

KIM JONG IL

**ON CORRECTLY ANALYZING
AND REVIEWING THE HISTORY
OF THE PRECEDING
REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY
OF THE WORKING CLASS**

WORKING PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, UNITE!

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Today I have called you to organize the work of comprehensively analyzing and reviewing the history of the preceding revolutionary ideology of the working class.

For the next few years we will analyze and review the century-long history of the working-class ideology. In other words, we will be conducting a comprehensive analysis and review of Marxism-Leninism. Many years have passed since the formulation of Marxism-Leninism but no attempt has yet been made to conduct a comprehensive analysis and review of this doctrine, nor has a proper yardstick been identified for doing so.

The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's revolutionary ideology—his ideas, theories and policies—should be our sole yardstick for analyzing and assessing the preceding theories. I think that it is time to conduct a comprehensive analysis and review of Marxism-Leninism with the leader's revolutionary ideology as the yardstick. This is an urgent requirement of the times and the developing revolution which brooks no further delay; it is also a historic task that has devolved on us. So, I recently decided to conduct a comprehensive examination, analysis and review of the 100-year-long history of the working-class ideology, Marxism-Leninism. To analyze and review the preceding revolutionary ideology of the working class is a prerequisite for eliminating sycophantic and dogmatic approaches towards Marxism-Leninism and establishing the Juche orientation in the field of ideology and theory.

The tendencies of holding Marxism-Leninism as absolute and blindly venerating its classic works have persisted for a

long time within our Party. Whenever the leader set out new revolutionary theories or policies, anti-Party, counterrevolutionary factionalists, steeped in worship of big powers and dogmatism, would slander them, measuring them against the theories and propositions advanced by the authors of Marxism-Leninism. Holding Marxism-Leninism as the sole yardstick and a panacea for the revolution and construction, they turned a blind eye to our Party's policies, ignoring their validity and creativity. They not only opposed our Party's policies by invoking Marxism-Leninism but also tried to define our developing reality according to set formulae and propositions that did not conform to the actual conditions in our country or had already proved invalid. Some people who were not armed with the revolutionary ideas and theories of our Party venerated the classics by Marx, Engels and Lenin in the mistaken belief that only those who had studied them could become communists.

The anti-Party, counterrevolutionary factionalists worshipped Marxism-Leninism, holding it as absolute, but they merely learned some of its formulae and propositions parrot-fashion without grasping its ideological and theoretical content, and were incapable of understanding it properly.

The sycophantic and dogmatic approaches towards Marxism-Leninism exerted a considerable negative influence on our revolutionary struggle and construction work. It is a law that where sycophantic and dogmatic approaches towards Marxism-Leninism are prevalent, there is always a separation of theory from practice, along with stagnant thinking. The hazardous nature of the sycophantic and dogmatic approaches towards Marxism-Leninism lies in that they preclude the working-class party from working out lines

and policies that are suited to the specific conditions in the country and leading the revolution and construction to victory. When it approaches Marxism-Leninism from a sycophantic and dogmatic standpoint, the party becomes incapable of thinking from a fresh viewpoint, adopts set formulae and propositions parrot-fashion or applies them mechanically, thus disrupting the revolution and construction, and in the long run ends up divorced from the masses. These approaches are also harmful in that they prevent people from thinking creatively and being innovative, and convince them that they should make the Korean revolution not in the Korean way but in the way pursued by the Soviet Union and other European countries. If they are steeped in sycophancy and dogmatism, the masses of the people cannot perform their role as masters of the revolution and construction, nor can they work creatively for them.

The authors of Marxism-Leninism did not want their theories to be accepted blindly; Marx said that their theories were creation, not dogma.

When I was studying at Kim Il Sung University, I cautioned those who were endeavouring to seek a master key from the classics of Marxism-Leninism, against harbouring illusions about them. But some cadres and intellectuals have not yet relinquished the habit of interpreting the leader's revolutionary ideas within the framework of Marxism-Leninism, under the misapprehension that the latter contains solutions to all the problems arising in the revolution and construction. Such a habit is severely detrimental to the establishment of the Party's ideological system among cadres, Party members and other working people.

Sycophantic and dogmatic approaches towards Marxism-Leninism are incompatible with the Party's ideological system that our Party is endeavouring to establish. Our Party's ideological system is precisely the leader's ideological system. Those who regard Marxism-Leninism as a cure-all in any era and any country do not correctly understand the essence of the leader's revolutionary ideology and our Party's policies, its embodiment; nor can they accept them wholeheartedly, make them their lifeblood and implement them properly.

