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# Independence Is Basic Need of European Nations

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Last year we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea in Pyongyang, and this year the Workers' Party of Korea has held a successful 9th Party Conference. The experience of the DPRK shows that a socialist system based on the Juche idea is successful.

It is important to recognize the strengths of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, because it is the right and duty of the working class to act in order to overthrow capitalism and to build a democratic and just society.

The socialist system led by the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s. In the Soviet Union, the people did not sufficiently understand the Marxist scientific theory of society, which was the theoretical foundation of the system. Teaching dialectical and historical materialism to the masses was even considered too challenging. Because the people lacked deep ideological understanding, there was also no consensus on long-term goals or on how socialism should be built. The aim of catching up with the West in commodity production, which was pursued in the Soviet Union, is alien to socialism.

There were, of course, other reasons for the defeat of socialism in Eastern Europe, but I personally consider the neglect of ideological work to be one of the most significant. Ideological work continues long after the establishment of a socialist system, and in the DPRK the respected Comrade Kim Jong Un has often drawn attention to this issue, most recently at the 9th Party Congress. Of the three revolutions, the ideological one is the most important.

The construction of Korean socialism has, of course, been based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and on dialectical and historical materialism. However, President Kim Il Sung recognized certain weaknesses in these and began developing the Juche idea, which would best respond to the needs of the Korean people in building socialism. Historical materialism describes well the dialectical development of different social formations, but the conception of how society should be built after the victory of socialism has been inadequate or overly optimistic.

The building of socialism in the DPRK has demonstrated that the Juche idea best meets the needs of the people and enables the continuous development of socialist society in accordance with those needs.

According to the Juche idea, the human being is the master of everything and decides

everything. Society is built according to the principles of political independence, self-reliance in the economy, and self-defence. In other words, the people must govern their own country without external influence or dependence on great powers; the national economy must be self-sufficient and based on domestic resources; and the country must be able to defend itself without foreign assistance.

The situation in Western countries is moving in the opposite direction. In the West, an extreme culture of individualism prevails, in which people are forced to compete with one another, and those who have accumulated great wealth at the expense of others are admired. The capitalist system is based on exploitation, and imperialist blocs — the EU and the USA — must constantly seek new markets and natural resources to maintain their dominance. This has led to extreme militarization in Western Europe. Money for weapons is taken from ordinary people, whose living conditions are deteriorating.

It is clear that the Western social system does not listen to the people; everything is done according to the dictates of international big capital in order to guarantee the success of capitalist blocs.

### **What Is the Current Situation in Europe?**

The economic situation of the working class across Europe is challenging. Real wages have declined and in-work poverty has increased. The nature of work has changed: today's labour is characterized by temporary contracts, platform work, and part-time employment. Trade union organization among the working class is weakening, which in turn accelerates the dismantling of rights previously won through struggle. Social security is being weakened, healthcare and education are being privatized, and public assets are being sold off.

All this has led to capital accumulation: the poor are getting poorer and the rich richer. This development is linked to the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, Europe practiced so-called Keynesian economic policy, in which the bourgeoisie was forced to take into account the demands of a strong labour movement. It was said that at the negotiating table between the bourgeoisie and the working population sat a third party — namely the socialist system. After the collapse of Eastern European socialism, neoliberal economic policy could be advanced without restraint.

War has taken place in Europe since 2022. The root causes lie further back, in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, while the Ukrainian conflict has been active since 2014. At that time, a military coup brought about by Western countries took place in Ukraine, and the legally elected President Yanukovich was removed. Repression against the Russian-speaking population and the

rehabilitation of Nazi-era legacy began immediately after the coup. The events of 2014 led to a civil war in Ukraine that can be seen as continuing to this day. The coup was important for Western capitalists because gaining control over Ukraine brought them closer to Russia's natural resources.

Ukraine is also important to Western capitalists because of its own natural resources and agriculture. Ukraine is a large-scale agricultural country and one of the world's biggest exporters of grain and sunflower oil. A large share of agricultural land is controlled by international big capital. The five largest farms together cover more than two million hectares, and their ownership is registered in Luxembourg, Cyprus, the USA, and the Netherlands.

Ukraine's accession to the EU is a goal of European big capital. If Ukraine were to join the EU, its impact on EU agriculture would be significant. Ukraine has more than 30 million hectares of arable land. If it were to receive full agricultural subsidies at current levels, it would become one of the largest beneficiaries. This would mean either a radical reduction in subsidy levels for current member states. Agricultural profitability in Finland is weak. It can be said that income from selling agricultural products covers production costs, but farmers' wages come from EU agricultural subsidies. Thus, the level of subsidies is crucial for Finnish agriculture and for food self-sufficiency. As we know, without self-sufficiency there is no political independence. This development is particularly evident in Finland today.

