

The Albanian Intervention

In light of the previously expressed judgement that “the Socialist camp had ceased to exist” (at the 10th CPC Congress in 1973), China’s inauguration of ‘Three World Theory’ was less a reconceptualisation of foreign policy on less ideologically based categories (i.e. class nature), and more a reapplication of tried and tested alliance-building strategies regardless of ideological affinity.

The genealogy of ‘The Three Worlds Theory’ suggests continuity in Communist China’s multi-polar conceptualisation of the world. There was a revival of the category of ‘intermediate zone’: the emphasis on Europe was not simply as an arena of confrontation, between the two superpowers with European states as accomplices of US imperialism, but subject to superpower domination. With the Soviet Union identified as an imperialist state, then the state-to-state relations with its “satellites” could be “cultivating outposts of resistance in the Soviet background” mirroring relations with Western European states in their alliance with the USA (Xiaoyuan 2004).

Mao’s comments to President Kaunda of Zambia saw a world system comprising of two superpowers (First World) developed industrialized nations forming a Second World, who exploited the developing countries but were also in turn exploited and bullied by the two superpowers. The Third World, consisting of the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, was exploited and oppressed by both.

Even earlier, the concept of “intermediate zones” was present in Mao’s post-2nd World War thinking: the notion in Talk with Anna Louise Strong in August 1946 .The policy of ‘leaning to one side’, that is a sole alliance with the Soviet Union, was forced upon the newly emergent communist regime by US hostility and encirclement policy. In diplomatic terms, the Chinese had suggested no other basis for relations with countries having a different social system than that of the ‘Five Principles’ * propagated at the 1955 Bandung Conference between Zhou Enlai, India’s leader Nehru and Burmese leader U Nu.

The enunciation of a broad strategic approach, as in the general line for an international united front (targeted at the two superpowers, and then specifically at the Soviet Union) did reflect growing Chinese foreign policy concerns in the 1970s.

Veteran Australian Maoist leader, Ted Hill observed,

some times the bourgeoisie and its agents call us “Peking” We do have warm fraternal relations with the Chinese Communist party. We will do all we have to help and support it particularly when it is under attack from within and without as it is today. Nor is there any doubt of its support for us. That does not lie in anything other than a common adherence to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and proletarian internationalism. We are not the agents of China’s foreign policy.”¹

¹ Hill, E.F. (1977) *Class Struggle Within the Communist Parties*, defeat of the Gang of Four Great Victory for World Proletariat. Australia: A Communist (Marxist-Leninist) Publication page 42

It would be a crude summation that pro-China groups adhered to, and acted little more than part of a chorus, to what came out of Beijing. Within the ML groups, the resources and personnel to analysis policy shifts were seldom available; instead the framework of identification with, or against the Party in power, supplemented to media reports, informed the stance of the European parties. Bi-lateral relations between the European Maoist organisations were far from uniform or comprehensive. The main avenue for exchange of views was the flow of publications between organisations and reportage in Peking (later Beijing) Review.

The existence of the 'Three World Theory' provoked distension between groups that were heated and acrimonious, the volume of literature and meetings that focused on the 'Three Worlds Theory' in the late 1970s that came out of the European Maoists reflected the attempt to independently understand and assess the implications of the authoritative statement.

Divergent views were observable between the two allies: the lack of agreement of views on international developments such as the consolidation of the European Union. In 1975, China established formal relations with the European Community, while at the PLA's 7th Congress it was grouped with its East European counter-part, Comecon, as "equally reactionary forces". The differences between their approaches of the allies were bubbling up to the surface.

There were strategic differences as Albania was critical of the foreign policy priorities that increasingly reflected the containment of the Soviet Union as China's objective. In their opposition to China's widening diplomatic offensive to establish relationships² Albanian criticism appealed to a political orthodoxy that asserted (within a Marxist discourse) the primacy of class against the complexities in the Chinese analysis of world politics that spoke of national independence and alliances with bourgeois leaders. In retrospect, the PLA concluded that,

with Nixon's visit, China joined the dance of imperialist alliances and rivalries for the redivision of the world, where, China, too, would have its own share. This visit paved the road to its rapprochement and collaboration with US imperialism and its allies.³

The theme that 'it is impossible to use one imperialist to oppose another' had pointedly appeared at the time of Chinese preparations for the visit of US President, Richard Nixon to China. It came after Romania's leader Ceausescu had received a warm reception on his visit to China in 1971.

