

December 9, 1957

**A Note from Sluczanski to Several Comrades in
Warsaw concerning the "August Group" and the
Political Situation in the DPRK**

Citation:

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Summary:

Comrade Sluczanski describes the situation regarding the "August Group" in North Korea, stating that a number of arrests have taken place throughout North Korea.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

No. 31/D.V.

/-/ Ogrodzinski

Receiving:

Comr. Cyrankiewicz
Comr. Gomulka
Comr. Jedrychowski
Comr. Loga-Sowinski
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Comr. Rapacki
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Comr. Wierblowski
Comr. Dluski
Comr. Czesak
Comr. Naszkowski
Comr. Wierna

Warsaw, 9.XII.57

Top secret

Note

concerning] the political situation in the DPRK

According to] the information of the People's Republic of Poland Embassy in the DPRK coming from the Koreans and the diplomatic corps, the means of repression of persons connected to the so-called "August group" (a group under the leadership of former members of the Politbureau of the CC of the Korean Workers' Party, Pak Changok and Choe Changik , which took the floor at the CC Plenum in August of last year with a criticism of the DPRK party and government leadership - the cult of personality, distortions of inner-party democracy, a low standard of living - and strove for a change in the leadership, having prepared the composition of a new government with Choe Changik at the helm. Some of the members of the group fled to China after the Plenum and presumably remain there. The former DPRK ambassador to the USSR, Li Sangjo who was connected to the group has refused to return and probably remained in the Soviet Union. According to a different version, he is at the party school in Beijing. He has developed his activity among students and Korean citizens in the USSR) have been sharpened.

Even though the Korean comrades continue to say that the August group did not represent a larger force and did not have broader influence, the facts seem to point to the fact that a part of the intelligentsia, young writers, students and employees of

the party and state apparatuses backed the group. But there is a lack of data that would show that the group had support from the working class and the peasantry.

The quite far reach of the group's influence, as well as the recently noticed certain broadening of their influence (in May and June, a small group of professors pronouncing views close to the views of the "August group" spoke up at the University in Pyongyang. These professors were excluded from the party and removed from the University), have led the authorities of the DPRK to undertake repressive methods toward the people connected to it. A number of arrests and changes in the central offices were conducted, especially in those where the people from the "August group" were at the top (in the Office of the Council of Ministers, Min[istry] of Culture, Construction and the University). The arrests also included provincial centers. House arrest was implemented toward Pak Changok and Choe Changik. Kim Dubong, former Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK, was removed from state activity.

Meetings are being conducted in government offices and institutions with the goal of explaining the party's policies and the anti-party activity of the Pak Changok and Choe Changik group. These meetings quite often serve as moral pressure, and cases of suicide have even been noted as a result of them. Currently, until March 1958, a campaign of raising party loyalty will be conducted in the whole party.

As a result of the repressive action among party activists and state employees, fear of arrest has begun to spread, which has led to the organization of a number of attempts to escape to the PRC (the last one took place in October of this year), where some of the main organizers of the "August group" are staying. According to the Soviet comrades, the PRC does not intend to hand over the escapees to the DPRK, despite the talks on this subject, which the Koreans have initiated.

Currently, an investigation of the case of the Pak Changok and Choe Changik group is being conducted. The results so far are as follows. The group did not intend to bring about a coup or fundamental changes in policy by force, it intended to gain a majority at the CC Plenum so as to bring about changes in the leadership in this way. In the opinion of Korean comrades, a particular group of people, who had the intention of changing the leadership by force, not stating any ideological program, took advantage of this. Last year, some of these people were to have aimed to bring about a "Korean Poznan." Indeed, the "August group" possessed a storm unit made up of students of the Institute of Construction (the Institute's building is located next to the CC), but apart from that no preparations of a military character have been ascertained, and the investigation did not so far show connections between members of the group and foreign intelligence organizations or saboteurs.

Analyzing the issue of the so-called "August group" against the overall political situation in the DPRK, one should conclude that currently it does not represent any important problem, since the internal situation in the DPRK is stabilizing increasingly. The latest decisions of the government and party leadership, such as striving to strengthen ties to the masses and attempts aimed at raising the standard of living, have strengthened the position of the current leadership.

/-/ Sluczanski