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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Tutkielma käsittelee Korean Demokraattisen Kansantasavallan (KDKT) ensimmäisen päämiehen ja johtajan Kim il-Sungin henkilökultin luomistyötä, sekä esikuvia, joita hän propagandakoneistonsa kanssa käytti henkilökulttinsa luomiseen. Tarkasteltu ajanjakso sijoittuu vuodesta 1945 noin vuoden 1962 loppuun. Alun perin Neuvostoliiton asevoimien tuella valtaan noussut nuori johtaja ryhtyi pian kehittämään itselleen omanlaistaan henkilökulttia, jonka esikuvina toimivat niin Neuvostoliiton Josef Stalin kuin myös kansallissosialistisen Saksan Adolf Hitler. Molemmat edellä mainitut diktaattorit toimivat Kim il-Sungille esimerkkinä monilla kulttuurin ja propagandan sarjoilla, niin esimerkiksi maalaustaiteessa, sanomalehdissä, radiossa tai filmillä esiintymisessä, kuin myös julkisessa esiintymisessä. Heidän esimerkinsä toimi oppaana myös vaikuttamisen ja propagandan keinoissa, joiden avulla Kim il-Sung loi itsestään kansalleen ja ulkomaille kuvan suurena ja mahtavana valtionpäämiehenä, joka johtaa Koreaa Juche-aatteen avulla. Työ sivuaa myös Juche-aatteen syntymää, joka oli Kim il-Sungin henkilökultin peruspilari. Henkilökultin itsensä tavoin, myös Juche-aatteen luomistyössä Kim il-Sung sekä hänen valtiokoneistonsa käyttivät hyväkseen niin Neuvostoliitosta kuin Saksasta tuttuja esikuvia ja propagandan sekä vaikuttamisen keinoja. Näin Korean Demokraattiseen Kansantasavaltaan syntyi mielenkiintoinen poliittinen sekä yhteiskunnallinen järjestelmä, joka yhdisteli ideologisessa pohjassaan niin sanotusti parhaat palat sekä stalinistisesta kommunismista, marxismi-leninismistä, kuin myös kansallissosialismista, japanilaisesta militarismista, sekä klassisesta fasismista, aina kun vain Kim il-Sungin toiminta valtionpäämiehenä sekä todellisuudessa että propagandan sivuilla niin vaati. Tutkielman on pyrkimys osoittaa, että Korean Demokraattisen Kansantasavallan propagandakoneisto ja hallintomuoto vuodesta 1956 eteenpäin edustavat omanlaistaan, valtavirran kommunismista poikkeavaa sosialistisen kansallisuusaatteen linjaa, jolla oli vahvoja samankaltaisuuksia niin stalinismin kuin saksalaisen kansallissosialismin kanssa. Esimerkiksi Korea-asiantuntija tohtori B.R. Myers on väittänyt näin viimeaikaisissa julkaisuissaan. Myös KDKT:n historian ja politiikan tutkimuksen toinen tässä tutkimuksessa usein siteerattu ammattilainen, tohtori Andrei Lankov, on myöntänyt Korean Demokraattisen Kansantasavallan hallinnon toimivan äärimmäisen taitavasti, sekä macchiavellistisesti poliittisten kysymysten ja ideologian soveltamisen parissa, mikä osittain tukee tutkimuksessa esitettyä väitettä. Metodien puolelta tutkielma seuraa sekä tohtori Reinhart Koselleckin että tohtori Quentin Skinnerin metodologisten teorioiden pohjaa, mutta sen lisäksi työssä on käytetty apuna myös teoreettisia esimerkkejä Max Weberin, Jorma Kalelan, Hannah Arendtin, Martin Heideggerin sekä Carl Schmittin näkemyksistä, sekä aihepiiriin liittyvistä metodologisista kysymyksistä.</p>	
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THE KING WHO CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN

The Image and the Cult of Personality of the "Eternal President" Kim Il-Sung in

Official State Propaganda

1945-1962

Masters thesis

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1. Introduction

This master's thesis aims to make the aspects of the cult of personality surrounding Kim Il-Sung (1912-1994) a bit more clear to academic readers and even to some general readers who happen to be interested in the subject for one reason or another. The research part of the text is conducted through analyzing the official state propaganda and other relatively reliable texts produced from the person in the centre focus of the research, Kim Il-Sung, and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. The emphasis of the research is centered, for the most part, on the field of comparative historical study to other totalitarian regimes around the world existing roughly at the same time or slightly before, and the figures of speech and rhetoric, through which the official state propaganda has used to describe and praise the late "great leader" of the Korean Peoples Democratic Republic. This research also hopes to shed light on the formation of the Chollima-initiative and later Juche ideologies, which have been already generally acknowledged to have their beginnings sometime during this fifteen year time period. Some of the terminology, original ideology and concepts of the Juche ideology can be said to have been formed already in the 1950s and the project known as the Chollima-initiative began during the year 1956 and shaped the inner workings and foreign image of the DPRK utterly for the coming decades and the rest of the century. The process of change was mostly centered on agriculture, intelligentsia and factory workers and the reform of their lifestyles along with the cult of personality, which will also get subjected to some thorough analyzation in this thesis, in parts which they are relevant to the cult of personality and the creation of the "Kim dynasty" myth.

The main primary sources used in this research are the writings, supposedly written by Kim Il-Sung himself during the period from 1945 to 1994¹². Some of the material has been edited into book form after his death in 1994, but supposedly written before his death. Whatever the case with their actual authors may be, they nevertheless give the research an actual propagandistic original source to comparative study between texts produced during different years of the regime and the study of the figures of speech aforementioned above. Chronologically, the era the paper is mostly trying to shed some ray of light into, is between the autumn of 1945 and the creation of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea, and approximately to 31st of December of 1961 or 1962. At around this time the break between China and the Soviet Union happened, and the DPRK chose to enact a more independent way of political and economical existence. Many other researchers, including the

1 For example: Selected Works of Kim Il-Sung II to V, Pyongyang 1971

2 For example: Kim Il-Sung With The Century I-VIII, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Pjongjang 1993-2007

unofficial grand old man of North Korean studies, Andrei Lankov.³ In many of his excellent published books on the subject, seem to accept that the Peoples Republic found itself in some kind of a stable and self sufficient economy-political entity by 1960-1961. This development of stability left Kim Il-Sung directly responsible of wielding the power in the country unchallenged and for the most part, allowed him to control the monopoly of violence over his subjects through the armed forces and the party. The cooling of diplomatic relations with China and the Soviet Union roughly around the same time frame between 1960 and 1962 is also one turning point for the road of the Peoples Republic. This event, which gives birth to a set of whole new challenges and sociopolitical events, would probably need an entire research of its own. Therefore, it is only touched upon in this work when it is absolutely relative to the main questions this research addresses. Through this “coming-of-age” for the dictatorship in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea during the early 1960s and the worsening of the diplomatic ties between its major supporters and the Peoples Republic itself, the flow of history forms a compact era of roughly 15 to 17 years. Though an attempt at describing the birth and the coming of age of the dictatorship of Kim Il-Sung in the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea, this research in no way attempts to be any kind of “Bildungsroman” or a rosy, ideologically driven paper about the birth of an arguably socialist dictatorship, but a critical examination of the subject which still divides the researchers to some extent⁴, a dynastic dictatorship that controls the northern part of the Korean peninsula under its unyielding iron grip to this day.

The title of the research paper is a nod towards a historical, common Korean legend widely known in both the DPRK and the Republic of Korea. According to this legend, the family and clan of “Kim”, one of the most common surnames in the Korean community in the peninsula and worldwide, would have originally been a ruling imperial house in the ancient empire/kingdom of Silla. Silla was one of the ancient three kingdoms of Korea, which was roughly situated around the central inland and eastern coastal parts of modern North-, and South Korea⁵. So it could be seen in a way, that the current dynasty of Kims ruling the northern part of the Korean peninsula and the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea, although not officially a dynasty or an imperial house, still actually draws some symbolical and esoteric power and influence from ancient national epics and

3 See Lankov 2005 from the sources

4 For example: B.R. Myers: *The Cleanest Race* 2010. In this study, Myers throws out in to the open the suggestion that North Korea is in fact a theocratic-fascist dictatorship based on the racial and mythological-mystical aspects of Korean people and their ancient mythology, something not unlike Nazi Germany, in the minds of the more esoteric and paganistic SS and NSDAP members, like the SS-Ahnenerbe and the sinister Thule-Society during its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s.

5 Oberdorfer 2001, "A note on Korean names" xvii

Korean mythology, known commonly to many Koreans in the both Koreas and the community of Koreans worldwide.

As Kim Il-Sung has been said by the official propaganda to have led the guerilla-war against the invading Japanese from the sparsely populated and heavily forested lands surrounding and partially covering the fabled Paektu mountain, this name gets even more understandable for the reader unaware of Korean mythology and history. In a way, he could then be seen as a “King” coming down from the mountain, to his people, to lead them after a time of strife against an evil imperialist invader bent on conquering the nation and enslaving all the innocent people who live there. Kim Il-Sung's own son, the later ruler-to-be Kim Jong-Il, was said to have been born on top of the mountain while his father was leading the resistance movement against the Japanese in the valleys, forests and lands surrounding the mountain in the 1940s. This, along with the propagandistic, religious and mythological value the whole mountain region is charged with in Korean culture, gives some kind of a propagandistic continuity to the rule of the Kims and binds it with this ancient legend of another ancient Korean king, who ruled from the top of the Paektu mountain. The mythical king Hwanung, the son of the Sky God, or the “honourable Lord of the heavens”.

So in addition to the Kim dynasty, there is also yet another, though mythological, highly venerated king in the Korean national mythology who was deeply involved with the Paektu mountain and the regions surrounding it. The mystical and legendary first leader of the Korean people, Hwanung. According to the Korean mythology, he was born in the heavens as a child of the Sky God, Hwanin. He yearned to live on top of the earth among the beautiful and green valleys and rivers. His father permitted him to move to the face of the earth, so he was to be the first person to land on the face of the earth, and this landfall happened on top of the Paektu mountain. He was followed by 3000 of his heavenly demigod subjects, with whom he formed the first city in the world on the top of the mountain. There on the mountain, while exploring the new lands, he encountered a tiger and a bear, who both wished to become humans. He gave them the secret recipe for becoming sentient human beings, but only the bear succeeded in the transformation process, as the tiger was too impatient to wait for the one hundred days so that all the various herbs and magical spells would have an effect on him, like Hwanung guided him to in order to succeed. With this former bear-woman, now completely human in form and function. King Hwanung had a child, king Dangun Wanggeom. It was he who according to the Korean mythological stories of creation built the first mortal city somewhere near the modern day Pyongyang and started through his subjects and progeny “the

heavenly race of Korean people” we know today.⁶

These two myths about ancient kings from the heavenly mountain⁷ have influenced the rulers in both Korea throughout their history. Images of Mt. Paektu appear often in the propaganda of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea⁸, and often they have a central place even in published material or commercials produced in the Republic of Korea in the southern part of the peninsula. Even though officially, the DPRK is a socialist state, and would likely deny any kind of glorification of kings and noblemen, often deemed as a capitalist or reactionary influence for one reason or another, these mythological kings and their stories certainly give some credibility on the hold of power the Kim dynasty has in the DPRK today. As the mountain is a holy place and the kings are the founding fathers for both of the governments of the south and the north, it is easily understandable, why all this carries such an important national and mythological value well into the 21st century.

1.1 Historical background and framework 1945-1960

The birth of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Korea is generally accepted to have happened during the autumn of 1945. This view is supported by the official state sources, as well as the more critically reviewed western academic research literature. Only some exact dates and minutiae surrounding some events are recorded differently in the official sources of the DPRK. The role of the Soviet armed forces which had then just recently invaded Manchuria and Korea, and liberated large swaths of land from the Imperial Japanese Army, is one of the major differences between western and official DPRK sources. Independent and neutral researchers from many countries outside of USA, DPRK and Russia have agreed with the fact, that the role which Soviet army played in the liberation⁹ of the peninsula from Japanese occupation was significant. Even Kim Il-Sung himself arrived to the lands which later series of events reformed to be his “kingdom” after the Soviets had liberated the northern parts of the peninsula from the Japanese. According to some sources he himself, or he as the most suitable for the Soviets out of many potential persons, rose to

6 http://www.san-shin.org/Dan-gun_Myth.html accessed on 20th of october, 2015. Also: Discussion and a quick Korean history lecture with Park, N. ethnic Korean person with some knowledge on the subject of the creation myth of Korean legends.

7 Mt. Paektu in Korean means approximately something like: "Heavenly Mountain"

8 For example, some imagery on <http://www.korea-dpr.com/> (accessed on 30th october 2015)

9 Many might call this as the Soviet Occupation, but for the purpose of clarity, I have left the term "liberation" here, because it is constantly used in the original source materials, and North Koreans themselves considered it to be a "true liberation" of their nation from the Japanese military regime.

the leading position inside the ranks of local communist politicians. In any case, soon after Kim Il-Sung had a grasp of power he immediately started to put through his own plans of developing northern parts of the Korean peninsula into a socialist state.¹⁰¹¹

During the same 15 year long era, some other equally important events happened in the history of the DPRK, which have also had some major and minor effects in the forming of the cult of personality around Kim Il-Sung. The Korean war was fought between 1950 and 1953, but the war and its many events are excluded from this study, as they have already been very extensively studied even by persons with first hand experiences from the battlefields of the war. However, the changes the war brought to the field of official propaganda, and the official image of Kim Il-Sung as a leader of the nation post-war are included. These are very interesting events to be unravelled, even though from the original sources that are available for this research, many speeches and essays written by Kim Il-Sung are missing.¹² The similarities between Stalin and Kim Il-Sung come first and foremost into ones mind when reading the original source materials from this period, and they are later addressed more thoroughly in this paper. After the war and in another speeches, letters, books and essays however, the official state propaganda works and Kim Il-Sung himself have praised and referred to speeches and letters supposedly made during the war, so many valuable noteworthy texts are still available for study. Based on what is available through the original sources, the war was quickly put in place as some kind of a myth of national construction and perseverance in the face of almost certain doom, and it served to solidify and unify the official image of the DPRK, and did even more good to the image of Kim Il-Sung as an invincible and honoured statesman. The image of Kim il-Sung as a close and “humane” leader who understands his people better than anyone else was also encouraged, as he himself also wanted to be seen as the common father or grandfather of every korean worker and party member in existence.¹³

In the year 1956 the DPRK initialized, under the leadership of Kim Il-Sung, the later very well known *Chollima*-initiative. The *Chollima* was supposed to increase industrial output and agricultural efficiency across all fields of industry, everywhere in the DPRK, compared to the levels

10 Suh 1988 pages 45-100

11 Kunze, Vogler et al 2013 pages 93-109

12 It is truly a sad thing, that even though the University of Jyväskylä was the number one in the list of "student radical saturation" in universities in Finland during the era of flirting with socialism, and even outright communism and maoism 1970s, most of the socialist material has already as of 2015 been recycled or sold away at second hand auctions organized by the university library on a yearly or bi-yearly basis. During the 1980s, the University did receive a substantial amount of books written by Kim il-Sung as a donation from the embassy of the DPRK. Some of these still remained in the storage library as of 2017.

13 Selected Works II, Pyongyang 1971, passim.

of early 1950s. This project was most likely the brain child of Kim Il-Sung himself, although, in many later official sources, the role of Kim Il-Sung has even been outright expunged away from existence. In the end, the results achieved in the *Chollima* were very much less than optimal. During the *Chollima* the country also took a change from your typical run-of-the-mill socialist planned economy, towards a militaristic and isolationist hermit state centered around a cult of personality and eternal worship of its leader. Interestingly, the role of Marxism remained strong and even grew stronger than in the Soviet Union after the *Chollima*-initiative was officially over.¹⁴ Later on, the role of Marxism gave way to the cult of personality more openly, but this happened sometime in the 1970s and in the 1980s, so these events, however interesting they might be, are generally speaking out of the scope of this study. In 2009 however, any and all references to marxism have been removed from the official constitution of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.¹⁵¹⁶ This leaves even more questions hanging unanswered in mid-air, more so than anything before, and only amounts to giving more construction materials to the mystified and strange image the country has been given in the mass media after the end of the famine and the change of its leader in the 1990s.

When the DPRK entered the 1960s, Kim Il-Sung had already made his position as the undisputable leader of the Peoples Republic well known. He had cleansed the Korean Workers Party from “undesirable political elements” and diplomatically alienated his country from both the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China. Although material support remained modest in the name of socialist unity, the level of military and diplomatical assistance from China and the USSR dropped to zero after the late 1950s. During the late 1950s and early 1960s Kim Il-Sung also began to build his own group of socialist friends between himself and other socialist, or socialist-aligned african strongmen, guerilla leaders and some heads of state around the globe.¹⁷ Through these changes of political environment one could say that the cult of personality of Kim Il-Sung had come to maturation. No longer did Kim Il-Sung need the Soviet army or the massive Chinese volunteer forces, or diplomatic pressure from the “greater benefactors” to make a point in the global table of world politics.

14 For example: Lankov 2005, Hokkanen 2013, Suh 1988

15 The Constitution of the DPRK 1972. Sanan tie 1972.

16 Myers 2010 pages 55-56

17 Suh 1988 pages 159-209, 209-287

1.2 The research question and the original sources

The topic of this study is to find out, what common and different means of influence, ways of speech and rhetoric etc did Kim Il-Sung use when compared to other dictatorial regimes and dictators throughout the 20th century. The emphasis is on a certain few of dictators, who gathered a court around themselves and made sure they had a lasting cult of personality surrounding them until the end of their lives. Most often he is going to be compared to two very well known dictators mostly active in the years slightly before him, Adolf Hitler and Josif Stalin. In addition to these two though, also some other minor dictators offer a reference point for the research. All of these dictators who are used as a reference material have, according to their own official propaganda and personality cults, done great deeds, engaged in political purges and actions similar in scale and scope as Kim Il-Sung himself. The comparative study is limited wholly to context in published research literature, and in this paper, no original sources from aforementioned dictators are utilized. These imagined and coloured acts performed by said dictators and Kim Il-Sung himself are to be taken with a grain of salt of course, but they offer an interesting way of observing the cult of personality, and the use of propaganda in totalitarian regimes all across the world. Especially Hitler and Stalin are used in this research as equals to be compared in context with Kim Il-Sung. Both of these men created a massive cult of personality around themselves, Hitler with his personal influence, and Stalin supposedly very unwillingly, finally bending to the will and the pleading of his court and highest advisors, and the “great soviet people” itself. In many ways, both the cults of Hitler and Stalin also acted as an makeshift religion during the war years and before them, and in Stalin's case, also after the war. Several independent sources also point out, that the Kim dynasty that took the reign from late Kim Il-Sung after his death in 1994, has read its history rather well, and has since the 1980s used many of the means of influencing the people and political dissidents found from the textbook examples of Stalinist and Nazi German propaganda and persuasion. Kim Jong-Il has been said to have been an avid reader, and very knowledgeable of both *Mein Kampf* and the several Russian and western biographies of Josif Stalin.¹⁸ These same kinds of elements of supposedly spontaneous and voluntary leader worship, cult of personality, and deifying the national leaders as with Hitler and Stalin in their respective countries, is clearly seen in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, where the great public often times, at least officially, consider the great leaders who have now passed on, as something similar to God and his son baby Christ.¹⁹

18 For example: Hokkanen 2013 passim and Suh 1988 passim

19 For example: Myers 2010

The original sources of this work are, as previously described, the collected writings of Kim Il-Sung and some official biographies written by anonymous or hard to track²⁰ party approved historians and notable academics, and an autobiography supposedly written by the man himself. These original sources are nothing else, but pure propaganda. All texts and information relating to actual history, social and political science, pictures and otherwise, must be subjected to heavy source criticism, as we have no way of ever exactly knowing who, when and under what orders actually wrote the heavily propagandistic text.²¹ This information, highly saturated with propaganda and falsified records, is nevertheless an important source for the study of the development of the cult of personality in the DPRK. Both Kim Il-Sung and his son who took power after him, the late Kim Jong-Il have always been presented as avid readers and writers in the official state propaganda of the Peoples Republic. In addition to their capabilities as voracious readers and super-productive writers of literature, both of them have, according to the official state propaganda, written and produced a massive number of stage plays, written poems, song lyrics, movie scripts and so on. Their abilities as writers of all material has been praised in official propaganda as unparalleled in history or myth, both at home and abroad. Due to this, even before starting any kind of serious research on the subject, the question of authorship comes to mind first. It is highly unlikely, that either Kim Il-Sung or his son Kim Jong-Il wrote all of the material attributed to them in such a short period of time that was schedule wise possible for them. They were constantly touring the country and working as advisors to the workers, farmers and academia in many places in a short period of time, so it seems rather impossible to keep up writing so much material at the same time. It is therefore most likely but probably perpetually unconfirmed, that a collective of hard working mid-level bureaucrats and party members from the propaganda department were behind many of the speeches and essays purportedly written by Kim Il-Sung. Through this research, the question of authorship remains unsolved, and it is not actually even a factual part of this research, as all of the original sources are state authored propaganda anyway, and as such, completely acceptable as original sources about Kim Il-Sung and the Peoples Republic, regardless of their actual, now possibly long gone authors. Due to the availability of English and Finnish language translations of the original, supposedly korean language material as original sources, not each and every book supposed to be written about Kim Il-Sung or written by Kim Il-Sung himself is available for use.

20 Most likely these men or women have been purged from the system for one reason or another and perished in the work camps or were executed sometime between the 1960s and 1990s. There is also a chance that they are completely fictitious persons, made up by the propaganda machine to act as the authors of the respective books, though.

21 Welch 2014 3-18, On the nature of propaganda in the past and the modern world

Potential original source material exists in many formats as countless of small books, huge multi-part books, as electronic material in the official website of the Peoples Republic, and so on. Nevertheless, due to the constant, almost daily changing political situation of the DPRK from 2015 onwards, when this thesis was started to be written by the present author, when each and every day seems to bring something totally new to the news outlets of the mainstream media from the mysterious “hermit kingdom”, many of the online sources for original sources are unreliable and subject to change in a short period of time. Also the problem of discarded material is an actual one. During the post-soviet era of the 1990s, many Finnish storage libraries, although the country was never under the direct military occupation or direct soviet influence as many other unfortunate ones were, systematically destroyed or sold away many socialist and communist themed pieces of literature as a cost and space saving measure. Thus many of the “holy books” of the student radical movements of 20 or 30 years past were silently expunged even from storage facilities, as no one had any direct need for them for the foreseeable future.

