

***ON THOROUGHLY ESTABLISHING A REVOLUTIONARY FILM-MAKING
SYSTEM OF OUR OWN***

Talk to Officials in the Film Sector
April 28, 1971

I would like to take the opportunity at this meeting with senior officials and creators in the film sector to speak about thoroughly establishing a film-making system of our own.

If we are to raise our film art to a higher level, we must smash the old pattern in creative work. There are still many defects in the film sector to be corrected.

Many aspects of the method, order and regulations of film-making, for example, must be remedied fundamentally. The present film-making system contains elements of capitalistic methods handed down from the days of Japanese imperialism and of dogmatism introduced from abroad after liberation. With this hodgepodge system we cannot produce promptly films that meet the requirements of our Party's ideological work, nor can we ensure that their ideological and artistic levels are high.

As the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung has taught us, cinema should, in each period and at each stage of the development of the revolution, play the role of a mobilizing force by advancing ahead of reality, just as editorials of the Party organ do.

In order to develop cinema to meet the demands of the times and to make it a powerful weapon for Party ideological work, we must smash the outdated system of creation and establish a new one more suitable to conditions in our country and more in conformity with the nature of the production of revolutionary films.

For this purpose it is particularly important to have a correct understanding of film-making system.

In the process of making a film, many people—writer, director, cameramen, set designers, composers, actors, actresses, technical and administrative personnel and workers—are involved, each discharging his respective assignment. Though the people involved in the process share one and the same aim, they perform different duties. So there must be a clear demarcation between their responsibilities and a well-regulated work system.

The film-making system is a one under which the whole course of motion picture creation and production is organized and standardized, and by which the creators, artists and all the other people who take part in film-making fulfil their duties fully and responsibly.

In view of the characteristics of film-making and of the fact that it requires a big work force, a complicated technical process, large numbers of materials and great quantities of funds, the process of film production must be strictly organized and standardized so that all the

people involved can perform their duties in their respective posts. Otherwise they cannot produce films high in ideological and artistic value.

Proceeding from these practical requirements, we have stressed the need to set up a new, revolutionary film-making system of our own and the need to implement it properly. However, neither the senior officials who are guiding film production, nor the creators and artists who are the performers of the work itself, have a correct understanding of this need. As a result, they cannot break the old, conventional pattern. Currently the work of producing films at studios is in many ways entangled, and people work very busily, yet without the desired results being achieved. This is because they have failed to establish a rigid revolutionary film-making system suited to our conditions.

That is why I began, stage by stage, to correct the old system of creation while giving guidance to the work of film-making. I developed this work in depth when the immortal classics *The Sea of Blood* and *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man* were being adapted to the screen.

What is important in establishing and implementing a new, revolutionary film-making system suited to the situation in our country is to observe the Party's principle that all creative activities are conducted completely on the basis of the leader's teachings and Party policy.

The teachings of the great leader and our Party's policy are the only correct guideline for officials and artists. Without these teachings and this policy, no one can move along the right track and achieve success.

They are the basis for artistic creation, serving as the guideline in the whole creative process and acting as the yardstick by which the final review of the work must be measured. Therefore, everybody—the official who leads the creative work, the scenarist, the director who writes the acting script and leads the production unit, and the actors who portray the characters—must follow the principle of studying hard to become familiar with the leader's teachings and Party policy with regard to the production of the work concerned, and must carry out creative activities using these as their guideline.

This principle must be strictly adhered to in the whole course of film-making, not only in producing a work but also in reviewing it.

In the past creative workers reviewed productions in their own way and according to their own assessment, without standards by which to judge them. As a result, they could not properly assess the process and results of production. The Party therefore put forward the policy of reviewing productions by means of seminars on the great leader's ideas on art and literature. It did this in order to encourage film-makers to analyse and judge all problems with his Juche-based ideas as a standard, thus gaining experience and learning valuable lessons. Only by doing this can we correctly assess the process and results of production by the single Party standard.

The next important matter is thoroughly establishing a new

revolutionary system of creation and putting it into practice is to make sure that all officials, creators and artists discharge their duties responsibly and skilfully at the highest level.

Inducing every person involved in film-making to play his designated role with the attitude of a master is a requirement arising from the basic principle of the Juche idea.

All officials, including writers, directors and artists, are the creators of motion pictures; they are revolutionaries who serve the Party and the revolution by making films. Therefore, those who are involved in film-making must assume the attitude of masters in the revolution and carry out their respective assignments promptly at a high level. Such an attitude is decisive in successful film production.

Since no set system of creation existed in the past, officials who guided production would avoid responsibility for the ideological and artistic content of the films. Worse still directors, who are in overall charge of production, would avoid responsibility for the results of the final product.

