

**January 5, 1968**  
**Memorandum on Two Informational Reports from  
the GDR Embassy in the DPRK, Pyongyang**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Ambassador Herrmann explains that the population in Pyongyang is being reduced while other restrictions are being placed upon the North Korean population owing to the tense military situation on the Korean Peninsula.

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

It is said that the population of the capital should be reduced by 300,000 and that, at the same time, a certain number of factories should be relocated to other parts of the DPRK in order to "minimize the risk to Pyongyang of a military attack." The resettlement of families is said to have started already in November 1967. Also the official permission for domestic traveling, which had been introduced early this year, is to be seen in the context of an increased defense alertness, since they want to be able to assign everybody at any time far from his home. It was noted how a Korean woman who wanted to travel to a nearby village for her son's funeral had been treated in a very unfriendly way by the police; obviously in order to have her renounce her travel plans. This new policy can be readily observed by the fact that the trains are now almost empty, while in the past one had to show up at the station much earlier in order to get access to the train. If the police now issue a travel permit, one gets a special passport valid only for one particular journey. They banned all romantic lyrics and old Korean love stories because love would distract the people from their revolutionary thinking. These prohibitions also extend to the romantic operas (as our colleagues call them), the fiction book "How the Steel was Tempered" and the music of Beethoven as he is not considered a revolutionary. [...] (Signed) Herrmann