1.3 The methods of research and methodology

The original source material used in this research is primarily studied through propaganda analysis, based on the original sources and examined with the aid of various ideas by known historians of conceptual and political thought. On the side of methodology, many ideas from Reinhardt Koselleck and Quentin Skinner are utilized. The use of these have a point in this study, as cult of personality can be seen both as a phenomenon detached from a mere mortal human being, but also, it could be seen as an idea strongly dependent on the personal attributes and charisma of the deified person in question. In addition to this, the theories provide us a good set of guidelines for the analysis of past political discourse. These personal attributes by the person in the centre of the cult act as a kind of a fuel for the fire, that eventually forges the cult of personality around them. If Skinners ideas are used as a main argument, it can be said that each and every dictator is also the most important corner stone and the *primus motor* for ones ship of state. On the other hand, if Koselleck is to be used as a basis for the research, a researcher could throw out the nowadays very accurate question if equally cruel and totalitarian system with similar cult of personality could also exist under someone who as a person is totally different from the original dictator. This research is aiming to go for an expedition to find some answers from the wild jungle of the original source materials. In addition to the original source materials, some published research from other totalitarian dictators is

also used as a source material. The ideas of Max Weber and his view of politics and power give a small subconscious influence on the work, as some of his classical writings have been in many cases mandatory or optional reading for students studying political science between 2011 and 2015 in the University of Jyväskylä. These “Weberisms” are most likely to concentrate on parts ruminating about the use of propaganda and power in a totalitarian dictatorship, and their effects on the people thoroughly indoctrinated by the cult of personality forming around the ruler of the country.²² In addition to these, a noted Finnish academic of political history from the University of Turku, Jorma Kalela, has also been an influence on the methodological side of things. His old, but still very useful book from 1972²³ still gives some useful advice for the study of a dictatorship that could be said to have permanently been stuck to the 1960s or 1970s.²⁴ As the observation of the cult of personality encompasses both the fields of history and political science, and to some extent, the philosophy of power and possibly even theology, Kalela’s notion about the differences between history and other “neighbouring sciences” is not a qualitative one, as all can objectively study same phenomenon, but rather a difference in scale of the same “science.”, so to say.²⁵

From the world of published research literature, this research is going to use some old and new books, centering on dictatorships and dictators themselves. These books and their subjects are used as a tool providing comparative perspective between the regime and image of Kim Il-Sung and the other respective dictators. Most of them have proved to be very useful when looking for ways and means of propaganda to influence people and to compare how cults of personality are formed and upheld around the world in different dictatorships through the 20th century. Even some helpful similarities between photographs, how people, leaders and potential monuments or buildings are placed in them, can be found just by looking pictures of dictators and comparing them with pictures taken or edited with Kim Il-Sung as their centrepiece and printed to the pages of the original source materials. The most helpful of these books have been Dae-Sook Suh's *Kim Il-Sung: The North Korean Leader* from University of Columbia press, 1988 and *The Stalin Cult: A study in the alchemy of power* by Jan Plamper and Yale University press from 2012. Especially the book by Jan Plamper has been very helpful in giving this research paper some guideline on how to present

22 For Example: Weber, Max: *Tiede ja politiikka: Kutsumus ja ammatti Vastapaino* 2009 (Original book(s): *Wissenschaft als Beruf* 1917, *Politik als Beruf* 1919)

23 Kalela, Jorma *Historian tutkimusprosessi Gaudeamus* 1972. For readers from the Anglosphere or otherwise not fluent in the Finnish language, some of the ideas represented by him can be found from the book "Making History - The Historian and Uses of the Past", Palgrave MacMillan, 2012

24 See for example: *The Vice Guide to North Korea* (YouTube), or *The Land Of Whispers* (YouTube) where this point is elaborated by non-mainstream media reporters from Canada, UK and USA, who could be considered to be more reliable and neutral on the subject than reporters from more established media outlets.

25 Kalela 1972 p 39

findings and compare them to already published literature about cults of personality and leaders of various socialist countries. *The Stalin Cult* is definitely something one could consider useful to read, if one is in any way interested in the subject of this research in a more wider scale. In addition to these books, the small but informative collection of dictators found from the book *Oh Du, geliebter Führer – Personenkult im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert* by Thomas Kunze and Thomas Vogel and the Christoph Links Verlag has been very helpful. From the pages of this book one can find an assortment of dictators through all continents and times through the 20th century, and it is truly a shame that this book has not been as of the time of writing, translated into English. Again, as with Plampers book about Stalin, this book by Kunze & Vogel is very helpful to a reader proficient enough in German, who would like to know more about various cults of personality and take step deeper inside for him or herself into the world of dictatorship studies. Ian Kershaw's book *The Hitler Myth* contributes at least some minutiae to this thesis. As it is that Hitler, along Josif Stalin was one of the first great leaders who formed a popular cult around themselves, the usage of Kershaw as a reference along Plamper is obvious and justified. From the more theoretical and general side of research literature, three major works have given considerable amount of help to the research. The first one is the ageless classic of totalitarian and dictatorship study, Hannah Arendt's well known book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* from 1951 is contributing many useful ideas and perspectives to this study. The ideas and perspectives by Arendt are still capable of holding water and staying afloat in the harsh sea of totalitarian thought and dictatorship research, and are therefore useful for this research paper, on which to build on more material from other research during the writing process. Arendt was one of the first researchers active in the field after WW2, and was among the researchers popularizing the concept of individual atomization of subjects under the elite or a strong ruler, an argument today used by thinkers on both the radical left and the radical right, when criticizing among other things, modern consumer based society.

As the material written by Arendt eventually indulges into very professional and science-specific matters, the version utilized in this research is the Finnish edition of the book from the year 2013 by publisher Vastapaino I sincerely hope that any potential readers of the study, regardless of their political or ideological orientation, will understand this choice of author and book, mainly done for reasons explained in this introduction just a few more lines below this. The second one of these books which is, as of the time of writing of this introduction, unfortunately only available in Finnish and Italian is *Fasism in lumous*²⁶ by the Finnish author and well known researcher of fascism Tarmo

26 Available (partially) in Italian as *LA TENTAZIONE FASCISTA* edited by Settimo Sigillo, ISBN 9788861481626, very recently (as of late October 2015) published. According to the original book itself, the rights have also been

Kunnas. This book is a comprehensive study on fascism in Europe during the inter-bellum era, and gives some additional light on the cult of personality in the DPRK, especially when combined with the results suggested by Myers (2010 and 2015) and the first hand evidence gathered for example, by Hokkanen (2013) and others, while visiting the DPRK or living there for considerable periods of time. As is the case with many of the defectors later turned into authors, or people involuntarily kidnapped to the DPRK like the actor-director couple described in the work of Fischer (2015)²⁷. Many of these sources have, in addition to Myers, described similarities between the modern DPRK and its fondness of military parades and the fascist propaganda-show often seen in historical sources considering National Socialist Germany, Francoist Spain, or Italy under Mussolini. The third of these important theoretical and general research books is the well known *Black Book of Communism* from Stephane Courtois et. al., published in the 1990s. The book contains numerous helpful insights on communist countries and their various political machinations in the 20th century, not unlike the previously mentioned book by Kunze & Vogel et. al. Instead of dictators and their personalities, the book by Courtois concentrates more on the general work of the governments under communist organization during the era, and highlights many of the more sinister developments in these countries during the dark 20th century. These include the following type of cases from various countries: Purges of political dissidents, industrial reorganization projects that ended up in massive failures not totally unlike the previously mentioned Chollima-initiative, and even outright genocide of unwanted minorities or religious groups, and the like²⁸. Through Courtois' work, the differences and similarities of Kim Il-Sung cult between other communist types of governance can be rather easily analyzed to some extent, and many valuable pieces of information can be used in the process of conducting this research. It must also be kept in mind however, that Courtois and his book are also a controversial subject, as is Arendt. Both of these books have their adoring fans and fierce haters in the current political climate of the world, and the ideas presented in both should be taken with a grain of salt, and viewed in the light of all the other sources and the original sources themselves, too.

Several other books have also been used as a source material for this paper, and countless number of both academic literature, online material, speculative fiction, classical literature and prose have of course given some form and colour on the writing style this paper is written in. As English is not

sold to France, but the author of this study has only been able to find evidence about a partial translation in the form of "Céline, Drieu, Brasillach et la tentation fasciste" published by Editions de L'Homme Libre in 2005.

27 Fischer, Paul *Rakastettu johtaja ylpeänä esittää* original title: *A Kim Jong-Il production* 2015 Atena/Paul Fischer

28 See for example: Courtois (1997/2001) pages 612-718 (the chapter about North Korea and other Asian socialist regimes in general, in French and English editions page numbers may most likely vary)

my first language, but instead, something I learned through the internet and television in the mid 1990s and onwards, some amount of comparisons, figures of speech and grammar elements might seem a bit odd for native readers from the anglo-sphere, or to people with academic background from other parts of Europe or even the Korean peninsula in the 2010s, 2020s or beyond. Regardless of how well this research paper would be through read and spell checked, some odds and ends might still end up in the final form of the paper. Most of these can be explained through cultural, chronological and memetic differences between the writer and the reader, which are not so easily removed by spell check and proof-reading. I hope the potential reader of this research will keep all this in his or her mind when reading this paper.

1.4 The targets and objective

This masters thesis is intending to contribute to the academic discussion surrounding cults of personality, the study of totalitarian regimes, and the study of Korean history in general. It might also delve in to the fields of political science, and even contain useful information for the occasional theologian or sociologist, who might desire to research cults of personality and compare them with aggressively missionary sub-sects of messianic beliefs and some other, very media-visible or vocal religious cults. This study is not an attempt to fit purely in to the field of history, nor political science. It is something that combines all of these elements, while trying to find out some small and previously unnoticed parts previously not well known or completely unknown from the cult of personality surrounding Kim Il-Sung.

The research surrounding somehow defined “great persons” and the study of great leaders in history has also been out of fashion in the sphere of historical sciences for a while. Latest developments from circa 2014 onwards though, seem to suggest, that the age of political strongmen and venerated and deified leaders is far from over in the 2010s. One could even say it has grown more important now than it has been before, due to the modern communications technology making the process of cult-creation and the upkeep of personal image more challenging and important. Even the democratically elected leaders of the West have to keep up some kind of an appearance in the social media like Twitter, Facebook, Et cetera to be acknowledged as “acceptable” to the common voting man or woman. Many democratically elected leaders keep up court in the vein of Stalin or other previous dictators, and gather admirers, not unlike Hitler did in his time. These people include, for example the current prime minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, and the current president of the

United States Donald Trump. The sabre-rattling between Russia led by the president Vladimir Putin and the “fuzzily defined” West²⁹, the political and military situation in Syria under Bashar al-Assad, another strongman and a cult figure, from the year 2011 onwards and the Middle-East in general, and the Russo-Ukrainian which begun in 2014 have probably shown this to the general reader. This research paper is therefore also a small attempt to open up this line of research again, after a hiatus of twenty-something years in the general academic world, hidden in the metaphorical cardboard box in the far corners of the attics and mildewed cellars of various universities, old and new, across the world. It is not a major undertaking, as it is concentrated on a single set of events almost 60 years ago on the other side of the world as seen from the place where the research and study effort is being conducted. It will try to utilize old information and research material from the age of the first Cold War, to give us some general view of history into a small part of the world we live in, so we might learn from it for the future.

Also, in the words of Swedish historian and member of the Swedish Royal Academy 2009-2015 Peter Englund, as he wrote in his book about the first world war and on the subject of propaganda and the cyclical aspects of history and the human behaviour guiding it forward: “Sometimes, paradoxically, the hypermodern is a return to the past”³⁰ And as if to remind us why the research of cause-and-effect in history and propaganda, and the research of propaganda itself is important: “When causes are vague and goals uncertain... it becomes necessary to fall back on the bloated and honeyed words of propaganda.”³¹ These two quotes describe the situation, and the reasons that led to it in the first place, in the Western front of world war one almost to the day 100 years ago, in late 1915 and 1916. During the time when this introduction is being written in october-november 2015, the message of these quotes suddenly seems to be very current and modern.

2. Background and history: How Kim Il Sung stepped in to the limelight

In this chapter, the reader is provided with some essential and useful background information about the various reasons and cause-effect relations, which allowed the rise to power for Kim Il-Sung and

29 In general, many countries now being called "West" by Russia have long been associated with the 1st Cold War era "East" in the general minds of Anglo-American and European people. For example: The Ukraine, Poland and to some extent, Hungary, former Yugoslavia and the Baltics.

30 Englund, Peter: *The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of World War One*. 2011 pages 162-163

31 Englund, Peter: *The Beauty and the Sorrow: An Intimate History of World War One*. 2011 direct quote

the various socialist and communist elements in the northern parts of Korean peninsula. All this happened between the mid-to-late 1930s and 1946. In a further sub-chapter, I will also introduce some events further back in the history of Korea, which have influenced the Korean peninsula and the world in which Kim Il-Sung and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea existed during the 1940s and beyond. This is necessary so that some digressing into bigger discourses in the past, small nuances, comparisons to historical situations and little things that are involved in the official propaganda³², and for example, the large amount of anti-Japanese and anti-American sentiment³³ can be put into a perspective as a part of a a more longer lasting chain of effects and events in history.

The main purpose of this chapter is to give the reader some background information on these historical events tied to the issues and events in the Korean peninsula during the mid 1940s, and to give some additional background information about Kim Il-Sung himself. The events described by official state propaganda are also mirrored with the known actual events that took place around this time. Although the analysis of propaganda is carried more thoroughly in chapters 3 and 4, this chapter also functions as an entryway to the further chapters, along with its informative contents, tying the history of Korea with the events of 1945-1960 into a somewhat understandable package.

In order to understand the situation and what was going on in the northern parts of the Korean peninsula in general, it might be a very good idea to open up some different events for the modern reader, which were in very recent history and in personal memories of the people involved in the current events from the viewpoint of 1946. Kim Il Sung rose to power *de facto* in 1945³⁴, with aid from the Soviet armed forces, and finally in August of 1948, he officially took the powers of a supreme leader after winning in the recently organized elections. The elections, their level and methods of democracy and the results can however be cast into doubt in the light of western research.³⁵

The important events and themes which relate to this masters thesis and are thus also included in this chapter are, for example, the solidifying of the power structure in the north, the selection of Kim Il-Sung as the supreme leader, the real and claimed mundane and heroic deeds attributed to the president Kim Il-Sung and their usage in propaganda, and the various deeds he actually made in order to be selected as the leader of the Soviet backed northern interim government. Kim Il-Sung

32 For example: any chapter of Kim Il-Sung 1971 II, or Kim Il-Sung 1980 will contrain these.

33 For example, see the reference before.

34 KTKPI 1972 pages 118-119

35 Hokkanen 2013 page 39

has, at least in official propaganda, painted a very rose tinted picture of how things actually turned out for him during the 1930s and 1940s in several books attributed to him³⁶. Many official books and biographies not written by him also support these claims strongly. In these books Kim Il-Sung is pictured as a tireless warrior and an experienced fighter, who fought against the Japanese and their lackeys hiding in the Chinese countryside and in the valleys and forests surrounding Mt. Paektu, until one day, after defeating the “imperialists”, he came down from the mountains to greet his beloved Korean nation as the supreme leader of the guerillas and therefore, the whole nation³⁷. The reality behind his rise to power is undoubtedly much less epic and dramatic and more mundane³⁸. It is undoubtedly clear that the events described in the propaganda by the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea are exaggerated and vividly coloured stories, influenced by Korean mythology and fairy tales. For example, the role of the Soviet Union and China was almost totally edited away from the official propaganda, although it was certainly very important for Kim Il-Sung and the Korean communists, beginning from the earliest days of their existence. Many times during the latter history of DPRK, especially during the Korean war of 1950-1953, Kim Il-Sung was practically forced to receive military and economical aid from both China and the Soviet Union.³⁹

2.1. The King Comes Down From the Paektu Mountain – How did Kim Il-Sung Arrive to Korea

According to most of the western non-aligned academics and writers who have some expertise about the events of Korea during the 1940s, Kim Il-Sung did not set his foot on the Korean peninsula before the autumn of 1945. He arrived there around september of 1945 to be exact, being sent there by the Soviet armed forces of the Far East. Simply put, he was the most suitable, Soviet-loyal and the most easily available ethnic Korean leader the Soviets could produce from their selection of available Korean military personnel to the newly born Northern occupation zone of the Korean peninsula. His very first military rank on the soil of Korea Kim Il-Sung recieved around the time he was introduced as the new leader of the Korean people. He had arrived to deliver a speech to the people gathered inside a sports stadium, when a translator unfamiliar with military ranks and terminology described him as a “General” to the wider audience present. This did not matter much, as probably most of the people listening his speech would not have known much about military

36 See for example Baik 1968/1973 part I, passim. Or alternatively Kim Il-Sung 1980 passim.

37 Kim Il-Sung 1980 pages 309-326 and KTKPI 1972 pages 85-112

38 Suh 1988 pages 60-66

39 Suh 1988 page 137-139, Chang & Halliday 2005 pages 433-449

ranks of the Soviet Union in any case⁴⁰. In reality, according to some sources, Kim Il-Sung held the rank of a Major in the Soviet armed forces.⁴¹

This event was displayed in the official propaganda as a great triumph which took countless of years to prepare itself, involving all the delicately planned mythos and claimed heroic deeds by the great “General” Kim Il-Sung during his years of guerilla fighting in Korea and China. According to the official propaganda, Kim Il-Sung had set his foot on the Korean soil long before the september of 1945, arriving there sometime around the late 1930s on several raids, and later on around june 1937 as a permanent guerilla fighter, fighting a relentless war of asymmetric attrition warfare against the occupying Japanese forces.⁴² After his arrival to the Korean peninsula from China, Kim Il-Sung was described to have lead his guerillas in several raids against the Japanese soldiers stationed in Korea⁴³. The bright, colourful and unspoiled nature, its flowers and even the very water in a pond next to the indomitable Korean guerilla fighters were very important in this piece of propaganda, in order for Kim Il-Sung to achieve victory from the Japanese soldiers. In addition to this, he was described to have held several political meetings, as presenting political talks to the people and his guerillas in various situations, and also, in a very surprising choice of words for communist propaganda, even to have harnessed some primordial powers from nature and the spirit of the Korean people itself.⁴⁴ As the events described in the propaganda mythos are very vividly and colourfully explained to the reader of these works, it is worth to go back even further in history from the mid 1940s, to see some kind of an image about what actually happened in Korea and to Kim Il-Sung, before he could start to expand his cult of personality and solidify his personal power in the northern parts of the Korean peninsula and in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea even further with the aid of the Soviet military forces.

According to the official propaganda of the state⁴⁵, and according to the most of the contemporary researchers too, Kim Il-Sung was born as Kim Song-ju⁴⁶ in April 12 of 1912, in the northern parts of the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang to be exact.⁴⁷ Both his mother and father were peasants, and living together as a family at the time of his birth. Furthermore, what can be deciphered from the information available from Korean propaganda and abroad, he seems to have been the first child

40 Hokkanen 2013 page 125

41 Suh 1988 pages 55-73

42 Baik 1968/1973 Part I pages 363-382

43 Ibid pages 382-389, 393-406

44 Ibid pages 417-437, 438-450

45 Baik 1968/1973 Part I pages 9-54

46 Suh 1988 page 3

47 Suh 1988 page 3

and also a very wanted child. His family soon moved from Korea to Manchuria, and the future Kim Il-Sung, still named Kim Song-ju followed his parents there. According to Suh, who has gathered the most complete amount of information from the early years of Kim Il-Sung, he attended several schools in the Manchuria region, though he was never a very bright or a well behaved student⁴⁸. According to official propaganda, of course, he was an active pre-communist nationalist fighter for Korean independence from the Japanese rule well from his early years, pouring relentless amounts of work, free time and the very spirit of life into the fight for freedom from the Japanese rule. In the parts where bad school grades are necessary to be described, the propaganda biography simply mentions the overextensive amount of work needed for establishing Korean communism and fighting for the motherland as the main reasons why Kim Il-Sung did not manage to stay in school or to achieve above average grades. Kim Il-Sung was also described among other things, as a voracious reader and a very well learned in the field of theatre and the expressive arts of acting and singing. He was described in the official propaganda to have lead various art and theatre projects in many different phases of his life, his first artistic breakthroughs happening in the very early years of his life in the late 1920s⁴⁹ This would later on reflect very much on the image that was created for his personality in the official propaganda, and how people around him saw Kim Il-Sung even later on during his life.⁵⁰

The 1926 death of his father, mister Kim Hyung Jik, influenced Kim Il-Sung deeply according to both official propaganda and western sources. The importance of fathers in asian cultures notwithstanding, the event probably was very traumatic for a young boy far away from his home. While his father was described as a staunch anti-imperialist and an anti-Japanese fighter of great reputation in the official propaganda⁵¹, the reality could not have been much further from the truth. In fact he had gotten most of his formal education from a school established by American missionaries during the 1800s, and had not really dabbled with any kind of anti-Japanese insurgency in real life, possibly not taking part in the action at all.⁵²

The mother of Kim Il-Sung has also recieved a great and mythical place in the official propaganda text, especially the official biography. Ms. Kang Pan-sok was lifted as a some kind of a common mother for all Koreans in the biography, throughout the entire text.⁵³ She, as her husband and son,

48 Suh 1988 pages 3-11

49 Baik 1968/1973 Part I pages 11-78

50 Fischer 2015 pages xx-xx, Fujimoto 2008/2014 passim

51 Baik 1968/1973 Part I pages 11-78

52 Suh 1988 pages 4-5

53 Baik 1968/1973 Part I passim.

was described as an intelligent, though self learned woman, who had a strong belief in socialist ideals, despite never having heard of them herself. Her socialist thought might be described as some kind of a primordial *Juche bellyfeel* originating from some kind of a mythological Socialist-Juche origin in all Koreans. Her guidance and presence was deemed very important for the young Kim Il-Sung in many parts of his early life. According to the propaganda sources, she worked as a teacher of children at some point of her life and the childhood of Kim Il-Sung.⁵⁴ As with the death of Kim Il-Sung's father in 1926, also the death of “mother dearest” of the whole Korean people was a shock for Kim Il-Sung in the summer of 1932. Her death was described as a very emotional moment, containing many descriptions of her final thoughts and feelings, echoing the national-socialist themed pathos of the Korean propaganda, which we are about to see in much larger numbers in the coming chapters. She is quoted to have said something like this during her final moments according to the official state authorized propaganda:

Just before her death, she is said to have told her attendant, a woman living next door: "...When my son, Sung Joo⁵⁵, visits me after my death, please treat him as I would. But if he visits while the Japanese imperialists remain on Korean territory and before Korean independence is won, please tell him not to move my grave... Without vanity... I can say he'll never come home while the fighting is still on... When the fatherland is independent, you sister, please go and see Mangyungdai⁵⁶ near Pyongyang. It's really a nice place. But for the Japanese aggressors, who would live in this foreign land, always longing for it?..." These words embraced her noble wish and lofty and firm spirit.⁵⁷

Both the father and the mother of Kim Il-Sung have since received official burial grounds and statues to different places inside the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. The statue of his mother is near her place of birth at Chil'ilgol and his father's monument is situated near the area of his father's place of birth, Ponghwari. As they died relatively young, the mother at age 40 and the father at age 32, they could not have provided much for Kim Il-Sung or his siblings during their short and sadness-riddled lives. But when compared to the other Korean people alive during the period of history in question, they were rather normal and uneventful persons to have as parents, and in both good and bad, rather average and normal for a Korean person born in the early years of 20th century.⁵⁸

54 Baik 1968/1973 Part I pages 11-78

55 The name of Kim Il-Sung before the mid 1930s

56 Mangyungdai or Mangyongdae is a hill preserved as a park near Pyongyang. It is reportedly where Kim Il-Sung was born in 1912.

