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PEKING: "THERE CANNOT BE A MIDDLE COURSE"

During the past few days, and especially after Chou En-lai's recent visit to Rumania, the Communist Chinese renewed their warnings against opportunism and middle-of-the-road attitudes in the international Communist movement.

Ceausescu's apparent refusal to let Chou use Rumanian soil as a platform from which to launch vehement attacks against "modern revisionism," let alone to go along with China in making such attacks, has aroused Chinese anger against what they call "middle-of-the-road opportunism." (1)

The Chinese were obviously disheartened by the Rumanian press's uncompromising censorship of Chou's first and only major speech. In that speech Chou openly denounced both "great-power chauvinism" and "modern revisionism," only to find the sentences containing these denunciations missing from the Scanteia version of his speech. From then on all Chinese speeches delivered during the visit contained largely perfunctory statements and rather meaningless gestures of friendship and solidarity.

Chou obviously went to Bucharest determined not to compromise on "issues of principle." To his surprise, his hosts showed themselves equally adamant on not allowing themselves to be committed to any "ultra" or openly anti-Soviet line. The outcome was a show of complete disagreement which was reflected, among other things, in the lack of a meaningful communiqué. It is not surprising therefore that during Chou's visit to Albania the matter was publicly aired in the form of indirect references to opportunism, neutralism, and polemics against any kind of vacillation when it comes to condemning Soviet modern revisionism. The references were obviously aimed against the Rumanian leadership.

(1) For an analysis of the visit see EERA Background Information, Rumania, "The Failure in Bucharest," 28 June 1966, by J.F. Brown.

The attack on middle-of-the-road attitudes was first launched by Enver Hoxha who, at a Tirana reception honoring Chou, reminded his listeners of the necessity for fighting both imperialism and revisionism "without pity and without mercy," and maintained that "hesitation and vacillation" as well as "opportunism and center-neutral (sic)" attitudes are damaging to the interest of socialism.(2)

Hoxha was rejoined by Albanian Premier Mehmet Shehu two days later.(3) Shehu, speaking at a mass rally in the port city of Durres, pointed out that neutrality in what he called a "life and death struggle between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism" merely favored revisionism. "It is high time," Shehu added, "that every Marxist-Leninist Party should shoulder full responsibility for its attitude before ... the international Communist movement." Shehu referred to unspecified "political acrobats" who, in his words, "try to persuade us by disguising their revisionism as 'neutralism' that we should carry out joint actions with the Khrushchevite revisionists." Shehu, however, never revealed who made the above suggestion. His very failure to specify the charges makes one suspect that he was talking about the Rumanian Communists who have recently been active in diplomatic exchanges with the Tirana regime.

Chou En-lai himself picked up the same line a day later, at a farewell reception held in Tirana.(4) He maintained that struggle against imperialism was inseparable from struggle against revisionism. Lamenting over the fact that some people are not yet aware of this, Chou maintained:

But the struggle against modern revisionism, like the struggle against imperialism, is a matter of principle in which double attitudes are not allowed. We are convinced that in the long run all true Marxist-Leninists will stand on the correct position.

The same theme was repeated by the Chinese press shortly afterwards. People's Daily, Ta Kung Pao and Kwangming Jih Pao, (all published in Peking) inserted sentences in their respective editorials on Chou En-lai's Albanian visit deploring centrist attitudes.

The basic tone of the three comments was the same: one cannot fight imperialism without simultaneously fighting revisionism. The moral of the argument was clear: any compromise with revisionism

(2) ATA in French, 25 June 1966.

(3) ATA in French, 27 June 1966.

(4) Radio Tirana, 27 June 1966.

means compromise with imperialism. In People's Daily's words:(5)

Marxist-Leninists must under no circumstances take any "united action" with modern revisionists ... but should disassociate themselves completely from the modern revisionists politically, ideologically, and organizationally.