In order to cure people of the inveterate malady of approaching Marxism-Leninism in a sycophantic and dogmatic manner it is necessary to analyze and review it in an all-round way and draw a clear distinction between the achievements and limitations of the doctrine.

“Leftist” and Rightist opportunism has now emerged in the international communist movement, and its proponents are interpreting Marxism-Leninism in their favour. Providing a clear idea of the essence of Marxism-Leninism is also necessary for discerning this misinterpretation.

My intention in comprehensively analyzing and reviewing Marxism-Leninism is to clarify the historical position which the revolutionary ideology authored by the leader holds in the ideological history of mankind, as well as its originality.

The standpoint and attitude from which Marxism-Leninism is analyzed and assessed is important. We should analyze and assess the achievements and limitations of Marxism-Leninism from the standpoint of Juche.

The century-long history of the communist movement can be called one during which the leaders of the working class authored and enriched the ideas on revolution and

applied them in transforming the world. In the mid-19th century Marx and Engels formulated Marxism, the first revolutionary ideology of the working class, and inspired the proletariat to a struggle against capital, ushering in the international communist movement. Early in the 20th century Lenin presented Leninism, an advanced version of Marxism that reflected the historical period that was characterized by a shift from capitalism to imperialism, and he led the socialist October revolution to victory, thus paving the way for a transition from capitalism to socialism in Russia. In the wake of the Second World War socialism emerged victorious in several countries under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, and began to proliferate across the world. In view of its historical achievements Marxism-Leninism is worthy of great admiration as a valuable ideological and theoretical asset of the working class.

However, we are living and working in an era entirely different from that of Marx and Lenin. The present is a new historical era when the revolutionary movement is appearing on various scales and in different types worldwide. As more than a century has passed since the emergence of Marxism, and as this is a totally different era, Marxism-Leninism inevitably reveals historical limitations.

In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis and review of Marxism-Leninism it is necessary to make a close study of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and analyze and assess them.

I studied these works as a student at Kim Il Sung University and later, on other occasions, and I have found that they contain many controversial points.

I have selected more than 30 of their works which I think

are necessary for the proposed analysis and review. I am planning to hold discussions about the works with you from now. You need to read them all and take an active part in the coming study sessions. You should relinquish the old habit of worshipping the classics of Marxism-Leninism blindly. You should study each and every phrase of the works and, in the context of their settings and purposes, analyze their historical significance and limitations. You should also assess whether the individual propositions contained in the works suit our present situation or not.

In studying the works of Marxism-Leninism, we should take account of the following points.

First, we should consider the background of the times when Marxism was formulated and its social basis. Marxism appeared in the period before the transition from capitalism to imperialism, that is, when capitalism was on the upswing. This was the background against which Marx and Engels, while living in this period, analyzed the historical stage of pre-monopoly capitalism and presented their doctrine. The resultant limitations are reflected vividly in all their works, as well as the revolutionary theories, strategies and tactics they proposed. Marxism is also a revolutionary doctrine based on an analysis of social, economic and class relations in Britain, Germany and other developed capitalist countries. So this doctrine does not provide solutions to the theoretical and practical problems in the revolution and construction in former colonies and semi-colonies which make up the overwhelming majority of the nations on earth.

Second, we should direct due concern to the requirements and standards for the revolutionary struggle of the working class, as reflected in Marxism. Marxism

appeared as a reflection of the requirements of the era when the working class in Europe embarked on the revolutionary struggle against capital, conscious of their class status and strength for the first time. This doctrine was aimed at ideologically enlightening the oppressed working class, who had been groping for their way in the darkness, and inspiring them to the revolutionary struggle by awakening them to the inevitability of the victory of socialism over capitalism. In short, Marxism was a revolutionary doctrine based on the experiences gained when the working class was being trained to initiate a revolution. In their time Marx and Engels could not lead socialist and communist construction because the working class in no country had won victory in the revolution. That is why they could not anticipate the theoretical and practical problems that would arise in setting up socialist system and then building socialism and communism after the seizure of power by the working class, nor could they give specific solutions to these problems.

