



**THE HISTORICAL LESSON
IN BUILDING SOCIALISM**

Kim Jong Il

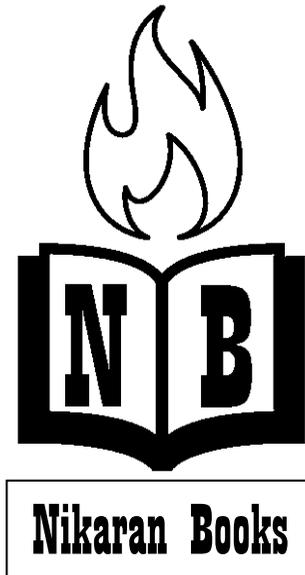
THE HISTORICAL LESSON IN BUILDING SOCIALISM

KIM JONG IL

Talk to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of
the Workers' Party of Korea

January 3, 1992.

Redesigned and Reproduced by:



*Nikaran Books is a Non-Profit Publishing venture run by
www.nikaran.com*

Today the defence of the cause of socialism and its triumphant advance is a very important matter which concerns the destiny of mankind.

Socialism has suffered a setback and capitalism has revived in some countries in recent years; a short time ago the Soviet Union broke up and ended its existence. As a consequence of this, the imperialists and reactionaries are claiming that capitalism has 'triumphed' and socialism has 'come to an end'.

This is causing ideological confusion among some people who do not understand the situation properly, and seriously affecting the development of the world revolution. Now it is an urgent historical task to learn a lesson from the prevailing situation, reconstruct the socialist movement on a new basis and lead the cause of socialism to an upsurge.

The cause of socialism is a just cause for realizing the independence of the popular masses; it is an inexorable law of historical development that mankind advances toward socialism. Although there may be twists and turns in the course of the development of socialism, the main direction of historical development cannot change.

The imperialists and renegades of socialism, describing the frustration of socialism in some countries as a change in the historical

trend, are arguing that the idea of socialism is invalid and that it was a mistake even to have carried out the socialist revolution. This is a reactionary argument.

For many years the popular masses desired a new, independent society free from exploitation and oppression and waged an arduous struggle for its realization. In the course of this Marxism, a doctrine of socialism and communism, came into being, and the October Socialist Revolution emerged victorious as a result of a struggle guided by this doctrine.

Since then socialism has spread worldwide, and the socialist countries have, in a short period of time, attained greater socio-economic progress than would have been possible even in hundreds of years under capitalism. This process of historical development has shown that the idea of socialism is valid and that socialism is incomparably superior to capitalism.

How, then, should we view the recent frustration of socialism and the revival of capitalism in some of those countries which were once advancing along the road of socialism? The path to socialism is an untrodden path; it is a thorny path of revolution an advance along which is faced with relentless confrontation with and an uncompromising struggle against imperialism. Therefore, trials and difficulties are inevitable in the advance of socialism, and unexpected situations may arise.

The frustration of socialism and the revival of capitalism in some countries, when viewed in the light of the main tide of historical development, is only a temporary, local phenomenon. But we can never regard it as an accidental phenomenon, nor can we consider that it has been brought about only by external factors.

As the great leader always says, when anything is wrong with us we must find the reason in ourselves, not elsewhere. That is the attitude of a revolutionary and the right way to rectify a mistake. Only when we thus correctly ascertain the cause of the frustration of socialism and learn a lesson from it, can we defend and promote the cause of socialism.

In short, the basic reason for the frustration of socialism in some countries is that they did not put the main emphasis on strengthening the motive force for building socialism and on enhancing its role; they failed to understand the essence of socialism, of centring on the popular masses, the makers of history.

Socialist society is a society in which the popular masses are the masters; it is a society which is developed through the creativity of the popular masses that are united as one. The essence of socialist society, which differs from all exploitative societies, and the driving force which promotes the progress of the socialist society lie in the fact that the popular masses work in comradesly unity and with a high degree of consciousness of being masters and displaying their ability as such.

Therefore, the basic way to promote the building of socialism successfully is to strengthen the motive force of the revolution by educating the popular masses in a communist way by giving priority to the transformation of the people and by rallying them fully behind the Party, as well as to enhance the role of the driving force by giving the fullest play to the revolutionary enthusiasm and creativity of the masses. There is no other proper way to promote socialist construction.