If they are to produce the best possible films without a hitch we should ensure that all creators and artists perform their responsibility to the letter with the attitude of assuming full responsibility for their designated roles.

Needless to say, a writer should complete the script in a responsible manner. Likewise, a director should be responsible for the completed film. Right now the process of producing a film shows that there is no well-regulated order or clear demarcation in the work of film production. The process of scriptwriting and that of film-making, in particular, are confused so that no clear demarcation line between writers and directors and between the Scriptwriting Company and the film studio exists with regard to their duties and responsibilities. Accordingly, there is no set system whereby everyone is responsible for his designated work.

I have already explained that the Scriptwriting Company should help writers in a responsible manner to complete their scenarios in order to have the latter approved by the State Evaluation Commission for Works. I have also made it plain that the studio should make the scenarios that have passed the commission's assessment into films with no further changes before receiving the approval of the Party. However, my request is not being met properly. Certain officials at the studio often alter works approved by the State Evaluation Commission for Works and even call on writers to rewrite scripts at the stage of the rushes if any shortcomings are revealed. Such practices occur often.

If film-making continues in this way, no progress will be made. Once they get a scenario, officials at the studio, directors and other creators, as well as artists, should produce the film on their own. If they complain about the work and demand that the writer make the dramatic quality stronger, despite the fact that the film lacks artistic appeal because of shortcomings on the part of directors and actors themselves, they cannot improve the artistic presentation of the film. It is the basic requirement of our Juche system of film-making that all

creative workers and artists?writers, directors, actors and actresses, cameramen, set designers and composers, as well as those working in the supply section?carry out their respective duties fully and responsibly. Remembering this requirement, creators, artists and senior officials must make maximum effort to discharge their duties. However, some creators now display a tendency to avoid bearing full responsibility for the work assigned to them.

Even though you try to set up a well-regulated film-making system, if the creators and artists in charge of the various processes of production and various sections cannot prove themselves worthy of their posts, film-making will fall into disorder and confusion.

If the director has shooting started with an incomplete acting script and revises the script carelessly on the spot, or if he demands that actors and actresses do this or that in front of the camera without holding meticulous discussions with them beforehand, the work plan of the production unit will be rendered unstable and the players and other members of the unit will lose confidence.

In order to establish and implement a proper system of film-making, all the members of the production unit must be well versed in their jobs. This is applicable not only to creators and artists but also to technicians and production and supply personnel. Creative work can never be successful from a subjective desire alone. Even those who have a proper attitude of masters to their creative work, yet who fail to prepare themselves politically, ideologically, technically or practically, or to master their work, will fail to carry out their tasks successfully and will, accordingly, also fail to discharge their duties and roles as masters.

If you are to establish a strict film-making system, you should embody the principle of collectivity properly, while enhancing the responsibility of each worker.

Film-making is not work by individuals; it is joint work by all the members of a production unit. The more collective the intelligence, the better the quality of the film.

The thorough embodiment of the principle of collectivity in film-making requires intense discussion between directors and other creative workers. ‘°A general without an army is no general,± goes the proverb. A director, however distinguished he may be, can never make a film on his own. Even when he has outlined a unique plot, putting it to open discussion will produce suggestions for improvement. Therefore, directors should not behave in a self-satisfied manner, sticking to their own opinions, but should have the work-style of relying on the masses at all times and learning from them with an open mind.

Only those directors ‘°who guide production by relying on the masses and enlisting their wisdom can lead film-making to success.

If you are to apply the principle of collectivity, you must strengthen relations between all the sectors and units involved in film-making and meticulously organize a joint operation.

A film studio is not merely a film-making organization; it is a large production enterprise. Therefore, without strengthening production

relations between offices and workshops and organizing their joint operations properly, the work of making films cannot proceed smoothly. If offices and workshops behave in a self-centred way, and workteams only compete without helping one another, difficulties will crop up in film-making, and individualism and egoism will make their appearance in the collective. So everybody must fully display the communist trait of creation under the slogan, 'One for all and all for one!' in each unit and at every post, and then go all out to produce films.

In order to set up a strict system of film-making you should regulate the whole process of film-making and give unified guidance to it. Unlike poems and novels, films can be perfected only through complicated technical processes. If one out of ten processes is not implemented, or one section among ten fails to play its proper role, it becomes impossible to guarantee the quality of a film and to perfect it. Just as the army has military rules and regulations, so film studios must have strict rules and regulations. Only then can all the problems which arise in film-making be solved and good films be made in a short time.

An important aspect of putting film-making on a regular basis is strictly to observe the proper order of the production processes.

A director's script cannot be written prior to the completion of the scenario, and before the director's script is written a film cannot be shot. In addition, the recording of the dialogue, music and sound effects must be done prior to dubbing. It is only by observing the proper order that film-making can proceed smoothly.

