

**March 14, 1961**

**Report, Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK to the  
Foreign Policy and International Department of the  
Socialist Unity Party, GDR**

**Citation:**

"Report, Embassy of the GDR in the DPRK to the Foreign Policy and International Department of the Socialist Unity Party, GDR", March 14, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO-BA, Dy 30, IV 2/20/137. Translated by Grace Leonard.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112303>

**Summary:**

A report from the GDR Embassy in the DPRK on the impact on the DPRK of Chinese interpretations of socialist theory, the negative impacts of Kim Il Sung's personality cult, and the status of repatriation of Koreans in Japan.

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Foreign Policy and International  
19 and 22 March 61  
Relations Department  
Berlin, 14 March 1961  
Confidential

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Information on a few problems in the Korean Workers Party and in the Democratic People's Republic of China.

(Prepared by the embassy of the GDR in the DPRK)

Addressing the following issues:

- I. The influence of Chinese interpretations and theories in the DPRK
- II. Kim Il Sung's cult of personality
- III. The status of repatriation to the DPRK of the Koreans living in Japan

I. The influence of Chinese interpretations and theories in the DPRK

1. Corresponding to the Chinese theory of the national economy developing in leaps, our Korean comrades have also attempted to achieve Socialism in great leaps. The Korean version is the so-called "Ch'ollima" movement. As in China, the symbol for it is a winged horse on which a worker is mounted.

Even after the publication of the Moscow declaration, there is talk of "new, even greater and more successful leaps" in reports on the satisfaction of the Five Year Plan and in the formulation of tasks for the Seven Year Plan.

During the course of the Five Year Plan, this theory of leaps led to major disproportions in the national economy, just as it did in the People's Republic of China, and these disproportions were considered legitimate occurrences linked to the building of Socialism.

2. Only in the last year there were measures implemented with the consent agreement of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers Party that amounted to over-centralizing the management of the national economy. Having eliminated nearly all of the ministries and established two super-committees for managing the national economy, now they are again undertaking to form ministries for the individual branches of the national economy.

3. So-called "experimental economies" were created in two areas that include regions of up to 12,000 hectares, and they are organized in precisely the same manner as the Chinese people's communes.

They have even begun to establish a type of urban people's commune, called Housewives Street Brigades, in that housewives and family members form so-called homemaker cooperatives that decide issues of production, societal life, and other things.

4. The same managerial methods are applied in the army as in the Chinese army. The generals must serve as soldiers. There is no individual responsibility. Orders are decided in advance in the Party organization. The army is both a military unit and self-reliant in all areas. Chinese methods have been applied with even greater vigor,

especially since the visit by the Chinese military delegation during the last months of last year.

5. There is a strong orientation toward "black and yellow" brothers. This leads to violation of the principle of proletarian Internationalism, especially with regard to the importance of the struggle by the worker class in Europe and in other regions of the world. The roles of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are still seriously underestimated and the role of the Communist Party of China is overestimated.

## II. Kim Il Sung's cult of personality

The cult of personality surrounding Comrade Kim Il Sung has been growing steadily for some time. Everything the Party and the Korean people earn is attributed to Comrade Kim Il Sung. There is no room, no classroom, no public building in which a photo of Kim Il Sung cannot be found. The Museum of the War of National Liberation is designed entirely around the role of Kim Il Sung. There are no less than 12 figures of Kim Il Sung in the rooms of the museum, each larger than the next.

The history of the revolutionary war and the formation of the Communist Party of Korea are not correctly portrayed. The decisive role of the Soviet Union in the liberation of Korea is completely downplayed. Its role is addressed on only a single panel. This is also expressed in the materials as well as in films and depictions. Thus, a legend of Kim Il Sung has been created that does not correspond to the actual facts if one considers what Comrade Kim Il Sung has actually done.

Party propaganda is not oriented toward studying the works of Marxism/Leninism, but rather is solely and completely oriented toward the "wise teachings of our glorious leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung". Many rules of Party life, such as the link to the masses, are portrayed as if they were discovered by Kim Il Sung rather than by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. There are almost no articles or events in which Comrade Kim Il Sung is not mentioned. It is also a fact that all of those who are not in agreement with such an approach are characterized as sectarians, and recently as revisionists. This demonstrates that criticism and self-criticism in the Party are very poorly developed and in many cases democratic rule is not guaranteed. This is particularly true of the army and state organizations.