The people of some countries, however, did not understand this. How and on which principle socialism should be built after the establishment of the socialist system was a task that challenged the parties that led the building of socialism a task that required a fresh solution. It was an important matter which was connected with the problem of how to overcome the historical limitations of the communist theory of the previous age.

Marxism was a revolutionary doctrine which represented the era when the working class had emerged in the historical arena and was waging a struggle against capital. As such it made an immortal contribution to eliminating the exploiting class and the exploitative system and realizing the class liberation of the popular masses. But the times have changed and history has developed, so Marxism has acquired inevitable historical limitations.

Marxism, in a nutshell, is a doctrine which clarified the conditions for realizing the liberation of the working class on the basis of the

materialistic conception of history. Considering the process of social development to be a process of natural history, Marxism expounded the theory that the production relations develop with the development of the productive forces, that the economic system, the whole of the production relations, forms the basis of a society, and that the superstructure stands on the basis.

On this premise Marxism viewed the mode of production of material wealth to be the decisive factor defining the character of a society and the level of its development, and the process of social development to be a process of changing an old mode of production into a new one, a process in which the contradictions between the productive forces and the production relations are resolved through a class struggle.

Proceeding from these principles, Marxism recognized that, if the socialist mode of production is established, the social revolution which transforms capitalism into socialism is completed and that, since the difference between the high and low stages of communism can be attributed to differences in the levels of the development of the productive forces, communism, the ideal society for mankind, can be achieved only when the productive forces are developed through the building of the economy after the establishment of the socialist system.

Ultimately, Marxism failed to provide a proper explanation concerning the building of a socialist and communist society by continuing the revolution after the establishment of the socialist system.

Historically, Marxism is an idea and theory dealing with the requirements of the initial stage of the socialist cause; it did not clarify the detailed ways and means necessary for building socialism and communism, as neither the social conditions for doing it nor any practical experience of it existed at that time.

For the successful building of socialism and communism after the establishment of the socialist system, the parties leading the building of socialism should have developed the theory of communism in accordance with the requirements of the new stage of the development of socialism and, on the basis of this, formulated a correct line and policies.

However, the parties of some countries which had been building socialism failed to carry out this task properly. As a result, some of these parties applied the existing theory dogmatically, having failed to recognize its historical limitations, claiming that they were building socialism with Marxism as their guiding principle. Other parties, on the other hand, denied the revolutionary essence of Marxism and pursued a revisionist policy.

Those who had failed to rid themselves of the dogmatic understanding of the existing theory viewed the nature and superiority of socialist society as not being defined by the popular masses who had the socialist idea but as being defined by socialist government and by the socialist relations of ownership; they also sought the driving force of socialist construction in the economic factor, namely in the adaptation of the production relations to the productive forces.

Needless to say, the establishment of socialist government and the socialist ownership of the means of production creates the socio-political and economic conditions for guaranteeing the position and role of master for the popular masses and rapidly developing the productive forces. This is a great advantage of socialism over capitalism. But these political and economic conditions themselves are not the decisive factor in promoting the development of socialist society.

As regards the development of the productive forces, the working masses, who are directly responsible for production, play a leading and active role in their development; unless the voluntary enthusiasm and creative power of the working masses are increased, it is impossible to develop the productive forces at a steady, high rate, even though the socialist relations of production have been established. People with the socialist idea, a socialist government and a socialist economic system are tied closely together, and it is the people with the socialist idea who are essential.

The historical process of the establishment of the socialist system shows that first the socialist idea comes into being in the course of the struggle against exploitation and oppression, the people with this idea organize a revolutionary party, the party sets up a socialist government

by politically awakening the popular masses and organizing them, and then, by relying on the socialist government, the party establishes the socialist economic system.

The socialist economic system cannot be maintained or managed to conform with its nature unless there is a socialist government, and the socialist government can neither maintain its existence nor fulfil its function in keeping with its nature if it is separated from the people with the socialist idea. Thus it is clear that the popular masses equipped with the socialist idea are always the decisive factor in the development of the socialist society and the shaping of its destiny.

However, some countries believed that socialism could be built merely by hastening the progress of economic construction while keeping control of state power and the means of production, and they did not put their primary effort into the transformation of the people to raise their ideological and cultural levels rapidly and prepare them fully as the driving force of the revolution and construction.

