is a war film. Even if it is a war film, it should show the relations between the hero or heroine and other characters developing in battle, as well as their mental worlds.

You should not exaggerate lives in your film scripts on the plea of using fiction. Exaggeration in the description of lives is like death. To write good scripts, writers should imbue themselves thoroughly with the Juche artistic and literary thoughts of the great leader. Although creators and artists study these thoughts, as well as his instructions, they fail to acquire their essence in depth. Writers must conduct a close study of the leader's instructions and use them as a measure in creating works.

From now on film studios should set Friday in their weekly plans as the day to make a study of and to hold meetings on the great leader's Juche thoughts on art and literature, and study his instructions and thoughts harder. Only then can creators and artists embody his Juche artistic and literary thoughts properly in their works.

New films should be shown to artists and writers before others. It is not a good idea for those who make films to be shown films after everyone else. Projectors should be carried to locations where film production units are working, or to the April 15 Production Unit for Literary Works, or other creative centres, in order to show films to creators after the words of the leader have been passed on to them. Writers should also read works written by others.

The great leader constantly emphasizes that we should read many books, and educates us by setting practical examples. While speaking about the need to read novels, he has recently been using the hour between 10 and 11 p.m. to read the long story *Thriving Sunflowers*. He has given instructions that stories should be read on the radio so that cadres can listen to them.

Creators who write scripts or produce films should read a greater number of novels than any other people. Apparently writers are complaining that they cannot read many novels because of the pressures of work, but this is unreasonable. Writers do not devote even one-tenthousandth of the energy and labour expended by the leader.

Although they should read foreign novels and dramas such as *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection* and *Hamlet*, they must concentrate mainly on reading our own country's books. This will enable them to become proud of their nation. I will provide you scriptwriters with any book for which you ask.

Another important factor in the production of films is to produce good acting scripts.

Even though a screenplay may seem flawless, when it is made into a film it could well fail to be a success. This is because a different person makes it into a film.

Two years ago we attempted to produce a film from the script *A Boxer*. But we failed because the work on its acting script was not done efficiently.

Since turning a screenplay into an acting script is creative work to produce the screenplay into a film, the director should reprocess the script to suit cinematic requirements, instead of merely distributing the scenes.

In order to produce good acting scripts directors must not persist in acting arbitrarily. When producing a film from the screenplay *Masters of a Coal Field*, the director did not cooperate properly with the scriptwriter, on the pretext that the latter stuck exclusively to his own creative view. The director was grossly mistaken. The director should not work in an arbitrary manner, for this reason. Even when the writer is obstinate, a director should be patient in meeting his real goal and work together with the writer to produce a good film.

Directors should also give effective guidance to actors and actresses in their acting.

They should maintain control over them and make strong demands on them until their directing purposes are achieved, even though they may be accused of behaving bureaucratically. However, some directors try to guide their actors to act properly by simply requesting them to act well, so some actors do not obey them and look down upon them.

To give proper guidance to actors, directors should have their own opinions. If they lack these opinions they cannot work properly to produce films. Once the major plots of a work have been framed, they should insert details of lives into them and press on with the creative work in accordance with the purposes of the delineation.

Directors should also improve their artistic ability.

It is mainly because some directors are unable to direct the acting properly that actors look down upon them.

When a stage performance of the satirical drama *Conscript* was being prepared by film actors and actresses in celebration of the 57th birthday of the great leader, the director could not complete the production because he lacked artistic ability. When one sees a work produced by someone else, one is unable to do it if one lacks ability, even though one may feel equal to it.

In future when actors hold meetings to display their talents on Thursdays, directors should appear as well, with a sketch to display their own abilities, and should also direct the training of the actors in practice.

Directors should not overlook shortcomings in film production.

Some directors regard it as luck if their film is passed; they are doing a sloppy job instead of displaying faithfulness in creative work. This is not a proper attitude for creators.

It is a manifestation of a lack of loyalty for creators to offer to the leader films which they know contain shortcomings. Directors should always create with sincerity in order to produce better films, displaying the attitude of masters.

Directors should be careful even in selecting costumes for actors. In the film *Shining Stars* the costumes chosen for the actors were not appropriate. In this film People's Army officers were poorly dressed, whereas the enemy officers were in woolen clothes of high

quality, which may cause people to overestimate the enemy and harbour illusions about them. During the Fatherland Liberation War the uniforms of the US imperialist aggressor soldiers, were not of good quality.