The most important matter in observing this order is to give precedence to scenario writing. As I have always stressed, writing the scenario is the first process in film-making and the ideological and artistic basis of a film. When definite priority is given to the screenplay, the studio becomes active. Films are not being produced on a regular basis at present, and this is entirely due to the fact that scriptwriting is lagging behind. In this situation the relations between the various production processes cannot be maintained and, accordingly, the new system of creation will not produce good results. In observing the proper order of the film-making processes it is also important for the director, as the commander of the production unit, to give proper guidance to production.

Even though the individual members of the unit may work well, if the director who is in charge of leading the creative work in a unified way does his job inefficiently, the production processes cannot be linked with one another. It is the director who decides when the production goes over from the preparatory stage to the shooting stage and from the shooting stage to the finishing stage; joint work among artists, cameramen and set designers is also conducted under his guidance.

From the time when he begins writing his own acting script from the scenario until he completes the initial film, the director should always find himself at the centre of creation, establishing relations between the production processes and organizing joint work between different

sections so as to lead the whole group in a unified way. To this end he should work hard so that the whole group achieves a consensus of opinions concerning the work. If each member of the group approaches the work in his own way, smooth progress cannot be made from the outset.

The director should strongly demand that actors and actresses have a correct understanding of the central idea and content of the work; he should insist that they study the work and identify a proper acting style in order to ensure the harmony and uniformity of both their own acting and of the performance as a whole. To this end, I saw to it that a campaign was launched for actors and actresses to read the director's script a hundred times. They did this while filming the immortal classic, *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man*. The campaign is a good method of improving quality in films by making sure that actors and actresses have a full understanding of the ideological and artistic content of the work and, on this basis, begin the creative process with a unified view of the work.

After ensuring that the actors master the work through the campaign to read the director's script a hundred times, the director should immediately organize a meeting at which he expresses his intentions. He should confirm his directing plan by letting the actors and actresses know just what this plan is and by accepting their valuable opinions on it. Having thus made full preparations, the director must start interpreting the work with the other members of the creative group.

Work with actors and actresses, in particular, should be carried out with skill. The director should at all times pay primary attention to working with them and guide their acting with skill, subordinating the role of the rest of the film-making group to the successful acting of the players. Only then can he portray the characters on the screen in a vivid way and maintain a harmony of cinematic representation. The new film-making system requires that full preparations for production be immediately followed by a speed campaign, which should be conducted throughout the whole course of shooting in order to ensure a work that is perfect in the shortest possible span of time. The speed campaign alone will guarantee high quality in the work and shorten the time taken for film production as a whole.

According to the principle of the speed campaign advanced by the Party, all creators and artists, including directors, must join the campaign only when they have grasped the central idea of the work, formed a clear understanding of their tasks and of the ways of carrying them out, and made all the preparations necessary for production. Therefore, they must not try to unfold a speed campaign without making thorough preparations for shooting.

When adapting the immortal classic *The Fate of a Self-defence Corps Man* to the screen, the members of the production unit succeeded in turning out a long feature film in only 40 days by making full preparations for shooting and conducting the speed campaign. This experience shows that the speed campaign is an excellent method of creation that serves to improve the ideological and artistic value of a

work and greatly shortens the period of film-making.

It is also important to observe the requirements of the final stage in following the order of the production processes.

Because the process at the final stage is not done on a regular basis, serious problems appear with the editing and montage since they are being done in a slipshod manner. Some directors edit films haphazardly, ignoring the rules of film production.

If you are to maintain order at the final stage, you should make sure that the recording is done effectively, with precedence given to musical composition. One of the main reasons for your failure to improve quality in recording and to include songs that are appropriate to the scenes is that you do not give priority to composition. From now on you should make it a rule strictly to observe the principle of putting composition first.

In addition, actors and actresses must not be allowed to enter the recording room if they have not learnt their dialogue by heart. If they record their words while reading the script, they will reduce the overall standard of their acting and will be unable to ensure the time taken for film composition. Unless they learn their dialogue by heart, it will be impossible to do the sound recording and shooting simultaneously.

You should do away once and for all with the practice of actors' recording dialogue for others. If a film actor is poor at speech and lets others do it for him, he is not qualified to be an actor.

The process of finishing the rushes and the initial film must be put strictly on a regular basis.

The rushes are the fruit of the creative endeavours of all the officials and artists involved in film-making. However, at present the officials of the film studio neglect to work in a responsible way to perfect the rushes prior to sending them to the Party for approval. Some officials and directors, on the excuse of being busy, send rushes to the Party without having either carefully checked the montage of the scenes or worked on the superimposition meticulously. When the rushes are examined, a lot of attention therefore has to be focussed on the details, and the works have to be revised to correct the errors revealed.