As a consequence the popular masses, the masters of socialist society, could not play their full role as such; in the long run, economic construction was not successful and all the spheres of society fell into stagnation.

Worse still, these countries did not pay due attention to establishing a popular mode of government that was suited to the intrinsic requirements of the socialist society, and so weakened the unity and cohesion of the people and failed to allow them to give full play to their creativity.

Whether or not the popular masses have become the genuine masters of politics in a socialist society and participate in the management of the state and society with the attitude befitting masters is the most decisive factor in the consolidation and development of the socialist system and the success of socialist construction.

But in some countries in which socialist power had allegedly been established, they still clung to the mode of politics of former societies. As a result, the management of the state and society had become an undertaking for privileged people and had been conducted in isolation

from the popular masses, their masters. This gave rise to the growth of bureaucracies, and produced such grave consequences as holding the people's creativity in check, impairing the masses' trust in the party and the state and undermining the unity of the popular masses. In the long run, socialism in these countries was deprived of a powerful driving force for its development and had no firm socio political foundation. Socialism devoid of a strong motive force can neither display its superiority and might nor overcome the challenges and trials on the way of its advance.

Historical facts show that even a large country with strong military power and enormous economic potential will inevitably collapse in the face of the anti-socialist offensive of the imperialists and reactionaries if it fails to strengthen the driving force of socialist construction and enhance its role. The frustration of socialism in these countries when confronted by the imperialist and reactionary anti-socialist onslaught should be regarded as an inevitable consequence of their failure to strengthen the driving force of socialist construction and enhance its role.

Another reason why socialism in some countries was frustrated is that they failed to recognize the qualitative differences between socialism and capitalism and did not adhere consistently to the fundamental principles of socialism. In order to accomplish the socialist cause we must consistently maintain socialist principles in the revolution and construction. To defend thoroughly and meet the popular masses' desire for independence and their interests is a fundamental principle that should invariably be maintained in socialist construction.

A socialist society is a society which meets the intrinsic requirements of the popular masses to abolish the exploitation and oppression of man by man and lead an equitable, independent life; and the process of building socialism and communism is the process of realizing the full independence of the popular masses.

Therefore, in leading socialist construction the working-class party must resolutely defend the popular masses' desire for independence and their interests and solve all the problems arising in the revolution

and construction thoroughly in their fundamental interests. In order to build socialism to meet the masses' desire for independence and their fundamental interests it is imperative to strengthen the working-class party organizationally and ideologically, ensure its leadership of the revolution and construction, steadily enhance the function and role of the socialist government, safeguard and develop socialist ownership and resolutely combat imperialism. This is a revolutionary principle which must never be compromised.

In the course of building socialism one can commit minor errors, but the working-class party which is responsible for the destiny of the popular masses must on no account abandon the fundamental principles of socialism.

Since the circumstances and conditions of the revolutionary struggle change in the course of the building of socialism and communism, one should develop one's line and policies creatively in conformity with the changes but should never deviate from these revolutionary and working-class principles. The circumstances and conditions of the revolutionary struggle may change, but the basic ideas and demands of socialism shall never alter.

In the struggle for socialism against capitalism the abandonment of revolutionary principles is surrender and treachery.

In the past the people of some countries that were building socialism wavered in the face of transient difficulties that arose in the course of building socialism and went so far as to yield to the pressure of the imperialists, gradually conceding and abandoning their revolutionary principles because they lacked confidence in socialism and their working-class stand was weak.

These countries had neglected the work of strengthening the working-class party, weakened its leading role and the function of the unified leadership of the socialist state, adopted the capitalist relations of ownership and capitalist methods of economic management and compromised with imperialism in an unprincipled manner, instead of fighting against it.

As a consequence of revisionist policies, society gradually degenerated, and the degeneration of socialism was further accelerated by the introduction of 'pluralism', on the pretext of the 'reform' and 'restructuring' of socialism. 'Pluralism' can never be tolerated in a socialist society. 'Liberalism' in ideology, a 'multiparty system' in politics and 'diversity' in the form of ownership which 'pluralism' advocates are the mode of politics that is characteristic of capitalist society in which competition for survival dominates, based on individualism and liberalism.

