

Institute for Independence Studies

Commemorating Comrade Kim Il Sung

Speech to the meeting organised to defend People's Korea and Cuba, called by the Defend Cuba Campaign and Revolutionary Left Forces of Turkey, and supported by the Black Unity and Freedom Party, the All-African People's Revolutionary Party, the Communist Action Group and the Institute for Independence Studies.

Held at the Halk-Der Community Centre, Stoke Newington, London.

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With greatest sorrow, we find ourselves holding this meeting at a time when the progressive and peace-loving people of the whole world are mourning the passing away of Comrade Kim Il Sung, great leader of Korean and world revolution.

Comrade Kim Il Sung was associated since the 1920s with every aspect of the Korean people's struggle for national liberation, socialist construction and the struggle for Korean reunification. Those who have visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will have experienced the tremendous bond of love that bound the people with their leader, who symbolised and spoke for their deepest aspirations for an independent and dignified life in a reunited Korea free from imperialist domination and the threat of war.

We in the Institute for Independence Studies highly appreciate the initiative of the organisations who called this meeting at a time when People's Korea has been facing mortal threats from US-led imperialism, and their internationalism in calling this meeting is a demonstration of the fact that their solidarity with Cuba is directed not only at defending one specific country, but at the noble internationalist task of defending the ideals for which Cuba stands among the people of the world as a whole.

The nature of the threats against People's Korea lies in the fact that the United Nations and other international organisations including the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) have, under US pressure and domination, become pitted precisely against those who are in fact the most deserving of international support - the oppressed peoples and nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America who reject their oppressed status and insist on their right to independence and dignity and to build a new society of their own choosing. The IAEA and its mode of action on the pretext of attempting to enforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in Korea epitomises this situation.

All the world knows that it is none other than the US which has for decades positioned a high density of nuclear weapons in the southern half of Korea. All the world knows also that Britain has in recent years supplied vast amounts of radioactive material to Japan, which as home to much of the world's most advanced technology is consequently now in a position to become a leading nuclear power at any early date of its choosing.

Fewer people are aware that Britain is in breach of international treaty obligations with respect to its nuclear plant at Sellafield.

Yet now the IAEA shamelessly targets People's Korea, which even the wildest allegations of the US cannot credit with the possession of more than two small nuclear warheads, which would in any case be plainly unusable in practice in a conflict on the confined space of the Korean peninsula where South and North alike would suffer from any use of them.

So why do US imperialism and its allies target People's Korea?

First of all, because People's Korea firmly and unyieldingly upholds socialism and has built a unique and stable form of socialist

society based on the people. People's Korea has long been an outpost of socialism in the East, and indeed in the Korean war of 1950-1953 stood on the front line of defence of the socialist camp which then stretched united from Berlin to Shanghai. Thus was the name of Comrade Kim Il Sung placed forever among the great names of Asian and communism, alongside such as Comrades Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh, who dealt such blows against imperialism in the East, and indeed turned the East red – leaders whose example has glowed like a red sun in the hearts of the downtrodden peoples not just of Asia alone but of the whole world.

Just as Korea has been the outpost of socialism in the East, so also Cuba has been the outpost of socialism in the West. Indeed, in the difficult times of crisis of the past few years, we are reminded ever more forcefully that these two small countries have contributed far beyond their small size to the legacy of socialist ideology and culture. They have consistently given an example of internationalism, and have powerfully impelled the expansion and development of the anti-imperialist, anti-US armed struggle throughout the world, and thus the advancement of the world revolution.

As Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz said in his message of condolence last week, Cuba will be eternally grateful for Comrade Kim Il Sung's support for the Cuban revolution. "The fact of having a common enemy added to what we had in common... Relations between the two countries were forged in the anti-imperialist struggle .. Cuba will continue to defend the conquests of socialism along with the dear Korean people."

