

Communist Organization of Greece

The influence of the Chinese Revolution on the Communist Movement of Greece

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[The influence of the Chinese Revolution on the Communist Movement of Greece \(2006\)](#)

Contribution to the project of Comrade Bao Yu Ching



Introduction

Without a doubt, the struggle of the Chinese communists has influenced and to a point defined the development of the international communist movement. We cannot know what the scope of the resistance against revisionism and capitalist restoration would be if the essential contribution of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese communists and Mao Tsetung had not taken place.

However, the real question that should bother us and points towards a critical assessment is: has everything possible to oppose revisionism and the capitalist restoration been done? The answer is not easy and we don't have all the clues necessary to give it. The internal developments in China and the international developments during the '60s and '70s are not easy to be "deciphered", neither would be methodologically correct to judge by the "result". On one hand, there is the fact that the "general headquarters" that led the struggle against Soviet revisionism during the '60s (and looked united at that time), would split later, during the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, the turn of China's foreign policy marked by the

Sino-American approach and the application of the “Three Worlds Theory”, poses many questions that have to be analyzed, because we should not limit ourselves into a ceremonial hymnology. We realize the gravity and difficulty of such an effort, but we cannot pretend, 50 years after the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) and 40 years after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, that such issues do not exist.

Our contribution can reach the point of formulating an opinion (open for debate) and sharing the experience of a small section of the world’s proletariat, that of the Greek communist movement.

The Greek communists and the Chinese Revolution

“Our countries have two things in common: our ancient civilization, and two fatal numbers: 6 and 7. You are on the 36th parallel and we are on the 37th. You have the 6th Fleet of the US Navy, we have the 7th”.

(From a speech of Chairman Mao on a meeting with the representatives of the Greek-Chinese League of Friendship in 1965.)

It is of interest to state the opinion given by a great Greek communist who pioneered in the antirevisionist struggle in Greece. It is that of Comrade Yiannis Hontzeas, who, in the note that follows, gives us a testimony of what the perception of Greek communists about the CPC was, and what their expectations were, before the open conflict with the Russian revisionists began:

When I. V. Stalin died, many communists in our country, the majority of the veteran EAM members [EAM - National Liberation Front] who remained faithful to the CPG’s [Communist Party of Greece, CPG or KKE] and the EAM’s traditions during difficult times, expected that Chairman Mao will be invited in Moscow in order to advise, to lead, to arrange the things. Regardless of what anyone may say today, Mao was then, after the death of Stalin, regarded as the leader of the world proletariat, the guide of the world communist movement. If that was a simplistic faith, this is an issue of different nature. Mao visited Moscow on two separate occasions: The first time in 1950 in order to sign the treaty with Stalin, and the second time in 1957 in order to attend the Conference of Communist Parties. After the events of that period, Mao’s name was transformed from legend to curse - to become a legend again in the ’60s and ’70s, winning the minds of both the youth and the working people, gaining even more glory after years of slander. But how did Mao and the Chinese Revolution become known in Greece?

The generation that grew up in the ’30s had a “mythical” perception of what was going on in China. Of course the communists and the sympathizers were reading in communist newspapers about the heroism and victories of the Chinese Red Army, the Chinese Soviet government etc. The older communists were then reminding the younger ones that the Chinese Revolution wasn’t a game. They were reminding them of the bloody Japanese

invasion, proud that they took part in protests during the '20s under the slogan "Hands off China" etc. Instinctively, that truly wonderful and legendary revolution was touching so much the hearts and minds of our people, that even the bourgeois Press became interested in it in order to raise its sales, and thus contributed a lot to the general information about China and its revolution, regardless how much accurate this information was in fact.

Mao Tsetung's name started to be mentioned relatively late. The names of other Red Army leaders were initially mentioned more often – but always in a confusing way. Nevertheless, the campaigns and counter-campaigns of the Chinese Red Army filled the bourgeoisie with surprise and our people with admiration.

In the mid-30s the name of Mao began to be mentioned in the bourgeois Press as that of a satanic communist general – especially because our bourgeois journalists reported time and again that he was killed, and then he always reappeared alive. In the meantime, since 1936, Greece was living under another fascist dictatorship. The Spanish Civil War, despite its dominant place in the international news, still left room for the Chinese Revolution, the Unified Front etc. A conviction was born among the Greek communists and sympathizers, that the Chinese Red Army was invincible. During the occupation [of Greece, 1941-1944] and after, the CPC, its Army, as well as Mao became even more popular.