China's foreign policy initiatives in the Balkan region served to confirm Albania's worst fears: in August 1977 Yugoslavian leader Tito undertook a state visit to China. By March 1978, Inter-party relations were restored between the CPC and the Yugoslav League of Communists. When Hua Guofeng's visit to Western Europe in August 1978 included Romania and Yugoslavia, relations between the former allies had reached their lowest point; with not too much subtlety Hoxha's fourteen-year-old article regarding Khrushchev's visit to Yugoslavia was republished in Tirana under the title, *Khrushchev Kneeling Before Tito* at almost exactly the time that Tito was visiting the People's Republic of China

² Dai Bingguo (2001) The Communist Party of China's contacts with Foreign Political parties: an interview with Dai Bingguo, Minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee.

³ Hoxha 1979b: Reflections on China - 2 volumes. Tirana: the <8 Nentori> Publishing House: 41

An underlying but significant factor in the Albanian intervention was the perceived national interest of the small Balkan state. Albanian independence had been a motif in the PLA's engagement in the international communist movement. Prior to the 7th Congress, the Albanian Defence Minister, Balluku was executed, along with other senior military officers, allegedly for collusion with China promoting a military alliance with Romania and Yugoslavia.⁴

Within a few years of Mao's death in September 1976, the pro-China groups had been reshaped and divided along ideological lines as a result of a concerted intervention by the PLA designed to bring organisations into its exclusive political orbit. The Albanian intervention appeal was to those favourable to looking to Tirana in much the same way earlier generations of communists looked towards Moscow. Pro-Albania groups turned to Third Period Comintern-era ideology to replace Cultural Revolution-era Maoism. The political battle lines were to be drawn up in four principle texts –: the unsigned '*Zeri I Popullit*' editorial of July 1977, *The Theory and Practice of Revolution*, the governmental letter of July 1978 sent on the occasion of China's cessation of aid to Albania and the third was Enver Hoxha's *Imperialism and Revolution* published in 1979 and Hoxha's two volume dairy *Reflections on China* should be read as having had an overt political function beyond providing a contemporaneous historical record on Sino-Albanian relations. The fourth contribution, summarising the differences and criticism culminating in the October 1978 seminar, organised under the auspicious of the Institute of Marxist Studies.⁵ The formation of the pro-Albanian movement had coalesced over an eighteen-month period.

The official Albanian Party History records the subterfuge employed; while, for 'tactical reasons' the CPC was not named, the entire world would understand against whom the criticisms were aimed, as the counter-revolutionary <<theories>> and actions of the Chinese were already known to all.⁶

In 1976 the 7th Congress saw a gathering of European and other Maoist leaders in Albania. The Communist party of China was again absent due to a decision that since their congress in April 1969 they had not sent delegations to any foreign party congresses, or invited any foreign delegations to their own.

From the anti-revisionist movement, twenty-nine sent delegations to Tirana⁷, more than ever before (and in addition there are "Marxist-Leninist friends" present from Turkey, Iran, and Iceland). They represent Australia, Italy, Brazil, West Germany, Britain, Argentina, Spain, Sri Lanka, France, Ecuador, Indonesia, Bolivia, Norway, Colombia, Sweden, Peru, Japan, Portugal, Chile, Austria, Paraguay, the Netherlands, Uruguay, Belgium, the Philippines, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, and the Dominican Republic.

⁴ "15 Albanians executed for pro-China conspiracy". *The Times* August 4 1978 p5.

