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Juche ideology in Africa: its origins & development

Abstract

During the decolonisation of Africa between the 1950s and 1960s, the newly independent countries looked for state-building ideas. Africa in this period of history was also a battleground of ideologies, which were represented by the Global Powers – the US and western states; the USSR and its allies, such as North Korea.² Due to some aspects of socialism, like anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, these kind of ideologies found fertile ground. One of them was also the Juche, which was promoted by North Korea. During many years until today many offshoots of this ideology have taken root in Africa.

Keywords: Africa, ideology, Juche, North Korea, politics.

Introduction

The second half of the XXth. century was the particular period in African history. After a long period of domination by European colonial powers in Africa, the long-awaited decolonisation process took place. It was possible for many reasons, which have been widely researched by political scientists and historians. First, the political activities of educated, new, young African elites, political parties and national or liberation movements of Africans.³ In some cases this was preceded by a combination of, on the one hand, armed struggle and on the other by the political activity of Africans. Second, post-war changes inside the colonial powers and as a consequence their gradual retreat from their African possessions.⁴ Third, the new world order built after the Second World War, in which world domination were divided between new powers: the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Fourth, the creation of the United Nations (UN) and its international

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2 In this research paper, I use the term “North Korea”. Exceptions are only quotes and proper names, in which is used the term “DPRK”.

3 Milewski 2002: 44.

4 Milewski 2002: 44.

activity. The proclamation of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, whose regulations indicate the rights of all nations to equality and self-determination.⁵ In later activity, the UN proclaimed decolonisation as one of its primary goals.⁶

Finally, the decolonisation process began in the 1960s, which for many years was dubbed as “The Decade of Africa”. In this decade most of the former European colonies gained independence. The majority of them declared independence in the 1960s, the rest in the mid-1970s, and the latest, like Zimbabwe, in 1980 or like Namibia in the 1990.⁷ Power has been taken over by the marginalised African majority and new African power elites emerged.

The post-war period up to 1989 was characterised by the aforementioned rivalry of the world powers – the US and the USSR and their allies, also known as the “Cold War”. Consequently, it was also an ideological competition between the capitalist and socialist political, social and economic systems. The object of this rivalry and one of the main foci of the global powers was newly emerging, independent African countries seeking ideas for their newly established states and how to develop. Following with the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial elements of socialism or, more broadly, Marxism-Leninism, left-wing ideologies were interested in Africa at that time. The choice of such a development path was also dictated by aid considerations (especially military and economic assistance) flowing from the Eastern Bloc. One of the examples of interest and popularity of left-wing ideology at that time in Africa was African Socialism. One of the variants of Marxism-Leninism, which reached to Africa was the North Korean ideology of Juche.

This paper analyses the theory of Juche ideology itself, then the background of Juche ideology in Africa, and finally its origins and development in Africa. Finally, the paper seeks to answer the question about the future of Juche ideology in Africa. In my analysis, I have used methods and theories widely circulated in political science. According to the character of research conducted in this paper, I have decided to use the historical method or more precisely, its genetic and materialist subtype.

5 Prokopczuk 1983: 14.

6 Prokopczuk 1983: 14.

7 Milewski 2002: 46.

Theory of Juche ideology

Juche (in Korean: 주체) as a term in simple translation literally means “self-identity”, “subjectivity”, “self-reliance” and / or “autonomy”.⁹ The term Juche consists words: *Ju*₁₀ (주) – power, but also owner or master¹¹ and *Che* (체) – physique, integrity or essence.¹² The term Juche was used for the first time on 28 December 1955 in Kim Il Sung’s speech to the Workers Party of Korea (WPK) and propagandists and agitators officially translated it as “On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work”.¹³ In this ground-breaking speech, Kim argued that North Korea should adapt Marxism-Leninism applicable to Korean realities, thus laying the ideological framework for North Korea’s philosophy of Juche.¹⁴ The aforementioned point of view is closer to the notion of the creation of national versions of communist ideologies like Leninism / Stalinism in USSR, Maoism in China or later Titoism in Yugoslavia, Castroism in Cuba.¹⁵ But also it is a result of the changes in the Kremlin after Stalin’s death and the subsequent search for new strategies by Kim Il Sung or simply as an ideological tool to distance Pyongyang from Moscow.¹⁶

In the available literature the term Juche as translated into the language of political practice is understood as: a state of mind and position of a person capable of carrying out policies by himself without outside influence.¹⁷ The Juche ideology grew out of “Kimilsungism” – from the name of the creator of Juche ideology Kim Il Sung, which is also a base for the Juche ideology; sometimes these terms are used interchangeably. In the second way of understanding, the Juche ideology is simply a statement that the hosts or owners of Korea are Koreans and the host of the revolution is the Korean nation.¹⁸

8 The classic positions about Juche ideology are North Korean books wrote by Kim Il Sung e.g.: Kim Il Sung (1975): *On Juche in Our Revolution*, Foreign Languages Publishing House; Kim Il Sung (1972): *Juche! The Speeches and Writings of Kim Il Sung*, Foreign Languages Publishing House; Kim Il Sung (1972): *The Selected Works of Kim Il Sung: Volumes 1 – 5*, Foreign Languages Publishing House; and also many more.