Socialist society is based on collectivism, and regards the unity of the popular masses as its lifeblood; therefore, socialism cannot be compatible with 'pluralism'. The introduction of 'pluralism' into socialist society fosters individualism and liberalism that encroach upon the common interests of the society, break the unity and cohesion of the popular masses and produce social disorder and chaos. Permitting liberalism in ideology and a multiparty system in politics in a socialist society is, in the long run, to open a road to counter revolutionary manoeuvres that are aimed at demolishing the foundation of socialist society and overthrowing the people's government.

A struggle in the sphere of ideology is the prelude to a political struggle, and naturally develops into a struggle for power. Historical experience clearly shows that if anti-socialist ideas are disseminated by liberalizing ideology and the activities of anti-socialist parties are permitted through the tolerance of a 'multiparty democracy', class enemies and reactionaries will rear their heads, commit anti-socialist acts and ultimately drive the working-class party out of power.

The revisionists, harbouring illusions about capitalism, completely rejected socialist principles and fully introduced the capitalist mode of politics and economic system, with the result that socialism was frustrated and capitalism revived.

Single concessions and a gradual retreat from socialist principles have resulted in ten and hundred-fold concessions and a full retreat until, finally, the grave consequence of the ruin of the working-class parties themselves was incurred.

The frustration of socialism in some countries is also due to the fact that they had not strengthened international solidarity based on independence in relations between parties. It is a basic principle that must be adhered to by the parties of socialist countries in their relations to unite and cooperate with one another on the basis of independence, and to maintain their independence while strengthening international solidarity.

Independence is the lifeblood of a country and a nation. Socialism and communism are built with each country and nation as a unit; a revolution in one country is earned out by the party and people of that country for themselves. It is an inviolable right of the party of each country to map out lines and policies to suit the specific situation in its own country and to implement them in an independent manner. The adherence to independence by the party of each country never impedes the strengthening of international solidarity with the parties of other countries. The cause of socialism is the national cause of the people of individual countries as well as an international cause.

The communist or workers' party of each country has the right to defend its own independence and, at the same time, is in duty bound to respect the independence of its counterparts in other countries, and to unite and cooperate with them in a comradely manner for the victory of the socialist cause.

In the international communist movement, there are parties from big and small countries as well as older and younger parties. It cannot be denied that the parties of the big countries are stronger than those of the small countries and accordingly, are able to make a greater contribution to the common cause. So the parties of big countries must be aware of their greater responsibility for defending and developing the international communist movement. It is natural for them to help their fraternal parties selflessly and play a bigger role in carrying out the common cause. Nevertheless, they must never be guilty of great-power chauvinism. There can be no higher or lower parties or leading or led parties.

The time is long past when there was one centre in the international communist movement and individual parties acted as its branches. The

parties of the socialist countries must naturally cooperate with one another in a comradely manner on the principles of complete equality and independence.

In the past, however, the parties of some socialist countries did great harm to the development of the international communist movement by failing to rid themselves of the old customs of the Communist International. The party of a certain country claimed to be the 'centre' of the international communist movement, and ordered other parties to do this or that. It acted without hesitation to put pressure on other parties and interfere in their internal affairs if they refused to follow its line, even though it was awrong one. As a consequence, the ideological unity and comradely relations of cooperation between the socialist countries were greatly weakened, and this made it impossible for them to counter imperialism with a united force.

The parties of some countries yielded to the pressure of the great powers and acted under the baton of others, and the result of this was that they meekly accepted revisionism when the big countries took to revisionism and accepted 'reform' and 'restructuring' when other did so. Therefore, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe socialism was frustrated, and this is a serious state of affairs.

As the great leader said a long time ago, if a man turns to flunkeyism he becomes a fool, if a nation takes to flunkeyism the country goes to ruin, and if a party follows flunkeyism it spoils the revolution and construction. The fact that some countries spoiled socialism having taken to flunkeyism is eloquent proof of the validity of the leader's teaching.

Historical experience shows that when people steadily strengthen the driving force of the revolution, with a strong conviction in socialism and a correct guideline, hold fast to socialist principles in all circumstances and strengthen comradely unity and cooperation on the basis of independence, the socialist cause will advance along the road of victory; otherwise it will suffer setbacks and frustration. This is a serious lesson mankind has learned on its road to socialism.



**Serving
Humanity is the
Way to
Immortality**

www.nikaran.com



**Nikaran
Books**