⁵ The Institute of Marxist Leninist Studies, (1979) *Problems of Current World Development: Reports submitted to the Scientific Session held in Tirana, October 2-4 1978* Tirana: the <8 Nentori> Publishing House

⁶ *History of the Party of Labour of Albania 1966-1980*. The <8 Nentori> Publishing House, Tirana 1981: 232

⁷ Quoted in the Albanian order listed by ATA on November 1st by Kevin Devlin in FOREIGN DELEGATIONS AT THE ALBANIAN CONGRESS .RAD Background Report/224 (Albania) 3 November 1976

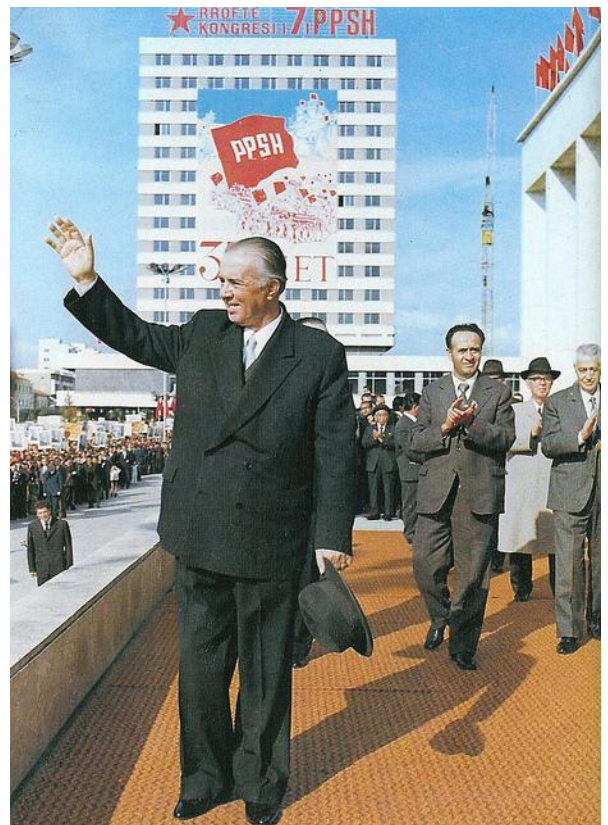
There were two noteworthy absentees the Communist Party of New Zealand, which had supported the Albanians for a decade and a half [and in the simmering polemic that emerged, continued to do so]. The other absentee was the Polish Communist Party (KPP) – whose Secretary-General, Kazimierz Mijal, is known to have resided in Tirana since he fled Poland in February 1966. Mijal was not reported as attending the Fifth Congress in 1966, although a proclamation addressed by the KPP to the congress was read by Jacques Grippa of Belgium; at the sixth Albanian congress in 1971 Mijal was present as head of the KPP delegation.

If the intention was to sound out disagreements with the Chinese positions and spot likely clientele for a Tirana-based ‘Marxist-Leninist International’, the response was mixed from the fraternal delegations attending.

Many of the delegations did praised their host; the Brazilian delegation called Enver Hoxha “the greatest and the most enlightened Marxist-Leninist of the present time”⁸ Symbolic because the Communist Party of Brazil had been amongst the first to ally themselves to the Sino-Albanian side of the Polemics in the early Sixties. A highly critical article followed on the Three World Theory and revisionist (meaning Chinese) attempt to split the Brazilian party after the visit by First Party Secretary, Joas Amazonas, to Albania⁹. The Latin American participants at the 7th Congress “took the opportunity to hold a fraternal meeting”¹⁰ to discuss their individual positions and issued a joint declaration in which they stated, among other things, that “This [Yankee] imperialism is the main enemy of the peoples on the continent [of South America].”

Others invited read like a roll call of a ‘Maoist international’: Ted Hill, Chairman of the Communist Party of Australia (ML), the leader of the Ceylon Communist Party N. Sanmugathan, a delegation from the Norwegian AKP (ML) and Jacques Jurquet, leader of the French PCMLF.

Reg Birch of the CPB (ML) address to Congress declared, “We do not go to bed with the bourgeoisie.”¹¹ A cryptic remark that implied criticism of what he saw would result from the Chinese call for a ‘united front’ against the two superpowers; an alliance with one’s own ruling class against the USA or USSR. The CPB (ML) were initially favourable to the PLA, even setting up the ‘New Albania Society’, in competition with an established friendship organisation led by Bill Bland of the pro-Albanian (but not recognised) Communist League. Amongst the few who argued early on about the



⁸ Prifti 1978:252.