9 Byun 1991: 21.

10 In this research paper, I use the most popular Korean language romanization system called McCune–Reischauer romanization.

11 Landlord or householder too.

12 Dziak 2000: 322.

13 David-West 2007: 138, Kim 1972a: 28.

14 Kim 1972a: 19.

15 Hale 2002: 289-290.

16 Kim 1972a: 19.

17 Kim 1987: 6.

18 Dziak 2000: 322.

It should be emphasised that the Juche ideology was not created at once. It was a fairly long-term process as a result of which the specific elements of this ideology were crystallised. The main foundations for the creation of subsequent elements were mainly the speeches and ideological works of Kim Il Sung, as well as studies by North Korean researchers on the basis of the above-mentioned works of Kim. Researchers distinguish the following stages in the development of the Juche ideology. As an embryonic concept: 1930-1945 – when Kim Il Sung, as a young revolutionist and guerrilla leader, accumulated experiences and learnings from the Chinese and the Soviets.¹⁹ An important factor in this point are also growing nationalist resentments due to the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula and later as post-liberation nationalism called *minjokjuui*.²⁰ 1945-1955 – The learning stage, when the aforementioned *minjokjuui* was still present, but additionally some elements were added. In this period Kim Il Sung developed his own ruling skills through exposure to the USSR and the Korean War.²¹ Especially during the faction wars inside the WPK, which resulted in the confirmation of Kim's full and independent leadership, he could afford to stray further from the Soviet line to guarantee his political power base.²² As an ideology of North Korea, but unofficial and not fully formulated: 1955-1962, when the Juche concept itself appeared and became part of the political circuit. At the same time, under the slogan of Juche policies an independent and separate North Korea was formulated, as was the autonomy of the WPK in external relations alongside critiques of the Great Power tendencies of the USSR.²³ In later years Kim Il Sung began to cautiously step ahead with his independent policies and finally implemented them in all areas of the state's activities on his own terms. During the years 1967–1972: As an official ideology of North Korea and the WPK. In this period the Juche ideology became the basis for all national policies and in the theoretical domain, Juche began to constitute a coherent ideological system.²⁴ Juche was officially recognised as the application of Marxism-Leninism to North Korean reality. During the period 1973-1980: The Juche ideology was recognised as a comprehensive system of ideas, theories and methods of Kim Il Sung, also as the cannon of the whole: nation, state, party and society.²⁵ The last period after 1980 can be described as the expansion and development stage. It is worth noting that in 1982 there took place a figurative event, namely, the construction

19 Byun 1991: 59.

20 Hale 2002: 287.

21 Byun 1991: 59.

22 Hale 2002: 288.

23 Dziak 2000: 284.

24 Dziak 2000: 284.

25 Kim (J.I.)1984: 1.

of the Tower of the Juche idea in Pyongyang as a symbol of the ultimate codification and dominance of Juche ideology in the life of North Korea. In 1992, the Juche concept's remaining connections to Marxism were completely removed from the North Korean Constitution, and Juche was elevated to the status of a kind of religious and moral system, which ultimately defined the purpose of people's lives, thereby providing the ideological justification for the hereditary succession of power of Kim dynasty.²⁶ So, Juche became a kind of political tool towards maintaining power and influence.

The ideology of Juche is very wide and sometimes a little bit complicated, so a brief explanation is needed. The Juche ideology consists of several elements, which condition it. These are: *jaju* (자주) – independence in politics, *jarip* (자립) – self-sufficiency in the economy, *jawi* (자위) – self-reliance in national defence, later to this set was added *suryeong* (수령) – leadership and in particular that the WKP and masses represent one organic body, but the brain and the main representation of their will, needs and interests is the Leader or Commander.²⁷ The main rule of Juche ideology is the statement that man is the master of everything and decides everything, in consequence this principle underlies all the principles and propositions elucidated by the Juche idea.²⁸ So in this point of view, a human is simply an independent entity in Korean - *Chajusong*. However, these features cannot develop immediately in the process of social development.²⁹ Therefore man must become a conscious social being and when that does not happen he simply cannot be called man anymore, according to the words of Kim Il Sung: “Man is a being with *Chajusong*, that is, an independent social being”.³⁰ If man is a social being, besides biological life, he can live also by the rules of socio-political life, even it is more important than the biological one, which has its end, in contrast to socio-political life, which is eternal through its achievements.³¹ Because immortality is an unparalleled value for man, it can only be achieved through socio-political life together with the full devotion of man to social and political life. It is impossible for a man to do it alone. It is possible only through political parties or other socio-political organisations. It is a honour and glory for man. The essence of human life is therefore a collectivist life. As Waldemar Dziak points out, the main aspiration of Kim Il Sung was the transformation of North Korea into a fully collectivist state on the basis of the Juche idea.³² So the

26 Park 2014: 6.

27 Park 2014: 6.

28 Kim 1984: 26.

29 Kim 1984: 77–79.

30 Kim 1984: 65–67.

31 Dziak 2000: 324–325.

32 Dziak 2000: 326.

main core of Juche ideology is collectivism. This is how people's masses are created. In Juche ideology people's masses are the main force of revolution, creation and progress, but only and exclusively when they are led by the party, because only the party can be the force of revolution and the nucleus of the masses.³³ As we have already noted, a socio-political organism with party and masses created in this way needs *suryeong*, that is independent leadership. As Park Yong Soo points out, only *suryeong* itself is at the apex and core of the system, because the whole society is mobilised with the aim of replicating his power.³⁴ Only under *suryeong*: can the whole nation act as one body under his guidance.³⁵ Further, *suryeong* drives the masses, party and state by enforcing the routine instillation of the military and revolutionary spirit at all times and at all levels of society, so in consequence the power of the *suryeong* is developed along with a wide range of social organisations to reproduce certain patterns of behaviour³⁶. This process can be carried out only by cult of personality, because Juche must be absolutely overwhelming.

