

Mikhail Vikulin (Ru)

## WPK in the fight against Khrushchev revisionism

The fight of the Workers' Party of Korea against Khrushchev's revisionism is an important stage in the development of Juche ideas. Now this topic is poorly disclosed in the literature. In Korean, of course, there is a book entitled «Experience in the struggle of the WPK against revisionism», but it is not available to most readers.

In order to assess how comrades **Kim Il Sung** and **Kim Jong Il** perceived revisionism in the CPSU, one needs to trace what happened in those years.

Moscow. February 1956. In a speech at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, Mikoyan sharply criticized the «The History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course» – a book on the history of the party, one of the authors of which is Joseph Stalin, although Stalin himself is not mentioned in the speech. At a closed meeting on the last day of the congress, Nikita Khrushchev read out a report «On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences». After that, it was sent to the leaders of the socialist countries.

The Third Congress of the WPK was held in Pyongyang in April of that year. Despite the wishes of the Khrushchevites, Stalin was not criticized. This topic was ignored.

November 1957. An international meeting of representatives of communist and workers' parties was taking place in Moscow. Almost all prominent figures of the communist movement made reports. A kind of “tribute” to Khrushchev was criticism of Stalin. Mao Zedong succeeded in this, and in addition to fighting the cult of personality, he praised the current head of the CPSU Central Committee. Even Enver Hoxha, a well-known defender of Stalin and a fighter against Khrushchev's revisionism, spoke about the heroic struggle of the «*Leninist Central Committee*» of the CPSU against the «*mistakes of Stalin*» and «*against the revisionist group*», that was, against the Anti-Party Group. All this is shorthand and is in the public domain.

In contrast, comrade **Kim Il Sung** remained principled. He became one of the few leaders of the socialist countries who did not participate in the «struggle against the cult of Stalin's personality». In his speech, he did not say a word about Joseph Stalin.

The split in the international communist movement in the 1960s caused new problems: in 1962 the «great polemic» between the CPSU and the CPC began, and then, from August 1966, the «Cultural Revolution» in China. In this situation, the DPRK didn't stand on either side and criticized both the Khrushchevites and the Maoists. At the same time, comrade **Kim Il Sung** argued that the contradictions between the socialist countries were non-antagonistic and it was necessary to unite forces to fight imperialism.

In the Korean political culture of the 1950s, it was not accepted to name modern revisionists by their first names. Therefore, you need to look at exactly what positions were criticized by comrades **Kim Il Sung** and **Kim Jong Il**. They were called by their names only after the collapse of the USSR.

In the 1960s, WPK actively criticized the Khrushchev revisionists. About the policy of peaceful coexistence, which the USSR began to preach, about the withdrawal of dictatorship of the proletariat from the program of the CPSU, and about other reactionary ideas Khrushchev said clearly: *«The modern revisionists deny the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist party and the dictatorship of the proletariat which together constitute the general principles of the socialist revolution. They maintain that the aggressive nature of imperialism has changed and that, therefore, socialism can get on well with imperialism; they madly proclaim that the transition from capitalism to socialism can be accomplished peacefully by means of parliamentary struggle»*. The verdict is issued as follows: *«As they are afraid of the revolution and do not want it, the revisionists are revising Marxism-Leninism and overhauling the theory of the class struggle...»*.

At the same time, the split in the world communist movement was gaining momentum. Along with the CPC, criticism of the CPSU was led by the Party of Labour of Albania. The revisionist CPSU in turn accused its opponents of “dogmatism”, “national bias” and “Stalinism”. Comrade **Kim Il Sung** said: *«...they call the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists who refuse to follow their revisionist line “dogmatists”, “nationalists”, or “Stalinists”, rejecting them and trying to isolate them from the socialist camp. This is the modern revisionists’ most absurd act and presents a serious danger to us»*.

In May 1966, Comrade **Kim Jong Il** began a large-scale work to analyze and summarize the development of the revolutionary thought of the working class in the previous period. One of the reasons that made it necessary to analyze the ideological heritage of the classics of Marxism-Leninism was the rampant left and right opportunism. **Kim Jong Il** said: in order to understand what the opportunists are wrong with, you need to clearly understand what the essence of Marxism-Leninism is.