In standardizing the film-making processes and observing the system and order strictly, it is imperative to prohibit individual officials and creators from patching up works as they please, out of subjectivism and self-conceit.

Scenarios already passed by state examination can be considered as having assumed a legal character. So if such scenarios are to be revised and supplemented, approval should be given by the State Evaluation Commission for Works. But individual officials and creators at the film studio revise scenarios that have been given legal approval as they please. This is, in fact, an act that breaks the law.

The film studio must produce rushes from scenarios approved by the State Evaluation Commission for Works. If some opinions are put forward at the studio, they should be discussed and an agreement concerning them reached at the time the rushes are being examined

by the commission. Then the rushes should be revised, completed and sent for ratification.

The individualities of the creators and artists must not be ignored, nor their creative enthusiasm and vision suppressed on the pretext of putting film-making on a regular basis. Creative work is done in one's heart. If the director's heart is full of passion, this will fill him with creative inspiration. The director who is at all times totally involved in his work and burns with creative fire may discover a good way to make a film—a way that did not occur to him as he wrote his script—just as the film is being shot or dubbed. Moreover, he may discover some defect in the work at the stage of shooting that was not evident when the script was being written. In such a case, how will matters stand if he continues on to the next process, or if he passes over one process on the plea of maintaining the processing sequence? The result will be that the sequence of film-making may be observed, but the ideological and artistic value of the film is degraded.

As for the regulations governing creation, they are there for the purposes of producing films that are high in ideological and artistic value; they are not formulae for binding the creative staff hand and foot. Of course, if the director discovers a new way of depiction in the course of creation, he should not try to put it into practice in haste. He should study in detail the significance of his discovery to improving the ideological and artistic value of the film, and examine what problems might arise in implementing it. When he has made up his mind, he should put his decision to collective discussion and reach assent through the relevant procedure. The director must not ignore a good way of depiction that might occur to him in the course of creation simply because he is chained to the order of processes; on the other hand, he must not behave on impulse either simply on the excuse that he is making effective use of a new way of depiction.

The firm establishment of a new revolutionary system of film-making to suit the situation requires that the whole course of film-making be put on a regular basis and that the life of the creative staff be properly organized.

Even though the film-making processes may be regular, if the artists engaged in practical activities are not organized, the new system will not prove worthwhile. That is why since I first took over the guidance of film-making I have advanced the policy of making the process of creation one through which artists and writers become revolutionary and assimilate themselves to the working class, and why I have defined rules for their life and daily routine.

However, a number of creative workers and artists who attach prime importance to the uniqueness of creation are not observing these rules and following their daily routine. Experience shows that it is only by observing these new rules and following their daily routine that they can ensure the better ideological and artistic quality of films and accelerate the process of their revolutionary and working-class transformation.

In setting up a reliable revolutionary system of film-making and implementing it, the Party committee should enhance its role of

leadership.

The Party committee of the film studio must form a group to make films so that the director-general and the director, having received a scenario approved by the State Evaluation Commission for Works, produce a film that is high in ideological and artistic value within a set time. The committee must also conduct organizational and political work to help all the members of the group to carry out their assigned tasks at their posts.

The Party committee of the film studio must assume responsibility before the Party for the whole of the film-making process and its results. The Party committee should not interfere in the ideological and artistic content of the production, but should exercise complete control over the production processes and help the film makers to produce fine films from legally approved scenarios. Since the Party committee of the film studio exists to conduct organizational and political work so that creators, artists and all others can produce good films promptly, it should concentrate all its efforts on making such films.

However, at present the Party committees of the Ministry of Culture, the Scriptwriting Company and the film studios confine themselves only to doing work within the Party; they do not put all their efforts into producing good films, their basic revolutionary task, but simply find fault with films as if they were indifferent onlookers.

The Party appointed the primary Party secretaries of the film studio and the Scriptwriting Company as members of the State Evaluation Commission for Works so as to enhance their roles and responsibilities. This is not an honorary post; it is an important assignment for them to bear responsibility before the Party for the ideological and artistic content of films and to work hard to produce the best films possible. Therefore, Party secretaries, as chiefs of Party organizations and evaluation commission members, should make strenuous efforts to discharge their duties.

The sector of film art should strive thoroughly to implement the new system of creation established by the Party.

To this end the senior officials in this sector must set an example in setting up this new system. At present the system is not being implemented thoroughly in the creative activities and daily life of artists. One of the main reasons for this is that senior officials are merely giving orders to their subordinates at will, ignoring the requirements of the new system.

Party organizations at all levels in the film sector should wage a powerful struggle to persuade creators to work and lead their lives as required by the new system. At the same time they must intensify the education of all workers in the essence and superiority of the new system. In this way the new system will be implemented thoroughly in all units and at all posts, and its superiority made apparent to all.

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