⁹ “The Unity and Reinforcement of the Workers’ Movement, a priority duty” *A Classe Operaria* January 1978

¹⁰ Joint Declaration of the Delegations of the Marxist-Leninist Parties of Latin America (Issued February 1977) Nottingham: Nottingham Communist Group

¹¹ *The Worker* (London) No23, November 29, 1976

nature of Maoism, were the Communist League led by Bill Bland (UK); and the Proletarian Path led by Moni Guha (India), Centre d'Etude Sur Le Mouvement Ouvrier et Paysan International (CEMOPI) led by Patrick Kessels (France).

The AKP (ML) commented, In the report to the 7th Congress of the PLA the CPC was openly criticised for the first time, although the criticisms was not textually directed against China and the CPC. Textually the criticism was directed against supporters of the three-world theory, yet everybody at the Congress readily understood that the CPC was the actual target.¹²

Enver Hoxha's Congress Report set the ideological framework: the introduction to an edition circulated by the Communist Party of England (ML), noted it contained:

a number of important observations on the international situation... The report is written at a time of great turmoil in the Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary movement throughout the world. The views presented in the report help to clarify a number of important questions and are a valuable contribution to the important struggle that is taking place against international opportunism.¹³

The existence of three English based groups siding with the Albanian argument was not unique; the premier site documenting the modern anti-revisionist movement noted that, in the United States the distinct Pro-Albania trend in the New Communist Movement emerged in 1978 in response to the open polemics between the Party of Labor of Albania (PLA) and the Communist Party of China. The main organizations in this trend were:



- * the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee (MLOC), one of the groups which had its origins in the Black Workers Congress;
- * the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists (COUSML);
- * the U.S. Leninist Core, which derived from remnants of the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization-Revolutionary Workers League alliance that formerly called itself the Revolutionary Wing;
- * Demarcation, which came out of the Red Dawn Committee (M-L), which itself had come out of the New York section of the Workers Congress (M-L);
- * a number of smaller collectives, primarily in the Midwest and on the West Coast.

Given their shared agreement with the line of the Party of Labor of Albania, efforts were undertaken in 1978-1980 to unify these groups in a single organization and/or party building process. In the end, however, all of these ended in failure.¹⁴

¹² AKP(ML)1978 :3

¹³ Communist Party of England (ML) 1977

¹⁴ EROL. *Unification Efforts of Pro-Albania Groups*. Despite the allegiance of these groups to the Enver Hoxha and Party of Labor of Albania (PLA), the PLA did not reciprocate. The Albanians maintained a policy of recognizing a single party in a

The decision to orchestrate a political offensive against the policies of the CPC had been taken by the PLA leadership at the June meeting of the Central Committee. Instrumental in solidifying the political allegiances was the 1977 '*Zeri i Popullit*' editorial, '*The Theory and Practice of Revolution*' authored by Enver Hoxha repeated criticism of Chinese policies with allegations of "opportunism" and "flagrant departure from Marxism-Leninism" and the attempt to "divert the attention of the Proletariat from the revolution". Hoxha was writing in his diary,

"I am not going to dwell at length on the great effect which the article <The Theory and Practice of Revolution> has had in the world.... Now China has mobilised all its hangers-on, the pseudo Marxist parties which it finances, which are concocting muddled articles to defend the Chinese theses which cannot be defended. The Chinese have sunk so low as to wind up a lackey in support of their anti-marxist stands, using a certain Hill from Australia, a person with two faces (or better to say, with many faces, because we don't know whom else he serves...) who poses as a friend of our party."¹⁵

The Albanian offensive attacked the Chinese "Three Worlds Theory" (*Renmin Ribao* 1977) for, in stating the "countries of the Third World were the main force" in the present era, the CPC advocated giving a leading role to the bourgeoisie of plainly reactionary states and negated the hegemonic role of the proletariat. The perceived disinterest by the CPC in the European organizations was not reflected in Albanian liaison with these parties. At, both the Sixth (1971) and 7th (1976) PLA Congresses there were representatives from the international communist movement. Greater emphasis on unity in the ranks of the movement was evident in Hoxha's suggestion, at the 7th Congress, that the situation might arise that would "call for a large scale meeting of all communists and workers Marxist-Leninist parties."



foreign country (usually based on how well the party toed the Albanian line). However, the PLA distanced itself from the US groups over fears of "CIA infiltration."

¹⁵ Reflections on China. August 11 1977