57 Baik 1968/1973 Part I page 35

58 Suh 1988 page 5

As the official propaganda and the claimed personal sources all state to us, Kim Il-Sung therefore started to consolidate his power in the northern parts of the peninsula immediately after his arrival during the autumn of 1945. Already before his victory in the 1948 elections, he was very active in the political sphere of the Korean society.⁵⁹ He kept establishing new communist and socialist organizations to all kinds of different fields of life, often giving fatherly guidance to the people involved in many activities of the Korean society in the northern parts of the peninsula.⁶⁰ According to Suh, this active period must be regarded as somewhat accurate information. There is little reason to suspect, that Kim Il-Sung would not have done anything to forward his own ideology during the period, and many sources discovered by Suh claim that Kim Il-Sung actually was there, organizing many different societies and events for the people under his regime.⁶¹

So all in all, Kim Il-Sung started to consolidate his power between the years 1948 and 1960 very efficiently in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. The official propaganda also gives descriptions how Kim Il-Sung had started to purge the Korean communists from undesired elements during these years. He also took fast actions towards legislature and habits originating from the Japanese colonial period, and this event of legislative reform continued more or less from the mid 1940s all the way until the 1960s and beyond. The strong imagery of opposing elements in the societal structures of Korea and the still looming threat of Japanese or later, American imperialism reigned supreme in the rhetoric of official state propaganda all the way from 1945 onwards.⁶²

In 1946 Kim Il-Sung began the preliminary planning phases for the work, which eventually lead to the introduction of Soviet style five-year plans to the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. This chain of events was briefly disturbed by the Korean war, but from 1953 onwards, he drafted the first three year plan which aimed towards a crash industrialization the Korean nation. Later on during the years, the plans were expanded so that these three year plans turned into five year plans. After finishing the already started three year plan in 1956, the new five year plan was beginning to be implemented. The next plan involved a general plan for boosting the economy, and it was accepted into force in 1957⁶³. Also, in december of 1956, Kim Il-Sung ordered the start of the famous

59 Kim Il-Sung 1980 passim

60 KTKPI 1972 pages 85-122

61 Suh 1988 pages 55-94

62 For example, Kim Il-Sung 1980 pages 301-302, 327-340, 341-350, 351-352. All in all, it is very difficult to find a part from Kim Il-Sungs supposedly personal writings where the elusive enemy of "counter-revolutionary forces", the "American and/or Japanese lackeys" or some other group like this is directly or indirectly blamed for the blight, hardship and struggles which are at the time of writing ravaging in Korea. In these writings a constant theme is also to encourage people to inform about possible adversaries of the regime and give them up for the state to be punished.

63 Suh 1988 page 140

Chollima-initiative. This sociopolitical and economical plan eventually combined with the new five year plan which was implemented in early 1957. The name *Chollima* in Korean means “a horse capable to move a thousand *li*”⁶⁴, which was envisioned as a symbolical description for the movement of the whole nation from poor conditions towards a socialist industrial state in the 1950s and beyond.⁶⁵ Kim Il-Sung personally mentions in his writings during the mid-to-late 1950s that both the five year plan and the Chollima-initiative are going to be an important step for industrialization and the well being of the nation as a whole in the near future.⁶⁶

By the end of the 1950s, Kim Il-Sung had effectively eliminated most of the dissent and solidified his power as the sole leader of the communists in the northern parts of the Korean peninsula. The massive efforts of infrastructure reconstruction and mass indoctrinating of the people took most of the time and resources available to the regime of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. Kim Il-Sung took a lot of time off from other work to perform his grand “whistle stop tours” criss-crossing the nation during these years. He kept encouraging his citizens to work harder and smarter, in order to repair the damages sustained during the Korean war.⁶⁷

The troops of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army and the Soviet observers withdrew from northern parts of the Korean peninsula during this time, approximately by 1958. After these representatives of the foreign powers left his realm, Kim Il-Sung started to function more on the line of the leadership the DPRK was known for before the war. The only major divergence from the status quo ante bellum was that from the last years of the 1950s to mid 1960s, Kim Il-Sung started the political game of power and diplomacy between his regime and a random assortment of third world countries, in order to create his own mini-bloc of socialist-aligned nations alongside Chinese and the Soviet spheres of political and economical influence.⁶⁸ Kim Il-Sung also started a campaign to discredit many Korean-Soviet, Korean-Chinese and ethnically foreign communists and their ideology as unfit for socialism or hostile towards the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. Some of these discredited communists disappeared from the public view, some committed suicide after

64 *Li* or alternatively *Ri*, is an ancient measure for distance which was used in China and Korea during the ancient times. Therefore, a horse which is capable of traveling a thousand *Li* without having to stop is therefore a very hardy and enduring specimen. In the most modern editions of the writings of Sun Tzu, one can find more thorough descriptions about the amount of *Li* converted into modern metrics, etc. The author of this thesis has used the 2005 Finnish language edition by Tietosanoma to determine the meaning of the word *Li*. This was based on a British translation from circa 1960, so one can suggest that many other English language editions contain information about this too.

65 Kim Il-Sung 1971 II page 47

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid pages 40-63, 78-79, 101-117

68 Suh 1988 pages 260-268

falling from Kim Il-Sung's grace, while others were executed by the Kim Il-Sung led government during these years between 1958 and 1960.⁶⁹ Also, according to Andrei Lankov, one of the most respected and published researcher of North Korean issues in the west these days, Kim Il Sung started a major “re-stalinisation” campaign during this time, in unison with the massive purges in the Korean Workers Party and the DPRK society in general⁷⁰. This eventually led to the ideological drift from the more traditional socialist workers republic into a something more closely resembling a “Nationalist Socialist” or Orwellian nightmare dystopia in the DPRK in the coming years, which has continued into this day. However, some other researchers, for example B.R. Myers, do believe that this process aiming towards a “Nationalist Socialist” or a Nazi-Germany inspired totalitarian government in all aspects of state but with additional socialist cake crusting for foreigners, did begin already in the late to mid 1940s.⁷¹ However, more on this matter will be discussed more or less from the surface and in depth from chapter 3 onwards in this work.

When the 1960s began, one can, in the light of these findings, claim that these historical events, discourses and courses of action taken by Kim Il-Sung and his regime led to his rise as the supreme leader of the communist party of Korea and the whole Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea. As mentioned in the last paragraph, the Kim regime started to create a mini bloc from in theory non-aligned, but in practice semi-socialist or openly communist third world nations from the late 1950s to mid 1960s onwards.⁷² In many of these developing countries, as also in the Ceausescu led Romania from the 1960s to 1970s onwards, Kim Il-Sung was regarded as a valuable ally and as one of the greatest foreign friends of said nations. All the rulers had very close-knit political and economical relations with the DPRK regime, and they continued well beyond the scope of this work to 1970s and beyond, some even continue to this day.⁷³ These chains of events on the other hand, opened up some new chapters in the history of Korean peninsula, which would wound up as the leading schisms and unifying factors between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea in the 1970s and 1980s. There events, how ever interesting they might be, are unfortunately left out from this masters thesis, as they serve no additional value to the research of the events that passed between 1945 and early 1960s.⁷⁴

69 Ibid 1988 pages 144-145

70 Lankov 2005 passim

71 Myers 2015 23-105

72 Suh 1988 pages 260-268

73 Kunze et al 2013 pages 72-91, 92-107

74 Oberdorfer 2001 pages 23-26

2.2 Scattered to the four winds – the foreign and outside factors involved in the development of the DPRK and ROK in earlier history

As the earlier chapters point out in many of their respective parts, four bigger outside empires and nations have had a lasting influence on the events in the Korean peninsula, some since times immemorial. Two of these nations have influenced the events since the ancient history, and the two newcomers roughly from the mid 1800s onward. These nations are of course, China, Japan, the United States, and Russia, which later on evolved into Soviet Union. All of these nations influenced the events on the Korean peninsula between 1945-1960 at the same time, but in different ways. Most of all though, during this period of history, the influence to matters both internal and external was mostly coming from the two newcomers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The cold war, which began, depending on who you ask from, in the mid 1940s to late 1940s of course gave these two newcomers a massive boost in the capability and interest to act in the matters of minor countries far away from their heartlands. However, the roots of these interventions lay even further back in the past that one might realize at a first glance. The whole process how Korea was formed began during the ancient times on a land area pressed tightly between two huge nations, the various empires and war-lordships of China and Japan. Alongside these general lines of development, some notable major events have also influenced the development of things on the peninsula in the 1940s more than other events during the 5000 year history of Korea.⁷⁵

Throughout its written history, Korea has had the questionable honour of functioning as the battlefield and invasion ground of the neighbouring mighty empires. Korea has had to withstand hundreds of invasions, which have left scars in both collective psychology and culture of the peninsula during the years, decades and centuries as the march of time went on. For example Oberdorfer (2001) mentions that according to some estimates, at least 900 different invasions by neighbouring empires, tribes or other random sea-faring enemies came to pass on the modern area of the Korean republics during its early history. The most active invaders were the Chinese warlords and empires, who on the other hand were also the party who were the most eager ones to “invade” the country by peaceful means during various parts of their history. Many ancient Korean kings and emperors owed their literacy skills, writing skills and court culture to these peaceful invasions of the past.⁷⁶

75 Oberdorfer 2001 pages 3-8

76 Oberdorfer 2001 pages 3-8

In the years 1894-1895 China and Japan were involved in the Sino-Japanese war. This war was mostly fought in the surrounding areas of the Korean peninsula. The causes of this war were strongly related to the position of Korea and Manchuria in the spheres of colonization and influence between the empire of Japan, the tsardom of Russia and the Chinese empire. Japan had recently finished the Meiji-restoration and its various ripple effects had mostly waned down and stabilized by the 1890s. This restoration also gave the need for Japan to get its own “place in the sun”, and to acquire a real colonial empire. As this war ended in a negotiatory victory, loads of good prestige in the eyes of other great powers and favourable gains for the empire of Japan, they decided not to push their forces too thin and left Korea alone for the following five or so years.⁷⁷

After the Sino-Japanese war of the 1890s, it was the turn of the tsardom of Russia and empire of Japan to go competing in the field of military and naval might between each other. This happened in 1904. The Russo-Japanese war was fought between 1904 and 1905, and during the war Korea got, perhaps as an ill omen for what was to come during the bloody 20th century, to be the plaything of the great powers. Both Russia and Japan negotiated between each other from the division of Korean peninsula and Manchuria, in order to avoid or, later, to stop the war. Before the war, Japan offered Manchuria as a gift to the Russians in order to avoid conflict. If the Russians had accepted this offer, then the war might have been avoided. The tsar never the less said no, as Nicholas II had his eyes on an asian sphere of influence to cover his empire against his various enemies and adversaries. The war eventually ended as a historical failure to Russians, as the Russian fleet at Port Arthur was attacked, the Far East flotilla sailing from Vladivostok, and the Baltic fleet which had sailed all the way from St. Petersburg to join the war was sunk under the waves almost completely in a series of clashes against the Imperial Japanese navy.⁷⁸

The war ended in a peace treaty organized by no one other than Theodore Roosevelt, in the United States. The President of the United States organized these negotiations at his expense in 1905 in New Hampshire, Connecticut, USA. The peace treaty left Korea to the hands of the Japanese all the way until 1945. The peace treaty came in the eleventh hour for Russia, as the war and the dissent it caused among the great Russian public had caused another force to flip pages of history forward in the Russian heartlands. Perhaps, this too was an omen from what was to come, as the Russian revolution of 1905 was later on highly mystified in the Soviet historiography as a prelude to the events of 1917-1920. The Japanese occupied the Korean peninsula after the Imperial Russian armed

77 Riasanovsky 1969 page 444

78 Riasanovsky 1969 pages 444-447

forces left the area and the lands surrounding it. The Korean people felt that they were gruesomely betrayed by the American president and the United States, as Theodore Roosevelt and his peace treaty gave the Japanese the chance to just walk in into Korea and occupy it without any voices against the occupation being heard from the Koreans themselves.⁷⁹⁸⁰

Later on, the Koreans felt that the division of their peninsula during 1945 was just another betrayal from the side of the Americans in 40 years time. The sentiment was rather common along the both sides of the inter-Korean border during the 1940s and before the Korean war broke out. It did just not limit itself to people who were stranded in the northern parts of the peninsula, but could have been defined as common for people everywhere in Korea. There were serious reasons for behind this all though. For example, not a single university professional with knowledge from Korean matters, be it recent or historical, or pre-historical, was heard at all when the plan for the division of the peninsula was made in the 1940s. Neither did Washington listen to any Korean ethnic or cultural organizations, some of which were even active in the USA by circa 1940. Most of these ethnic, academical and cultural societies felt that this was a disgrace towards Korean people and the nation as a whole from the side of the great powers.⁸¹

These events later on made possible the events that followed them, which enabled the Korean anti-Japanese sentiment to develop during the 1900s, the Russian and later Soviet revanchism towards the Japanese, and the US interests towards the Korean peninsula and East-Asia in general. All of this that happened during the first years of the 20th century has an eerie resemblance to things which happened around 40 years later, and therefore, their effect on the collective psyche, national mythology, the view of the world in the eyes of an average Korean can not be belittled by a single bit. They have their place in the collective memory of the Korean people, both in the Republic of Korea and in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea, which gives people on both sides of the inter-Korean border some certain subconscious or conscious reservations towards people and ideology from outside of their zone of personal comfort. So all in all, the role of these events should not be belittled even when studying the events that happened in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea during the 1940s and the 1950s. As it is customary in Asian cultures to show respect towards your elders, and undoubtedly, many elder people were still around and in good to moderate health during the 1950s, who had personally seen the events of 1890s and early 1900s, the weight of those events must have undoubtedly been recognized by Kim Il-Sung himself. Even in his own

79 Ibid

80 Oberdorfer 2001 pages 3-8

81 Oberdorfer 20001 pages 3-8

autobiography, he did stress in many occasions the importance of elders, regardless of their political background or personal history, to him and to the 20 million strong Korean people.⁸² One could throw out into the open a suggestion that Kim Il-Sung might have even seen himself as a hero equal to those countless national heroes and respected elders before him, whose names were on the lips of the Korean people during these conflicts. At least on the leaves of the official propaganda books, the attempt to raise the “General” Kim Il-Sung as an unparalleled hero and a sage brought by his respectable age and deeds, comparable to the heroes before him, is well established.

3. The Cult of Personality and the Father of The Nation

The propaganda machine of the DPRK created the cult of personality for Kim Il-Sung during the establishing years of the governing system in the northern parts of the peninsula. By some accounts, a cult of personality for the leader was already going strong in 1947⁸³. Across all fields, political, economical, and cultural, the size of the cult and the intensity of the propaganda kept growing all the way until 1956, when the coup attempt trying to destabilize the Kim Il-Sung led government was instigated by a small group of soviet born Koreans.⁸⁴ However, by 1956 the state had already grown powerful enough to withstand a coup attempt, and the effort made by the so called coup plotters was not enough, and as the government had trained itself to fight all kinds of real and perceived enemies, as seen in the coming chapter number 4. After this coup attempt, the cult of personality and the government institutions have not come across any real or legitimate threat according to any found sources. Only in the most recent times, have some things happened, which might have an effect on the cult of personality and the state institutions of the DPRK, but these events are out of the context of this thesis.

It can be thus pointed out, that a cult of personality was already existing and expanding in the DPRK from the very early years onwards. The Korean war of 1950-1953 gave some additional chances of creating a true hero mythos for the deeds of Kim Il-Sung, which were continuously utilized in the works of the propaganda writers and Kim Il-Sung himself after 1953.⁸⁵ The stories of the early years were still not as high-flying as the ones discovered in recent times⁸⁶, so there is even

82 Kim Il Sung 1993 parts I-IV passim

83 Martin 2004 p 59

84 Lankov 2005 p 26-59. Martin 2004 p 69-92

85 Martin 2004 p 69-92

86 For example, Hokkanen 2013 mentions the legend of turning pine-cones into grenades and maize kernels into bullets during the 1930s anti-Japanese struggle, a commonly cited story of the heroic deeds of Kim Il-Sung in the

a chance that not unlike Stalin allegedly did in his time, Kim Il-Sung also made many attempts at moderating the most pompous legends about himself during the early years. And at least, according to Martin (2004), this very much was the case, as Kim Il-Sung did indeed curb down the most excessive stories written about him or his guerillas during the 1950s and onwards.⁸⁷

Propaganda is usually considered to be emotionally laden text, with an occasional pieces of factual information put in between the material as a grain of salt for the more curious or intelligent reader. Contrasting the “us” to “them”, glorifying ones own political system and people are the most classical examples of propaganda, probably used since times immemorial in oral communication, and also in written propaganda.⁸⁸ Kim il-Sung and his propaganda ghostwriters were in no way alien to these ideas, and used the classical and Soviet inspired methods of propaganda work very cleverly, applying different methods when needed. Their task was also undoubtedly made easier by the remote location of the newly founded DPRK, which made the country a naturally closed area, compared to, say, Soviet Union. As Welch (2014) points out, the spreading of all kinds of propaganda is much more easier in a closed state than in a more open society.⁸⁹ It is also interesting to note that the German propaganda aims as described by Welch⁹⁰, look eerily similar to the ones Kim il-Sung was aiming in his official texts and official propaganda. B.R. Myers with his two books on the subjects of the connection between German National Socialism and Juche even more enforce this opinion the present author of this thesis has concluded on the basis of the original sources. Just by relying on what Welch has written about the Nazi-German propaganda aims and reading the original propaganda text of the DPRK, on can see a lot of similarities in aims and methods of propaganda and actual political work. If nothing else, this at least gives some credibility to the assumption that Kim il-Sung and his propaganda writers had read a lot about Hitler and the Nazi-German state functions and took the best parts of their system to be utilized in the DPRK, not unlike many other dictators after the second world war.⁹¹ However, the opinion of the present author is that Juche ideology has many similar valued points when compared to to the national-socialist ethos of Nazi-Germany or Imperial Japan and could be viewed as such.

Also, many other earlier masters of propaganda work seem to have inspired either Kim Il-Sung himself or his propaganda writers at working with his cult of personality or the other aspects of the

DPRK during the 2010s

87 Martin 2004 p 11-12 Plamper 2012 p 119-123

88 Welch 2014 p 37

89 Ibid. p 96

90 Ibid. p 97

91 Ibid p 96-109

DPRK propaganda work very much. Among others, the way of utilizing his own image in propaganda is reminiscent of Stalin⁹² and the way how the masses are organized to the party work and perform in the collective ethos of one single party organ for everyone is not wholly dissimilar with the rallies and propaganda events held by the National Socialist party in Germany of the 1930s and beyond. This one common political organ then works as a single body towards an heroic, nearly impossible aim that is waiting to be conquered just around the corner.⁹³ The image of an ideal leader to the Völkisch movement of the 1800s and early National Socialist movement is also very close in style to what Kim Il-Sung became in the late 1950s.⁹⁴ Also of curious note is the fact that the “combat attitude” and many of the narrative styles used by the author of Kim Il-Sung’s autobiographical texts seem similar to a much earlier nationalist leader, who lived on the other side of the world and was active around the same time as Kim Il-Sung was in his youth. The heavy use of battle and military terms and vivid, epic way of explaining how the simplest of things happen in Kim Il-Sung’s autobiography reminds a learned reader to a some extent about the autobiography of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the leader of the Guard of the Archangel Michael, also known as the Iron Guard. This Group was active in the 1920s and 1930s, and their work was translated to many languages during the years before their rather complicated and almost to say, untimely, destruction in Nazi hands in 1941. It is highly possible, that some of the propagandists, fiction writers and screenwriters working under Kim Il-Sung and his propaganda office have also read Codreanu’s autobiography.⁹⁵ The close relations between Romania and the DPRK in the later years of Kim Il-Sung also could be a way how this information carried to the DPRK by the time official propaganda and history about the 1930s and 1950s was widely published. The exact knowledge on how these two autobiographies do have a slight stylistic resemblance, and if there is any connection, is merely a suggestion thrown out by the present author, though. Nevertheless, the breadcrumbs of information are there, for someone to be followed to the potential conclusion of this historical curiosity.

One of the most early important mediums of art for the propaganda made by the DPRK propaganda offices and Kim Il-Sung was the theatre. Kim Il-Sung has been said from early on in his official

92 Plamper 2012 p 29-86

93 Kershaw 2001 p 48-82, Arendt 2013 p 382-397

94 Kershaw 2001 p 106

95 See Kim Il-Sung autobiography "With the Century" and compare it stylistically with "For My Legionnaires" by Codreanu. The stylistic choices in the text are often very similar, and at one point in the latter autobiography, when Codreanu gets thrown into jail, the present author of this thesis had a strong sense of *deja vu*, after having read the early parts of "With the Century" some 5 months earlier. Both paint us a picture of a brave young man fighting against the establishment with the help of a small group of faithful ideological companions.

biography and other propaganda sources, to have been interested in the art of theatre.⁹⁶ He was said to have organized theatre groups already at a young age⁹⁷, along with his actions aiming towards a formation of a communist party, and a communist guerilla army.⁹⁸ In addition to this, the theatre groups Kim Il-Sung has been said to have established, were used as a form of entertainment for the ethnic Koreans around the areas of modern day China where Kim Il-Sung lived during the 1930s, and to serve as spreaders of the communist message among the population. Of course, in the official propaganda, they were often displayed as spontaneous showings of gratitude towards the “General”, as he was called in the biographies and early propaganda.⁹⁹

The Kim Il-Sung cult could be seen as being built on a few major strongpoints. These were, the continuation of traditional mythology and the historical events, like ancient, sometimes mythological strong leaders, like the “son of heaven” mentioned in chapter 2 of this thesis. The second one was a close link to the homeland, through mind and body, as shown by various descriptions of environment and the nature in the official propaganda.¹⁰⁰ The third one was the unique form of political ideology, that in the end, when maturing enough in the mind of Kim Il-Sung and his propaganda institution was released to the wider world under the name of Juche. When linking the Kim Il-Sung cult to the historical narrative of the Korean people, and giving it these supernatural, or even outright “Völkisch”¹⁰¹ connections with the very nature itself, the propagandists undoubtedly won many traditionally oriented rural people to the regime and consolidated the power of Kim Il-Sung as the only and the true leader of the Korean people during the 1940s and the 1950s.

