

February 16, 1981

**Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 4th Main Department,
Memorandum, 16 February 1981. Subject:
Establishment of a Social Democratic Party in the
DPRK.**

Citation:

"Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 4th Main Department, Memorandum, 16 February 1981. Subject: Establishment of a Social Democratic Party in the DPRK.", February 16, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1981, 86. doboz, 251, 001543/1981. Obtained and translated by Balazs Szalontai.
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/116013>

Summary:

The Hungarian Foreign Ministry reports that the Korean Democratic Party has changed names and become known as the Korean Social Democratic Party.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

Original Language:

Hungarian

Contents:

Translation - English

On 26-29 January 1981, the "Korean Democratic Party," which had originally included medium and small entrepreneurs, artisans, independent peasants, and Christians, held its 6th congress in Pyongyang, at which it transformed itself into the Social Democratic Party.

This nominally existing party, which lost its membership during the 35-year process of socialist construction in Korea, has been preserved, under the guidance of the Korean Workers' Party, for the sake of the negotiations about national unification.

To broaden the country's relations, propagate the platform of national unification, and offset South Korea's influence, in the 1970s the KWP made active efforts to establish contacts with the Social Democratic and Socialist parties, principally in those countries which did not grant diplomatic recognition to the DPRK. Its efforts have not resulted in a successful breakthrough, but it did establish some contacts.

Following the KWP congress held in last autumn, Kim Yeong-nam, the CC secretary in charge of international relations, visited the Social Democratic parties of the Scandinavian countries, and later fulfilled the invitation of the PCE [Communist Party of Spain] at the time of the meeting that the Socialist International held in Madrid. In response to the inquiry made by our ambassador in Pyongyang, official Korean personalities emphasized the mere coincidence of the two events. In Madrid, Kim Yeong-nam met every recognized leader of the Socialist International, and asked for their support to the admission of the KDP to the International.

The transformation of the Korean Democratic Party into a Social Democratic Party occurred after the trip of the CC secretary.

At the founding of the new party, the following declaration was made: "The Korean Social Democratic Party is a mass organization whose basic idea is the conception of national Social Democracy, the idea of national Social Democracy that the party proposes in a novel way, the Korean type of Social Democracy, ... national Social Democracy strives for the complete independence of the nation, .. and it struggles, under the banner of human rights, for building a sovereign, independent, democratic, and peaceful Korea."

The KSDP defined its most important foreign policy activities as follows: the strengthening of internationalist solidarity with the democratic parties of the world, cooperation with the democratic forces fighting for independence, and active cooperation with the movement of the non-aligned countries. It declared its firm opposition to the imperialist and "dominationist" powers. It demands the dissolution of military blocs, disapproves of the deployment of nuclear weapons in foreign countries, strives for the transformation of various regions of the world-including the Korean one-into nuclear-free zones, and mentioned the struggle for global disarmament as one of its aims.

The KSDP does not play any substantial role in the domestic policies of the DPRK. One can still regard it as a nominally existing party. The purpose of its creation was a diplomatic one. This was also confirmed by the DPRK ambassador in Budapest.

By renaming [the KDP], the DPRK intended to create a new opportunity for the implementation of its ideas to [achieve] national unification. The Korean leaders regard the [policy] of joining the Social Democratic movement as a new "channel" to demonstrate their "independent line," and as a better chance to gain the diplomatic recognition of the Western capitalist countries through the mediation of the Social Democratic parties.

One should also take into consideration that in the form of the KSDP, the Korean

leadership will obtain a forum to express such standpoints and views which the KWP cannot afford [to declare].

The chairman of the party is Vice-President Kang Ryang-uk, Kim Il Sung's uncle.

According to our preliminary evaluation, in the light of the program declaration and objectives of the KSDP, the establishment of the party will not produce any effect on the domestic policies of the DPRK. In the field of foreign policy, it will serve as yet another demonstration of [North Korea's] "independent line," which its program declaration has already made clear. The planned cooperation with Social Democracy might further dissuade the KWP and the DPRK from a closer cooperation with the Communist parties of the socialist countries.

We make the following proposals:

- our embassy in Pyongyang should regularly inquire about the international activities of the new party;
- we should investigate whether there is a real possibility for the admission of the KSDP to the Socialist International;
- during our conversations with the representatives of the DPRK, we should occasionally express our attitude toward the Socialist International.

Ferenc Rátkai
Ferenc Szabó