The first part of Juche ideology outside of the widely analysed features above is *suryeong* is *jaju* (자주) – independence in politics. Man should be a master of his own destiny, cognately the principle of political independence is obligatory if the state wants to shape its own destiny. Every state has equal rights and possibilities to self-determination, and what's more every state must have rights to chart its future in order to assure freedom and prosperity for its people.³⁷ *Jaju* demands complete equality and mutual respect among states, as well as rejects subjugation and thus opposes enslavement.³⁸ To conduct *jaju*, the state should accommodate a national adaption of Marxism-Leninism; second, it should maintain independence in shaping guidelines and policies by staunchly opposing dogmatism; third, it should insist upon complete equality in foreign relations, because only this line differs from national egoism in that it strengthens proletarian internationalism.³⁹ This point is particular in the subject of this article. To conclude, *jaju* as political independence is the basic provision and guarantee for economic self-sustenance and military self-defence. The second element of Juche ideology is *jarip* (자립) – self-sufficiency. This element of Juche ideology refers directly only to the economic relations of the state. According to Kim Il Sung, economic independence is

33 Dziak 2000: 327.

34 Park 2014: 5–6.

35 Park 2014: 6.

36 Park 2014: 6.

37 Byun 1991: 76.

38 Byun 1991: 76.

39 Byun 1991: 76–77.

a key factor in achieving the political independence.⁴⁰ *Jarip* should mean the pursuit of autarchy and intensive expansion of the national economy, whose symbol is the *Chöllima* movement established to achieve self-reliance in the economy⁴¹. The last element of Juche ideology is *jawi* (자위) – self-reliance in national defence. Similar to the previous elements, in order that achieve political independent and confirmation of power, it is important to implement fully militarisation. Because military power is the basis of all power, so without true independence in military affairs, the state cannot exercise its sovereignty.⁴² It requires fortification of the entire country, to militarise all society and to develop a strictly national army, also in the case of the arms industry.⁴³

Juche ideology in Africa – the principles

Probably most important, from the North Korean view, is the question of the ideological war between the US and USSR in Africa during the decolonisation period or even wider – Africa as a battleground for capitalism and socialism. African states became an object of ideological and political measures of the US and USSR, mainly to attract each of these countries to one of the global camps. The main world powers used a variety of tools to attract African countries, ranging from political ones: military assistance, consultancy, through economic: preferable loans, investments, economic consultancy, to humanitarian aid.

With its various diplomatic engagements in the 1950s like support for Egypt in the Suez Crisis and many guerrilla or rebel groups in the Third World or appealing for international aid to North Vietnam, North Korea gained confidence in itself and its strength. This was intensified by faith in their own political and economic success after the Korean War. On the other hand, Kim Il Sung, according to Juche ideology and in detail to *jaju*, allowed himself to openly criticise the international activities of the USSR and China, calling their actions “hegemonism”.⁴⁴ The co-option of new African countries through the development of Juche ideology was for North Korea another source of international support to counter Sino-Soviet influence.⁴⁵ *Jaju* understand as political independence allows North Korea to conduct its own international relations. So, developing Juche ideology in Africa became for North Korea an attempt to build independence and prestige. North Korea wanted to match

40 Byun 1991: 72.

41 Byun 1991: 72.

42 Byun 1991: 73.

43 Byun 1991: 74–75.

44 Byun 1991: 44.

45 Byun 1991: 44.

Cuba, which took active part in the wars in Angola and Namibia, sending its soldiers.

According to the spirit of the Bandung Conference⁴⁶ in 1955 and aforementioned actions, North Korea decided to have an extensive, multi-faceted presence in Third World states, especially in Africa, which was then experiencing the process of decolonisation. Juche ideology became as a tool in conducting North Korea's foreign policy in Third World and therefore in Africa. North Korea tried to present Juche as a model of politics, economic development and foreign relations.⁴⁷ Certain aspects of Juche ideology seemed to be interesting or even worth implementing for many African countries, which had liberated themselves from long-time colonial domination and exclusion, the Juche component ideas held a powerful allure.⁴⁸ Implementation of Juche ideology by newly independent African states was aimed to prevent them from recolonisation. Moreover, this attitude was shared and represented by North Korea's leaders, who did seem to believe their country was an example for the Third World, which was worth following, even Kim Il Sung tried to present himself as a leader of the Third World, and a number of Third World governments, particularly in Africa, seemed to find aspects of the North Korean model both relevant and attractive.⁴⁹ Simply, for Africans Juche ideology was a visible example of fast (socialist) modernisation, which took place in North Korea after the Korean War and which Africans so greatly expected.