And just as imperialism fears this raising once more of the socialist banner, with all the danger that brings at a time when many in the former socialist countries have now experienced what unrestrained capitalist restoration actually means, so also People's Korea and socialist Cuba carry another message to the oppressed and divided peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, namely that a nation with a strong sense of national dignity and revolutionary pride is unconquerable. In all aspects of the self-assertion of the downtrodden peoples and nations of the world, Comrade Kim Il Sung was always to the fore, whether it was in furthering the aims of the Non-Aligned Movement and rallying third world heads of state to resist imperialist pressure, or in giving moral and material support to the Indo-Chinese, Palestinian, South African and other national liberation movements too numerous to list. Comrade Kim Il Sung always had in mind those who, like the Korean people, had to face a double task in their revolutionary advance - the struggle against both national and class oppression, and was always aware that this included communities living within the imperialist countries such as those hosting and supporting this meeting today.

Comrade Kim Il Sung raised the banner of national liberation at a time when Korea led the life of a downtrodden and dispersed nation under Japanese colonialism, with large numbers forced to leave their homeland in search of work or to flee persecution. Yet he never forgot that all Koreans everywhere, whether living in Japan, Manchuria, the United States or elsewhere, were legitimately a part of the Korean nation and till his death he always called upon them to see their primary struggle as the liberation and reunification of Korea, just as Irish, African

and other representatives in Britain of divided and dispersed peoples so often turn towards the liberation and reunification of their homeland as their primary struggle, and to leaders such as James Connolly, Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara and the Asian socialist leaders as more true spokespeople for their ideals than those of the countries where they now live.

Today's meeting is itself a vivid demonstration of how such a nationalist stand-point can open the way for all oppressed masses and be a powerful impulse to an internationalism from which we must all learn. It shows besides who are the real friends of a threatened third world country such as Korea to whom it can most confidently turn for solidarity in the hour of its need.

Comrade Kim Il Sung was not one to see the vocation of a revolutionary to be to sit behind a desk. It was always a distinctive feature of his work, even when he became head of state, to go among the people, and to ensure that he participated in all aspects of their work on the spot. This style of work which was the heart and soul of his life dated back to his days as a guerilla fighter, when he shared all hardships and dangers with his comrades, and was deepened and refined in the years when he guided Korea's independent course which rejected uncompromisingly the idea that any revolution could be built by slavishly following the example of any other country, no matter how big and powerful.

It was on the basis of this experience and outlook that he advanced the people-centred ideology of Juche, which holds that the masters of revolution and construction are the people and that it is only by going among and relying on the people and their aspiration for social and national independence that a revolutionary movement can succeed and proceed to the building and consolidation of socialism. Socialism is indeed the social system that most fully responds to that aspiration for independence, based as it is on the outlook and ideology of the working class, the most independent class.

Today's meeting comes at a time when the British imperialist state threatens communities of many nationalities such as the Turkish and Kurdish communities, who stand up against racism and discrimination both here and in their countries of origin. Yet they have seen it as right to take time from their urgent tasks of self-defence to host this internationalist meeting, as also have communists and other anti-racist activists who have taken time to put up posters advertising it in this area and promoting it in other ways. And yes indeed, how right, how very right, it feels to be commemorating Comrade Kim Il Sung here, here among the most oppressed, dispersed and downtrodden, who are also the most active and determined and who best know what imperialist oppression really is and who can bring to our struggles here the experience and inspiration of their living traditions of anti-imperialist struggle.

These are the people who grieve the deepest when a great revolutionary passes away and who most bitterly feel the loss, and we are proud to be among them at this time of mourning for Comrade Kim Il Sung.

May this indeed be the way that Comrade Kim Il Sung is commemorated, so that we may build the most fitting memorial to his name - a united, determined and effective movement to defend his living legacy to the world, namely People's Korea, which is at this moment more than ever in need of our solidarity. And, taking a leaf from the book of the Cuba solidarity activists who called today's meeting, let this movement defend not only People's Korea alone, but also socialist Cuba, and all other forces dedicated to defending the socialist cause under the banner of anti-imperialist struggle in this, the oldest imperialist country.

May the memory of Comrade Kim Il Sung inspire us forever in this task.