This all led into an interesting combination of using the ancient national mythology as a propaganda tool, or as an integral part of a story where applicable. Also, the importance of nationalist and ethnic collective and individual ethos was highly celebrated among the propaganda aimed for the people. Finally the ideology of Juche was born, which took its preliminary form sometime between 1945 and the early 1960s combined in Kim Il-Sung's official propaganda and the work of the DPRK

96 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 65-78

97 Ibid

98 Ibid

99 Ibid p 189-196

100 See for example Baik 1968/1973 p 363-382, a very emotional representation how Kim Il-Sung set his foot on the Korean soil for the first time in many years.

101 Völkisch is a name for a German populist movement active in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. It had a quasi-romantic and esoteric view of national mythology of the German nation. Ian Kershaw in his book “The Hitler Myth” spends some time in describing the movement during the time before the rise of the National Socialists in the 1930s. The similarities between the Völkisch movement and the “socialist nationalism” ideology of Juche gives the present author the idea to use this term in quotation marks, when describing the style and ethos of some propagandic texts.

propagandists and government institutions. The birth of Juche influenced the livelihoods of everyone in the northern parts of the Korean peninsula continuously from circa 1945 until the early 1960s, and continues to do so to this day. Some scholars, like Andrei Lankov, date the birth of Juche ideology to the years after 1956¹⁰², but Myers, on the other hand, insists that the ideology was constantly developed through the era of 1945-1956, and was just established more firmly after the reconstruction in the aftermath of the Korean War made it possible.¹⁰³ One must keep in mind however, that in many asian revolutionary governments that have sprung up since the 1940s, nationalist ethos has had no trouble at all in coexisting with imported western socialism or communism. The quasi-nationalist synthesis of a nationalist mythos narrative and the socialist Marxist-Leninist ideology has influenced a lot of countries in asia, namely Cambodia as an example¹⁰⁴, along with the DPRK.¹⁰⁵ It was just in the DPRK, however, where this style of socialist nationalist government gained the most power over the individual during the years and created one of the most unique forms of government from these starting points. Other countries more or less followed submissively in vein of China or the USSR in the tenets of communism.

In the following subchapters, the thesis tries to shed some light into the parts of more nationalist inspired propagandistic deeds of Kim Il-Sung as written by himself or the “armies of screenwriters” cited by the former leader of the propaganda institution, Hwang Jang-yop, who has since been credited by some scholars as one of the persons leading the institutions designing the Juche ideology during the years 1945-1960 and beyond. Both the ideology of Juche and remarks made about it in the official propaganda, and the more general nationalistic ethos and imagery will be analyzed in some form. Mr Hwang Jang-yop defected from the DPRK in 1997, and has since given many interviews, written statements and other tidbits of information about the history of the DPRK during the 1950s to 1970s. Bradley K. Martin among others, has discussed about his endeavours in their books.¹⁰⁶ Along with the official propaganda, the two books written by Myers in 2010 and 2015 give an interesting insight, that has guided the author of this thesis on the journey of studying the phenomenon of propaganda and its nationalist dimensions in the DPRK alongside the Juche ideology. The more the propaganda itself is analyzed and read through, the more it seems that Myers has a valid point in his two books, which both claim the DPRK government being more ideologically close to Japanese fascism or National-Socialist ideology. The way the leader is

102 Lankov 2005 p 1-25

103 Myers 2015 p 45-61

104 Courtois et al 1997/2001 p 647-712

105 Myers 2010 p 74-160

106 Martin 2004 p 12

presented in the propaganda, and how different words and phrasing is used in the official propaganda, point towards this assumption more than once. The author does indeed concur with Myers on many points.

3.1 Nationalist and Nature Imagery In the Official Propaganda

It is almost needless to point out, after one has got himself or herself acquainted with the official propaganda of the DPRK, that the many examples of stories from the past, be it distant or more recent, heavily depend on imaging either combat rhetoric or the wonders of the Korean nature to the readers. Many are the stories, where beautiful scenery, certain types of flowers¹⁰⁷ or trees¹⁰⁸, or sometimes even the weather is discussed in very high detail¹⁰⁹, when derailing away from the usual Marxist-Leninist or pseudo socialist nationalism ethos present in the propaganda stories.

Sometimes, even certain individual plants or nature phenomenons gain more importance during the stories than the presence of a fierce battle or a guerilla operation led by the ever present Kim Il-Sung. And in the midst of an another story, he arrives into a battle against the Japanese. When he does so, a new star is born on the milky way, shining brightly into the night sky during Kim il-Sung's arrival to the battlefield. After the birth of this new star, Kim il-Sung naturally lead his troops to the battle singlehandedly, and caused so much disarray in the Japanese local forces, that he got them to fight against their own troops, in the darkness of the night. His troops, so impressed from all this action, gave him the nickname "The Heavenly General" from that day on, and the nickname spread amongst the people of Manchuria after this event.¹¹⁰

Also, the return to the Korean peninsula from a long campaign of guerilla warfare in Manchuria during the 1930s, as represented by the official propaganda, now known to be mostly falsified, is presented as a mythical, mystical and a magical moment.¹¹¹ As briefly stated in the introduction to this chapter, the soldiers and Kim il-Sung himself felt the situation was very important, and had even a supernatural element to it. At least the biographical author tends to describe the event with various superlatives, and to imply, that this was the moment all of the guerillas had been waiting for. The event did not lack in any kind of "Urgemeinschaft"¹¹² or motherland-fatherland pathos, as can

107 Baik Part I 1968/1973 p 438-450

108 Ibid p 363-382

109 Ibid 1968/1973 p 417-437

110 Ibid p 302-312

111 Ibid p 363-382

112 The word "Urgemeinschaft" means something like "the beginning society" when freely translated. In this context, the present author uses it as a quasi-nazi term for the origin of the DPRK party and the racial-nationalist ideology, as the birth of the personal ideology of Kim il-Sung was in process during the 1930s, before his rise as the leader of the DPRK in 1945.

be seen in this quote:

“On June 2, this expeditionary force arrived, as scheduled, in a village located at the entrance to Erhshih-santaokou and took one night’s rest, and the following morning they climbed Koosigol Hill from where they could command, for the first time, a view of the mountains and rivers of the fatherland. The blue waters of the Amrok River, which has never ceased to flow from Lake Chunji on Mt. Baikdoo¹¹³ since the very beginning of time, was seen meandering under their feet, and as far as the eye could reach, lay the undulating mountains high and low.

This was the dear fatherland they had long waited to see – in their hard-pressed marches through endlessly raging blizzards, amidst heavy fighting, in their short sleep near a campfire built under the starry canopy of a foreign sky. Facing this inspiring view of the fatherland, the troops were too deeply moved to utter a word.”¹¹⁴

Further on on the same pages, even more emotional, even outright Völkisch representation for the return to the dear motherland/fatherland is represented. The text echoes out as a rhetorically rich piece, using the same kind of imagery that even Heidegger¹¹⁵ would have been acquainted with:

“It was June 4.

Their beloved mountains and rivers were bathed in the morning light, a sight that made them happier than ever. Even the commonplace scene of Korean pines, clustering on a cliff, appeared to them like a landscape, incomparably beautiful enough to gladden their hearts, just because it was part of their fatherland. Overcome by emotion, some rolled about on the grass while others took handfuls of earth and pressed their cheeks to it.

The cheeks of the General¹¹⁶ flushed with rising blood. As if unable to repress his surging emotion, he shifted his burning eyes from the streets of Bocheon spreading below towards the distant mountains and rivers dimly floating in the mist.

Mother Earth that had inspired him with sublime thoughts and nurtured his intellect and courage, that had always smiled and sung to him through many a day of hard fighting over land and water – that very Mother Earth was now shackled by the invisible chains of the enemy and was suffering, moaning and crying for help. The General, with the great task of national salvation on his shoulders, could not look her in the face nor could he save the unfortunate fatherland unless and until he knocked out the aggressors and executioners.”¹¹⁷

In the light of these two quotations, it is interesting to see, how great an element all the nationalistic and nature-centered imageries are in Kim il-Sung’s speeches and writings about him in general.

These two quotations are by no means the only ones containing such imagery, on the contrary, these

113 Mt. Paektu, as written by Baik Bong in ca. 1968 (author's note)

114 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 367-368

115 Kunnas 2013 p 423-430 (parts about Heidegger)

116 Kim il-Sung, as named in the biography (author's note)

117 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 368-369

two are just among the most obvious examples of the quasi socialist-nationalist ethos Kim il-Sung and his propagandists aim to relay to the readers through the official propaganda. An interesting note about these two quotations is that not a single word about class struggle, socialism or the Marxist-Leninist movement is uttered on the spot of seeing the dearly beloved home for the first time in decades. The descriptions are just of the nature inspired and ancient semi-mythological type. Complete socialism, when reached in the distant future of Marxist-Leninist societies, aims to be completely class free, but at this point, it is highly unlikely, that Kim il-Sung had really achieved much in the way of creating a utopian socialist society amongst his guerillas, or to the whole of Korea.¹¹⁸ And if the case with the biography is such, that the authors or Kim il-Sung had decided that the reading populace of the 1960s exists, or will soon exist, in a classless utopian society, the biography is then guilty of a rather unhistorical act of presentism, as in omitting historical points, which might not have been the idea of Kim il-Sung at all, even if it looks obvious to the general western reader, regardless of ones personal political orientation, or a lack of one.

Another interesting fact is that the mythos surrounding the Paektu mountain, along with the guerilla activities committed in the environment around the mountainous area, seems to have been created almost overnight. According to the research done by Myers, it was practically done overnight after the government of the DPRK had started the propaganda writing process sometime around 1945. Before this, the Paektu mountain was known only in the ancient legends as the home of the sky king, and other areas of Korean peninsula had allegedly more weight on the mythos scale of things to the Korean people in general. What was notable in the Paektu mythos was that for the most part, the early propagandists were freshly immigrated or hastily rehabilitated former Japanese-Korean artists and writers. Thus, they had received their education in the traditionalist-militarist oriented Imperial Japan, and behaved accordingly.¹¹⁹

Also of note is the fact, that along with tactically omitting Marxist-Leninist rhetoric in many places, the official propaganda does not ever directly mention anything about the working class after the mid-to-late 1940s, when Kim il-Sung still firmly backed the Soviet Union in all things political¹²⁰. In the libraries full of any official speeches, the autobiography, or in many other texts written in english for foreign consumption, the very mention of the working class is a rarity. Myers mentions this in his book¹²¹, and when one browses through a widely published, many times translated

118 Lankov 2001 p 103-104

119 Myers 2010 p 14-53

120 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 1-16

121 Myers 2010 p 14-53, especially page 28

example of the official propaganda, the almost complete absence of the working class comes out as a very obvious and curious phenomenon. By 1947, Kim il-Sung declined to mention the working class even in an address to the People's committee congress. Instead of the working class, a lot of weight is given to the society and people as a whole. When they work as one *Gemeinschaft*, as an example of *Gemeinschaft ohne klasse*, to be exact, everything can and will be done.¹²² One has to go all the way to the the first official constitution, adopted in 1972 on paper, but de facto the basis of Kim il-Sungs work in an unwritten form all the way from circa 1956, to find a mention of a working class. And in this constitution, the working class is often sidelined by the Chollima movement, the actions of the nation as a whole, or the armed forces.¹²³ Thus the actual effect and spread of the use of this constitution could be casted in a suspicious light. It might just have been a piece of propaganda for friendly socialist nations, along the three tiered system of propaganda in the DPRK as described by among others, Myers.¹²⁴ This discovery from the official propaganda texts of the DPRK gives more factual abutment to the view supported by Myers, and the author of this thesis, that the massive amounts of propaganda literature and Kim il-Sung books function merely as a group of prop items for the elite of the DPRK society.¹²⁵

Instead of the working class, the official propaganda, however, contains a huge amount of descriptions, stories, general texts and all kinds of other material imaginable, talking about the people as a whole. The nature symbolism as seen in the quotations above in this chapter reign supreme in them. Along with propaganda, the symbolism is also seen in the visual arts, which were also thoroughly analyzed by Myers. When for example, Kim il-Sung was seen in official propaganda in a natural landscape or talking to the people, he was often depicted as wearing a spotless white uniform or a suit. White is generally considered as a universal symbol of purity, and in Korea, the symbolic meanings of white colour are, according to Myers, generally more or less so.¹²⁶ This depiction of the great leader in a spotless white suit among the people goes all the way back to the Soviet realism used by Stalin, who was also depicted wearing a spotless white uniform in the official Soviet propaganda, which undoubtedly served as a role model for the artists of the DPRK.¹²⁷

In the official artwork of the DPRK, Kim il-Sung is however more closely in tune with the nature

122 Kim il-Sung 1977 Part I p 139-145, Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 250-339

123 The Constitution of the DPRK, as translated in Finnish, 1973

124 Myers 2015 p 1-15

125 Myers 2010 p 6-13

126 Myers 2010 p 54-74

127 Plamper 2012 p 39, also see image appendix, esp. plate 8 and 19

than Stalin was. Whereas Stalin was seen as clothed and positioned differently from his comrades, and constantly static, as other characters were in constant motion in the propagandic art¹²⁸, Kim il-Sung was seen mostly as the center of people's attention, the focal point where everyone gravitated towards to. Kim il-Sung was usually surrounded by either children¹²⁹, or strong elements of nature, such as Mt. Paektu landscapes, the Korean forests or at least a spotless blue sky. He too was always clad in a spotless white suit or uniform, before the stylistic choices used to depict him were changed in the official propaganda arts. In an interesting note of events, Kim il-Sung is practically absent from the propaganda depicting the Korean War in all its forms.¹³⁰

Along with nature, the relationship between a mother and child was very important in the official propaganda of the DPRK.¹³¹ Kim il-Sung was said to have received the pistol he started the revolution with, from his very own mother.¹³² As mentioned in chapter 2, despite living pretty much ordinary, if even slightly more well off life than average Koreans of the early 1900s, the family background of Kim il-Sung was fairly normal for the era. This part of the veneration of one's own mother is, along the Asian tradition of respecting one's father and grandparents, very much intertwined with the Korean culture in general. But especially in the DPRK, the status of the mother has gained some mythical and mystical proportions, when compared to, say, China or the Republic of Korea in the southern peninsula, where western influence has given its additional flavours to child-parent relationships since circa 1945 onwards. For some reason, most likely involved in population control through idealized behaviour examples and propagandistic style choices, the mother is very much held in high esteem in the official propaganda.¹³³ As seen in the official biography of Kim il-Sung, her mother was depicted as a frail, yet strong and determined woman, capable of pretty much anything humanly possible, if it involved the well being of her son, or his revolutionary friends:

“She was frail of constitution, and life was getting harder. Comrades-in-arms of her husband stopped at her home and the General's comrades dropped in after he devoted himself completely to the struggle.

In spite of illness and poverty, she treated the General's comrades as her own children. She not only supplied them with food and clothes, but also helped them with a little money from her meagre purse. When there was no rice, she made rice-bran cakes for

128 Plamper 2012 p 29-86

129 Martin 2004 p 1-10

130 Myers 2010 p 75-203

131 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 19-53

132 Ibid.

133 Myers 2010 p 75-203

the youths leaving her home.”¹³⁴

And continuing below the quote above, the praise for Kim il-Sung’s mother for her work was as follows:

“Mrs. Kang Ban Suk was the beloved mother of revolutionaries and also a woman fighter who took an active part in the revolution.

Following the death of Mr. Kim Hyung Jik¹³⁵, she participated in the Women’s Association, and in 1928 was Chairman of the Paishan District Women’s association. From that time on, in her capacity as Chairman, her activities ranged over a wide area including Fusungchen, Chihhsiangtun, Wanliangtun and Santaohuayan. Through night schooling, lectures, commentaries and other educational methods, she imbued the Korean women with the spirit of struggle for the restoration of the fatherland and for the emancipation of women, rallying them around the revolutionary organization. She took part also in a secret circle under the leadership of the General and gave direct help to the “Sainal (New Day) Children’s Corps” and the “Anti-Imperialist Youth League.”

Threading this steep and horny path, bearing all the suffering and hardships life brought her, as the wife of a revolutionary and mother of revolutionaries and as a fighter in her own right, she lived and fought until she died at the age of 40, on July 31, 1932, from a lingering illness, too early to see the victorious march home of the General whose courageous actions were beginning to make him famous across the globe.”¹³⁶

As can be seen in the quote from the official biography of Kim il-Sung by Baik Bong, the role of his mother was very important to the mythos of General Kim il-Sung. What strikes as an interesting part of the mythos is, that how ever important the mother of Kim il-Sung was in the early years of the General and his endeavours towards a free Korea, the actual life and the rights of women in the DPRK seem to be something else. At least according to Lankov, while the official propaganda, the legends and the constitution give equal rights to women in the DPRK, and advocate equal rights and pretty much the destruction of every other real or imagined privileges males have over females in the western world, the amount of females in high position in the DPRK has constantly been very, very low if at times nonexistent. From all the party congress members ever in the history of the DPRK between 1945 and 2000, a staggering amount of six individuals have been female. Ironically, and in the protective bubble of a bad taste in humour, and the spirit of old Soviet jokes, one may thus say that the only place where a female could expect herself to be truly elevated above men in the DPRK hierarchy would be if she would work as one of the Pyongyang traffic wardens, whose elevated working posts tower a metre or half above the pavement on which the cars driven by men

134 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 34

135 Kim il-Sung's father (author note)

136 Baik 1968/1973 part I p 34-35

travel.¹³⁷

It can be thus said, that the nature imagery, along with the mystical, sometimes magical, powers Kim il-Sung had to the elements, was in a very important part of creating the cult of personality for him in the DPRK, through the official propaganda. The stories were really teetering on the other side of credibility, even though, allegedly trimmed by Kim il-Sung removing stories about himself of the most outlandish and lavish types.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the role of the propaganda texts is quite an ambiguous one. As mentioned before in this thesis, Myers claimed that most of the propaganda material and books exist just as mere props for the Juche ideology. A person of high political class could utilize them to fill one's office and thus forge oneself an outwards image of civilized and educated person with little effort.¹³⁹ On the other hand, the propaganda ministry has been said to disregard credibility when it comes to the stories about the leaders of the DPRK¹⁴⁰, which might hint towards the notion that at least some of the propaganda releases by the government are possibly meant to be enjoyed as stories of adventure and suspense.

3.2 Juche as an Ideology of Applied Methods and Improvisation

The ideology of Juche is an interesting set of tenements for the state functions and the nationalist ethos of the DPRK. The first time it is mentioned in official texts, is in the mid-to-late 1940s, after which the mention of Juche escapes from the official propaganda released in english, until the 1960s, while returning with a huge effort in the 1970s. However, the three authors Lankov, Martin and Myers all give good examples that put in question the status of Juche being actually missing from the DPRK society between the 1940s and 1970s. Myers has the most aggressive opinion, claiming that Juche actually never did disappear, and the failed coup-attempt of 1956, thoroughly analyzed by Lankov in one of his books¹⁴¹, was just an excuse to initiate a new propaganda campaign towards other nations and in the media, while actually making little reforms besides the Chollima-initiative in the DPRK itself. Myers goes as far as to coin the phrase “the watershed that wasn't” for the events of the years 1955 and 1956.¹⁴² Besides boasting the ideology itself, the

137 Lankov 2013 p 24-26

138 Martin 2004 p 11-12

139 Myers 2010 p 10

140 Myers 2010 p 81-85

141 Lankov 2005 passim

142 Myers 2015 p 45-84

explanations for various events in the propaganda often lack much intellectual credibility.¹⁴³ The stories were meant to be praised, and not analyzed by academia involved with the fields of literature, dramatic arts or, one forbid, history.¹⁴⁴ Martin, on the other hand, reminds us that Kim il-Sung has been known to have lied a lot about his past deeds and personal history. For example, according to him, Kim il-Sung worked among the Chinese communist party until the 1940s, instead of establishing his own ethnically Korean guerilla contingents. This was, ironically through the fact that Komintern had banned all ethnicity based communist parties outside of their home countries, thus making the completely Korean guerillas described in the official propaganda virtually impossible.¹⁴⁵ Martin also has dug out information, that Kim il-Sung was a target of a botched assassination attempt in march of 1946, while campaigning for the agricultural reforms in the DPRK.¹⁴⁶ The attempt of assassination was foiled by Kim il-Sung's then Soviet minders and bodyguards.¹⁴⁷ Just after the assassination attempt, Kim il-Sung did give a speech filled with hatred and vitriol towards the Japanese and their lackeys, which might have been a signal to treat the assailants as people's collective enemies.¹⁴⁸ Undoubtedly, an experience with public dissent this early on his career as the supreme leader of the DPRK must have made him more eager to push through the land reform¹⁴⁹ aiming towards control over his subjects, as by 1947, he is mentioned already having a strong cult of personality among the communists of the DPRK.¹⁵⁰

The speech made by Kim il-Sung in the early days of 1946 can also be seen as the birth speech of his cult of personality and quite possibly, the Juche ideology itself. Not many researchers have given time or effort to point this out, unfortunately. The speech was made on the 13th of January 1946, and contained many important parts of political ethos, and guidelines, which became known more better under the ideology of Juche, a few decades later. Still in 1946, Kim il-Sung was very well aware that the Soviet Union was to thank for the existence of the DPRK and was, in the beginning of the speech, very grateful for their aid in the establishment of the early form of the DPRK, the northern occupation zone of the Korean peninsula. He also claimed that the solidifying of power and constructing a functional party is of the utmost importance for the DPRK in the near future. He also encouraged worker's unions to unify the nation under him, which gives the speech a

143 Myers 2010 p 85

144 Ibid p 6-13

145 Martin 2004 p 31

146 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 91-94

147 Martin 2004 p 56

148 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 102-103

149 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 104-106

150 Martin 2004 p 59

subtle undertone of Syndicalism or classical Italo-Fascist corporativism. Finally, he ends the speech by noting that propaganda work and education is also very important, along with building a strong state, and that the people should be mobilized for propaganda work. Also, the danger of foreign elements was looming over the people of Korea even then, towards eliminating this danger, Kim il-Sung offered more work to the people and propaganda to counter the dangerous and hostile foreign lackeys and their blatant lies.¹⁵¹ A citation is in place, so all of this can be seen by the prospective reader of this thesis in the aforementioned speech itself. One should note, that this is also the only piece of official propaganda, where the working class is mentioned in particular. This might have been intentional however, as the Soviets most likely would have very much liked to see the working class and its struggles being mentioned by Kim il-Sung:

"Comrades,

It is already five months since we greeted the August 15 liberation. In this period the political situation at home and abroad has been very complex. However, the general situation is developing in our favour. Today the balance of forces between democracy and anti-democracy, progress and reaction on the international arena has undergone a fundamental change, and the democratic forces of the world are growing and strengthening rapidly. World War I resulted in the birth of the Soviet Union, the first socialist state, and World War II ended in the defeat of fascist Germany and Italy and militarist Japan, liberating the many peoples of Asia and Europe from the imperialist yoke and making them advance along the road of democracy.

