

Hungarian Embassy to North Vietnam, Report, 4 February 1963. [Summary]

The author of the report notes that he had discussions with several middle-level North Vietnamese comrades in the last days. They referred to debates in the top leadership about the issues dividing the Communist countries that time. Allegedly, the leadership came to the conclusion that in the "Yugoslav question", it was the Chinese who were right; in the "Albanian question", partly the Chinese and partly the Soviets were right; they had no clear opinion about the "Cuban question"; and they considered the Sino-Indian border conflict as a Chinese internal affair. Nevertheless, the author added, these views were held only by a part of the VWP leaders. He complained of the North Vietnamese's secretiveness with regard to Sino-Vietnamese political and economic contacts. On the other hand, he stressed that Soviet bloc countries were not discriminated against by Hanoi, either in a political or an economic sense. Thus he proposed a tolerant attitude toward the DRV. He complained of the disorganized character of North Vietnamese macroeconomic management, the absence of good planning, etc., which badly affected Hungarian-North Vietnamese trade. For the mistakes and errors committed, no one was criticized or punished, the leadership simply stated that "we have a lot of problems". (The author agreed with the absence of punishments, since, he stated, it was the top leadership that was primarily responsible for the blunders.) Errors were rather numerous and various: for instance, in certain areas the power stations did not operate due to the lack of consumers, while in other regions construction projects were cancelled due to the lack of energy. In other cases, factories ordered by Hanoi were declared to be unnecessary after the machines had arrived. The leadership launched an over-ambitious industrialization program in 1958--59, ignoring the fact that an agricultural country could not be transformed into an industrial one overnight. (Industrialization as such was, of course, necessary, he declared.) The DRV lacked skilled planners, engineers, technicians and workers. There were dozens of factories, but their productivity was very low, since most of the workers had been uneducated peasants before. Supposedly a great number of the newly-built industrial enterprises received (and needed) state subsidies. The new intellectuals (technicians, etc.), numbering several thousands, had just left the universities, and thus they lacked the necessary practical experience. In the course of collectivization, bigger errors were made in the DRV than in Hungary, the author of the report stated. The situation of food supply steadily worsened since 1960, due to high population growth, natural calamities, the substantial amount of food sent to the NLF and the Pathet Lao, frequent political meetings (which interrupted and disrupted agricultural production), etc. Although the DRV was still an agricultural country, it had to import agricultural products quite regularly. In 1962, investments in agriculture were more than twice as much as in 1960; however, this still was not enough. According to the author, irrigation and artificial fertilizers constituted the key of development: while in the DRV some 2,2 tons of rice was produced on one hectare, other (supposedly "capitalist") countries, under similar circumstances, managed to produce some 3-4 tons on one hectare with the help of irrigation and artificial fertilizers. He explained the

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neglect of agriculture by the Hanoi leaders partly by that they had expected the rapid unification of the country, and hoped to base their policies on the southern agricultural resources.