

November 27, 1957

**Notes from a Conversation between the 1st
Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK with
Comrade Berentz, 3rd Secretary of the Embassy of
the GDR, on 26-27.XI.1957**

Citation:

"Notes from a Conversation between the 1st Secretary of the PRL Embassy in the DPRK with Comrade Berentz, 3rd Secretary of the Embassy of the GDR, on 26-27.XI.1957", November 27, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained by Jakub Poprocki and translated by Maya Latynski.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/111726>

Summary:

Brzezinski Henryk and Comrade Berentz describe the aid North Korea has received from East Germany to reconstruct the city of Hamheung as well as the impact of the August 1956 Plenum on that city.

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

Embassy of the Pyongyang, 27.XI.1957
People's Republic of Poland
in Pyongyang [trans. note: tilted stamp]
No. 984/166/2421/57/tjn. [trans. note: most likely short for tajne, secret]

N o t e

From a conversation with comr. Berentz, 3rd Secretary of the Embassy of the GDR of 26-27.XI of this year

Berentz was interested in the question of Polish aid to the DPRK and the situation in the DPRK. I relayed these issues to my conversation partner according to instructions from the Ambassador.

In 1953-55 the GDR has given assistance to the DPRK in the amount of 350 million rubles. In the second phase of assistance, in 1955-1964, another 350 mil. rubles, with a distribution of 35,000,000 annually. At this moment the DPRK is incapable of using 35,000,000 rubles of assistance annually. I.e., the DPRK is incapable of delivering the appropriate number of people and construction materials.

The GDR assistance is designated for the construction of the city of Hamheung and construction of several factories in that city. The situation is such that after the assistance is finished, Hamheung will look like an oasis (Berentz's term) vis-à-vis the rest of the country. The Koreans have come to the GDR government with a request to shift a part of the GDR's assistance to other cities in Korea. The government of the GDR has not accepted this request. The government of the GDR has agreed to extend the assistance for a further two years, but on the condition that the whole assistance will be devoted to the city of Hamheung.

Berentz informed about the methods of the security apparatus of the DPRK being used vis-à-vis the leading Korean persons in Hamheung who are suspected of participation in the activities of the August group (the Pak Chang-ok [Pak Chang Ok] and Choe Chang-ik [Choe Chang Ik] group). Security functionaries came to the Director of the construction trust in Hamheung and ordered the director to write about his ideology. The director wrote in a room that had been closed off by the security functionaries. After some time the security functionaries entered the room, read what the director had written. After the reading, the director was told "we know more about you, so write again." This process lasted several weeks toward some people. In the meantime, arrests of some people were carried out, while some wrote about their ideology and worked. In this situation, according to Berentz, there were cases of suicide (by hanging).

[trans. note: illegible sentence]

Made 3 cop[ies]
2 cop[ies] MSZ [trans. note: Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych-Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Dep[artment] V
1 cop[y, rest illegible]
1 cop[y, rest illegible]
Brzezinski Henryk
[trans. note: followed by signature]
1st Secretary of the P[olska] R[zeczpospolita] L[udowa- People's Republic of Poland]
Embassy in the DPRK