Directors should ensure that not only costumes but also props and settings are used correctly from the historical point of view so that the artistic portrayal as a whole accords with the character of the times. They should clearly understand how important their tasks are in film production and eliminate slovenliness and expediency.

There is a problem with actors, which should be solved.

There are not enough actors. Young actors display their originality once or twice, but fail to do so afterwards. Unless some changes are made among these actors, there will be no decent actors and actresses left in a couple of years.

It is a good idea that actors at the Korean Film Studio and at the February 8 Film Studio are exchanged for making films. The February 8 Film Studio has been able to produce good films such as The Report of No. 36 and Shining Stars because it saw to it that competent actors from the Korean Film Studio appeared in accordance with the instructions of the great leader. These two films are wonderful.

The actor playing the county headman in The Report of No. 36 plays his part very skilfully. He is an actor with dignity. If the Korean Film Studio gives it assistance by lending such actors, the February 8 Film Studio will also be able to produce good films. This year, too, the two studios should make films by exchanging actors. However, this step will no longer be effective after a year.

To solve the problem of actors, it is necessary to discover new ones and train them under a long-range programme. This is the way to train able actors and to give freshness to the cinema screen. I think it would be a good idea to select and train more than 100 new actors this year.

Officials should improve their work methods.

Success in film production depends on how well the officials in charge of organizing and carrying out the work mobilize artists and writers.

They should not impose their individual opinions on creators heedlessly.

Some officials are now directing creators in an administrative way by forcing their opinions on them. Worse still, some at the Korean Film Studio apparently go to the length of urging creators to insert scenes of people who are not in the scripts. If they direct film makers that way, the latter will not stand for it. If officials force unreasonable opinions on creators, it may paralyse the faculty for creative thinking on the part of the latter, and have serious effects on films.

Officials should consult with creators sincerely and frankly with one mind and one will, at all times seeing the good points first and preserving them, and giving constructive advice so as to encourage creators to correct their shortcomings.

Writing is by no means easy. Those who write have the greatest

trouble. Writers devote all their energies and talents to the production of works. Each article they write has its validity and logic. Therefore, we should respect their views and never impose our opinions on them. Even if the manner of the correction is just, it should not be imposed on creators. We should persuade and enlighten writers so that they rack their brains and cherish creative illusions. When watching the first copy of a film, the great leader never talks about omitting or inserting anything. Even when he watched the film *Two Workteam Leaders and Two Soldiers* recently he only asked questions, such as: '°What kind of agony is this for an 11-year-old schoolgirl?± '°Is it all right for her to get married in such a state?± '°What about including a scene in which fox furs are prepared as a gift to a People's Army unit?± and '°Is it appropriate that the last words of the hero should be spoken in that way?±

Officials should learn from the great leader's method of guidance and fully apply it in their work with creators.

While seeing problems from the point of view of Party policy, workers of the works evaluation office should give effective guidance to improve the ideological and artistic quality of works.

Officials of the primary Party committee at the film studio, too, should mix with creators, work and live together with them and help them in a kind way to produce films to meet the requirements of Party policy.

Artists and writers should further strengthen their political and ideological lives.

Although a radical advance has been made in the field of cinematic art over the past few years, no revolutionary change has yet taken place in the political and ideological life of artists and writers.

Nowadays many artists and writers lack the revolutionary consciousness that would prompt them to devote all they have to the revolution; instead they lead a life of indolence and slackness.

Some film makers go around complaining about the lack of goods available in the studio shop, while some actresses are only after an extravagant life. Artists who work and live in such a way cannot be called screen artists of the revolutionary age.

We are now living in the age of revolution and the age of struggle.

We have not carried out our revolutionary cause and we must continue with the revolution in order to achieve the complete victory of socialism. We must also reunify the country and conduct world revolution.

In order to fulfil our revolutionary tasks we should strive to increase our powers of defence, no matter what the difficulties may be. That is why at present we are making considerable efforts to allocate vast sums of money to building up our defences. If we transfer part of the money which is invested in building up our defences to economic construction, we will be able to step up socialist economic construction and improve the people's standard of living. However, we cannot do so because the US imperialists are perpetrating their aggressive moves more openly.