Juche ideology belongs to the set of leftist ideologies built on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. These kinds of strategies were quite popular among newly independent African states and their political elites at that time. In particular, due to such elements like: anti-imperialism or / and anti-colonialism. Therefore the USSR and its allies, China, North Korea became the main partners for African states. Very often also as an exemplar, how to build and organise the state. Furthermore, according to Juche ideology, newly independent African states in the 1960s and 1970s were in developing socio-historical movements, as such their struggle for *Chajusong*.⁵⁰ Juche ideology seemed to be the main driving force and great help for Africans to organise their societies and state life.

The main strength of the construction of a modern state – according to the example of North Korea – seemed to be precisely the Juche ideology. The North Korean propaganda line was consistently in favour of anti-colonial

46 Conference for Afro-Asian Solidarity held in Bandung, Indonesia, which effectively launched the Non-Aligned Movement.

47 Armstrong 2009.

48 Armstrong 2009.

49 Armstrong 2009.

50 Kim 1984: 240.

nationalism and independence throughout the Third World.⁵¹ According to the Juche ideology and words of Kim Il Sung, American imperialism was presented as the main enemy of the Third World peoples and Juche as the very embodiment of anti-imperialism.⁵² Clear evidence of this case was supposed to be North Koreans' struggle against the US and South Korea as identical with the struggle of Third World peoples for independence, and completely compatible with proletarian internationalism.⁵³ This view was confirmed and publicly pronounced by Kim Il Sung himself in a speech, entitled "On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the South Korean Revolution", which took place in 1965 at Ali Archam Social Science Institute in Jakarta, Indonesia.⁵⁴ Besides issues which concerned Juche, Korean unification and the development of North Korea, Kim Il Sung also called for strengthening of the anti-imperialist movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.⁵⁵ Juche ideology became North Korea's instrument of "fraternal help" for African states. The development of Juche ideology in Africa aimed to prevent the still possible plot of imperialism to undermine Communism and world revolution.

Developing Juche ideology among African states by North Korea was undertaken with practical and political precision. Namely, new African states were joining the UN around the time when the Korean question was being tabled, and what's more between 1945 and 1961 African membership in the UN increased nearly sevenfold, meaning Africa had a controlling vote in the UN.⁵⁶ In turn, the main aim of Pyongyang was to recognise the North Korean regime as the legitimate government of Korea.⁵⁷ To achieve this North Korea strived to cast its net as wide as possible of countries in order to capture loyalty before South Korea could.⁵⁸ Newly independent African states were targeted because of similar developmental ideologies to gain votes in the UN and to increase support for Pyongyang's goal of removing US military troops from South Korea.⁵⁹ This support was also gained through the sending of weapons or by providing military training to select African countries. In addition to ideological similarities, North Korea wanted through the development of Juche ideology to bring African countries closer to its own interests and to

51 Armstrong 2009.

52 Armstrong 2009.

53 Armstrong 2009.

54 Armstrong 2009.

55 Armstrong 2009.

56 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

57 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

58 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

59 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

pursue its political goals. The development of Juche ideology in Africa once again appears as an instrument of North Korea's political aims. Since the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, a race between the two Koreas began with seeking the support of African countries and support in the UN General Assembly. In establishing relations with other countries, Pyongyang relied on cultural diplomacy, while Seoul relied mainly on trade diplomacy.⁶⁰ From 1965 to 1973 South Korea focused on concluding trade agreements, giving aid and sending trade missions, while North Korea focused on concluding cultural agreements, establishing friendship associations and exchanging cultural missions to which could be included as activities associated with the development of Juche ideology.⁶¹

Juche ideology in Africa – development

Study groups, but also meetings, so-called institutes, conferences and workshops were the main instrument of developing Juche ideology in Africa. These organisations worked to promote Juche ideology, North Korea's and Kim Il Sung's greatness through research and discussion on ideology issues and Kim Il Sung's works among pro-North Korean politicians, scholars in African countries with the assistance of North Korea.⁶² At the same time, in line with the increasing political, military and economic interest of North Korea in Africa and the presence in some of the countries from the continent, and analogous to the adopted strategy, there took place the first initiatives concerning Juche ideology.

The first international Juche idea study group was established in Africa. It took place in April 1969 as the Juche Idea Study Group in Bamako, Mali, which was formed by teachers and students of the Mali Senior College of Education.⁶³ The Juche Idea Study Group in Bamako was the first step in the rapid spread of Juche initiatives almost all over Africa. Mali was an interesting case of animated relations with North Korea and a particular object of North Korean interest. For example it was the first African country with which North Korea established full diplomatic relations (1958) and became partners in mutual cooperation, which the result was a joint communiqué on "Afro-Asian solidarity against US imperialism".⁶⁴

Many African leaders, officials, and intellectuals briefly began to experiment with Juche ideology. All African initiatives which concerned Juche ideology