During the summer of 1946 up to early 1947, when the White Terror [in Greece] was in full swing, Rizospastis [the still legal CPG organ newspaper] published the famous guerrilla war principles which were formulated by Mao in his work A single spark can start a prairie fire ("when the enemy advances, we retreat" etc.). After that publication, the reactionary regime practically forbid the sales of Rizospastis.

The communists, the people of Greece, were looking at the triumphant march of the Revolutionary War of the Chinese people and they warmly saluted their victory. The victory in China became a factor of great help, as it happened simultaneously (1949) with the "victory" of the US-led reactionary forces of monarchofascism in Greece.

Let us give an example: in Makronisos [a small Greek island transformed into the most ferocious concentration-torture camp] a militant was savagely tortured, but he refused to denounce his beliefs. The torturers then tried to convince him with the "super argument": Why don't you go with the majority? (They meant the militants who had already given up because of the unbearable tortures). And he answered: What are you saying? It is me the one who belongs in the majority! Aren't the 900 million Chinese (exaggerating the number of the population of China in the psychological state he was in) the majority? Torture us, murder us, but one day you will get over-pounded, both you and your bosses! This was not an isolated case: the victory of the Chinese Revolution greatly encouraged the imprisoned Greek communists in these difficult years.

During the years 1950-1956 the translations of Mao's works began. Originally in handwritten form, which was distributed hand in hand in prisons and concentration camps, and later

through publishing houses. The Korean War and the role of China there gained once again the admiration of the Greek people.

For a short period right after the “6th Conference” [the “6th Conference”, organized with the violent intervention of Soviet revisionists in 1956, was for the CPG what was the 20th Congress for CPSU] the new revisionist leaders of CPG displayed in every way possible their admiration and support for Chairman Mao, praising the combination of his “eastern wisdom” with his “anti-dogmatic” Marxism-Leninism.

However, this admiration turned fast into rage in the summer of 1957, when the Conference of Communist Parties in Moscow declared that revisionism was the largest threat to the international communist movement. “Well informed” as always, the Greek revisionists ascribed it to Mao. Since 1959, the slanderous attacks against Mao, the anti-internationalist, anti-communist, anti-Chinese poison were at an all time high.

Later on, when our organization examined the period after 1956, it reached certain conclusions:

1. In the years 1953-1957 there were a lot of turnarounds and changes in USSR and in many Communist Parties. The revisionists in the leadership clique of the CPSU were left undisturbed to push all of their choices and stabilize themselves. Here lies a certain responsibility as to when and what kind of criticism against revisionism was made, or how the revisionist choices were initially even facilitated (including by the CPC). [Whoever re-reads the articles On the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat and More on the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat of 1956 will see clearly our point]

In the same way, although the declarations of the international conferences of 1957 and 1960 named revisionism as the main threat, they did not really block the prevalence of modern revisionism. Whatever happened on the international level until the beginning of the open polemics between the CPSU and CPC, was in reality very insufficient, thus offering precious time to modern revisionism to stabilize itself, slander its opponents and isolate the consistent communist forces.

2. The 10th conference of CPC in the fall of 1962 is the first time where directions concerning class struggle in socialism, the “two roads”, the danger of capitalist restoration, the criticism of the socialist construction in the USSR, are adopted. All these conclusions would be expressed in an openly polemical way during the open conflict with USSR in 1963-1964. In fact, a lot of things had already happened such as the Great Leap Forward, the withdrawal of the Soviet experts and breaking of relations between USSR and China, the anti-Chinese and anti-Albanian hysteria in the Press and the Congresses of the revisionist parties.

Despite the fact that the above conclusions constituted historical advances and promoted and armed the struggle of consistent communists all over the world, the largest part of the Chinese Party was then under the control of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who did nothing else but undermine the antirevisionist fight. This issue is important, because when the matter of the organizational separation from the revisionist parties rises in 1964, this clique dominates the CPC with all the consequences that this had. Anyway, there are many things at that period in China that seemed to be or were really controversial.

3. The outburst of the Cultural Revolution shows in practice the inadequacy of the earlier response, as well as the need for a more profound criticism and revolutionizing of the program, as well as revolutionizing the masses' action. Unlike the "secret" document of N. Khrushchev on Stalin (which was on purpose supplied to and published by the CIA, the first major tryout of the US-Soviet cooperation), which was a great shock for the communists all over the world, the slogan of the Cultural Revolution "Bombard the Headquarters" surprised, provoked and gave inspiration. The secret document and anti-Stalinism were about to become the vehicle for the domination of new bourgeois elements which had risen inside the socialist societies. On the contrary, the slogan "Bombard the Headquarters" was a battle cry for rebellion, for the creation of a new generation of communists who would form a new program, enriched with all the conclusions about the characteristics of socialist societies, the need of deepening the dictatorship of the proletariat, the promotion of the struggle against imperialism on a worldwide scale. In addition, it was connected to the emergence of a new revolutionary wave all around the world. A question arises: having to face united and well-organized enemies (imperialism, social-imperialism, modern revisionism etc.), did the worldwide restructuring and regroupment of the communist movement advance in a sufficiently organized way? With what program?

