

November 12, 1964

**Remarks by the East German Embassy in Hanoi on
the Article in Hoc Tap No. 11/1964 [Excerpts]**

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Summary:

The GDR's Hanoi Embassy remarks on an anti-Soviet article in the North Vietnam paper. The Soviet opinion is that there a change in Vietnam's attitude toward the Soviet Union

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Translation - English

We have already informed you in a telegram about the publication of the article "Long Live the October Revolution in Russia" by Hong Chuong, the withdrawal of that piece as well as its basic contents. Now we send you a partial translation (some paragraphs without significance are missing).[1]

In this context we would like to summarize once more, how the withdrawal of the article occurred. Shortly after the publication of the piece, the Soviet ambassador [Ilya] Shcherbakov made a visit to Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. He asked what Cde. Pham Van Dong thought about this article. Cde. Pham Van Dong evaded a clear reply. In the following days, representatives of the editorial board of Hoc Tap visited diplomatic missions, removed the copies already delivered, and replaced them with new ones, from which the article had been cut out. When Cde. Shcherbakov shortly thereafter made a visit to the first CC secretary of the VWP, Cde. Le Duan, the latter remarked in the course of the conversation that the article had been a mistake, and apologized for it. He added that there are people in the party, who have no understanding of the situation and thus make mistakes and shoot beyond the target.

...

On 14 November the press attaché of the Hungarian embassy, Cde. Benyei, told me that he knew from Cde. Fourniau,[2] a correspondent of L'Humanité, who the author of the article was. Cde. Hong Chuong is vice director of the pedagogical university in Hanoi; he apparently lived for more than 10 years in France and visited a French school there. He is supposed to be very intelligent and knows the European situation well. His articles, in Cde. Fourniau's view, are always very interesting, since he usually represents the line of the VWP leadership, but sometimes reveals details that provide nuances in official policy.

Estimate by the Soviet embassy

The article was an open attack on the policy of the Soviet Union and, especially, the 20th and 22nd Party Congress.[3] In China it is impossible to admit such mistakes or apologize for them. We agree with this opinion. We still have to wait [to see] how things develop. Yet, it is already clear, that at least on the surface a change in the attitude towards the USSR has occurred. Signs for this were, among others, that Cde. Le Duan stayed for a long time at the Soviet reception for the anniversary of the November [October] Revolution and, while there, embraced a Soviet artist after she had sung a song in Vietnamese, and that, after a long time, speeches by Soviet comrades were published in the media (it relates to the speeches by comrades [CPSU Secretary General Leonid] Brezhnev and [Soviet Minister Council Chairman Alexei] Kosygin at the reception of the cosmonauts and the speeches by Cde. Brezhnev and [Soviet defense minister Rodion] Malinovsky on 7 November-both verbatim).

[1] The partial translation of the Hoc Tap article (not included here) is attached as an addendum to the original document.

[2] Charles Fourniau was a journalist permanently accredited to the DRV from 1963 to 1965. Due to the political closeness of L'Humanité (the daily of the French Communist Party), he had some privileged access to information in Hanoi.

[3] The 20th party congress took place in February 1956, the 22nd in October 1961. At both, Khrushchev denounced Stalin.