60 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

61 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

62 Yonhap 2003: 536.

63 Yonhap 2003: 536.

64 Armstrong 2009.

were operated by the International Research Centre for the Juche Idea in Tokyo,⁶⁵ which was formally set up in 1978.⁶⁶ The 1970s became a decade that saw most Juche ideology initiatives. By its end, North Korea had established diplomatic relations with many newly independent African states, while Juche ideology initiatives were created, especially Juche Idea Study Groups. As follows: in 1972: Cameroon, Madagascar, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) and Zaire (DR Congo); in 1973: Angola, Benin, Gambia, Mauritius, Togo; in 1974: Botswana, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Niger; in 1975: Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Tunisia, São Tomé and Príncipe; in 1976: Nigeria and Seychelles; in 1980: Lesotho and Zimbabwe.⁶⁷ Also, participants of Juche Study Groups very often were expedited to North Korea for Juche idea scholarships, training, meetings or simply to discover the land of Juche and Kim Il Sung. Juche Idea Study Groups were not an artificial product of North Korean propaganda. In fact, these groups did really exist and Pyongyang widely disseminated its propaganda across Africa, simply in order to gain more admirers.⁶⁸ The strategy adopted by North Korea to acquire African countries through Juche Ideology Study Groups was effective, and the groups themselves, despite their very small number of members, were initially relatively popular, despite the US Embassy issuing an official protest, in which it complained to Zambian officials that the dissemination of North Korean propaganda in the country needed to be stopped since it contained anti-American statements.⁶⁹ A similar situation also took place in Ethiopia. South Korean and US officials worried about North Korea's ideological appeal to Africans eager to develop their newly independent nations.⁷⁰

The 1970s also saw an important event, a conference on the Juche ideology in Africa. This conference covered the Juche ideology its role and place in the new African states, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, and international and North Korean issues. Statements which praised Kim Il Sung – his leadership and genius - were an important point of similar conferences. First was the Pan-African Seminar on Comrade Kim Il Sung's Juche Idea, which was held from 18th to 20th December 1972 in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.⁷¹ This seminar gathered about 50 delegates from 16 African countries, which

65 It was led by Kenishi Onishi, who has ruled over this Centre during the last 30 years. The headquarters of this organisation is located in Tokyo, instead of no diplomatic ties between North Korea and Japan.

66 Yonhap 2003: 536.

67 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

68 Young 2015.

69 Young 2015.

70 Young 2015.

71 The Preparatory Committee... 1973: 5.

consisted of students, politicians, academics, journalists, representatives of many organisations, members of African liberation movements and especially representatives of Juche Study Groups and Societies of North Korea Friends, notably from Africa and from other parts of the World.⁷² Namely these were: Algerian representatives; Angola – MPLA; Congo – ACAP; DR Somalia – representatives of government; Equatorial Guinea – African Student Group for the Study of the Revolutionary Philosophy of Comrade Kim Il Sung; Guinea – representatives of government; Mali – Mali Association for Friendship with the People of the DPRK, Mali Youth, Peace Movement of Mali, representatives of government; Mauritius – CPM and Mauritian-Korean Friendship Society; Namibia (then under South African occupation) – SWAPO; Nigerian representatives; North Korea – Academy of Social Sciences of DPRK; São Tomé and Príncipe – MLSTP and ST&P group for Study of the Juche Idea; Sierra Leone – Association of Sierra Leone’s Women, Freetown University, Sierra Leone-Korea Friendship Society; Sierra Leone’s Youth, representatives of government, especially from the ruling party APC; a Sudanese delegation; Tanzanian representatives and probably more African states than mentioned in the sources.⁷³ The slogan of the conference in Sierra Leone was: “The Great Idea of Juche Radiates over the Revolutionary Struggle of the African Peoples”. The main aims of the seminar were: comparing and deepening of Juche ideology knowledge, revolutionary ideas, exchanging experience between participants and projecting ways in which the revolutionary struggle of the African people against colonialism and racism would be possible.⁷⁴ In spite of the fact that there were only a small number of participants, it was undoubtedly an important propaganda tool for North Korea. To illustrate that North Korea meant something in Africa (especially for internal use) and is an inspiration for African people and states. An interesting testimony was the quoted book that summarised this conference. Except for all the documents, speeches and statements, there were full of pictures of Kim Il Sung giving directions on the spot surrounded by Koreans, Korean achievements and cheering participants of conference, like e.g.: “standing and hailing <<Long live Comrade Kim Il Sung >> and shouting revolutionary slogans”.⁷⁵

As Benjamin Young points out, the 1970s saw the total development of Juche ideology in Africa, which besides aforementioned initiatives included the inspirations of Juche ideology for some African politicians. They praised publicly Juche ideology, like the Malian head of state, who called North Korean achievements and experiences a model for developing countries or Moges

72 The Preparatory Committee... 1973: 5, 9–11.

73 The Preparatory Committee... 1973: 9–10.

74 The Preparatory Committee... 1973: 5.

75 The Preparatory Committee... 1973: 17.

Wolde-Michael, the chairman of the Economic Committee of the Ethiopian Provisional Military Administrative Council, who said that: “the Juche idea that had enabled the DPRK to perform miracles, which is attributable to the genial guidance of President Kim Il Sung, the great and excellent leader, and to the diligent work of the Korean people”.⁷⁶ In the case of inspirations from Juche ideology, we can find “Horoya”, created by Ahmed Sekoutoure, former President of the Republic Guinea, which had similar principles as Juche.⁷⁷ Another example is the ideology of “Umuganda” created by former President of Rwanda Juvenal Habyarimana, which means “coming together for a common purpose”, according to the words of the Rwandan president, who added that it had similar viewpoints as Juche.⁷⁸ At the end of this section it is worth noting that many African politicians criticised both Juche ideology as inapplicable in the postcolonial reality of Africa and dangerously radical and the way in which North Korea had tried to promote it, describing it as aggressive.⁷⁹ As Kenyan politician Tom Mboya at a Pan-African Conference in 1970 described Juche ideology: “I accept the slogan of self-reliance. The man in the bush has always been self-reliant and that is the reason why he is still in the bush”.⁸⁰ It is worth noting that at the end of the 1970s North Korea operated approximately about 1,000 Juche Idea organisations in various countries.⁸¹

