

December 28, 1956
**Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the
Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Report from Ambassador Károly Práth to Budapest on a conversation he had with Macuch, the Counsellor of the Czechoslovak Embassy. They discussed the inefficient organization of industry in North Korea and the ineffective manner with which Southern provocations are dealt.

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

On 27th December this year, [...] Comrade Fűredi invited Macuch, the Counsellor of the Czechoslovak Embassy, to coffee. [...] Comrade Macuch dwelt upon the Korean situation, and described all the main shortcomings that had been noticeable in the development of the DPRK's economy and that still existed in many places. [...] for instance, he related how senselessly industry had been developed in the DPRK; in his view, what was most characteristic of this was that the Hungarians and the Czechoslovaks were building plants of completely similar type and capacity in Gaeseong [Kaesong] and Huicheon respectively, even though the DPRK's demand for the machines produced there could be abundantly met by just one such factory. In his view, the Korean leaders are thinking of long-range plans for exporting machines to the South-east Asian countries. In his view, this plan will continue to lack any real basis for a long time. They have built many factories where they cannot provide the workforce, the skilled workers, the engineers, etc. There are also frequent disruptions in the supply of raw materials because they have neglected the development of the mining industry [...]. Although the 3rd Congress of the Korean Workers' Party had already dealt with these mistakes, they set such guidelines for industrial development that they could not prevent [the repetition of] the earlier mistakes. Later, the CC plenums held in August and December finally modified the earlier plans, and instead of new industrial projects, they resolved to enlarge already existing ones and improve their technical standards. In addition, they are laying more and more emphasis on improvement of living standards, for there are still serious problems in this field.

As far as he knew, Comrade Macuch said that in South Korea the population's living standards were higher, which was made possible by the fact that the substantial aid given by the USA provided employment for the industrial workers in certain branches of light industry, and by the fact that they did not invest as much in industry as was the case in the wartorn DPRK. In his view, peasants also live better in South Korea, for there is more and better land at their disposal, and they use much more artificial fertilizer-800,000 metric tons in 1955, as opposed to the DPRK's 125, 000 metric tons-of course, this does not mean that the South Korean population lives well, it merely lives relatively better than the population of the DPRK.

[...] Comrade Macuch said that the Americans were doing their best to curtail the influence and authority of the N[eutral] C[ontrol] C[ommission]. Various disturbances and provocations are constantly occurring in the border zone; for instance, recently Rheeist provocateurs came over to a border village, killed the chairman of the cooperative, and kidnapped several youths. In Comrade Macuch's view, it is not right that the press of the DPRK does not deal concretely and publicly with these and similar cases but always writes merely about the "Syngman Rhee clique," the "gang," the "traitors" etc. (To our knowledge, the press did write about that border incident; Comrade Macuch was misinformed in this case.) In his opinion, this formulation is not right, for the South Korean population also keeps an eye on it, and the latest elections also showed that more than half the population supported Syngman Rhee. It would be more sensible if the attitude of the government of the People's Republic of China toward Jiang Jieshi and other leaders active on the island of Taiwan became a lesson for the DPRK. Recently, the following policy is being pursued there: they [the GMD leaders] are called upon to return home [...]. In our opinion, the DPRK cannot completely follow the Chinese example in this field, for the greater part of the population [lives] in South Korea, and conditions are entirely different.[...]

Károly Práth
Ambassador