

May 19, 1965

Note about North Korean Internal Affairs

Citation:

"Note about North Korean Internal Affairs", May 19, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, IV A2/20/252. Translated for NKIDP by Bernd Schaefer.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111819>

Summary:

A description of the Korean Workers' Party involvement in economic and company affairs.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

SED Central Committee
Department of International Relations
SAPMO-BA, DY 30, IV A2/20/252

GDR Embassy in DPRK
B/7/805/219

Pyongyang, 19 May 1965

Confidential

N o t e

about an Information from 29 April 1965

On 29 April 1965 the embassy got informed about the following:

1. Currently in the DPRK selective tests are administered at universities, colleges, academic institutions, and schools. Those tests are supposed to weed out 50 percent of all students, academic cadres, and teachers in order to send them into factory production. This is supposed to amend shortages in the working force and increase production substantially.

2. Recently the deployment of KWP officials to leading positions in factories has increased. Opinions of experts and specialists there how to improve production are ignored, since these officials are devoid of technical knowledge. For about two months experts are allowed to study some foreign technical journals. However, the technical cadres cannot prevail over the political functionaries. The latter have the tendency to do everything by themselves. A proposal for improvement made at Nampo Wharf would have resulted in saving 33,000 Won, but it got rejected. Due to the many meetings and assemblies lasting four hours and more every day, the main engineer of the wharf did not find the time for six months to study a technical publication. The cadres are especially imprecise in using the term "technical revolution". A leading functionary at the wharf called a Japanese ship with a modern design an example for technical revolution. Technicians and other specialists trained in foreign socialist countries do not receive positions with responsibilities in factories. They are met with great mistrust, especially when they are married to wives from foreign countries.

3. At Nampo Wharf they had to listen to an analysis of the Leipzig Spring Fair though nobody from the wharf attended it. The information focused on China's participation in the fair and the products exhibited by the PR China there. China is always emphasized as a great friend. It also shows in the delegation of many interns traveling for six months or more to the PR China for training. To the Soviet Union they only sent study delegations for short stints.

4. Probably a military parade will be held on the anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War. There was no information whether something was prepared for the 20th anniversary of liberation. Nothing was seen or heard on this one. Political preparations were already made for the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Korean Workers Party. The party printed study material for this occasion to be studied by both party members on non-members.

5. The population is very displeased, as it notes no improvements in standards of living. Still, people keep silent out of fear for repression. Though they have not much to eat, and clothes are very expensive. Many families just live from watery soups. Unmarried people and orphans are still doing best. Living standards of the people are especially bad in the North of the DPRK.

One can only talk about conditions in the DPRK with very close and trusted friends. Mistrust among the people looms very large. If you openly voice discontent, it may happen you will lose your position at work. Some people disappear without information being given to families where they are. There exists something like kin liability. Families of those arrested, for instance, do not receive an apartment and no distribution of food. Functionaries perform regular checks in the apartments. They also sift through closets and boxes.

1. Though the Korean side frequently claims university and school students would receive their clothes for free, the former have to pay 35.00 Won and the latter 25.00 Won for clothes.

2. A West German engineer from MAN [Machine Tool Company] in Munich works at the machine tool factory in Huicheon. West German specialists also worked in Kanghae [sic] steel factory and probably are still there. At Nampo Wharf, certain West German machines have been installed now.

Note: On 4 May 1965 three West German specialists from Höchst chemical company in Erlangen arrived in Pyongyang.

[signed]
Merten
3rd Secretary

CC:
1x 1st Extra-European Affairs Department (Foreign Ministry)
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