The Ukrainian question divides communists and leftists in Europe. The issue is whether Russia's actions in Ukraine should be considered imperialist. If the matter is examined from the perspective of Lenin's theory of imperialism — which in this case is the only relevant one — Russia cannot be considered imperialist. Russia is also part of the BRICS alliance, which is an equal economic community that does not involve territorial redistribution. Since 2014, US and European imperialism have moved closer and closer to Russia's borders, despite promises made to Russia in the early 1990s. Russia must be able to trust that its neighbouring countries will not threaten its existence.

I compare the current situation to Finnish-Soviet relations in the 1930s. Bourgeois education teaches that the Soviet Union started the so-called Winter War against Finland in 1939. The question of who started the war is irrelevant. Finland had launched attacks against Soviet Russia since the 1920s and pursued strongly anti-Soviet policies at that time. If the war had not begun in 1939, Finland would have attacked the Soviet Union later after further rearmament. Against this background, it is understandable that Finland sought alliance with imperialist Germany.

A few words about relations between Europe and the United States, which are also in transition. The traditional alliance between Western Europe and the USA is changing with the development of capitalism. The USA, for example, is seeking to acquire Greenland from Denmark and is also threatening Canada and Panama. I see the partial confrontation between Europeans and Americans

as a strengthened power struggle between capitalist blocs. This development cannot be avoided due to capitalism's own laws, such as the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Europe has strongly positioned itself against Russia, while the USA sees that Russia cannot be defeated in Ukraine. Europe has ended all cooperation with Russia, and if American companies could enter Russian markets without competition from European firms, there would be opportunities for very large profits and for temporarily counteracting the falling rate of profit — thereby strengthening American capitalism relative to European capitalism.

### **What Is the Situation in Finland?**

After the Ukrainian crisis began in 2022, Finland strongly condemned Russia's actions, quickly joined NATO, ended economic relations with Russia, and closed its eastern borders. Finland granted the USA access to 15 military bases. Closing the borders, ending economic and cultural interaction with Russia, and enthusiastically promoting anti-Russian sanctions plunged Finland into a prolonged economic recession.

NATO membership was justified by the so-called Russian threat. This threat has been created and maintained by Finland's parliamentary parties themselves. With the war in Ukraine, the Finnish elite saw its opportunity and long-prepared NATO membership was implemented very quickly, against the interests of the people and without public debate. Russia did not threaten Finland in any way, and remaining neutral would have ensured good security, economic growth, and the possibility of developing the welfare state. This did not suit the bourgeoisie.

With NATO membership, Finland's economic situation has collapsed and Finland currently has the highest unemployment in the EU. The conditions and rights of the working population are deteriorating continuously.

NATO membership has brought a constant deterioration in the security situation, tying an ever-larger share of Finland's budget to militarization and destroying the Finnish welfare state — if it can still be said to exist. Elderly care is in crisis and access to doctors is increasingly difficult.

Finnish media are practically entirely controlled by big capital and uncritically repeats the message of the right-wing government. Russia's operation in Ukraine is condemned in harsh terms. Sanctions have been imposed on Russia, but Israel is allowed to carry out genocide in Gaza and is even supported through increased arms trade. The US attack on Iran did not provoke protest from Finland's leadership, even though American bombs have killed dozens of Iranian children. Instead, Finland's President Alexander Stubb condemned Iran's self-defence — namely strikes on US military bases. The sinking of an Iranian ship by the USA off Sri Lanka has been widely recognized as international terrorism. This, too, has not provoked protest from Finland's leadership;

international terrorism is supported if carried out by the “right” actors.

All this shows quite concretely how Finnish and European leaders are not interested in democracy, citizens’ rights, or the well-being of the people. The media monopoly feeds the public a narrative that this is necessary and in everyone’s interest.

This attitude is justified by reference to “European values.” But what do European values actually contain? Freedom of speech and free elections are often emphasized. As we know, these values do not materialize from the perspective of the working class. The media are almost entirely controlled by big capital and promotes values that maintain and strengthen their power. The same applies to elections, in which movements that can spend large amounts of money and have the support of capitalist-controlled media succeed.

This, then, is the situation in Europe and Finland: the independence of nations is being further undermined and political power is flowing to big capital.

### **In DPRK, Society Is Built According to the Needs of the People**

In the DPRK, the Party listens carefully to the needs of the people and strives to respond quickly. This has created deep trust between the masses, the Party, and the leader. The Party does not detach itself from the masses, as has happened in some other countries; rather, it is present in both their happy and difficult moments. No one is left alone — everyone is included in building society.

It can be said that the Juche idea has proven to be the most effective model for building socialism.

This provides a good starting point for examining how the Juche idea could be applied to the situation in our own country. Studying the Juche idea does not mean memorizing Korean practices and transferring them unchanged to other countries. Rather, it is about how we build our own revolution by utilizing the central principles of the Juche idea.

From this perspective, we students of the Juche idea have much to contribute. We must expand educational activities and reflect on what the Juche idea means from the standpoint of our own countries. In this world of individualism, the spread of the Juche idea happens one person to another, one at a time, so every study group is important regardless of its size.

Let us study the theory of the Juche idea and its application in the DPRK — there we can find the path to democracy, welfare, and a more just world.