4. In the above environment, there is an issue with the attitude of the CPC regarding the situation in Europe (and we do not mean the "Three worlds theory", which would come later). As far as Europe was concerned, there was the bewildering statement "we should unite with the minor revisionism to oppose to the major revisionism". Both the "flirting" of the CPC with Euro-communism and its relations with the Communist Party of Romania and Santiago Carillo's Communist Party of Spain constitute the result of certain assessments. Simultaneously, they reflect a statist mode of thinking on behalf of the CPC, at least as far as Europe is concerned. Many things may be explained by the complex internal situation and struggles in China, but the fact remains that all the above did not prove at all helpful for the antirevisionist forces on international level, and especially in Europe - on the contrary, they created difficulties. The assessment that may lie behind is that great revolutionary movements were not expected in Europe. In combination with the assessment that priority should be given on revolutionized zones, it resulted in "neglecting" the duty of providing help and specific assessments and directions for the communists in Europe. The other side (Soviet revisionism) did not neglect this duty at all. This was a mistake, especially after the "storm" brought by "May '68" and the large-scale disengagement of masses from the bourgeois and revisionist influence. The mistake becomes even greater when informal positions and

opinions of the Chinese are expressed in Europe through... intellectuals, and when demeaning examples of “pro-Chinese” parties are allowed or even encouraged to appear.

5. What was the reason for the fact that, in the struggle against revisionism, a large part of the international communist movement failed to come together and the parties and groups which were formed on the base of this struggle often failed to obtain a larger, more massive base? There are reasons on the objective and subjective level.

Among the first ones we can recognize the fact that, in contrast with old revisionism, modern revisionism had the support of states. This is very significant. Although the support by the states towards the revisionist parties had many faces and was continuous, the same did not apply for CPC and LPA (Labor Party of Albania) towards the international anti-revisionist communist movement. Revisionism, despite its contradictions, acted in an organized way whilst Marxism-Leninism acted divided in many pieces, not only on the level of coordination but also on the level of clarifying the basic theoretical, political etc. matters. These as far as the objective level is concerned.

On the subjective level, and this side is of course not independent of the objective one, there were various trends among the forces that opposed revisionism. There were those who believed that some “bad luck” stroke the communist movement at some “point”, altering its course and that things would be “automatically” corrected sometime. Some others were more attached to expressions of general contest of basic beliefs. Some others, according to their specific experiences, saw that many issues should be re-examined in depth, etc. At last, there was a majority tendency, according to which the problems would be solved by “somebody else”.

The conflicts between these tendencies intensified because of the way in which the Cultural Revolution was interpreted, as well as because of some semiformal analyses that circulated in Europe and concerned the past of the communist movement. The inability of the organized forces in countries like France and Italy to make a correct analysis and to intervene -up to an extent- to events like May '68, despite the fact that in both cases there was a greater interest on behalf of both parties (CPC-LPA), made the problem even bigger, because at that period large masses were disengaging from revisionism, creating temporary or more stable forms of political organizations. We could mention a lot of other examples that show the differences that existed (already before the split between China and Albania) among the forces that battled revisionism, and their consequences.

Two things were missing, in a period when new phenomena and tendencies were developing in the modern world: a procedure of discussion of all the problems that the Marxist-Leninist movements and organizations faced, and a common “central” ideological-political base.

Finally, as expected, the “Three worlds theory” played an important, negative role, especially in Europe. The crisis and the separation of the M-L Parties in Europe during the '70s-80s is not irrelevant to these issues.

Back to our own story

In 1955 in Tashkent, capital city of the Soviet Kazakhstan (and base of the Greek communists-political refugees after the defeat of the Democratic Army of Greece in 1949), a cruel intervention of Soviet revisionists against the Communist Party of Greece started. The problems continued for months, reaching a peak with the establishment of a “special international commission of fraternal parties” aiming at “resolving the crisis” - which the revisionists themselves had provoked inside the CPG. The result was the expelling of thousand communists in all organizations of political refugees, as well as the exile of hundreds of them in Siberia, including the general secretary himself, Nikos Zachariadis. The reason was the non-compliance and disagreement of Greek communists with the “new spirit” of the Soviet revisionists, and ultimately their opposition to the directions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

From 1956 up to 1964, a great confrontation took place within the Greek communist movement, implicating thousands of Greek communists living as political refugees in the USSR and other socialist countries, as well as in Greece itself, in the underground organizations, in the exile and in prisons. From the early '60s, the works of Mao and the documents of CPC began to be distributed among the Greek communists. As a result of this confrontation, the first public expression of Greek Marxists-Leninists, the review *Anagennisi* (Rebirth), was published in October 1964. Many documents of CPC were republished in this review, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was supported publicly - something which provoked the fury of Greek revisionists.

