

## **Aspects of the Life of a Great Internationalist**

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Speaking at the banquet held on April 15 1992, to mark his 80th birthday, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung said:

“The destiny of our nation is closely linked with that of the world’s people. Our people will remain loyal not only to their own cause but also to the common cause of the people of the world; they will oppose national egoism and fulfil their internationalist obligations.”

Indeed, the whole life of Comrade Kim Il Sung was that of a great patriot and a great internationalist.

Whilst his Memoirs, *With the Century* make clear that his earliest political memories stem from his time in Korea as a child, he essentially began his lifetime of revolutionary activity as a teenager in China, working together with Chinese comrades. Comrades like Zhang Weihua are remembered and honoured to this day for their contribution to the Korean revolution, but Comrade Kim Il Sung also joined together with them to fight for the Chinese people’s liberation, recognising that the revolutions in these two neighbouring countries were inextricably bound together.

A little later, as Japanese imperialism increased its threat to attack the world’s first workers’ state, Comrade Kim Il Sung put forward the slogan. “Let us defend the Soviet Union with arms!”, something that acquired even greater significance

with the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War in 1941, when it became essential that the Soviet Union not have to fight on two fronts at the same time.

Following the Korean people's victory in the struggle against Japanese militarism in 1945, from 1946-49, Comrade Kim Il Sung sent many thousands of battle-hardened veteran fighters to join the fight for the liberation of north-east China, greatly contributing to the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Following victory in the Fatherland Liberation War of 1950-53 and the rapid completion of the tasks of post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction, the DPRK soon began and intensified its active support to national liberation movements around the world who were fighting for the liquidation of the old colonial empires. An early example was the Algerian people's war of independence, which the DPRK was one of the very first countries to support.

The DPRK's role in the world revolution surged forward in the 1960s.

Faced with the split in the international communist movement and the divisions among the socialist countries, Comrade Kim Il Sung led the DPRK and the WPK to take the principled stand of firmly opposing modern revisionism, but also dogmatism. Being against right and 'left' opportunism and for unity against imperialism.

In 1966, Comrade Kim Il Sung proposed that all the socialist countries should send their volunteers to join the heroic Vietnamese people in their war against US aggression and for national salvation. And he put his words into action, dispatching Korean pilots to fight the Yankee aggressors in the skies of Vietnam.

At this time, the DPRK not only supported national liberation movements and revolutionary struggles throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, but also reached out to the most revolutionary forces in the imperialist heartlands, for example establishing special relations of solidarity with the Black Panther Party in the United States.

A similar example can be found in the close personal relationship that Comrade Kim Il Sung established with the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and its leader, Juan Mari Bras.

Indeed, like Cuba, the DPRK is a country that has contributed to the world revolution out of all proportion to its size.

Together with Cuba, it actively supported revolutionary struggles throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean, including in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chile.

Comrade Kim Il Sung also had special relations and empathy with the struggles of the peoples of Africa, along with that of the Palestinian people against Zionism, which was characterised by his special friendship and brotherhood with Comrade Yasser Arafat.

Alongside the struggle in Algeria, which I have already mentioned, Comrade Kim Il Sung led the Korean people in extending fighting solidarity to the struggles of the people of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Western Sahara among others.

As with Vietnam, Korean pilots were with the Egyptian air force in the October 1973 Middle East war.

And Comrade Kim Il Sung also supported countries throughout the continent to defend their independence and build new societies, including through the development of agriculture and the dispatch of medical teams. As President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea observed when he was awarded the International Kim Jong Il Prize, the DPRK was the first country to come to his country's assistance when it inherited the ruined legacy of Spanish colonialism.

Comrade Kim Il Sung had a genuine, all-embracing global vision. It didn't matter how small the country was or how far it was from Korea. If its people rose in struggle against imperialism or embarked on the building of a new society, he was on their side and doing everything he possibly could to help and support them, even though there was always so much to do to build socialism in Korea and improve the people's living standards, while fighting for national reunification, standing in face to face confrontation with US imperialism and its constant threats of nuclear war.

For example, he actively supported the people of Grenada when they overthrew the neo-colonial puppet government and set up a revolutionary one.

He supported the people of Malta, when their Labour government expelled the British military bases and adopted a non-aligned and anti-imperialist orientation.

And he supported the Irish people in their struggle to realise complete independence and reunify their country.

He even sent a high-level party delegation to attend the annual conference of the Welsh nationalist party Plaid Cymru.

I mention these just as typical examples, not to give a comprehensive exposition.

Of course, the last period of Comrade Kim Il Sung's life was marked by the greatest setback to the international communist and working-class movement, namely the collapse and destruction of the USSR and the socialist countries of central and eastern Europe.

Faced with this, Comrade Kim Il Sung devoted much of his efforts in his last years to rallying the socialist forces worldwide, assisting them and giving them renewed confidence.

He made the last of his very many visits to China after the East European events to strengthen unity and solidarity among the remaining socialist countries.

He met with the leaders and delegations of many communist parties, including small parties and parties from different wings of the communist movement – who had supported the Soviet Union, China, Albania, or Cuba, or who had maintained an independent position.

And, together with Comrade Kim Jong Il, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, in April 1992, he initiated the historic Pyongyang Declaration, ‘Let us Defend and Advance the Cause of Socialism’, as a first step in rallying the communist and broad socialist forces. Today, it has been signed by hundreds of parties and organisations throughout the world, including several in Britain, among them the New Communist Party of Britain, the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

Today, therefore, we celebrate the life not only of the great leader of the Korean people but also one of the very greatest revolutionary leaders in world history.