How, then, does the situation stand in our country now? After liberation our people set up the people's committees – their own government bodies – everywhere, and progressive and democratic political parties, including the Communist Party, and social organizations have been formed and are now active in north Korea. However, as soon as they landed in south Korea, the US troops proclaimed the establishment of military government. They are suppressing the people's committees set up on the initiative of the people, and making every attempt to check the struggle of the south Korean people for the democratic development of the country by using the reactionary forces.

What should we do now under these circumstances and how? We should strive to establish a unified democratic government at the earliest possible date in Korea and turn north Korea into a powerful democratic base for building a prosperous, independent and sovereign state. For this purpose, we should first form a solid national united front and rally all the patriotic, democratic forces closely around it; we should root up the legacies of Japanese imperialism in all spheres of politics, economy and culture and introduce democratic reforms, thus guaranteeing the people genuine liberties and rights and improving their lives.

In order to fulfil these tasks successfully, it is essential to strengthen the Communist

151 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 8-16

Party. Our Party is a true Marxist-Leninist party around which the progressive elements of the working class and other people have rallied to build a new, democratic Korea and accomplish the Korean revolution. The successful carrying out of the Korean revolution is unthinkable without our Party's correct leadership. We should do everything in our power to expand and strengthen the ranks of the Communist Party and promote the role of its organizations.

As yet our Party has a small membership, is not organizationally strong enough, and has not struck deep roots among the workers, peasants and other broad sections of the masses. Pongsan County, for one, has only 70 to 80 Party members yet, the Party cells have not yet been formed in many factories, mines and farm villages. In this situation our Party will not be able to fulfil its historical mission properly.

In order to strengthen the Party, its ranks should be expanded rapidly before anything else. To this end the closed-doorist tendency should be thoroughly eliminated in the work of increasing the Party membership. Because some Party organizations make the mistake of taking a closed-doorist attitude in the work of increasing Party membership, they fail to admit to our Party those eligible for membership. The same is true of Pongsan County.

One of the closed-doorist tendencies manifested in the work of increasing the Party membership is to put forth too rigid requirements and reject people eligible for Party membership. As you all know, the level of political theory and ideological consciousness among our working class and other sections of the working people at present is not high. This is because they were barred from education under the protracted colonial rule of Japanese imperialism and had no political and ideological training in the past for the lack of a Marxist-Leninist party in our country. It is a gross mistake to disregard such conditions and try to admit to the Party only those who are fully qualified ideologically and theoretically.

Another closed-doorist tendency manifested in the work of Party's numerical growth is to prevent eligible persons from joining the Party by defining the qualifications of the person recommending Party membership incorrectly out of keeping with the actual conditions in our Party. At present only those Party members who have been in the Party for more than one year are entitled to recommend others for Party membership. This is wrong. Our Party was founded quite recently, and if the matter is handled as it is now how can we expect large numbers of people to join our Party? In the final analysis, the definition that the person making the recommendation should have been in the Party for more than one year is little short of intentionally putting an obstacle in the way of increasing the Party membership.

We should correct these closed-doorist tendencies. If we fail to do so, we will not be able to expand and strengthen the Party ranks rapidly, and those persons who should become Party members in the natural order of things will join other parties. The Party organizations should conduct the work of increasing the Party membership on the principle of boldly admitting and educating good people who have a high degree of class awakening and are enthusiastic about building up the country, even though their political and theoretical level is low. And under the present circumstances we should not

be so mechanical with regard to the length of Party membership of persons making recommendations, and should see to it that all who are eligible are allowed to join the Party.

First of all, we should steadily expand the Party ranks among the working class. We should be bold enough to admit to the Party those progressive workers who have been tempered in labour for a long time, even if they are not as fully prepared as they should be. This alone will make it possible to strengthen our Party and firmly rally broad sections of workers around it. In addition, candidates for Party membership should be selected from among the hired farm hands and poor peasants in the countryside and, for the present, the Party should admit those active peasants who had been tested through the campaign for the voluntary delivery of food grain and in the struggle for a system of tenancy which provides for 70 per cent of the harvest giving to the farmer and 30 per cent to the landowner. We should also register progressive intellectuals, and test them in the practical struggle before accepting them into the Party.

We should accept into the Party large numbers of the best, progressive elements from among the workers, hired hands, poor peasants, and working intellectuals, so that our Party cells will be formed in all factories, enterprises and farm villages. An important problem calling for our attention in Party growth is to improve the composition of the Party. Our Party's present composition shows that workers are very few whereas peasants and intellectuals occupy a large proportion. This runs counter to the basic principle of Marxist-Leninist party building. We should conduct the work of increasing the membership correctly along the line of raising the proportion of workers in the composition of the Party.

In order to improve the Party's composition, it is important to take correct statistics of Party members. Like other Party organizations, the Pongsan County Party Committee, too, carries out this work incorrectly at present. If one only counts the number of Party members and fails to analyse[sic] their composition, just as you are doing, it is impossible to build up the Party ranks qualitatively. The county Party committees should always be mindful of the Party members' statistics and. By analysing the composition of the membership, steer the work of increasing its membership in the right direction.

In particular, we should strive to ensure the purity of the Party ranks. It will not do to admit every man jack indiscriminately into the Party on the pretext of expanding the Party ranks. Because some Party organizations have conducted the work of increasing the Party membership carelessly in the past, many impure and alien elements have sneaked into the Party ranks. We should clear out all of them from the Party ranks and keep a sharp lookout so that no pro-Japanese and alien elements can worm their way into the Party. While steadily expanding the Party ranks, we should be deeply concerned about securing the Party's unity in ideology and purpose. These days factions have appeared within some Party organizations in Hwanghae Province and each faction shows a tendency to bring over Party members. We cannot strengthen our Party without putting an end to such a factional tendency. We should give a sharp rebuff to the factionalists and wage a resolute ideological struggle against every practice that interferes with the unity and cohesion of the Party. We should firmly unite broad

sections of the masses around the Party, while consolidating the Party ranks organizationally and ideologically.

The revolution cannot be carried out by our Party alone; it can be victorious only when the broad masses of the people are mobilized. Therefore, we should always endeavour to rally the masses around the Party. In order to win over the broad masses, we should actively unite them in mass organizations such as the trade unions, peasants' association, youth organization, and Women's Union organization, and work properly with these organizations. We should first draw the workers of all factories and enterprises into trade unions and strengthen the guidance of them, so that the vanguard role of the working class is heightened in the building of a new Korea. At the same time, we should unite the peasant masses in the peasants' association, and organize and mobilize them at first to the struggle to lower farm rents, and then gradually to the struggle to confiscate the land of the landlords. Through such an actual struggle we should further cement the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, and rally them closely around the Party.

We should also work efficiently to unite the youth around the Party. Young people always play a great role in the social revolution and the building of a new society. In order to give a proper education to the young men and women of the new Korea and organize and mobilize them for nation-building, we should energetically draw them into the youth organization. The Party organizations should also pay close attention to the work of uniting the women, an important force in our revolution, in the Womens' Union organization. We should intensify the Party's guidance of the social organizations and ensure that the Party members go deep among the masses and exert great Party influence on them. If we are to build a new Korea successfully, we should strengthen the work of the united front. The Party organizations should form a solid national united front through intensified work with patriotic, democratic political parties and groups, and organize and mobilize its united force to the struggle for building a prosperous, independent and sovereign state. By forming a united front we do not mean joining hands with pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation. In any event we should form a united front only with those who love the country and love the people and democracy. We cannot compromise with pro-Japanese elements and the national traitors and should not pin any hopes on them.

However, we should not try to leave out even those who served passively with the Japanese imperialist establishments. We should clearly understand that if we win over and rally as many people as possible around our Party, the enemy will be isolated and our revolutionary forces strengthened so much the more. Next, we should further intensify the Party's propaganda work. There is nothing special about the Party's propaganda work. To explain intelligibly to the masses what our Party is advocating, what the liberated people of Korea should do, and other problems, is precisely the Party's propaganda work. We should acquaint thoroughly the masses of Party's propaganda work. We should acquaint thoroughly the masses of all strata – workers, peasants, intellectuals, youth, students, tradesmen, industrialists, and men of religion – with the character of our revolution, what should be solved in this revolution, and how to struggle to establish a unified democratic government.

Today our people are very eager to build their country. But they are not sufficiently aware which path Korea should follow, what they should do and how. And as a consequence of the Japanese imperialists' malicious propaganda against communism in the past and affected by the sectarian activities of the factionalists, many people still have a distorted idea of our Party and some politically unawakened people lend an ear to the false propaganda of reactionaries such as the pro-Japanese and pro-American elements who sell out the national interests.

Under such circumstances a very important problem is posed of strengthening the Party's propaganda work. If our Party does not intensify propaganda work, the people may be fooled by the reactionaries' misleading propaganda, and this will seriously retard the work of nation-building. We should lead the masses of people along the right path through intensified propaganda work by the Party. Propaganda work should be better conducted particularly in the Sariwon region, since it is inhabited by many vacillating religious believers, and lots of reactionary rumours can circulate there because it is situated close to the 38th parallel.

You are little concerned about the Party's propaganda work at present, and are conducting it with no clear aim or focus. If this work is to be successful, its aim and focal point should be clear. The focus of the Party's propaganda work at the present stage should be on heightening the political awakening of the masses from all walks of life by informing them clearly of our Party's political line.

The revolution we are now carrying out is the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution and the Korean people are confronted with the task of setting up a unified democratic government. Therefore, we should explain and propagate on a broad scale the character and immediate tasks of the Korean revolution to the Party members and the popular masses, thereby inspiring them to contribute to the building of a new, democratic Korea. Meanwhile, we should strengthen the work of exposing and denouncing all the crimes of the quislings and reactionary elements before the popular masses to prevent them from placing any hopes on the reactionary clique. We should mobilize competent people from the Party and social organizations to carry out propaganda work actively. The Party's propaganda work will be successful only when it is conducted deep among the masses in keeping with the actual conditions.

The Party organizations should strengthen the Party's propaganda work first among the workers, so that they, deeply conscious that they are masters of the factories and the nation, firmly defend their factories and enterprises from the enemy's subversions and exert every effort to build a new country. Besides, the Party organizations should intensify among the peasants to be active in the effort to introduce the 3:7 tenancy system and, furthermore, in the struggle to acquire their own land. We should also strengthen explanatory work among the intellectuals so that they may take an active part in the management of factories and enterprises and devote themselves to the education of the younger generation.

The Party organizations should also carry on propaganda work effectively among the tradesmen and industrialists. These people should be infused with patriotism and inspired to fulfill their national duties in the building of a new country. We should

explain to them explicitly our Party's policy of guaranteeing them freedom of business activity, and see to it that they participate with a will in making the country and people prosperous and run their enterprises efficiently. Success in the Party's propaganda work requires the participation of all Party members in this work. They should always be in the forefront educating and guiding the masses. Just as a stone thrown into a quiet lake starts a ripple that spreads out all over the lake, every Party member should educate tens and hundreds of people and arouse them to the building of a new country.

One of the important tasks confronting the Party organizations at present is the guidance of the people's committees and elevate their role. We should expel all alien elements and loafers who have sneaked into the people's committees, and build up the people's government bodies with good people ready to work devotedly for the people. In particular, the county Party committees should pay close attention to the work of solidly building up the personnel of the county people's committees. And they should always be on the alert and prevent any pro-Japanese elements and traitors to the nation from worming their way into the people's committees.

The county Party committees should give correct guidance to the county people's committees so that the latter may direct every effort to the immediate task of stabilizing the people's life. At present there are many people in our country without a job, and the people's living conditions are very difficult. If this problem is left unsolved, the work of nation-building cannot be carried on properly. In order to stabilize the people's life, it is essential first to restore and operate the factories and enterprises damaged by the Japanese imperialist scoundrels. Only then will we be able to provide jobs for the unemployed, those who have returned from "conscription", "labour drafting" and "patriotic service corps" and those who have come home from abroad, and turn out consumer goods essential for the people's lives.

The county Party committees should see to it that all the people's committees take charge of and efficiently carry out all activities – restoration and reorganization of factories and enterprises, voluntary delivery of grain, collection of taxes, and so on. By so doing they should stabilize the people's life as soon as possible and correctly organize and mobilize the masses to nation building.

I hope that you will make every effort to expand and strengthen the Party ranks and heighten the role of the county Party committee, thereby greatly contributing to the development of the Party and the building of a new, democratic Korea."¹⁵²

Early parts of Juche ideology can also be seen in a ten part program, Kim il-Sung was said to have given to his guerilla fighters, according to the official state propaganda.¹⁵³ The points shown in this program, harken towards the same ideological solutions and methods used in the Chollima-initiative during the 1956 events. It is also possible though, that this ten part program shown in official propaganda, has just been made up for the later use of these texts as an example of the unerring

152 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 8-16

153 Baik 1968/1973 part I p 292-283

nature of the mind of Kim il-Sung, or as to prove that Juche ideology existed long before it did, as many other modern scholars of Korean affairs believe. Nevertheless, the ten point program is an early example of an ideological *Perpetuum mobile*, or a perpetual mover. The aims given to the people and the communist guerillas were something to strive to, but during those times with available human capital and infrastructure, always beyond the reach for them.¹⁵⁴ Again though, the ten point program in its entirety does not mention the working class of Marxism-Leninism directly in any of its ten parts:

“The 10-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland clearly indicated the following as the struggle tasks of the Korean people for the attainment of national restoration:

1. To mobilize the Korean nation generally and realize a broad-based anti-Japanese united front and thereby to overthrow the brigandish Japanese imperialist rule and establish a genuine people’s government of Korea.
2. To overthrow Japan and its puppet “Manchoukuo” through a close alliance between both the Korean and Chinese nations, to establish a revolutionary government chosen by the Chinese people themselves and to grant real autonomy to the Korean people residing in Chinese territory.
3. To disarm the Japanese armed forces, gendarmes, police and their agents and organize a real revolutionary army fighting for the independence of Korea.
4. To confiscate all enterprises, railways, hanks, shipping, farms and irrigation systems owned by Japan and Japanese, and all property and estates owned by traitorous pro-Japanese movement, and to use part of the money for the relief of the poor.
5. To cancel all loans made to the people by Japan and its agents and abolish all kinds of taxes and monopoly systems, to improve the living of the masses and smoothly develop national industries, agriculture and commerce.
6. To win the freedom of the press, publication, assembly and association, to oppose the establishment of terrorist rule and encouragement of feudalistic ideas by the Japanese, and to release all the political prisoners.
7. To abolish the *ryangban*¹⁵⁵, common people and other caste systems and other inequalities, to ensure equality based on humanity irrespective of the differences of sex, nationality or religion, to improve the social treatment of women and respect the personality of women.
8. To abolish slave labour and slavish education, to oppose forced military service and military training of young people, to educate people in our national language and

154 Arendt 2013 p 397

155 The noble and well off persons of a caste system then active in Korea (author note)

characters, and to enforce free compulsory education.

9. To enforce an eight-hour day, improve working conditions and raise wages, to formulate labour laws, to enforce laws for the protection of labour and to extend relief to the unemployed by the state organs.

10. To form a close alliance with nations and states which take a position of equality with the Korean nation and to maintain comradely relations of friendship with states and nations which express goodwill and maintain neutrality to our national liberation movement.”¹⁵⁶

As can be clearly seen from the ten part program, Marxism-Leninism or the working class is not directly mentioned at any point of the tenets given to the reader by the plan. Only the common term of people, and “people’s” is used. Instead of a working class revolution, a simple revolution is the term used in the program. All in all, anti-Japanese and pro-Korean Völkisch ethos dominates the program text supreme. The liberation of the home country and its whole people, is the aim of the Kim il-Sung guerillas. Of interest is also to note that many parts of the ten part program were eventually discarded into the dustbin of history, such as the dreams about the freedom of the press, rights of women or the abolishment of slave labour, which was later even used to remove any Soviet oriented communists from the system. Also, one could argue that the party elite became the new *ryangban*, mirroring almost completely the ideas about the relationship of the elite and a totalitarian government given us by Hannah Arendt in the book “The Origins of Totalitarianism” in the early 1950s.¹⁵⁷ Also, the liberal discarding of ideas represented by the propaganda machine goes well with the idea coined by Arendt, that complete obedience can only be reached once an actual context is missing from the loyalty towards the state or the great leader.¹⁵⁸ The ten part program and the centering of Kim il-Sung’s struggle almost completely to the Korean people, using others as valuable allies or the omnipresent enemy, also echoes similarities with Mussolini’s ideology, that Italo-Fascism was something connected directly to his home country and could not be exported abroad.¹⁵⁹ Other nations had to develop their own vein of Fascism in order to get to the same level of development as Italy had.¹⁶⁰

The ideology of Juche was however showcased by the official propaganda as an ideology having its roots in these ten point programmes of the 1930s and speeches made even earlier by Kim il-Sung.

156 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 282-283

157 Arendt 2013 p 397-400

158 Ibid p 395

159 Mussolini 1932/2016 p 25-44

160 Kunas 2013 p 417

The core book of the Juche ideology was written in its modern form for foreign people in 1977.¹⁶¹ The two-part book contains many speeches and essays made by Kim il-Sung during the time between 1930 and the 1970s, with heavy emphasis on material from before the 1970s. The birth speech of Juche, as most of the scholars accept it, though, was the one made in december of 1955¹⁶², even though as it was earlier stated in this thesis, among others, Myers disagrees that the 1955 speech had any actual effect of the establishment of the Juche system or Chollima-initiative in the DPRK.

The speech of 1955 and the Chollima-speech following it, are nevertheless very interesting in the context of their propaganda value. The 1955 speech again scarcely mentions the working classes, and spends most of the time explaining what Juche truly is. When Marxism-Leninism is mentioned in the 1955 speech, it is not used as a direct guideline of what to do, but merely as an example of how others have done political and economical work. In the case of the 1955 speech, the example country utilizing the Marxist-Leninist work ethos was the Soviet Union.¹⁶³ Most part of the 1955 speech is used to guide the Korean people towards a way of self-determination and self-sufficiency. Kim il-Sung even gives advice on how Koreans should put the index of a book to the first pages of the book, instead of the “foreign” way of putting an index for a book to the last pages, as was the custom in the 1950s.¹⁶⁴

The need of rewriting history, as described by Arendt, is also thrown out by Kim il-Sung in the speech. He urges the propaganda and history workers to start to get more acquainted with the history of the Korean nation, and blames the propaganda workers for digesting Marxism-Leninism as “raw and without a second thought.”¹⁶⁵ Later on, Kim il-Sung himself questions Marxism-Leninism in its dogmatic form, saying that it is not a dogma, it is a “creative theory.”¹⁶⁶ This could be a sign that already then, even while still under a close scrutiny from the Soviet Union, Kim il-Sung and his propaganda workers were already knowing what they were doing, and aiming towards their own nationalistically inspired form of “socialist nationalism”, or national socialism, as the world at large knows the ideology. Later on, Kim il-Sung continues that “Internationalism and patriotism are closely related”¹⁶⁷, which echoes the pan-nationalist thought of Sir Oswald Mosley

161 Kim il-Sung 1977 Part I&II passim

162 Ibid p 166-194

163 Kim il-Sung 1977 Part I p 167,

164 Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 171

165 Ibid p 175-176

166 Ibid p 178

167 Ibid

(1896-1980), the leader of the British Union of Fascists¹⁶⁸, for instance. The combination of internationalism and patriotism is also known in liberal internationalism. The collective ethos of the Korean Worker's Party is also important to Kim il-Sung in the 1955 speech. He stresses that the training of the "one million party members" is an important task, which should continue along with the endless working towards national unification. Kim il-Sung says, that the core groups of the party should be grown first.

After this, the core cadres can expand on their own weight and continue onwards to educate the masses further on the road to Juche, if one abridges his message in clear, understandable terms from the political smorgasbord he ordered to be written down to the printed speech.¹⁶⁹ In addition to the party work and nationalism, the demonization of the Japanese people, and the Japanese armed forces is still very strongly present in the speech of 1955. Even though the war had ended ten years earlier, and there had been the Korean War between the speech and the end of the Second World War, the hatred and vitriol aimed towards the Japanese as a culture and a nation was still a major part of the 1955 speech. Kim il-Sung often digresses into speaking about the battles during the war and during his guerilla campaigns, like in many other of his speeches.¹⁷⁰ Finally, Kim il-Sung places a lot of importance on the daily newspaper of the DPRK, the *Rodong Sinmun*, for its role of indoctrinating the people of Korea to the ideology of Juche. According to him, the newspaper should work for educating the party members about the party line and inform them about the "combat tasks" the party members should complete in order to develop Juche in the country.¹⁷¹

The speech of 1955 was followed in the work towards Juche by the Chollima-initiative of 1956. According to the common consensus among scholars¹⁷², it was started by the speech made in the 13th of december 1956 by Kim il-Sung.¹⁷³ In this speech, he urged the Korean Worker's Party to work even harder towards building socialism to the DPRK. The speech starts with encouraging the building and development of heavy industry over other fields of economical work for the duration of the next year and its economical plan. Along with heavy industry, some development is allotted to agriculture and light industry, too. Heavy industry gains mythical proportions in the speech, as it

168 Readers interested about this connection between internationalism, supra-nationalism and authoritarianism, and to some extent, fascism and national socialism, should consider reading the autobiography of Oswald Mosley for more information. It is widely available from many publishers, online in various collections both legally and in the torrent network favoured by pirates, and even in some european university libraries still pursuing objective knowledge instead of "safe spaces", as of 2017.

169 Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 184-188

170 Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 188, p 190

171 Ibid p 193

172 Martin 2004 p 93-119 Lankov 2005 p 175-201

173 Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 195-206

is described as being the key of developing the nation economically, as without it, Kim il-Sung says, the standard of living will not rise.

Along with heavy industry, mining and agriculture are important, as they are the key in obtaining food for the workers and raw materials for the heavy industry.¹⁷⁴ Instead of Japan, in this speech, Kim il-Sung attacks the United States of America when seeking a foreign enemy to blame for the reasons of the poor economical state of the DPRK. The recently ended Korean War is completely blamed on the US actions, and Sungman Rhee, the then president of the Republic of Korea.¹⁷⁵ This kind of attack of hatred, just like the one aimed at Japan in the 1955 speech mentioned earlier, is according to Arendt, a classical example of a totalitarian state aiming its propaganda towards foreign enemies after gaining sovereignty within its borders, and having eliminated the last vestiges of the “old order.”¹⁷⁶ The rest of the speech continues to blame the Republic of Korea and the USA for the war, which had ended just a few years earlier, in 1953.