The 1980s and 1990s saw the total eclipse of the development of Juche ideology in Africa, which was influenced by several factors. First, a crisis of the socialist camp and as a consequence its complete downfall, which eliminated the USSR and its allies from Africa. Second, the crisis and the economic failure of North Korea itself, which led to a lack of interest in the Juche ideology and North Korea in Africa. Due to internal problems of North Korea, there was a lack of funds for Juche ideology initiatives in Africa. In fact, Africans were already witnessing the rapid development and success of South Korea and in effect blatant differences in the development and level of life between them. Simply, Africans saw the reality of the practice of Juche ideology and how its implementation ended up. Third, numerous crises in Africa in the 1980s caused a retreat from experiments with various ideologies and optimism related to decolonisation and hope for change expired. Also, many African states were governed by authoritarian, one-party regimes, which suppressed all other political activities including Juche Study Groups. Fourth, when in the 1990s “the third wave of democracy” hit Africa, new opposition

76 Young 2015.

77 The Preparatory Committee... 1973: 8.

78 Young 2015.

79 Young 2015.

80 Young 2015.

81 Yonhap 2003: 536.

parties were not interested in Juche as an ideology with its roots in a totalitarian regime. Fifth, the final end of the decolonisation process in Africa through the independence of Zimbabwe (1980) and Namibia (1990). Sixth, the final exhaustion of the formula of winning over African countries by Juche Idea Study Groups. Seventh, a noticeable lack of interest on the part of Africans in Juche ideology on the one hand and on the other cooperation with Africa became unprofitable for North Korea. So, due to the mentioned-above factors the development and presence of Juche ideology in Africa all but disappeared. The majority of Juche Idea Study Groups, which in most cases were small and marginal, were dissolved.

The 1980s were the last period of some Juche ideology developments in Africa. In 1981 the African Committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the Korean People was established in Nigeria.⁸² An important event was the establishment of the Juche Idea Study Institute in Africa in Sierra Leone in April 1985.⁸³ In the 1980s North Korea tried new form of development of Juche ideology in Africa. These were visits of earlier selected students in North Korea, the main aim being the study of the Juche idea at special courses.⁸⁴ In the 1980s, approximately 200 students from Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia attended such Juche Idea courses in North Korea.⁸⁵ However, as a result of certain factors, North Koreans decided to end this form of scholarship. Africans were no longer interested in it, because during these trips they experienced racism, propaganda, exclusion and permanent invigilation.⁸⁶ On the other hand North Koreans did not want to continue this idea because of ideological and racial frictions represented by the African students, and also lack of trust and fear of espionage and penetration of this sheltered state.⁸⁷

In this point, it is worth noting that the presence of Juche ideology in Africa was also an inspiration for the creation of works of science, culture and art. For example, Fred Agbobli, who was the chief of Ghana National Institute of the Juche Idea, painted and gave as a gift to Kim Jong Il the oil painting “Sunlight of Juche in Africa”.⁸⁸ Another example is a Cameroonian professor who wrote his doctoral dissertation on Juche and its application to Africa.⁸⁹ The professor explained that the main aim of his thesis was to adopt measures to embody the

82 *African Committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the Korean People* 2019.

83 Yonhap 2003: 536.

84 Young 2015.

85 Young 2015.

86 Young 2015.

87 Young 2015.

88 Boundless Reverence and Admiration of World Progressive Mankind for the Juche Idea 2017.

89 Young 2015.

Juche philosophy in Africa and thus have it disseminated widely and taught at African universities and in the African intellectual world so that intellectuals from African countries could have a deep understanding of the developed civilisation of Korea in the East.⁹⁰ The latest doctoral dissertation “Study on Overcoming Crisis and Development of Africa By Applying the Juche Idea” was prepared in 2017 by Roland Vele Mukelenge, chairman of the Group for the Study of Songun Policy and defended it at the Bandundu University of DR Congo.⁹¹

According to the aforementioned factors and total failure of the North Korean state in 1990s, the development and presence of Juche ideology in Africa were eclipsed. This resulted in a significant reduction of all initiatives concerning Juche ideology in Africa. The situation has improved in recent years more widely since Kim Jong Un took power.

Currently, Juche ideology is present in Africa in its typical forms like: Juche Idea Study Groups, which can be found also under the name connected with the personage of North Korean leaders; other organisations and committees; conferences about the Juche idea, which are held in Africa, North Korea, other countries of World with the representatives and/or participants of African Juche Idea Study Groups; also visits of Africans in North Korea.