What are these biases? Khrushchevites and Maoists. Although they are not named by name, this becomes apparent from the description that Kim Il Sung gives in his work *On the Transitional Period from Capitalism to Socialism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. This is a speech to the workers of the party-ideological front, delivered on May 25, 1967. The speech is devoted to the discussion on the issue indicated in the title. The question is really complicated and was not adequately resolved before comrade **Kim Il Sung**. The problem is that, relying solely on the work of the classics, this cannot be done. Hence there

are the different biases. «*You should neither cling to propositions of the classics and try to settle the questions dogmatically nor be enthralled by the ideas of flunkeyism and try to interpret the issues as others do*». **Kim Il Sung** says right-wing opportunists: «*It is the deviation of the Right opportunists to regard the transition period as the period from the seizure of power by the working class to the victory of the socialist system, and to suppose that the historical mission of the proletarian dictatorship will end with the termination of the transition period, equating the transition period and the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat to each other. Therefore, people with such a viewpoint say that following the attainment of the complete and final victory of socialism, which is the first phase of communism, and with the transition to the all-out construction of communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat has fulfilled its historical mission and is thus no longer necessary. This is a Right opportunist view, which is entirely contradictory to Marxism-Leninism*». From this it is obvious that **Kim Il Sung** called the Khrushchevites with their concept of a «nation-wide state» right-wing opportunists. **Kim Jong Il** said on this score that «*The statement that after the establishment of the socialist system the class struggle disappears and the dictatorship of the proletariat withers away is nothing but revisionism and a right deviation*».

The left deviation is obviously Maoism: «*Those who have the "Left" view used to regard the question of the transition period exactly in the same light as those who have the Right opportunist view, but, proceeding from their standpoint that communism can be realized some generations later, they contend that the transition period should be regarded as the period of transition from capitalism to the higher phase of communism. By doing this they apparently mean to criticize Right opportunism. It is all very well to criticize the Right deviations; but we cannot consider such views on the question of the transition period to be correct*». Only **Kim Il Sung** correctly resolved the question of the relationship between the transitional period and the dictatorship of the proletariat. He believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat didn't end with the transition period. It cannot die off as long as there is an internal or external threat of revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is carried out up to the highest phase of communism. In turn, the transition from capitalism to socialism begins with the socialist revolution and ends with the completion of socialist transformations.

Already in the late 1960s, comrade **Kim Jong Il** condemned the fight against the «cult of Stalin personality». He said: «*... modern revisionists slander the outstanding leaders of the international communist movement and try to nullify their merits*», denying the decisive role of the leader. This topic was more developed in the nineties.

After the collapse of the USSR, Khrushchev and Gorbachev were openly criticized by the DPRK leadership. Comrade **Kim Il Sung** criticizes Khrushchev and spoke positively of Stalin: *«The former Soviet Union was ruined by Gorbachev, but it began to be undermined from the time of Khrushchev. Khrushchev viciously vilified Stalin, allegedly to oppose the “personality cult” and denied the role played by the leader in the revolutionary struggle. Since then, the Party of the Soviet Union has lost the centre of its leadership. If a working-class party loses the centre of its leadership and is not guided by the leader, its fighting efficiency will be paralysed, and thus it will not be able to lead the revolution and construction correctly»*. Comrade **Kim Jong Il** developed the ideas of the great leader: *«In the past revisionists such as Khrushchev who appeared in the international communist movement, seriously undermined communist morality. Khrushchev, by slandering Stalin, gave the negative impression to the world that communists were ignorant of their forerunners in the revolution and fought one another»*.

Later open criticism of Khrushchev became commonplace. For example, in the book «Juche understanding of socialism» a story is given about the conversation between Khrushchev and Zhou Enlai. Khrushchev reminds Zhou that he comes from the class of exploiters, and Nikita Khrushchev comes not from the working people. To which Premier Zhou notes that both of them are traitors to their classes. In the end, the author notes that Zhou Enlai is a true revolutionary, faithful to the revolution all his life. Khrushchev, however, slandered Stalin and adhered to «modern revisionism»,

Based on the study, it can be argued that WPK was an active participant in the fight against Khrushchev revisionism. Comrades **Kim Il Sung** and **Kim Jong Il** defended a principled stand on the issue of the fight against opportunism and revisionism. This was an important stage in the development of Juche ideas.

Mikhail Vikulin

Head of the Juche Idea Study Group in Moscow

E-mail: [Mihail.v.00@gmail.com](mailto:Mihail.v.00@gmail.com)