The creation of a strong sense of collectivity, by encouraging the party workers to strive towards mass industrialization and agricultural innovations, combined with this rhetoric of hate towards the Republic of Korea and the United States of America is another classic example of totalitarian function, but this time, Kim il-Sung utilizes more communist rhetoric in his speech than on the one he gave about similar matters in 1955. Even though the speech of december 1956 has been mystified by many as the beginning of Juche, the speech itself is lacking any mentions about Juche, or Chollima-initiative itself.¹⁷⁷ Western sources know to tell, that the Chollima-initiative was actually invented by the workers of a steel mill, which Kim il-Sung visited after, or around the time giving the speech in 1956. Suh, for example, credits a Kangson steel mill worker Chin Ung-won as the person initiating the move for Chollima-initiative. He organized the workers in groups for the purpose of surpassing the quotas assigned to them and their steel mill. This method of work then soon got its blessings from the Kim il-Sung government and spread all over the DPRK in the space of a few months.¹⁷⁸

All in all, it can be thus said, that Juche is a very mysterious concept, with no clear point of origin or clear context of doctrine. The speeches shown in the official propaganda as the core foundations of the ideology, actually contain very little factual and objective information, on how does the

174 Ibid p 195-197

175 Ibid p 200-202

176 Arendt 2013 p 459-528

177 Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 195-206

178 Suh 1988 p 164-165

ideology of Juche actually function. The generally accepted terminology of self-determination and self-sufficiency can indeed be deduced from these three speeches. Also, the idea that in the beginning, Juche was an ideology of manufacturing Korean made products, by Korean people, from Korean raw materials, and putting Korea first is a credible explanation for Juche ideology. It has just since then evolved into something else, after the 1950s. Along putting Korea first, the idea of xenophobic suspicion for everyone foreign was also ingrained in early Juche, and has remained part of it since.¹⁷⁹

3.3 The International Idols – Stalinism, Fascism and National Socialism: Leading by Example?

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Stalin was a major inspirer for the cult of personality surrounding Kim il-Sung. Alongside Stalin, the image and personal mystification of Adolf Hitler was also closely studied by the propaganda writers of the DPRK, as many elements utilized by the Kim il-Sung cult retain a high degree of similarity between national socialist propaganda of the Third Reich and the contemporary propaganda of the DPRK in the post 1953 era.¹⁸⁰ Alongside the items and means of propaganda as described by Kershaw and Plamper, many similarities were pointed out by Myers in his two books about the DPRK and the issue of extreme nationalist propaganda utilized by the DPRK through the 20th century. In this sub-chapter, the thesis attempts to point out some of the similarities between the propaganda image of Stalin, Hitler and Kim il-Sung, as can be done through the analysis of the research made by Myers, using many of the same original sources. The fusion of pseudo Marxist-Leninist thought and clear examples of mass indoctrination borrowed from both Stalinist Soviet Union and from Adolf Hitler's Germany, was first thrown out into the open by a certain British artist: Aesthetician of early futurism, admirer of Hitler and an artist Wyndham Lewis¹⁸¹ said that Fascism is nothing more but the extreme form of Leninism.¹⁸²

The cult of Josif Stalin in the Soviet Union during the era between the 1920s and the 1950s was in many ways thorough and omnipresent. Stalin was seen as the ultimate leader of the nation, more of a myth than a mortal man made of flesh and bone. This attitude towards Josif Stalin is described by Plamper in the anecdote about Stalin visiting a member of Soviet *nonmenklatura*¹⁸³ during the

179 Martin 2004 p 111-113

180 Kershaw 2001 p 48-82, p 105-120

181 Silvennoinen et al 2016 p 88

182 Kunas 2013 p 191-192

183 An esteemed member of the Soviet party society. (author's note)

heighday of his reign in the Soviet Union. The poor woman, who had grown accustomed to see Stalin only in official photographs, portraits and sometimes in film, was stunned unconscious as Stalin himself was suddenly, one day, behind her apartment door. She described to the people noting up this incident that she thought that “I thought that a portrait of Stalin was moving towards me.”¹⁸⁴ This kind of dedication to a personality cult is also visible in the DPRK in many ways. The amount of official art displayed in the 1950s and even today showing Kim il-Sung is very staggering indeed. Alongside the portraits kept in every major building and public institution, the speeches, texts and books written by Kim il-Sung are oftentimes read and owned by the party elite of the DPRK. However, as mentioned earlier many times in this thesis¹⁸⁵, the role of the official propaganda texts as literature is sometimes questionable, as the sheer amount of them is very notable, and most likely, as mentioned in previous parts of this chapter too, they are solely used for stylistic purposes of decorating ones office. By using the propaganda as a decorative item, one displays power and knowledge about the system ruling the country, thus impressing people, who have no real coherent understanding of the ideology besides the *Führerprinzip* or the cult of personality towards Kim il-Sung endorsed by the state of the DPRK.

As Stalin was, so was Kim il-Sung partially disconnected from the official image of himself in time and in space. He was officially said to have a strong aversion towards his self-idolization, just like Stalin had had some years earlier in the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁶ As most of the artwork describing Kim il-Sung was centered on showing him as a father figure with ambiguous motherly sides to his image, almost constantly clad in clean or even in clean snow-white suits or uniforms, symbolizing cleanliness, innocence and divinity in the DPRK art.¹⁸⁷ But, unlike Stalin, Kim il-Sung had a role of a strong focal point in the propaganda and art. He was the primus motor of all that was moving in the propaganda describing or mentioning him, be it visual arts or text. As mentioned in chapter 3.1, Stalin was often seen as a static, spotless white monolith in the visual propaganda of the Soviet Union. Kim il-Sung, on the other hand, had much more mobility and visual aesthetics of movement utilized in the description of him in the official DPRK propaganda. This use of centrality and the point of movement being Kim il-Sung in the artworks was, borrowed from the art of the fascist Japanese propaganda and to some extent, from the national socialist propaganda of the National Socialist German government. The utilization of many of the same methods of art and propaganda as in the Japanese propaganda, can be easily explained through the fact that the DPRK was much

184 Plamper 2012 introduction p xiii

185 See chapter 3.1 of this thesis

186 See chapter 3 introduction, also Martin 2004 p 11-12 and Plamper 2012 p 119-123 as quoted there

187 Myers 2010 p 75-90

more lenient on the former Japanese-Korean intelligentsia than the ROK or Japan herself had been during the post war years. Many clerks, middle-level bureaucrats and office workers were directly just continuing what they did under Japan, as the northern parts of the Korean peninsula were brought under communist rule during the autumn of 1945.¹⁸⁸ It can be thus supposed, that the methods of producing propaganda, getting some models out from Imperial Japanese “fascism” and the German propaganda of WW2 can be traced to these people, and their sudden shift of allegiance owing to the lack of persecution or forced retirement in the DPRK. The creation of the Paektu mythos, for example, almost overnight¹⁸⁹ during the mid 1940s, was an interesting example of how eagerly these former Japanese artists, propagandists and writers were engaged in the new political system and the Korean nationalism encouraged by Kim il-Sung.

The propaganda methods used by Hitler and his propaganda officers in the 1930s Germany can also be seen thus giving some inspiration the DPRK propaganda machine. The art of mass meetings, the collective ethos and fierce nationalism bordering on the edge of mythological or even outright esoteric, are all familiar from the propaganda, art and collective ethos of the national socialist workers party of Germany (NSDAP) during the Hitler era.¹⁹⁰ The classic ideas of Carl Schmitt presented about total submission to the state also resemble the way Kim il-Sung and the DPRK moved towards after 1956. Schmitt was talking about creating fuzzy, non determinable lines between politics and everything else. Also, the need of a strong view of enemies and friends was important to a political vision. In addition to this, the political narrative can be linked to nationalism, regardless of the actual origin of said political narrative. So in a way, one can start with a revolutionary ideology even with noble and justified aims and end up with a totalitarian state concerned with national supremacy and the continuous vigilance towards real or imagined foreign lackeys and their attempts to undermine the home country. This also gives more credibility to the theory, that Kim il-Sung, or at least his propaganda workers, did emulate the ideas of the Third Reich to a some degree.¹⁹¹

The way how Juche and the Chollima-initiative also placed an emphasis on the resourcefulness and tireless toiling of the people as a whole, collective organism, was also not totally unknown to the extreme right. Fascism in general, and the more left leaning National Socialist movement also tended to romanticize machinery, production methods and technology, just like Kim il-Sung did in

188 Myers 2015 p 23-44

189 See chapter 3.1 of this thesis

190 Kershaw 2001 p 48-82 Welch 2014 p 96-109

191 Kunas 2013 p 147-152

the early days of the DPRK, all the way to the launch of the Chollima-initiative in 1956.¹⁹² The example how Kim il-Sung also was engaged in the romanticizing machinery, means of production and the industry can clearly be seen in his official text collected from 1946¹⁹³, or the late 1950s¹⁹⁴. Many other examples can also be found, the references to these themes are very often made in pretty much all of his official speeches, books, essays and magazine columns.

3.4 The power of the arts – Theater and movie as a tool for official propaganda

The medium of the theater was used by Kim il-Sung from an early part in his own personal narrative, and official propaganda, as a means of proliferating the ideology of the DPRK to the general people. In his official biography, the role of theater is emphasized very highly. It was said that already at a young age, the “General”, as he was called in the official biography, was very active in organizing and presenting theatrical art to the Korean people and his schoolmates.¹⁹⁵ Later on, the theatre aficionado had such an effect on the popularity of performing arts, that his son grew up as a well known movie aficionado¹⁹⁶, no doubtedly influenced by his fathers alledged or factual exploits in the world of stage play.

Later on, the alledged exploits of Kim il-Sung in the world of theatre also included organizing theatrical groups in other places, even while waging the guerilla war against the Japanese in Manchuria during the 1930s. After the events that led to the installation of Kim il-Sung as the supreme leader of the northern parts of the Korean peninsula, which would eventually be formed as the DPRK, he can be seen once again to be working with the world of theatre and the performing arts. From the collection of his official speeches, essays and other works, many are addressed to the artists, actors, cultural workers, like playwrights, and other similar people of note.¹⁹⁷ They are never aimed at a single person, but rather, as a group of artists as a whole. In these statements, speeches and other writings, he urges them to work in order to build his own socialist system to the DPRK. He also mentions that their work is of the utmost importance, and that their work is an important piece in indoctrinating people into the political system of the new government.¹⁹⁸

192 Kunnas 2013 p 195-254, p 348-402

193 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 150-157, p 202-205, p 260-263

194 Kim il-Sung 1971 Part II p 101-114

195 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p xx-xx

196 Fischer 2015 passim

197 For example, Kim il-Sung 1980 p 206-210

198 Kim il-Sung 1980 p 206-210

Along with the theatre, the musicians of the national symphony orchestra were often praised for their work, at least in the early days of the personality cult. In 1946, their work was deemed, like many other, irreplaceable for the building of the socialist system. Kim il-Sung also mentioned according to the official propaganda, that the work of musicians, along other artists, was an important tool for spreading the political vision he had.¹⁹⁹

Writers and playwrights also got their part of the indoctrination process in the early days, as in the autumn of 1946, Kim il-Sung addressed them in one of his official speeches. According to the official propaganda, this speech aimed at giving inspiration to the writers, lyricists and playwrights in order to work more productively, as among other things, the national anthem, and some army marches were needed desperately for the new government of the DPRK. An interesting note in this speech is, that Kim il-Sung uses a lot of nature symbolic, and quite a lot of *Völkisch* pathos is visible in his speech as he digresses to the attributes of the Korean nature and her people. The speech is ended in a note that of course, an invincible army should have an anthem most suitable for an invincible army.²⁰⁰

Later on, as the Korean war was over, the role of the culture workers was again a hot topic for the official propaganda. In the late 1950s, Kim il-Sung mentions that training oneself and indulging oneself in artistic hobbies is the key towards a self-enlightenment. According to the official propaganda text, Kim il-Sung said, that “everyone has the keys for self-betterment.” This line of thought presented by the official propaganda puts the theatre workers, movie directors, screenwriters, and playwrights in a some kind of a weird semi-healer role, as art and education was raised to the pedestal in the aftermath of the events of 1956.²⁰¹

Finally, in the early months of 1961, Kim il-Sung gave an official speech to the central committee of the Worker’s Party and its 4th party congress. During this time, the eventual break up in relations between the Soviet Union and China was already looming in the horizon. In this speech he pointed out that creating a reliable narrative for the people to enjoy the history and culture of their nation was and is a paramount task to the government and the artists they employ under them. The newly initiated Chollima-initiative should be viewed as a heroic struggle for the betterment of the whole nation under Kim il-Sung, both for future generations and the presently alive Koreans. Also, according to Kim il-Sung, the society that is the DPRK has no room for “bourgeoisie” literature,

199 Ibid p 298-300

200 Ibid p 400-403

201 Kim il-Sung 1971 Part II p 264-268

film, or theatre, and a strict ideological dogma is placed over all artistic works created in the DPRK. One of the methods used in the creation of this ideological dogma is the creation of the narrative about the heroes of the Chollima-initiative, and to describe their lives as “exactly as possible.” Kim il-Sung ends the speech in a note, that the cultural work should be encouraged in all fields, as it is the only way how the DPRK can achieve the Socialist future.²⁰²

It can thus be said, that the role of the theatre, and by proxy, the movies, as the production of films started to proliferate globally in the 1950s after the second world war, were an important part of the official propaganda and the cult-building process for Kim il-Sung. As a method of distributing reliable, party accepted information, they were undoubtedly very superior method, as spoken word and movies were capable of reaching even the illiterate elderly people and the young children who could not yet master reading the Korean alphabet. Also of note is that by translating foreign material to Korean when needed, the ideological tenets of Soviet communism, as they were applicable to the “Socialist Nationalism” of Kim il-Sung, could be thus distributed among Koreans not fluent in foreign languages.

4. The Imagined and The Real – The Perceived Enemies of the DPRK

As we have already seen in the previous chapters, all the way from chapter 1 and the preliminary introduction to this work, the image of the enemies, whether real or perceived, has always been an important part of the cult of personality and the functions of the state of the DPRK. Rarely even a small text of propaganda is seen, where hardships have not been caused, at least by proxy, by either Japanese backed, American backed or mutually backed lackeys or their spies.²⁰³ These perceived spies even include all possibly home grown “reactionaries” and antirevolutionaries, whether or not they actually had any contact with any western or to that matter, Soviet or Chinese foreign elements.²⁰⁴

As the propaganda machine of the DPRK developed in literary finesse and skill during the years after 1945, the tone of propaganda started to change somewhat too. For example, many of the

202 Kim il-Sung 1977 part I p 331-333

203 See for example: Kim Il-Sung Works 2 1980 passim. Or Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971, passim.

204 For example, speech by Kim Il-Sung at the party conference of 28th of December 1955 Kim Il-Sung 1977 p 166-194. Also mentioned in official propaganda biography Baik Bong 1968/1973 Part II p 485-496

propagandistic texts of the 1940s and 1950s were often very, very mundane in look and content. Their down to earth attitude towards the problems in the new people's democracy was pretty simple, even arguably humane to a certain degree. Issues were common with other post-war states of Europe and Asia. The rebuilding of infrastructure, feeding the people, starting the factories abandoned by either the Japanese or the indigenous workers during the late stages of the war, and so on. However, the role of Japan as the ultimate evil, against whom Kim Il-Sung had spent years on end fighting before the establishment of the DPRK, was not forgotten in these texts.²⁰⁵ Some official letters, speeches and articles were even more peculiar in style, for example the ones considering presidential personal guidance for Kimchi and salt production, issued by Kim Il-Sung in 1958.²⁰⁶ This was not the first time though, that Kim Il-Sung had given exact rules on how to manufacture even the smallest everyday items or staple foods. In 1946, he had given an official declaration on the theoretical basics of pencil manufacture.²⁰⁷ Later on, especially after 1956, the position of Japan as the ultimate evil, gradually shifted to USA. After the mid 1950s, it has remained so ever since. When comparing the amount of hatred and vitriol aimed towards Japan and USA between 1945-6 and 1958, between the two collections of official propaganda, the difference is clearly seen even by the most mundane reader.

In this chapter, the work in hand shall dig in more deeply into these real or perceived enemies of the DPRK, and tries to shed some light on how the initial "primary evil" of the regime, Japan, turned out to be "the second in command of evil" after the 1950s, partially due to the Korean War and also due to the events of the 1956 "coup attempt"²⁰⁸, when it most likely was realized by the anonymous masses of DPRK state functionaries and Kim Il-Sung himself, that the real threat to him was no longer his former adversary Japan, but pretty much every non-friendly foreign country trying to destabilize his government.

The "Coup attempt" of 1956 is discussed in more detail in its own chapter, as was the image created for Kim Il-Sung discussed more thoroughly in the previous one. The quotation marks are used purely on the basis that Lankov²⁰⁹ and Myers²¹⁰ have differing views about what actually happened, and in this research paper, some thought about their credibility is given to the both of the views. What is known however, is that Kim Il-Sung did really intensify his propaganda and governmental

205 Again, see for example Kim Il-Sung Works 2 1980 passim. Each and every text is pretty much about this.

206 Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971 p 55-58

207 Kim Il-Sung 1980 p 61-63

208 See for example, Lankov 2005 as the whole book is a dedicated study to the events of 1956 and the "coup attempt"

209 Lankov 2005 p 1-25, p 60-72

210 Myers 2015 p 45-84

work during that time²¹¹, which, among other things, led to somewhere between 9000 and 100 000 people dead²¹². The estimates are unofficial and vary wildly. But more on these in the next chapter.

4.1 Japan as the Ultimate Evil

The role of Japan as the most hostile and evil nation towards the recently established DPRK was of course, a natural role to fill in the situation which Korea as a whole was in 1945. The country had just been liberated from the Japanese occupation that began in the 1910s, and divided between USA and the Soviet Union as a set of two occupation zones one in the north and in the south, respectively. This has all been gone through pretty much in detail in chapter 2 of this work.

These historical events undoubtedly gave a serious base for the DPRK propagandists and Kim Il-Sung himself to aim the latent anger and need for a common enemy rife among the post-war people in Korea and in all the countries of the world more or less after World War 2. As one could not manufacture hunger, bad infrastructure or poverty as a rational enemy to be fought against, the fact that Japan had surrendered to the USA and remained, arguably though, in a much more coherent state than Korea in the aftermath of the war, was like a gold mine for any kind of propaganda. All that had been perceived as traditionally Korean was in constant danger of being lost during the Japanese occupation. The Japanese enforced their rule, school systems and customs to the Korean people all the way from 1910s to 1945. Now, in the situation the country and Kim Il-Sung found themselves in 1945, the assets they had were not perceived by themselves of being very much. Japan had even managed to maintain their Imperial system under US occupation, a fact that might have caused a lot of resentment in elder Koreans who still had memories of the Korean Joseon Empire of the pre 1910s era. However, as Myers (2010) points out, the resentment was most likely not based on decades long underground nationalism, as is commonly thought in the west.²¹³

Myers (2010) also argues, backed with a substantial amount of evidence, that Korean nationalism as the general academic circles know it today, was almost completely a product of Japanese colonial policy. He maintains that a common Korean identity was created by consent of the Imperial Japanese political elite, as it was perceived to integrate the Korean people more tightly into the sphere of the nascent Japanese colonial empire of the day. Before the 1910s, the northern border of

211 Lankov 2005 passim

212 Courtois et. al. 1997/2001 p 612-718, p 618 in particular

213 Myers 2010 p 14-19

Korea was in a fluid state, as people travelled freely between China and Korea. Also, Myers maintains that the small but still existing Korean intellectual class was virtually indistinguishable from the Chinese intelligentsia of the era. Many of the Korean national symbols and myths were revived during this era by anti-Japanese nationalists as well as pro-Japanese nationalists, who were constantly involved in their own battle of minds and souls over the Korean people. The relevance of Mt. Paektu, the legend of Dangun Wanggeom (mentioned in earlier chapters of this work) and many others, were enforced in the national psyche and culture during the times between 1910 and 1945.²¹⁴

However, in the official propaganda of the DPRK, this ancient history has been constantly glorified. The myths and legends mentioned by Myers and others feature very often in the propaganda of the early stages of the DPRK. For example, the official biographies of Kim Il-Sung, his personal autobiography and many other praising works²¹⁵ of his personal deeds and history, constantly support themselves on these nationalist myths, and portray Japan as the primary evil facing the Korean nation as a whole before the 1950s. Many events and of course countless battles against the Japanese army, have gained a mythical status in the official propaganda during the years. In his personal biographies, Kim Il-Sung is constantly represented as a fierce fighter, trying to help the Chinese to get rid of their Japanese occupiers, although unsuccessfully, and never leaving the sacred homeland of Korea after the late 1930s. The propaganda works constantly keep up the narrative that after returning there in the late 1930s, he remained in Korea, fighting with Korean guerillas against the evil and omnipresent Japanese military and police forces, occupying the country since 1910. After the ten or so years of guerilla action, he then emerged as a victor in final decisive battles during 1945, when Soviets declared war to the Japanese Empire.²¹⁶ The role of Soviet-Japanese war of 1945 is very often left out of the official propaganda, and only when needed, it is mentioned as a small footnote or in passing, as for example in many speeches and letters from around 1945 and 1946. Of course this leaves the reader suspecting, that these letters and speeches were also aimed towards Soviet occupation troops and their officials, in order to quell any suspicions the red army might have had about the competence of the new socialist leader Kim Il-Sung.²¹⁷ The other explanation was that Soviet-Korean army propagandists were behind these letters, speeches and talks, as Kim Il-Sung did not have the time to write all them by himself. The evidence gathered by Lankov supports this view.²¹⁸ The third explanation is that these messages of propaganda were the

214 Myers 2010 p 1-19

215 For example: KTKPI 1972, Baik I-II 1968/1973, Kim Il-Sung 1993-2007 I-VIII

216 Baik 1968/1973 Part I chapters 8-13 171-576 and Kim Il-Sung 1993-2007 part VIII passim

217 Kim Il-Sung 1980 p 1-3, p 32-39, p 91-94 for example

218 Lankov 2013 p 6-9

first ones relying on the three-tiered system of propaganda utilized by the DPRK. In this system, there are three different types of propaganda distributed to the audience. The completely domestic propaganda, the domestic propaganda visible to friendly nations and the third example of propaganda, the one directed completely towards neutral and hostile foreign countries.²¹⁹

Whole volumes of the Kim Il-Sung autobiography are dedicated to describe the fierce battles and superior tactical acumen he had fighting against the Japanese with either weapons, propaganda or just even everyday passive resistance or with all kinds of pranks and trickery. All in all the whole autobiography of several parts is a massive, over 2000 pages long and very difficult read about the viciousness of Japanese occupiers and their downfall between 1912 and 1945. It is not made any easier by the fact that the official pdf version shared by the DPRK virtual library online, has a lot of missing page numbers and occasional scanning errors in some of the various parts of the 2000+ pages and at least eight volumes long work.²²⁰ One also has to keep in mind, that according to a rather credible source, in the form of a high ranking Korean defector Hwang Jang-yop (1923-2010) it has been told the media and global academic circles that among countless other works by Kim Il-Sung, these autobiographies are most likely ghost written by an army of theatre and propaganda writers, especially the ones published after the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994.²²¹ Nevertheless, they still have a grain of salt in them, and are completely useful in studying the propaganda, if not the actual historical events too, that took place in the history of the DPRK during the era of their writing and publishing. Some researchers, like the present author, also see them as a semi-reliable description of some historical events during the era they are set in.