In Benin there is the *Comité National Béninois d'Etude des Idées du Juche* (Beninese National Committee for the Study of the Ideas of Juche) – leader: Hessou Kohovi – in the capital Cotonou, which organised a March 1st 2017 meeting under the title: “Praising Great Persons of Mount Paektu”.⁹²

Other currently active Juche Idea Study Groups have operated in DR Congo: the National Committee for the Study of the Juche Idea and newly established on February 8th 2018: Group for the Study of the Juche Idea for Independence in Democratic Congo in Kinshasa.⁹³ In Ethiopia: Ethiopian Youth Study Group of the Juche Idea; in Egypt: Egyptian Committee for Study Juche Idea; in South Africa: Group for the Study of Progressive Idea, The South African National Committee for the Study of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism (formed in November 2018, but according to the provided information only in the Mfumalanga province) and many others, like small Juche Idea Study Groups; in Guinea: the National Committee for Study Juche Idea.⁹⁴ There are probably

90 Young 2015.

91 DPRK Doctorate in Socio-politics Conferred on Followers of Juche Idea 2017.

92 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

93 New Juche Idea Study Groups Form 2018.

94 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016); *Africa Regional Committee for Study Juche Idea – Board of Directors 2019*; *S. African National Committee for Study of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism Formed 2019*.

more Juche Idea Study Groups in other African countries, but according to the provided information many groups were not active because of communication, financial, infrastructure problems or there was lack of any liaison with them.⁹⁵ As Alhassan Mamman Muhammad (chairman of the Nigerian National Committee on the Study of the Juche Idea), said that in every African state there exists a Juche Study Group, in most cases these groups⁹⁶ are independent with their own leadership structure.⁹⁷

The most powerful and active Juche Idea Study Groups in Africa are located in Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. In Nigeria, there is the Nigerian National Committee on the Study of the Juche Idea and the Nigeria-DPRK Friendship Association.⁹⁸ The Nigerian National Committee on the Study of Juche Idea is managed by Alhassan Mamman Muhammad, prof. at the FCT in Abuja. The Nigerian Committee was formed in the late 1970s and currently is thought to be the biggest in Africa, with approximately 2,000 to 2,500 registered members of Nigeria's Juche study group, organised in numerous branches across the country and a further 10,000 unregistered followers exist across Nigeria.⁹⁹ Alhassan Mamman Muhammed is famous for his many visits to North Korea (6–7 times) and close relationships with North Korean officials and even got North Korean orders of merit in recognition of his works.¹⁰⁰ The main activities held by the Nigerian Committee concern the functioning of the Juche Idea Study Groups and participation in African seminars, which are related to Juche Ideology and also produce support statements for North Korean policies.¹⁰¹ This Committee also runs a webpage, which has pure propaganda purport, and is full of aforementioned statements and information about North Korean policies, positions, and news.¹⁰² In Tanzania, is the National Coordinating Committee on the Juche Idea Study Groups, which manages the Juche Idea Study Groups scattered in many places in Tanzania. The last report concerns activities in 2009. The number of Juche Idea Study Groups has been decreasing, so active groups existed only in regions: Dar es Salaam (13 groups), Morogoro and Coast (in each 1 group).¹⁰³ Juche idea activities in Tanzania comprised meetings, seminars and lectures – also for special anniversaries and

95 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

96 According to the words of Alhassan Mamman Muhammad: "I know of least one person in every African country who represents a branch" in: Byrne 2014.

97 Byrne 2014.

98 *Nigerian National Committee on the Study of Juche Idea* 2019.

99 Byrne 2014.

100 Byrne 2014.

101 *Nigerian National Committee on the Study of Juche Idea* 2019.

102 *Nigerian National Committee on the Study of Juche Idea* 2019.

103 Kamwiziku 2010.

events of great importance to the Juche and North Korea.¹⁰⁴ The Tanzanian Committee also is responsible for a website “Africa Juche”, which is in both English and French, similar as in Nigeria this webpage is full of statements and support for North Korean policies and leaders and interesting poems like “*O Corée, Terre promise*”¹⁰⁵ or “*Songun et la paix mondiale*”.¹⁰⁶ In Uganda is the Ugandan National Committee for the Study of the Juche Idea, which is led by Mayambala Lawrence, but here also exists a quite important institution, which coordinates all Juche Idea Committees and Study Groups in Africa, namely the Juche Africa Headquarters, which is located in the capital of Uganda – Kampala.¹⁰⁷ The main objectives of Juche Africa are: To intensify the study and dissemination of the Juche idea in Africa for social, economic and political transformation; To strive for the advancement of the revolutionary cause of Juche in Africa’s quest for a better and organised status of human kind; To promote and strengthen Africa’s solidarity with North Korea and other socialist establishments in the world; To promote African integration and international cooperation.¹⁰⁸ So, Juche Africa acts as African regional committee for Juche ideology. Juche Africa as a central institution of Juche ideology in Africa is managed by a Board of Directors, which currently consists of representatives of some national Juche Idea committees, organisations, universities from many parts of Africa, which currently consists: Henry Masiko (president) from Uganda, Alhassan Mamman Muhammad from Nigeria; Eddie Kekana from South Africa; Francis Lyimo from Tanzania; Hessou Kohovi from Benin; Lohekele Andre from DR Congo; Mayambala from Uganda; Nigatu Dagnachew from Ethiopia; Riad Chaloub from Guinea; Yehia Khairollah from Egypt; Youssef Marouani from Tunisia.¹⁰⁹ Finally, it should be mentioned that funding and information materials needed for the functioning of Juche Idea Study Groups are provided by North Korea through its embassies in Africa.¹¹⁰