Third, we should pay attention to the characteristics of the formulation of Marxism and its evolution. Marx and Engels were not communists who started their socio-political and theoretical activities from a revolutionary standpoint of the working class. They were revolutionary democrats who hated the political reaction and high-handedness of the Prussian autocratic system and showed strong sympathy for the oppressed and exploited working masses. They were under the ideological influence of the philosophies of Hegel and Feuerbach. Their political tendency and ideological standpoint can be explained by the single fact that Marx was among the young Hegelists in the early days of his social activities. One fact to which due concern should be paid in

understanding the characteristics of the formulation of Marxism and its evolution is that Marx and Engels started their theoretical activities by accepting and studying the successes achieved by the bourgeois social sciences of the preceding generations. Marxism, composed of philosophy, political economy and scientific socialism, is based on German classical philosophy as represented by Hegel and Feuerbach, the classical bourgeois political economy of Smith and Ricardo, and the Utopian socialism of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen. Marx and Engels focused their studies on these theories and, by ridding them of their negative aspects, formulated their own doctrine. So, the works they wrote contain elements of the preceding bourgeois theories, those of Hegel's philosophy in particular, and there are more elements of them in their earlier publications.

It is impossible to find solutions to the theoretical and practical problems of the present times in Marxism, which emerged as a result of a theoretical analysis of pre-monopoly capitalism on the social foundations of a few developed capitalist nations in Western Europe. And among the revolutionary theories advanced by Marx and Engels, several lost their viability after the shift from capitalism to imperialism. Their theory of simultaneous revolution is a good example here. You should not refer to Marxism for theories concerning the building of socialism and communism in our era. Because they had no experience in building socialism and communism, the authors of the doctrine could not give solutions to the pertinent problems, and their theories with regard to the building of socialism and communism are highly superficial and simplistic and lie within the confines of

anticipation and assumption.

Leninism, as a variant of Marxism, is associated with the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. Lenin conducted ideological and theoretical activities in a different historical environment to that of Marx and Engels, defending the revolutionary essence of Marxism against a diverse range of opportunistic distortions and assaults and developing its fundamental principles in line with the specific conditions in the Russian revolution and the changed circumstances of the times.

In studying the works of Lenin, primary consideration should be given to the fact that Leninism was based on an analysis of the historical environment of the imperialist era and reflected the requirements of the revolutionary struggle in a country in the initial period following the seizure of power by its working class. Lenin lived in an era when imperialists held undivided sway in the world and the first socialist state had just been born. At that time imperialism, although a breakthrough had been achieved on one of its fronts, retained control over the destinies of peoples in the international arena, and Asia, Africa and Latin America remained colonial continents. It is evident that Lenin, who lived in such an era, could not anticipate the legion of problems that have been raised in the present times and, accordingly, no answers to these problems are given in his theories and works. In addition, you need to know that the Leninist theory on the socialist revolution, to all intents and purposes, presented a strategy and tactics that reflected the reality of contemporary Russia.

Second, Lenin, like Marx and Engels did not experience the building of socialism and communism. He struggled against bourgeois reactionaries and opportunists of all hues,

including the “Populists,” “economists,” “legitimate Marxists,” Mensheviks and revisionists of the Second International, and successfully carried out the proletarian revolution and established a proletarian dictatorship in his country. Lenin provided answers to some of the theoretical and practical problems raised in the early days of socialist construction, but died shortly after the revolution. So he could not provide specific solutions to the theoretical and practical problems arising in the building of socialism and communism as he lacked practical experience of it. This is an important point we must take into account in studying his theories and works.

Third, another important issue that deserves due consideration in understanding the historical limitations of Leninism, is its correlation with Marxism. In a nutshell, it is impossible to draw a qualitative distinction between the two doctrines. Proof of this is the definition of Leninism itself as a variant of Marxism in the era of imperialism. Leninism is, above all else, formulated, based on the same world outlook as Marxism, and the two doctrines are similar in composition. This defines the scope of the originality of Leninism.

All in all, Lenin was a staunch champion of and faithful successor to Marxism. But his achievements in the creative development of Marxism pale into insignificance compared to those in championing and inheriting it. Leninism has almost the same limitations, historical, ideological and theoretical, as Marxism.

Having taken these points into account, we should work hard to hold serious study sessions on the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

It would be advisable to hold our study sessions on the

works of Marxism-Leninism in this library, not in an office, because we will have to consult many of the works. I am planning to hold study sessions on Tuesday and Friday every week. Time is pressing for me on other days when I have a lot of work to do assisting the leader.

You should have a clear understanding of my intention in conducting a comprehensive analysis and review of the 100-year history of the working-class ideology, Marxism-Leninism, and help me a lot in it.