

# **JUCHE: LESSONS FOR INDEPENDENT TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICA**

**By**

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The Juche philosophy has the same message as the proverbial river water which can never boil rice no matter how hot it may be. This proverb which Amilcar Cabral reminds us of is one of the 14 million African proverbs. Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* posits how every generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it. This resonates with Karl Marx's century-old exposure of how different philosophers had been interpreting the world in different ways but that what was actually required was to change it. Within this same thought process, Lenin following Marx explained the imperative of combining both theory and practice. He underlined how there can never be revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory and vice versa. Eyerman later termed it cognitive praxis. Mussolini's political victim, Antonio Gramsci underlines the critical role of organic intellectuals like Kim Il Sung, Eduardo Mondlane, Amilcar Cabral and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in any revolutionary process. All these help us to understand and appreciate the context and reasons for the emergence of the Juche idea, its expansion and blossoming *en face* of the nuclearised, uncompromising hegemonic American imperialism.

Korea by 1910 was resisting the Yoke of Japanese imperialism. With the end of World War II, the two emerging hegemonic superpowers- US and USSR shared Korea between themselves. This precluded Korea's participation and consent. This was the same way they two emerging superpowers had done to Germany. For the benefit of the young generation, let me explicate this. The two had shared Germany between themselves. The US took West Germany while the SU took East Germany. They enforced this imperialist fraternity by constructing a thick wall – which from then became known as the Berlin Wall – as the boundary between the two. This process was informed by what had taken place in the same Berlin in 1884-85. Bismarck had invited the European colonial imperialist forces to a conference in Berlin to amicably share Africa amongst themselves. However, the main intention of the then young Germany was to remind Europe that it would later on demand for its share of the colonies as soon as it became strong. It was that which explained why it waged two imperialist wars – World War I and World War II against Europe.

Back to Korea, the division between North Korea and South Korea became permanent in 1948. The democratic People's Republic of Korea was established on May 1, 1948 with President Kim Il Sung as its uncontested leader.

Korean's organic intellectuals included Kim Il Sung. The enemies of Korea's nationalism included the US-led Western imperialist powers. These later on consolidated under the UN which split Korea into two. Other enemies of the Korean nationalism included external forces; the agrarian question, lack of industrialization , absence of a strong national state to ward off external aggression, domination and exploitation; lack of a highly developed, internally focused, integrated and self-sustaining economy; illiteracy etc. Korea's

organic intellectuals saw the solution being in unifying all the Koreans and consolidating the Korean land by liberating the Koreans from US Imperialism.

This would also constitute a strong platform for liberating the economy from rudimentary, peasantry mode and transform it into a developed, industrialized national one with forward and backward linkages, integrated market, without differences between urban and agrarian settings, etc. All these became consolidated into the Juche philosophy. These organic intellectuals therefore organized the subalterns into a unification war against the US-led imperialist forces from 1950. The imperialist killing machinery was finally checked and repulsed when the newly revolutionary China joined the war on the side of oppressed in 1953. With that hard-won independence, Korea finally rebelled from the imperialist debt trap in the late 1980s.

Thus the Juche philosophy is about self emancipation from external domination, oppression and exploitation and any other forms of external imposition, handouts, loans, debts etc. It also embodies freedom from the limitations of nature, education, science and technology by liberating the productivity to meet people's material needs, improve their welfare, avail them employment, etc. Put differently, Juche aims to guarantee a happy productive life for the whole people and to satisfy more fully their steadily growing material and cultural needs. Since its constitution into a nation, North Korea has been trying to enhance development. Development as a concept, ideology, philosophy and practice can be understood through Thomas Alan's three notions of development. He defines development as a vision, description or measure of the condition of being of a desirable society; as a historical process of social change in which societies are transformed over long periods; and as consisting of deliberate efforts aimed at improvement on the part of various agencies including governments, all types of organizations and social movements.

These have been witnessed through agrarian transformation, agrarian reforms, technical, cultural and ideological revolution; linking industries with agriculture, the rural working class and peasantry, liaising ideological consciousness of the subalterns, changing the education system to address the national concerns, improving the productive forces and uplifting the cultural level of the population. Two related aspects to illustrate this are literacy and life expectancy. Literacy is now at 99 percent of the total population while life expectancy is 69.2 years.