Others current developments of Juche ideology in Africa concern conferences, seminars and visits in North Korea. For example on 3rd of November 2018 in Conakry (the capital of Guinea) there took place the African Regional Seminar on Juche Idea. Most speeches concerned the Juche ideology and praised Kim Jong Un and 70th Anniversary of North Korea.¹¹¹ Also representatives of Juche Idea Study Groups from Africa have visited

104 Kamwiziku 2010.

105 *Africa Juche: Etude et diffusion des Idées du Juche (Etre maître de soi): Poems* 2019.

106 *Africa Juche: Etude et diffusion des Idées du Juche (Etre maître de soi): Poems* 2019.

107 *Juche Africa* 2019.

108 *Juche Africa* 2019.

109 *African Regional Committee for Study Juche Idea* 2019.

110 DuPre, Kasprzyk, Stott (2016).

111 *African Regional Seminar on Juche Idea* 2018.

North Korea many times to participate in special events devoted to North Korean national anniversaries or simply Juche ideology. On 3rd September 2018 there was an international seminar on “The Juche Idea and 70 Years of the DPRK” in which took part Nigatu Dagnachew, chairman of the Ethiopian National Committee for the Study of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, who made a speech on the “Immortal Exploits of President Kim Il Sung Performed and Great Achievement of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Made for African Revolution Will Remain Forever” and Alhassan Mamman Muhammad, chairman of Nigerian National Committee for the Study of Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, made a speech on “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; Seventy Years on the Spirit of Juche Idea”.¹¹² Representatives of Juche Idea Study Groups from Africa in many Juche Idea around the world and some of them are active in the worldwide Juche Idea community. Directors and members of Juche idea study groups from Africa took part in 40th Founding Anniversary of the IIIJ,¹¹³ which was held in the capital of Mongolia, Ulan Bator, on April, 7th 2018.¹¹⁴ All these activities in reality had a pure propaganda overtone and were simply an instrument for North Korean to prove the importance of the Juche Idea and North Korea at the international arena and its supposed superpower position thanks to Juche idea.

Conclusions

At the first sight, the presence of Juche ideology in Africa can make quite an impression, especially when we see how quickly it developed on this continent. However, the reality is completely different.

Since the very beginning, the presence and development of Juche ideology in Africa was not intended as a kind of North Korean mission for African countries that had recently gained independence and were looking for an idea for the rapid development of their state. On the contrary, from the beginning, the main aim of the idea of Juche mission in Africa was a political instrument of North Korea. First, to get full membership in UN before South Korea. Second, to build their own, sovereign zone of interests among newly independent states in Africa, according to the principle of *jaju*. North Korea wanted to be level with other socialist countries, which were active in the Third World like the USSR or Cuba. Fourth, presence and development of Juche ideology in Africa was the easiest and cheapest way to establish North Korean presence on the continent, especially due to the interest and fascination of Africans in fast recovery of North Korea after the Korean War. Fifth, the

112 International Seminar... 2018.

113 International Institute of the Juche Idea.

114 Functions Hold in Celebration of the 40th Founding Anniversary of the IIIJ 2018.

presence and development of Juche ideology in Africa was not a result of the aforementioned “mission” or help in the anti-colonial struggle. Simply, Juche activities in Africa were necessary for North Korean propaganda to construct the illusion of North Korea’s important worldwide position and role in international politics for itself and its citizens. Also, to create the personage of Kim Il Sung as the leader of worldwide revolutionary movement and anti-colonial, anti-imperialism struggle of African people. In addition, it helped create the cult of Kim’s personality and legitimacy.

Most activities which concern the presence and development of Juche ideology in Africa are conferences, guest visits (also in North Korea), seminars and Juche Study Groups. Even if these groups operate in most African countries, they are in fact marginal, as well as sensitive and dependent on problems related to financing and organisation. As a consequence, the strength of their influence is actually very low. As Bernard Young points out, in fact, Africans were not fascinated in the idea of Juche, but were interested in the fast development of North Korea after the Korean War and how North Korea had done it.¹¹⁵ So, the main force in the development of Juche ideas in Africa were citizens, who created from the grassroots most of the Juche organisations in most of cases. Especially thanks to the Juche theses about social development and solidarity, also independence from foreign political influence. But on the other hand, in some cases Juche organisations were the result of lively relations between African states and North Korean authorities, politicians, for example the case of Mali.

Currently, most of the coordinators and important personages of Juche ideology in African began their career in the 1970s or 1980s yet and there is lack of information about their successors or active members. It is possible that these groups gradually disappeared, but on the other hand new groups (often in the place of old groups) are still being created. One might suggest that as long as North Korea has an interest – mainly propaganda – in the presence and development of Juche ideology in Africa and there will be funds for its maintenance, all related initiatives will continue to function for some time. However, in general the final end of the presence of Juche ideology in Africa certainly arrived earlier than it seems.

115 Young 2015.

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