The general tone of the anti-Japanese sentiment in official propaganda sometimes goes even to the most absurd levels in the eyes of a modern reader. Many of the speeches considering everyday hardships in the DPRK start out as logical and understandable political rhetoric about the state of the affairs in the country after the second world war and the destruction the war brought along with it everywhere. Often, it is even possible to feel compassion to the people suffering from the hardships described in the texts. But then, instead of continuing on this track, the speech text jumps into telling how the entire Japanese people are either a bunch of immoral capitalist imperialists or outright plain worthless sub-humans who all deserve to die and that all this destruction is mainly their fault. The writing style, if one omits the very good grammar occasionally used in it, often looks surprisingly familiar when compared to a chatroom post or a comment on a modern

219 Myers 2015 p 1-22

220 Kim Il-Sung 1993-2007 parts I-VIII passim

221 Martin 2004 p 1-20

newspaper with several ad hominem errors and other flaws in argumentative skills.²²²

It is no great surprise though, in light of all this, that the Japanese occupied the role of the major evil in the world, at least in the eyes of the DPRK. As Kim Il-Sung was very fond of using all kinds of combat themed rhetoric in his propaganda, this kind of approach towards the masses of people under his rule needed a common enemy. The former colonial master Japan fit this role perfectly. And just like it was noted in the earlier chapter, in the vein of Adolf Hitler before him, Kim Il-Sung had already in the first year of his reign created himself an image of a capable warrior and a wartime leader.²²³ When everything in propaganda was turned as a battle against “the lackeys of Japan”, people undoubtedly could believe every word of it, and live with this ideology in their hearts and minds. This was helped also by the fact that many Koreans were still illiterate in 1945 and 1946, so they relied on spoken word and in some cases, the radio, for their news and entertainment.²²⁴ It is perhaps then to be considered as one of the few outright positive effects the propaganda institution had on the quality of life in the DPRK, that by the year 1960, most inhabitants of the DPRK definitely were capable of reading and writing.²²⁵

This demonization of Japan in the mid-to-late 1940s paved an easy way for the shifting of the cape of the main enemy in the rhetoric of hate to the United States of America during the Korean War. Even though US actions in Japan post-war, with Japan after 1946 or in the southern parts of the Korean peninsula were already under heavy criticism by Kim Il-Sung in the official propaganda in the mid 1940s²²⁶, the full force of anti-American propaganda was not released before the war broke out in 1950, and of course during the following years, when the war had ended and the armistice of 1953 was signed and enforced, Kim Il-Sung and his propagandists really started to attack the US in the propaganda.²²⁷

Even though the war gave a logical reason to abandon Japan as the arch enemy and replace it with the US, the evolution of the United States as the most evil country in the world according to the DPRK, can also be seen as a way to vent out the national, and perhaps personal, frustration of a nearly lost conflict, and a clever move through the battle rhetoric that Kim Il-Sung was very fond of

222 Kim Il-Sung 1980 p 1 -3, p 8-16, p 28-31, p 61-63, p 73-80 and many, many more.

223 Kershaw 2001 p 151-168

224 Myers 2010 p 14-53

225 <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy/> (accessed on 24th of november 2016) While based on this collection of reliable data, comparing the current 100% rate to the literacy rate of Cuba, a similar, socialist backed state with an agrarian background, it is most likely that the DPRK had similar rapid success in literacy proliferation between 1950 and 1980. Also, literacy has always been high on the Soviet backed countries socialist educational targets.

226 Kim Il-Sung 1980 p 8-16, p 21-24, p 196-201

227 Lankov 2013 p 11, Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971 p 150, p 193-232, p 361-362

using during his time as the supreme leader of the DPRK. When the general population now had a bunch of traumatic memories and revanchist hatred in storage for the US armed forces (even though Korean war was officially an UN operation), the change of heart in the propaganda and the gradual fading away of Japan looks like an understandable chain of events to have happened in that time and place. Also, with the death of Stalin in the 5th of march 1953²²⁸, and the lucky chain of events that prevented the Korean war from turning into a nuclear war between the US and Soviet Union might have enforced Kim Il-Sung to step up his propaganda machine as a more of an attacking force towards enemy nations. Kim Il-Sung along with his propagandists were nevertheless extremely wise players in the field of machiavellian political games²²⁹, so this shift from Japan to the US in the prime target in propaganda is perfectly understandable.

The shift also might have been a godsend for the anonymous masses of propagandists themselves. As Myers pointed out, many of the early governmental bureaucrats, artists, playwrights and other intelligentsia of the DPRK were more or less directly seconded from the Japanese era colonial society. Many Japanese era notables even moved to the DPRK as they felt that the society there was more pro-nationalist and livable in the immediate aftermath of the war, than the mostly poor and agrarian southern part of the peninsula.²³⁰ In many ways the Kim Il-Sung regime was much more lenient towards their own scholarly class that had collaborated with the Japanese than the South Koreans or even Japanese themselves were.²³¹ Almost no one was immediately persecuted of their connections to the Japanese government, and much of the anonymous masses just directly continued whatever they had been doing in summer 1945 under the new government that took hold of the country in the autumn months.²³²

In light of these findings, it could be said then, that before late 1955 and early 1956 and the following arguably very dark years were any of these people in great danger of being purged or persecuted of their crimes. For the most part, these crimes were either fabricated from small, usually meaningless actions which were suddenly turned into major issues, or outright fabrications with no basis on reality. So this chain of events might also be seen as a way to prolong their illusion of safety under the new socialist backed regime, lest the new rulers start to turn on them too soon. This pretty much turned out to be the case then, as Kim Il-Sung did wait until the mid-to-late 1950s and the following decade of the 1960s before he had a reasonable sized home-grown armies of

228 Plamper 2012 p 221-233

229 Lankov 2013 p xii, introduction

230 Myers 2010 p 14-53, p 21 in particular

231 Ibid., see also Myers 2015 p 23-44

232 Ibid.

bureaucrats and intellectual and industrial worker cadres to back himself in the effort of rooting out all kinds of “reactionaries” and “Japanese/US lackeys”, as we can see in the previous chapters 2 and 3, and the following parts of this chapter.

4.2 The United States evolves into the enemy worthy of fighting against

The United States of America began to inherit the mantle of the greatest evildoer in the official DPRK propaganda, right after the start of the Korean war in 1950. It was not until the end of the war in 1953, however, when the true anti-american work in DPRK propaganda was unleashed in all its might. Even though anti-american sentiment was rife even before the war, the main enemy had pretty much always been Japan, until the 1950s.²³³ During the war, propaganda served more as a back up tool for the actual fighting, as in any other country engaged in a conflict. After the armistice was signed, however, there were ample amounts of time and resources for the propagandists and Kim Il-Sung himself to pen and design more intricate propagandistic efforts and build an image of ultimate evil for the USA.²³⁴ However, Japan did not completely disappear from the propaganda, it now held the position of a second enemy, often also blamed for hardships encountered by the people of the DPRK in the post-war years from 1953 onwards. Oftentimes, Japan carried the mantle of the historical enemy, but still, every now and then, Japanese nation also carried the role of the enemy looming outside of the DPRK, too.²³⁵ It can be said, that the progress of the demonization of the USA was gradual, and in no way happened overnight, but as the propaganda machine grew older, the rhetoric of hatred aimed towards the USA and her armed forces did gradually grow bigger and bigger during the 1950s and intensified later on to the levels we know it exist in the DPRK today.

The role of the USA in propaganda was also often more insidious and subtle, than the open anti-Japanese hatred. For example, in one long text from 1961, given to the 4th congress of the Korean Workers Party in august of 1961, are foreign countries only mentioned in a small fraction, but all of this is dedicated to anti-American remarks about how USA is enslaving the southern parts of the Korean peninsula, and fighting against all things physical or ideological that the DPRK or the Korean people do. Then, this text moves on with the glorification of the results, that the Korean people have achieved under their leader Kim Il-Sung and how things look better now in the start of the new decade, than during the 1950s or the immediate post-war period. Also, the famed Chollima

²³³ Kim Il-Sung 1980 p 8-16, p 21-24

²³⁴ Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971 p 149-159

²³⁵ Ibid. P 64-101 p 193-196

initiative is given endless praise, as according to Kim Il-Sung, it is the only way how the Korean people could have ended the 1950s and move to the next decade in such a good economical and political condition as they had.²³⁶

Another interesting, and also discreet way of demonizing the USA is evident in the treatment of returnee prisoners of war (POW:s) from Southern Korea during the 1950s. In official propaganda, Kim Il-Sung personally encouraged people to be wary of the recently arrived returnees, as he states that they are now all spoiled by the imperialist american propaganda, and therefore, may pose a severe security risk to the citizens and the state. The text, which is aimed towards the guidance of a more orthodox party work in the Workers Party of Korea, also claims that these returned POW:s have been employed to work in their own work units and factories, in order to minimize the risk of American or Japanese influence to other people and workers of the DPRK.²³⁷ The text also mentions, that re-education is also important, as a means to create an increased feeling of safety to the general population. This leaves the possibility of redemption to these isolated persons hanging in the air, even though it is not directly mentioned in the text itself.²³⁸ To someone reading the text, this might seem to be a really cruel and unforgiving way of treating people, who might not have even been responsible of their fate themselves. Considering the fact that they were soldiers, what might have been the fate of lower level NCO:s and low rank soldiers, just obeying orders from their superiors? One must keep in mind though, that in the eyes of the DPRK propaganda institution, the method of isolating people who have seen the real conditions in foreign countries is a highly logical way to act. Behaving in this way, the government and the propaganda institutions get a huge amount of positive enforcement and confirmation bias to their own ideas that all kinds of “foreign lackeys” are constantly trying to undermine the society of the DPRK, and that the USA and Japan are the main enemies of the Korean people and the Workers Party of Korea.

Another element in the anti-US rhetoric is the way how Japan now gets linked to the American work against DPRK. Before the Korean war Japan stood alone as the evil working to undermine the DPRK society, or worked in equal footing compared to the USA²³⁹. Now, the Japanese work against koreans was instigated or guided by USA, according to the propaganda. One could say, that as the DPRK propaganda had constantly been boasting about “Japanese and American lackeys”, the role of Japan was downscaled into a US lackey in the propaganda texts.²⁴⁰ This example shows us again,

236 Kim Il-Sung 1977 part I pages 250-339

237 Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971 p 334-370

238 Ibid, page 366

239 Kim Il-Sung 1980 pages 8-16, 24-32, 40-53, 102-103, 383-399

240 Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971 p 1-39, 64-101

how subtle and careful the early anti american rhetoric in the DPRK propaganda was. It seems that the system was even, to some degrees, careful not to cause too much negative effects in the United States, and not to cause diplomatic incidents between them and the “parent nations” carrying the leading role in the communist block like China or USSR. After the beginning of the 1960s, the tone of the anti-american propaganda started to become gradually more harder²⁴¹, as the influence of both China and the USSR was loosened in the DPRK, and the country had begun to solidify its governing systems after the events of the late 1950s, like the 1956 coup attempt and the purges of Soviet backed communists and coup plotters in 1958-1960.²⁴²

In an eerily similar way how George Orwell described the governing system, and its attitude towards waging war, of the fictitious totalitarian communist superstate of Oceania, in his novel *1984*²⁴³, Kim Il-Sung now had a permanent enemy. This enemy just had destroyed much of everything he and the citizens of the DPRK had just spent years on end to rebuild after World War 2. In Orwell’s novel, it was outlined that a totalitarian government works best, when it guides the effort of the people towards an eternal war against an abstract, but omnipresent enemy, that is somewhere outside the home country. This war never ends, and it is also used as a justification for insurmountable hardships back home, as the war effort eats up any surplus resources from the society, and makes your average everyman to live on with very meagre assets. The work done by factory workers, intellectuals and other production oriented workers like farmers and construction workers produces no GDP growth or anything positive to the population in the long term, as all the effort is guided by the omnipresent totalitarian state towards the semi-imagined war-effort and the military.²⁴⁴ As the book was written already in 1949, it should be kept in mind, that parts of it have influenced the propaganda work of all dictatorships, and even the fields of free media, political influence and propaganda in the more or less democratic states worldwide after its publishing.

The shift from anti-Japanese to anti-American propaganda in the DPRK happened gradually, and not overnight. As we can see from these examples, the seeds of modern rhetoric of hate against the USA were beginning to sprout just after the Korean war, but did not get into a full bloom before the 1960s and the 1970s, when they became more globally known. Of course, the modern post 1975 staunchly anti US propaganda work is a completely another story, which is out of the spectrum of this paper. Other events happening around the same time might have had a strong effect on the way

241 Ibid. Pages 193-232

242 Lankov 2013 p 12-15, also for example Kim Il-Sung Selected Works II 1971 p 133 and Lankov 2005 passim

243 See Chapter 9 of the book “Nineteen Eighty Four” by George Orwell, the fictitious ideology of “Oligarchical Collectivism” explained.

244 Ibid.

how DPRK utilized its propaganda, for example the Sino-Soviet split of 1961 and the Cuban missile crisis might have been just only few of those major events guiding the propagandists towards more hatred against the USA. The DPRK might have felt that the Soviets betrayed the cause by bowing to the US in the shape of the Cuban compromise, and the DPRK and Kim Il-Sung himself might have felt that they now had much more air to breathe and space to move in, after the Sino-Soviet split. The evidence gathered by, among others Lankov²⁴⁵, but also some evidence pointed out by Myers²⁴⁶ support this view of the events. The DPRK propaganda machine and the state itself clearly matured into something more ideologically “independent” and different from the other socialist states during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

4.3 “Factionalists and Revisionists, lackeys of the USA and Japan”

In addition to the foreign influence of the USA and Japan in the society of the DPRK, propaganda and official texts have also emphasized the role of their “lackeys” and collaborators of the aforementioned governments as the primary source of bad influence in the DPRK society.²⁴⁷ These persons have been responsible for factionalism in the Workers Party of Korea, and they have, according to the propaganda, caused many unfavourable events to turn out, which have damaged the Korean people as a whole, and so on. Like in many other socialist countries, the brand of lackey has been in many cases, quite shallow and the factionalists working against the DPRK and Kim Il-Sung themselves have been even more elusive than the actual tenets of the Juche ideology itself²⁴⁸.

More often than not, the mentioning of the anonymous factionalist forces and foreign agents has been enough to influence people in the country to work harder and smarter for the state²⁴⁹, but many times, the badge of a factionalist or foreign lackey has also been, ironically speaking, awarded for people who have fallen from Kim Il-Sung’s personal grace for one reason or another and considered traitors to the revolution or to the government.²⁵⁰ This has also been an undoubtedly efficient propaganda weapon to gain popular support for the traitors condemnation and also, the creation of these fake lackeys and factionalists supports the propaganda machine. This work gradually makes it believable to the people that the foreign forces work relentlessly to bring down the DPRK at every

245 Lankov 2013 p 16-24

246 Myers 2015 p 63-84, about the Soviet relations and secrecy in them

247 Kim Il-Sung 1980 pages 40-53

248 Myers 2010 p 6-13

249 Kim Il-Sung 1977 part I p 246-249. Countless other examples can be found from pretty much any collection of Kim Il-Sung’s works.

250 Lankov 2005 p 7-25 Lankov 2013 p 9-15

hour, of every day, week, month and year. Working like this, the endlessly repetitive propaganda and the collective perceived reality of the people, supported by the propaganda laden media and education, form a kind of a self feeding illusion, that can be easily propped up with occasional fake trials.

This almost paranoid interest in rooting factionalism and the inherent dangers of even the slightest deviation of official party policies to Kim Il-Sung was not a totally made up threat scenario, however. During the times of his youth, in the 1930s, all kinds of factionalist shattering was the norm in the Korean political scene, as almost all parties across the political spectrum quickly collapsed to conflicts of interest and ideological schisms were created almost overnight from petty differences between a small number of aggressive political strongmen.²⁵¹ The fear of factionalism was without a doubt also enforced by the ugly truth that in spite of what Kim Il-Sung himself claims constantly in all parts of his autobiography²⁵², and also in his official biography²⁵³, he was not himself the original innovator of Korean communism, which was instead invented by completely another set of people during the late 1910s. Unfortunately, these people were not to see the birth of the DPRK, as many of them perished in the guerilla campaigns against the Japanese, or were executed by the Japanese soldiers after underground communist parties were forcefully disbanded, whenever found by the Japanese police forces. These two groups mentioned in history books, were not sanctioned by the Kremlin to operate under a unified socialist program of revolution. Ironically, as a cherry on the cake, the two communist groups fought fierce armed battles between each other at every chance they could get.²⁵⁴ So it could be said, that the first factionalists in the DPRK were born before the state was even born, as the Korean communist movement had severe and complicated issues with factionalism immediately after the idea of Korean communism was born. The last remnants of these purely home-grown communists were then actually taken care of by Kim Il-Sung himself, as he purged the Korean communist forces from undesirables in 1945-1946. According to Courtois et. al., many of the still surviving 1910s communists had the questionable privilege to perish in these purges. Cho Man Sik, one of the earliest factionalists in official propaganda²⁵⁵, is also mentioned to have been involved with these early communists. He was arrested as a factionalist in 1945, and executed in 1950, after spending almost five years in prison. Another person mentioned, who was executed almost immediately after being imprisoned was

251 Martin 2004 p 30

252 Kim Il-Sung 1993-2007 parts I-VIII passim

253 Baik 1968/1973 Part I p 63-122 (chapter 2) and p 123-167 (chapter 3)

254 Courtois et. al. 1997/2001 p 613-614

255 Kim Il-Sung 1980 p 21-23

Hyon Chun Hyok.²⁵⁶ Most of their names have been lost to the several purges that followed after 1945, and they are most likely to remain that way for all time. It is highly likely however, that many of them utilized pseudonyms or nicknames, just like Kim Il-Sung did²⁵⁷, so even if their “warrior names” could be dug out from the DPRK archives at one point in the distant future, this might not help researchers very much in any kind of research attempting to discover their true identities.

Besides Cho Man Sik, and Hyon Chun Hyok and the countless numbers of unnamed early communists purged in the immediate return of Kim Il-Sung to the Korean peninsula. Countless of other named people were deemed factionalists or american and/or japanese spies during the years leading to the early 1960s. At least hundreds, if not thousands of people were executed in 1945-1960, during the same time as Cho Man Sik was captured, imprisoned, and executed, according to both Lankov²⁵⁸ and Courtois et. al.²⁵⁹. The total estimates of deaths during the period go anywhere between “hundreds” to around 100 000 people, most of these people most likely imprisoned and executed as suspected factionalists or spies of foreign powers.²⁶⁰ The vast work camp network, that was to become more known to the outside world in the 1990s and beyond, was established during this period, and has been utilized to a great extent all the way from beginning days of its operations to destroy these imagined or real factionalists and spies through labour ever since.²⁶¹ It is good to keep in mind however, that any and all statistics about captured, imprisoned and executed subversives are mere estimates. Courtois et. al., for example, mention that estimates in the mid 1990s were considering somewhere between one and two million people to have died in the DPRK ever since the work camps started operating and the campaign against factionalists began in the mid 1940s. These figures, are however, only estimates, as no official and reliable numbers are available to the researchers, and the DPRK archives remain secret to this day.²⁶²

An entire matter of its own is the 1956 coup attempt²⁶³, and the following waves of purges, which on their own were massive, but also functioned as a catalyst to the continuing work against factionalists and revisionist in the Korean Workers Party. The reactions following the capture of the coup-attempters, and the following expulsion of Soviet-Korean minority from the DPRK²⁶⁴ is a

256 Courtois et. al. 1997/2001 p 613-614

257 Suh 1988 p 3-4, p 10-11

258 Lankov 2013 p 7-15

259 Courtois et. al. 1997/2001 p 618

260 Ibid.

261 Ibid. p 621

262 Ibid. P 631-632

263 Lankov 2005 passim

264 Lankov 2005 p 143-201

grim example of how far Kim Il-Sung and the DPRK state agencies could go in suppressing dissent in the country. Some people, like Myers have questioned the importance of the 1955-1956 events to the development of the modern DPRK²⁶⁵, stating that the whole process of turning into a “nationalist socialist” dictatorship was initiated far earlier than in the 1950s, but then again Lankov speaks for the turning point being exactly then and there, when Kim Il-Sung got rid of the worst troublemakers inside his own party functionaries and did not initiate any kind of destalinization in his government, and did not bring down the personality cult, as other leaders of the socialist block did.²⁶⁶

In this way, any and all subversive elements of the DPRK society were generally turned in the eyes of the propaganda as foreign influenced terrorists, who were determined to undermine the society and the socialist power structures of the DPRK. As was mentioned earlier, the propaganda machine presented any and all enemies usually as foreign backed, and hence started to brand them as such in propaganda aimed towards the citizens of the DPRK and to any possible visitors to the country. The people, constantly exposed to the propaganda at work, in the media, schools and in published literature, bought every word of the claims and accepted it. There was no other way, as you were in the danger zone of becoming the subversive Japanese or American lackey yourself, if you did not believe the official propaganda. This kept those people having second thoughts about the system even more quiet, and allowed the hypothetical, average loyal *Parteimitglieder*²⁶⁷ to gain more confirmation bias and positive enforcement for his or hers own worldview. The stigma of being a foreign backed lackey, factionalist or revisionist played together with the increased isolation of the population, that continued during the 1950s and to the 1960s. Myers mentions in one passing description, how the people were beginning to be so utterly suspicious of foreign people during the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, that even foreign diplomats from friendly socialist nations were beginning to be attacked by the Korean people in Pyongyang totally unprovoked. The most embarrassing of these events happened, when Soviet diplomats, of all people, were suddenly attacked in broad daylight in Pyongyang, during the early 1960s. The event led to Kim Il-Sung himself apologizing the incident to the Soviet government.²⁶⁸ It is highly likely, that the propaganda and state security machine, with its stories of foreign spies was heavily involved in allowing this

265 Myers 2015 p 23-84, 85-103

266 Lankov 2013 p 50-61

267 German term for “party member”, used very often in National Socialist Germany related research, as the term is considered by some to be more exact than the English word “member”, as it has no mathematical, geological or double-entendre meanings connected to it, and is limited to strictly political or associational sphere of membership and member-hood.