The Korean experience has great relevance to Africa. The question is why?

1. Africa has the longest and most profound history since it is the origin of human beings, human constructions, civilization, development, knowledge, social organizations, power, politics, administration, technology, etc.
2. Africa has experienced incessant negative history by Western imperialisms since 1492.
  - a. The first one was the collapse of the Moorish Spain Empire.
  - b. The second one was Columbus' arrival in America in search of profits and its giving rise to slave trade which lasted four centuries.
3. European colonial imperialism and its negativities. These were inaugurated by King Léopold II, who took possession of the whole of Congo and instituted rubber terror in search for excessive profits. In a bid to earn a personal fortune worth US 1.1 billion dollars, he had to unleash rubber terror in the whole of Congo and it wiped out ten million Africans. It also destroyed most of the rubber trees in Congo.

4. Independence and the Cold War which America created to keep off the Soviet Union transformed Africa into a terrain of hot war. It became a brutal war in Africa. The US took the lead to create these dictators. This started with the overthrow of Lumumba's government, his detention and assassination within the same year – 1960 by CIA, Belgian troops and local allies. Military elites whom the modernization theorists like Janowitz and Huntington as the agencies of modernity were soon identified and supported by Western imperialism to form coups and ward off revolutionaries from taking over political power. This gave rise to reign of terror by dictators like Mobutu, Iddi Amin Dada, and Bokassa.
5. The collapse of Cold War in 1991 and the hegemonisation of multinational corporations, the cooperatocracy by Economic Hit Men and NGOism. They give wrong advice, falsified figures and projections, SAPs, WTOs etc.
6. US-led instituted insurgency under NATO to destabilize and raze down Libya, Cote d'ivoire, Tunisia and Egypt.
7. ICC and its racist approach to Africa. All the indicted are African leaders. The imperialist powers led by the US have refused to sign and be members. They have genuine fear of their soldiers and politicians being prosecuted for the daily heinous crimes they commit in the developing countries. They are the same people who are using the ICC to implement their racism of witch hunting Africans. Its negation emerged in the last elections in Kenya where the voters voted overwhelmingly for the two political leaders who were indicted by the ICC.
  - Impact of the humiliation of Africa which traces from 1492 up to now.

Africa has been reduced from a continent of the greatest empires and emperors, from the greatest and only pyramid designers, architects and owners to a continent of beggars and importers of mostly worthless if not secondhand things. Africa today attests Emmanuel Wallerstein's Maxim of how colonial imperialism transformed Africans into producers of what they did not consume and consumers of what they did not produce.

8. A continent full of resources including oil and other minerals, forests, game, aquatic products and brains – and yet has been transformed into an exclusive depository of cheap resources for the imperialists.
9. Issues of reparation are being sidelined: the proposal of delinking from imperialism by the dependency school has been thrown in the rubbish pit but no any other tangible solution has been formulated. Brain drainage is on the rise though the culprits are now turned its logic on its head and are calling it brain gain while others are calling it brain saturation. It is facing carpet bombings in a bid to protect human rights and impose democracy as in Libya. The ICC is holding Africa as a prison. Humiliation has remained part of Africa, poverty, agrarian crises, externally oriented educational system characterize Africa. All these demonstrate the relevance of the Juche philosophy to Africa. These are confirmed by African proverbs or words of wisdom. I will cite five which underline independence, self-reliance and creativity.

1: Water from the river can never boil rice no matter how hot it is. In other words, it will need internal mechanisms which involve boiling the rise.

2: Help or Assistance from a neighbouring homestead arrives after rain has subsided or stopped raining.

3: Anybody who despises the warriors of his community has to migrate.

4: One uses the spear that he has to guarantee his defense from his enemies.

5: A stick in the neighbour's house can never be available to kill a snake in a house.

This is how refusing to pay heed to these revolutionary philosophies will retain the modus vivendi of the rat and its young ones being the food for the young ones of the cat and its kittens. Africa has been prey of the Western imperialism for over hundred years. Africa has to shift its whole approach to internally focused development for "independent transformation."

Thank you.

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