In order to prevent our people from again becoming slaves to

imperialism and repeating their bitter experience of the past, we should put efforts into strengthening our defence capabilities, even if it means that we must tighten our belts.

Artists and writers should not in any way lead an idle and easy-going life; they should work and live in a revolutionary manner, overcoming any difficulties in their lives.

They should lead their lives with solid conviction in the victory of the revolution. The great leader has always stressed the need to educate intellectuals in a revolutionary way lest they should waver during times of ordeal. The intelligentsia is guilty of feeble-mindedness and vacillation. Artists and writers should not wilt during times of ordeal like flowers in a greenhouse; the more arduous the revolution becomes, the firmer should be their conviction in the victory of the revolution. They should not waver. As you know from recently watching the documentary film on the general military contest of the People's Army, thanks to the care of the leader, our country is fully prepared not only politically and economically but also militarily. We have nothing to fear even if war breaks out. If the US imperialist aggressors provoke a reckless war we will defeat them with a single blow and then certainly accomplish the historic cause of national reunification.

At present the revolutionary forces in south Korea are also growing in strength.

The revolutionary organizations there are incessantly expanding their forces among patriots. The south Korean revolutionaries never waver, however difficult the circumstances, but fight bravely with the firm belief that they know the leader alone and no others. Revolutionaries must possess this sort of solid faith and strong will.

Artists and writers should have unshakable confidence in victory and live up to the deep trust and care of the great leader by making a success of their creative work.

In addition, they should bear in mind the intense pride and honour of conducting the revolution under his leadership.

The respected Comrade Kim Il Sung is the great leader whom not only our people but also revolutionary people around the world respect and follow. Everywhere in the world, 'groups for the study of Comrade Kim Il Sung's Juche idea' and 'groups for the study of Comrade Kim Il Sung's works' have been formed and are conducting their activities.

It is the trend of the times for the revolutionary people the world over to learn from the great Juche idea of the leader. This is a law of the development of history which no force can hold in check.

In the course of travelling abroad recently the members of the State Vocal Ensemble must have been keenly aware of the greatness of the international prestige and dignity of the respected leader and of what a great man he is. It is because they have the great leader that they received so enthusiastic a welcome and such cordial hospitality abroad.

We intend to conduct cultural exchanges on a wider scale with other countries.

If successes are achieved in the production of films this year, writers and stars, too, must be allowed to visit foreign countries. Then they will feel more keenly the superiority of our socialist system, established by the great leader, and gain even more national pride from conducting the revolution under his leadership.

Artists and writers should always take infinite pride in carrying out the revolution under the leadership of the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung and make themselves revolutionary fighters who are unfailingly loyal to the Party and the leader.

If they are to prepare themselves to be such fighters, they must lead a more efficient political and ideological life.

Now that we have laid the foundations for developing art and literature, we can concentrate on providing more effective guidance for the political and ideological life of artists and writers.

The great leader has said that the problem of building up solid foundations for the sector of art and literature arose 15 years ago, and that this has now been solved. Unless the political and ideological life of artists and writers is strengthened, anti-Party, alien elements may appear once again in our ranks.

In directing this life there are various methods that can be employed, but the best is to intensify the ideological struggle.

Artists and writers should wage an intense ideological struggle against non-working-class tendencies, such as the dislike of work and loafing on the job, and thus create a wholesome atmosphere in the ranks.

You should be bold enough to strike a blow at anti-Party, counterrevolutionary elements, but always hold fast to the principle of winning over waverers, even by criticizing those who waver.

At today's meeting the officials from the February 8 Film Studio debated well. Other people did not prepare themselves properly for the debate. The members of the actors' troupe from the February 8 Film Studio and the scriptwriters presented their written comments well, too.

It is a good idea for us to listen to all the views that the creators and artists will put forth at the meeting tomorrow, instead of restricting the debate. At tomorrow's meeting scriptwriters, too, must speak about any troubles they may have in their work.

If the results of the work done last year are reviewed efficiently, the work will not fail to bear fruit this year. Creators should press on forcefully with film production, displaying enthusiasm for it and the spirit of creation.

I am firmly convinced that you creators will live up to the expectations of the Party by winding up the seminar on the great leader's idea on art and literature well and achieving greater success in the production of films.

Korean Friendship Association (K.F.A)

<http://www.korea-dpr.com>