268 Myers 2010 p 32

kind of event to happen, as the local people had no other outlet for information from abroad, than the DPRK propaganda machine itself. The effect of collectivist group pressure on the attackers is a thing, that must also be remembered. One can suggest, that the people taking part in this attack, had no intentions of betraying their Great Leader, instead, they must have worked in full belief that they were doing something that was ideologically totally acceptable. One also can do nothing but wonder, what kind of propaganda, only intended for internal purposes, might have been written from the aforementioned event, to be consumed by the citizens of the DPRK. Alas, we can only speculate on this matter, as no official DPRK archive will open its doors for us in the foreseeable future, and no official information is likely to be forthcoming to the western academia, even in the coming years.

4.4 The 1956 coup attempt and its after effects

One of the most peculiar events to happen in the DPRK between 1945 and 1960 was undoubtedly the coup attempt of 1956. The reasons behind the attempt, whatever they might have been, have unfortunately been shrouded in mystery, and no historical records remain of the further background considering the event and its leaders. What we do know about the event rests on the findings from official propaganda sources and research done by Andrei Lankov, who has unearthed a lot of interesting information regarding the events in 1955 and 1956 from the Soviet archives and translated it into english, and eventually into a credible and respected academic research.²⁶⁹ Most factual information that we know from the chain of events, comes directly out of Lankovs work on the subject, as the official propaganda is in no way a credible source of truthful turns of events during those days. Another established scholar of Korean history, B.R. Myers, has also studied the events, and his differing view about the events in question are also an interesting take on the events of these two or so years of the history of the DPRK.²⁷⁰ What we do know, is that some kind of a group of Soviet educated koreans, some dual-citizens of the DPRK and Soviet Union, did at least attempt to organize an overthrow of Kim Il-Sung, in the wake of the events of 1953 and 1956 in East-Germany and Hungary respectively. During those years, a protest against Soviet occupation forces turned very violent in East Berlin, resulting in many casualties.²⁷¹ This was followed by the Hungarian revolution of 1956, when the people of Hungary and the local communist party decided

269 Lankov 2001 passim, Lankov 2005 passim, Lankov 2013 p 12-15

270 Myers 2010 passim, Myers 2015 passim

271 Wolle 2013 p 263-274

to introduce democratic and western elements into the socialist system without blessings from the Soviet Union. The attempt was crushed with military force by Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations.²⁷²

The group of the Korean coup planners were perhaps afraid that the people would rise against the socialist rule, if the Stalin-inspired dictatorship of Kim Il-Sung would keep on continuing ad infinitum, and wanted to de-Stalinize the country in lieu of the example given by the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and East-Germany. In all of these countries, the socialist governments had dismantled the personality cult of their former leaders and Josif Stalin, who was revered as a somewhat pan-socialist idol until his death in 1953. When he finally died, the cult built around him was dismantled very rapidly in a few years²⁷³, and denounced by the following Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev in 1956.²⁷⁴ The exact feelings and thoughts of the Korean coup ring can probably never be made clear, as no evidence about their meetings and plans survive, outside the ones scribbled by the Soviet embassy personnel, whom with they had requested audience in the 1950s, which were uncovered by Lankov from the state archives of Russia. Even the survival of these documents is a miracle in its own right, as some of them were hand-written, and not machine-typed. In those days it was the common way of writing reports clean with the help of a writer, and to discard the hand-written notes after the final report had been completed. The reason for the existence of these hand-written notes is also shrouded in considerable mystery. But yet, they still exist, and were an invaluable source of information in the research of the events of 1956 to Lankov, and the rest of the academic community researching either Soviet or Korean history during the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷⁵

Kim Il-Sung left for a long cross-Europe trip in 1956, and while he was away from the country, touring various socialist states in eastern Europe and through the Soviet Union itself, the coup attempt was set in motion. The group attempting the coup often visited the Soviet embassy during and before the coup, and tried, for the most part in vain, to gain some support for their coup. Soviets politely turned down any requests of aid one after another. It is either through them or some other channels, that the information about the coming coup was transmitted to the people close to Kim Il-Sung, who reacted to the information very quickly and in a hard manner. It is through these regular visits to the embassy, that we today even know this side of the story. The Soviet diplomats had the habit of keeping somewhat punctual and accurate archives of who visited them, when, and for what

272 Hungarian Spring 1956

273 Plamper 2012 p 221-226

274 Riasanovsky 1969 p 598-601

275 Lankov 2005 p 73-92

reason. Some of the material was deemed too risky to be sent forward by the embassy workers, and was even personally archived by some of them in the form of hand written notes, to be discovered by Lankov rummaging through the archives decades later.²⁷⁶

This did not however turn out as the Soviet-Korean coup organizers wished, and the DPRK state security services and Kim Il-Sung himself got informed of these attempts, and both acted swiftly, imprisoned and executed all the instigators of the coup attempt. Kim Il-Sung started a wave of massive purges in the DPRK, where countless of people perished or went completely missing. These purges stopped for a while, as a secret committee was sent to the country by both China and the Soviet Union in 1956. The arrival of this committee was kept secret from the people, and was not mentioned in official propaganda, which at the time concentrated on attacking the coup makers as “foreign lackeys” and spies, and denouncing their work. The arrival of this committee halted the purges for a shorter while, until, after its departure, the purges gradually stepped up in speed and intensified again.²⁷⁷

Many Soviet-Koreans in the country were given the option of leaving the country at this point, and almost all of them chose to repatriate into the Soviet Union, either out of their own free will or after persuasion by the secret police. The Soviet Union used these immigrants and their immigration passes as a political weapon, even perhaps saving many gifted and formerly valuable people who were most likely deemed to be executed by the secret police or the army in the DPRK.²⁷⁸ As the Soviet-Koreans were mostly highly educated and fluent in many languages and often had university degrees or had worked as technical engineers, their depart was considered a major blow to the DPRK society as a whole. Also, the Chinese advisors and Soviet aid workers largely left the country between 1956 and 1959 due to these events.²⁷⁹ The departure of the “fraternal socialist guidance” and a sizable chunk of the educated population in the country must have had some far flung consequences to the DPRK society, as the domestic training available did not replace the people left with reliable domestic graduates in such a short time period.²⁸⁰ During this time, between 1956 and 1959, countless of DPRK exchange students, then studying in various foreign socialist countries, like Czechoslovakia or East-Germany, were also persuaded to return back home, which also caused some diplomatic tow-rowing and short-term damage to the educational system of the DPRK, as foreign influence and channels of receiving innovations and idea exchange from the outside world

276 Lankov 2005 p 73-92, 93-115

277 Lankov 2005 p 121-174

278 Lankov 2005 p 143-174

279 Lankov 2005 p 175-201, 2013 p 15-18

280 Lankov 2005 p 175-201

were suddenly closed in a short period of time.²⁸¹ Many people acting in a subversive manner towards the state, in reality or on an imaginary level, were also sentenced to the labour camps. It is highly likely, that the camp system was used alongside the official “re-education”²⁸² purposes for a more sinister purpose. As according to many sources alongside Lankov, as much as 100 000 people died during the period approximately between the years 1949 and 1960²⁸³, one can easily throw out into the air the suggestion that the camp system also worked as an industrial facility aiming towards a national socialist project of extermination through labour.²⁸⁴ Instead of other races, sexual minorities or religious groups being branded as the eternal subversives, as in Nazi-Germany, the Kim Il-Sung government exterminated anyone opposing the government, regardless of said opposition being actual or imagined.

In the official propaganda, the events of 1956 were a literal and a figurative gold mine. In his official speeches and letters, Kim Il-Sung took all the tiniest minutiae that could be utilized in any way, and attacked the coup ring and other factionalists with them. This all had certainly been the doing of factionalists and foreign lackeys, of course working for the Americans and the Japanese again. The coup ring members were deemed deranged and unpatriotic, and were deemed to have continued this unpatriotic behaviour unopposed since the second world war and before. The coup attempt remained as a tool of propaganda and as a story describing a glorious victory against the omnipresent enemies and their assortment of lackeys with paper thin moral spines, who were constantly trying to undermine the achievements of the DPRK, well into the 1950s and beyond.²⁸⁵ For example in the official biography of Kim il-Sung, the following story is told about the 1956 coup:

“In line with the manoeuvrings of the modern revisionists who wanted to have the revisionist line adopted as the “common programme” of the international communist movement, these people tried hard to spread the move, describing revisionism as an “international tendency.” But the purpose of these people, who formed an alliance with modern revisionism, was to overthrow the Party and its leadership and to all intents and purposes frustrate the Korean revolution.

Foolishly enough, these treacherous people were frantically engaged in efforts to organize clandestine intrigues in order to destroy the Party and the revolution, even while Comrade Kim Il Sung was making friendship visits to the various socialist

281 Martin 2004 p 289-292

282 Lankov 2013 p 45-49

283 Courtois et al 1997/2001 p 612-718

284 Lankov 2005 p 175-201

285 For Example: Kim Il-Sung Selected Works III 1971 p 465-525, KTKPI 1972 p 163-256

countries as the head of a government delegation.

Actually, the Party and the revolution were the target of fierce, sustained attacks from all kinds of domestic and international enemies, but as it quickly turned out, the enemies of the revolution made a big mistake.

There is no doubt that they failed to grasp the fact that Comrade Kim Il Sung, equipped with an iron will and extraordinary political sagacity, had built up the Party into invincible ranks, able to bear the brunt of the severest storms of modern history, and that the whole membership of the Party and people were rallied behind the Leader, firm as steel.

They also failed to evaluate properly the revolutionary spirit of the members of the Worker's Party of Korea and Korean people who were boundlessly faithful to him. The people's enemies failed to disturb Comrade Kim Il Sung and the Korean people by whatever their means. Rather, it was the traitors to the revolution who had reason to be terrified."²⁸⁶

Thus, the events of 1956 were added to the expanding narrative and the mythos of the Kim Il-Sung government. The system was, or was at least thought to be, in grave danger for a short while, and had weathered the political storm largely independently. At least when studying the explanation of events according to the official propaganda. The events of those days and months quickly took their places in the official propaganda, and continue to be referenced occasionally to this day in many types of propaganda used by the DPRK, both in internal propaganda and in the material meant for outside consumption. Alongside the “coup-attempt”, the Stakhanovite inspired Chollima-initiative of 1955-1956 mentioned earlier in this thesis, all the way in the first chapters, happened at the same time. In addition to this the gradual modification of the DPRK state machine towards a more self-reliant and totalitarian government when compared to other people's democracies of the era was set in motion after the image of the real and perceived enemies was “standardized” finally in the mid-to-late 1950s. After making clear to the people who the enemies were, and tying them to the laborous process of the Chollima-initiative and relentless work in the fields and in the factories, the Korean people of the northern parts of the peninsula were now firmly under the control of Kim Il-Sung, existing in an ideological and mental mindset provided by the state.

4.5 Control the minds and control the state – the caste system and the battle for production

From 1957 onwards, the DPRK government started to do thorough ideological and racial profiling

286 Baik 1968/1973 p 550-551

for people, who were, among other things, vying for a study place from a university, or a position in the Workers Party.²⁸⁷ This was a rare phenomenon in socialist countries of the time, and could easily be thought of bringing back echoes from another totalitarian system much further away in history. This quasi-National Socialist or a “Nazi in all but name” way of functioning when processing the university applicants and new Workers Party members was most probably used as a tool of control and fear-instillation to the subjects of Kim Il-Sung. Working this way, the governmental system could ensure, that no more subversives would get an education high enough to question the state, or for example, get into a position of power through educational merits. When any potential gradual opposition is eliminated in this way, even before it had any chances of rooting itself to the system, Kim Il-Sung had finally established his position as the ultimate leader of the nation. With constant fear towards the state agencies responsible for public safety and ideological purity, an average layman could not do anything significant against the state and its functions in fear for losing his own life, if he would dare to oppose the regime in any way.²⁸⁸

The Profiling of the people was eventually codified in the laws of the DPRK, and turned into a caste system. The system originally had several parts and layers of function. People were categorized on basis of their family history, political history, and personal deeds. The system had a few dozen different classes for different people, and the classes in which people were assigned to, were often very immobile. It was nearly impossible for people to move away from their own class, at least upwards. Downwards spiral in class rank was always a possibility, if one engaged in subversive actions against the state or the image of Kim Il-Sung. The system was known as the “songbun” system, and a version of it is functional still to this day in the DPRK. It has gone through many revisions in later years, but the original system is still technically in effect.²⁸⁹

The songbun system was in a way, a very functional method to control the people. Like the feudal systems of ancient Europe and Asia, in almost all cases, it tied the people to the land or to the city they lived in. Moving between urban population centers was impossible, if it was not allowed by the state functionaries. The only segments of the people, who were allowed to travel, were the diplomats and the government workers, who also had very limited resources and travelled only for diplomatic, political or business related reasons, never for leisure. It also made completely possible the expulsion of undesired people from major cities without any resistance from more distant family members or friends, who did not dare to act in fear of losing their own songbun rank while helping

287 Lankov 2005 p 175-201

288 Ibid.

289 Ibid.

a known subversive and anti-citizen to escape from the authorities. The most unwanted peoples were moved under the guise of the systems legal jargon and official documents to the northern border areas of the DPRK, often having to work in harsh environments in agricultural or mining sectors. The harsh climate of the northern border areas, the hard work the people were subjected to, and the general suspicion and lack of social contacts from more prestigiously classified locals was also often causing the life of these people to end earlier than many others. This could also be seen as a tool for the national socialist style “extermination through labour”, and a very efficient one at that too. Without firing a single shot, or expending precious military or chemical equipment, like bullets or nerve gases, the state could get rid of the troublemakers. The confucian history of obedience towards ones elders and the state most likely was an invaluable asset to the DPRK system, and used accordingly.²⁹⁰ However, researchers such as Myers have pointed out, that the DPRK politics did not actually change during this time. They were just codified in the official propaganda and the law after the war. Myers points out that these traditional systems and harsh politics had always been in use in the DPRK, and it was not until the 1960s that official state organs got involved with them. He even goes as far as to call the DPRK as the “Albania of Asia” between the 1950s and approximately 1962-1965. This is due to the fact that even though, on paper, the Kim Il-Sung regime had tight control of everything, they still had not institutionalized the songbun, the traditional justice systems and so on. Also, according to Myers, Kim Il-Sung had always had the “Socialist Nationalism” as the guiding principle in his governmental work, so no real change happened in 1955 or 1956, the state had just reached the state of political development at this point, to enforce things officially and pragmatically, not only on paper and in the minds of the propagandists.²⁹¹

While all this was going on, the official propaganda continued to praise the post 1956 events in the DPRK. The Chollima-initiative and the introduction of the songbun system, which arguably guaranteed the workers for the initiative in order for it to succeed, carried on. In the early 1960s, Kim Il-Sung said that “great deeds and accomplishments” were made now that the party was unified as one, but did fail to mention many examples of what was actually accomplished. Instead of actual examples, a fair amount of mythological ancient characters and famous workers, all individuals, were used as an examples of how a loyal DPRK subject should work under the new post 1956 system and the society organized under the songbun system. Also, a variety of generalized examples were used, such as comparing the production facilities and their work schedules, to the organizations of the Korean People’s Army, and using language comparing the

290 Ibid p 34-45

291 Myers 2015 p 85-103

actions of the factory workers to battles and wars of the armed forces during the Korean War or the guerilla campaigns of the 1930s.²⁹² This continuous use of war as a propaganda tool most likely encouraged the people to literally soldier on under the regime, and as the stories were a mandatory favourite, possibly gave them something to think while toiling in the fields and in the factories. It is clearly seen, for example, in the stories regarding the early deeds of Kim il-Sung, like his autobiography²⁹³, or the first part of the official biography²⁹⁴.

At least, this is what the official propaganda tells us about the reception of such propaganda, as in his official biography mentioned. According to the biography, people received the post 1956 events with joy, and worked relentlessly in order to complete the country as an image of themselves and Kim Il-Sung's special leadership. The workers from all castes did heroic deeds when Kim Il-Sung was there to lead them. People worked overtime, without protective equipment or food, in order to complete various industrial projects, monuments, feed their families, and the like. As the name of Chollima-initiative was originated from the mysterious and ancient horse, who could ride without a rest for a distance of thousand li/ri²⁹⁵, the heroes of the post 1956 industrial efforts were called "Chollima Riders". They rode the figurative horse of Chollima-intitiative, as leaders of the production battle, towards socialism, thus inspiring other workers to work harder and faster.²⁹⁶ And at least for a while in the late 1950s and the early 1960s, this way of encouraging the workers to work for a better tomorrow did work. It should be noted, however, that the DPRK had always had a strong sense of belief in the future, in official propaganda. The amount of weight they put on the mystical future where the state triumphs over its adversaries is very much comparable to the plans of Nazi Germany, as massive construction projects and the change of the very fabric of the society were in planning stages, but were never completed in both governments.²⁹⁷

5. Conclusion

In light of these theories presented in this thesis, it can be said that the personality cult of Kim il-Sung, the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was based on three major tenets: The Juche ideology, the utilization of real and perceived enemies as scapegoats for the

292 Kim Il-Sung Selected Works III 1971 p 1-26

293 Kim Il-Sung With the Century I 1993 p 1-127 for example

294 Baik 1968/1973 p 63-264

295 An ancient Sino-Korean measure of distance, explained earlier in this thesis in the 1st and 2nd chapters. Written form varies, due to Korean and Chinese having no differentiation between western letters L and R.

296 Bong 1973 p 564-601

297 Lankov 2013 p 17

shortcomings and cruelties of the regime, and the mystical, sometimes magical connection the dear leader or “the General”, among other honorifics he has, is enjoying with the motherland and the Korean race.

The cult utilizes the nationalist ethos and pathos very much, going as far as the mythos of the ancient sky king of Korea²⁹⁸, in order to satisfy the need of mystical, historical figures from the past to justify the governance and the Kim il-Sung cult. The utilization of ancient mythology, the close connection between the homeland, its nature, soil and the Korean race itself, was an important part in fueling the fire of the cult of personality of Kim il-Sung already from the mid 1950s onwards²⁹⁹. Without the collective ethos given by the blind love of the homeland and the faith that the Korean race was superior in all fields of existence when compared to the other nations of the world, the cult of personality might have not gotten so huge and omnipresent as it did.

Along with the connection to the race and the soil of Korea, the perception of the enemies of the state was an important part of the cult of personality. Enemies could lurk anywhere, so people had to stay vigilant and guard their homeland, and their beloved leader, from the attacks of foreign lackeys and enemy saboteurs. More often than not, many people were persecuted on the guise of being foreign lackeys, if they just happened to have dissenting opinions about the state functions of the DPRK or have personal grudges against the party elite or Kim il-Sung himself. For example, as presented in this thesis, on the light of evidence gained by Lankov, most of the original politicians and activists behind Kim il-Sung, some of them his former close allies, perished in the purges of the late 1950s and early 1960s.³⁰⁰ After the calculated removal of the former close allies from the original 1949 politburo meetings, the state secret police and Kim il-Sung concentrated on other “factional” differences, and removed the Soviet-Korean minority from the DPRK by a series of imprisonments, executions and issuing orders of exile. After this tumultuous era of purges, repression and excommunications from the DPRK, the governing system of the DPRK was developed more on the lines of “socialist nationalism”, than the previous faithful leninist-stalinist line of most of the people’s democracies of the 1950s.

Thus, all kind of real or imagined resistance to the undisputable position of Kim il-Sung as the supreme leader of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea was removed, and he was left to reign supreme.³⁰¹

298 See chapter 2 of this thesis

299 See chapter 3 of this thesis

300 Lankov 2013 p 13-15

301 Lankov 2005 passim.

As claimed by some scholars of today, the aim to develop the country towards the “socialist nationalism” in the shape of Juche and an operator independent of the aid of China and Soviet Union in the long run, might have been the aim of Kim il-Sung all the time.³⁰² By creating the total control state, where everything and everyone is controlled through national socialism, not unlike in the Third Reich of Adolf Hitler, with nationalist mythos and hero worship lifted to the pedestal of virtues and foreign lackeys and subversives being declared the common enemies of people, a system of total control was established. It is just by cunning machiavellian politics and calculated movements, that Kim il-Sung played both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China to do his bidding and give the DPRK material aid when needed. Working in such way, both Kim il-Sung and the anonymous party elites protected their grip of the power in the DPRK, their livelihoods, their families, and in the end, to ensure some kind of continuity to the on global standards very meager, but by national standards, very prestigious existence of their families.³⁰³

By the end of the 1950s, and the early years of the 1960s by approximately circa 1963, the DPRK regime had achieved these standards. They were now firmly in control, all the Soviet born Korean nationals either executed, imprisoned, or made to return back to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. China and the Soviet Union had had a nasty break up between themselves in the early years of the 1960s, which was then a very contemporary political event. This opened up the road for the DPRK government and Kim il-Sung to make both of these countries to play for his bidding, when issuing material or technological aid. This also gave a small “ventilation hole” for the DPRK government to act more independently among the 3rd world countries all around the world at this time. A move which, unfortunately, is mostly outside the time and thematic limits of this thesis.

Needless to say though, that the repercussions from these adventures in Angola against the Portuguese and then against the South Africans, Indonesia while she was flirting with radical socialism and marxism in the 1960s, the Rhodesian Bush war from the 1960s onwards, and countless other countries had serious effects on the lives of many people all over the world, and we still carry the figurative scars of these events to this day. Approximately between 10 000 to even 100 000 Koreans died in the internal purges of the DPRK during the time between 1945 and 1963³⁰⁴, hundreds of thousands in both the DPRK and the Republic of Korea due to the Korean war in 1950-1953, thousands of western soldiers died in the war and in its aftermath, and later on, millions of african tribesmen, innocent civilians working as colonial servants, or just as hapless

302 Myers 2015 *passim*.

303 Lankov 2013 introduction p xi-xv

304 Courtois et. al. 2001 p 631-632

bystanders, as well as white colonial soldiers, colonial inhabitants and african natives, like the Afrikaners and white rhodesian farmers with family histories reaching back two centuries on the african continent, died due to the attempt of spreading Korean inspired communism to the continent in the decades beginning in the 1960s.³⁰⁵ Practically no one outside the Korean peninsula or the African continent mentions these victims either.

In conclusion, the cult of personality created by Kim il-Sung around himself was successful in creating a totalitarian police state, completely different from other forms of communism present in the 1950s, and arguably, the state was truly communist on paper only. In practice, the state adhered to something known as “nationalist socialism”, which was closely tuned in with the existence of the Koreans as a single race in their home country. After the break up of China and the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, Kim il-Sung turned towards a more independent way, away from the guidance of Soviet and Chinese politics, most likely influenced by the near loss of face in the Korean War of the 1950-1953. The ideology of Juche, arguably invented in the late 1940s, was adopted as the guiding principle over traditional socialism in 1956, and the country progressed on this newfound way of “nationalist socialism” ever since. The future of this system is uncertain, and has always been, which might be one of the very reasons it still exists as of early 2017.

305 Courtois et. al. 2001 p 759-781

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