How the Korean Comrades view the fight against domination is evident from a statement by Comrade Pak Tin Tsches (spelling from original German document) which he made in his lecture at the 15th anniversary of the foundation of the KWP: "We as Korean comrades have always fought the battle against dogmatism, we have always pursued our own standpoint against that of others". That is naturally a vulgar and false interpretation of the battle against dogmatism. Dogmatism in the Korean Workers Party is closely linked to the mystic ideas of Confucianism, which extend to certain nationalist tendencies. It is frequently stated that only a people like the Korean people is capable of such feats and heroism. All successes, not the least those achieved with the great assistance of the fraternal Socialist nations, especially with the aid of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people, are portrayed as their own successes. Great feats that were accomplished by the Soviet Union, the CSSR, Poland, and the GDR are portrayed as accomplishments of the Korean workers "without foreign" assistance. It is not coincidental that even after the Statement of the Communist and Workers Parties, neither international cooperation in all fields nor fraternal assistance from the Socialist nations were mentioned or shown any appreciation. Connected to this are also certain efforts not to take part in Socialist works and to underestimate the successes of other peoples in the Socialist camp. These nationalist tendencies are particularly prevalent in films, in the theater and performances, and in lectures.

### III. The status of repatriation to the DPRK of the Koreans living in Japan

By the end of 1960, the DPRK had sent 54 repatriation ships to Japan to bring about 53,000 Koreans back to the DPRK. 94% of them had lived in South Korea prior to emigrating to Japan. Among these Koreans are 700 specialists, 300 scientists and artists, 3 doctors of medicine, and 1 doctor in another field. In addition, this group includes 1500 Japanese who also emigrated to the DPRK. (These were primarily Japanese spouses.)

By January 1961 there were markedly fewer announcements and reports on repatriations in the press and on the radio in the DPRK than there had been previously. On 3 February 1961 the Japanese Red Cross announced that the Red Cross of the DPRK had sent a telegram to its Japanese counterpart which read: "To prevent an epidemic of the flu that is in Japan, the repatriation transports are being temporarily suspended." (Announcement in Vertr. Bulletin of the Ztak.)

On 8 February 1961, the Tokyo-based Japanese broadcaster "International Radio" reported that the Japanese Red Cross had sent a telegram to the DPRK that contained the following:

- Request for immediate dispatch of the 55th repatriation ship
- There are 735 repatriates in Niigata, none of whom are ill with the flu
- Proposal that the repatriates be provided prophylactic inoculations
- Proposal that the DPRK send with the 55th ship physicians whose duties would be to conduct examinations and administer inoculations.

The reasons the repatriation activities were halted are as follows:

1. The repatriates who are already in the DPRK have sent word to those still living in Japan not to come to the DPRK due to the living conditions.
2. Keeping track of the repatriates has proved difficult for DPRK organizations. For instance, our embassy has been able to observe that the younger repatriates, in particular, form groups and show up in Pyongyang, for example. They have their meeting points in the city and in some cases turn out to be "troublemakers".
3. Their clothing, attitude, and manner of personal appearance make them immediately recognizable in the DPRK. Some amenities that were commonplace for them in the past - portable radios, record players, etc., reach the Korean populace this way and lead to inconsistencies and complications in the education of the people, particularly the youth. (Tasks set forth for the youth at the last Central Committee meeting of the Democratic Youth Association: "Resolve difficult and complicated issues - Members of youth organization must be developed into "red soldiers of the Party".
4. The so-called Order Shops (purchasing centrals) currently offer items repatriates brought with them from Japan. Especially bicycles, portable radios, watches, leather jackets, suits, record players, leather purses, records, etc. These things are sold for cash to provide the so-called "material foundation" for the repatriates. Young repatriates in particular sometimes live up to six months on this money and do not pursue any regular employment. They use this time to make deals. This results in perceptible stimulation of the "black market" in the streets.

5. The repatriates, settled by DPRK organizations across the entire country, even in the most remote villages, frequently leave, migrating primarily to major cities.

6. There is dissatisfaction among the women repatriates, as well. In Japan, they were accustomed to having access to a broad range of products in shops and department stores, which is currently not the case in the DPRK.

7. The independent Capitalists and former owners of small and mid-size businesses adapt best and most rapidly to life in the DPRK. The sale of the of the complete factory equipment they bring with them and models (machines, spare parts, cars, etc. gave them high profits and great advantages, such as top jobs.

The specialists among the repatriates also fare well, since they are employed in accordance with their special knowledge and abilities. Repatriation has for the most part improved the lot of the farmers, since they were among the groups that suffered most in Japan. (High taxes, extremely poor living conditions.)

Repatriation also brought with it a host of problems for the DPRK in terms of security and vigilance. Since the border between North and South Korea is hermetically sealed, the enemy attempts to infiltrate agents and spies, especially through Japan. The great number of those returning to the DPRK makes it easier for certain trained cadre from foreign intelligence services to penetrate. The possibility of taking personal property

[illegible lines]

[illegible] the repatriates also provides an opportunity to introduce technical means of espionage and sabotage into the DPRK (portable radios as transmitters, etc.)

This problem is not acknowledged publicly at all. The facts listed above are observations that have also been made by diplomats from other embassies and that have been confirmed in talks and meetings.