There should not be any flexibility in dealing with them but a principled struggle must be waged against them; there should be no compromise with them, but a struggle must be conducted against them to the end.

[Emphasis supplied]

The Chinese inflexibility deploras any contact with "modern revisionism," the center of which, according to the latest Chinese terminology, is the leadership of the CPSU. Attendance at "revisionist" Party congresses thereby comes under the same proscribed category. The attendance by Rumanian leaders at the congresses of the CPSU, the Czechoslovak, and the Mongolian Parties earlier this year are thus to be considered as "association with modern revisionism."

North Koreans Criticized

While much that was said by Hoxha, Shehu and Chou in Albania on the dangers of opportunism could be considered as a reflection of Rumanian attitudes, it is clear that the Chinese and their followers are just as disillusioned with the North Koreans. A few days after the announcement of the renewal of Soviet aid to North Korea, the Chinese warned the Pyongyang regime against slackening its fight against revisionism.

In unmistakable terms the Chinese Communists tried to persuade the North Koreans that the Soviet Union is selling out Korean interests, and that opposition to imperialism and revisionism are unseparable from each other. A People's Daily editorial celebrating the 16th anniversary of the Korean war reads as follows:(6)

The leading group of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is playing the shameful role of an accomplice of US imperialism against the Asian people's cause of unity against imperialism... The leading group of the CPSU [is opposed] to the revolutionary cause of the Korean and other Asian peoples and is building an

(5) People's Daily, 29 June 1966.

(6) People's Daily editorial entitled "Oppose Aggressive Wars with Revolutionary Wars," 25 June 1966.

anti-Chinese encirclement around China... Therefore, in order to oppose US imperialism and its lackeys, it is necessary to oppose modern revisionism at the same time.

The same tone was sounded in an anniversary speech by the Vice Chairman of the Chinese Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, Kang Yu-ho, who pointed out that "only by firmly opposing modern revisionism can the fight against US imperialism be won.(7) Moreover, Kang declared that "in order to carry the struggle against US imperialism through to the end, we must resolutely draw a clear line of demarcation between ourselves and the modern revisionists politically, ideologically, and organizationally, and wage a principled struggle against them." The North Korean ambassador, who spoke at the same meeting, mentioned neither the CPSU nor "modern revisionism."

China Miscalculates

It is the very inflexibility of the Chinese attitude that seems to backfire in China's current relations with other Communist Parties both in Europe and Asia. The Chinese seem to have badly miscalculated Rumania's attitude toward the Soviet Union or other members of the Bloc. Peking may have thought that with a little prompting and with oblique references to "principles" Rumania could be brought over to its side against Moscow. The Rumanians, however, prefer to take orders neither from Moscow nor from Peking. It has been both firmness on certain principal issues and the ability to compromise on others that helped Bucharest to reaffirm its independence from the Soviet Union. Chou's arguments on the necessity of firmness on all issues, therefore, fell on deaf ears in Bucharest.

Nor is North Korea (or North Vietnam for that matter) more willing to endanger its economic or defense capacity for the sake of ultra-revolutionary phrasemongering. The North Koreans not only maintain but even expand ties with the Soviet Union politically, economically, and otherwise. The latest example of the strengthening of economic ties with the USSR was the signing of the recent Soviet-North Korean economic agreement. Party delegations between the Korean Workers' Party and the CPSU are characterized by the friendly businesslike manner maintained by the Korean delegate at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU. The North Koreans (like the North Vietnamese) also sent delegates to the Czechoslovak and Mongolian Party congresses.

(7) NCNA, 25 June 1966.

China's insistence on ideological "inflexibility," on the need for carrying out a "principled struggle" against modern revisionism, and on the necessity for parties "to disassociate themselves" from modern revisionism is a manifestation of political and ideological extremism. Such extremism, however, belongs to the past as far as other parties are concerned. Through advocating such an attitude, the Chinese Communists only contribute to their own isolation in the Communist movement.

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