

A Russian Newspaper's North Korean Native Advertising

April 19, 2017



Wong Maye-E / AP

Every year around the time of his birthday, the Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda publishes a native advertisement praising Kim Il-sung, the founder and former supreme leader of North Korea. This year was no exception, and readers were treated to an article titled, “[Kim Il-sung — A Great Man of the Century.](#)”

The text describes how he created *Juche*, North Korea’s isolationist version of socialism, and contains pearls like “Kim Il-sung’s burning love for mankind and his boundless, all-embracing graciousness was addressed not just to Koreans, but to all the people of the world, regardless of nationality, religion, and political beliefs.”

The article concludes on a high note, too: “President Kim Il-sung lives forever in people’s hearts.”

[Last year](#), the exact same text appeared in Komsomolskaya Pravda’s Khabarovsk edition, and

five days later it was copied again for an advertisement in the newspaper's Irkutsk edition. At the end of this article, a note read, "This material was provided by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

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This Tuesday, Komsomolskaya Pravda published what appears to be a second paid story promoting North Korea's erstwhile leader. Titled "[A Flower With the Name of a Great Man](#)," the article recalls how former Indonesian President Sukarno supposedly named the orchid *Kimilsungia* after Kim Il-sung. Komsomolskaya Pravda did not identify this story as an advertisement, however.

Speaking to the news agency RBC on Wednesday, Komsomolskaya Pravda chief editor Vladimir Sungorkin [explained](#) that a "North Korean organization" buys the ad space every year to promote "its own ideas about the social structure and role of North Korea in human history."

Sungorkin also dismissed the ads' influence on public opinion, joking that Russian young people aren't about to hit the streets to demand a North Korean regime of their own.

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