At this point, a certain clarification is necessary: Historically, the CPG, the Greek communist movement, was formed and developed with the decisive contribution of the CPSU and of the Comintern. This reality was expressed at all sides of its activities, in the organizational policy, in the methods of guidance and education. These special relations between the CPG and the CPSU, as well as the sharpness and roughness of class struggle in Greece (anti-communist legislation, fascist dictatorships, plots of Secret Police, civil war, special anti-communist punishment in exile-torture islands etc.) inevitably reflected in the reality of the Greek communist movement – and the reflections were not exclusively positive, as we adopted also the negative sides of the Soviet “model”. Thus, a “system” was created, the consequence being that the Greek communist movement does not experience any rectification campaigns such as those undertaken by the CPC in 1941-42. This may explain a lot of things.

What we can call revolutionary direction or M-L movement in Greece was not something one-colored or monolithic, and was not something unified from the beginning in what it was declaring or fighting against. This constituted some kind of strength and weakness at the same time. Its strength was that it was not anymore the cause only of a few people, but it expressed a demand deeply rooted in a large mass of militants. The weak sides would be overcome if those who were in leading positions in this movement fulfilled their duty in decisive and determinant moments.

The militants who revolted against revisionism inside and outside Greece, were the most disciplined and faithful to the pre-1956 Soviet Party, compared to the other members that did not revolt. This “paradox” is another even more important peculiarity of the Greek M-L movement in comparison with other countries. The anti-revisionist struggle in Greece was not an issue of mechanisms or students; on the contrary, what propelled the anti-revisionist struggle was the revolt of the rank and file of the Greek communist movement. So, the history of the anti-revisionist struggle in the Greece is much longer than many people believe, and definitely it did not originate just as a youth revolt, as it happened in several European countries. On the contrary, the Greek youth of those times met with the anti-revisionist current under a slow and torturing rhythm.

During the years 1956-58, when the “new spirit” (20th Congress) had already launched a wide pogrom against the Greek communists living in USSR and other socialist countries, and expelled the majority of the communists in Tashkent, inside Greece the balance of forces was the following: The underground organizations (especially after the position of the leadership favoring the self-dissolution of the underground organizations, as it was ordered by the Khrushchevites), the majority of communists in Ai-Stratis exile camp (the main exile camp in Greece), large parts of the imprisoned militants, and the biggest part of the middle and low cadres of the legal organizations were, in several degrees, opposed to the “new situation” provoked by the Khrushchevite intervention in the CPG. This balance of forces, along with the 7.000 expelled communists of Tashkent, was giving an overwhelming positive advantage for the anti-revisionist current. This balance of forces was not utilized properly and finally the struggles that were deployed in that period were deployed in a way that allowed the revisionist leaders to spread confusion and exploit the desertion or inaction of a great number of former high cadres – who were expected to lead the anti-revisionist struggle. Conclusively, in the Greek case we had a massive revolt of communists against revisionism, regardless of the imperfection of declarations or the influence of certain “anti-revisionist” cadres that did not stand properly.

Among the Greek communists who resisted against modern revisionism, two situations were coexisting. The first, the dominant one, was the vain wish and hope for the restoration of the Party rules’ sovereignty and the return to a recent past that was characterized by the revolutionary struggle of communists. The second one, concerning a minority, was the understanding that the past cannot come back, that the conditions have changed, and that we were getting into a new era.

The great mass of communists, because of the way they were educated, could not bear the idea of organizational separation from the Party, despite their sympathy for the Marxists-Leninists. For this reason, they did not follow them when they appeared publicly. The biggest responsibility for this development lies with the high ranking Party cadres, who, despite their disagreement with the CPSU 20th Congress, considered that any correction is possible only “from the inside”. But even among those who dared and undertook the responsibility for an organizational separation from the old Party, there was a section that what had in mind was the “return to the magnificent past”. Therefore, this section was unarmed in front of the great

commotions which would shock China later on; they easily resorted to a thoughtless pro-China suivism, and finally they praised the “Three worlds theory” and turned against the “Gang of Four” and the Cultural Revolution.

The M-L movement necessarily came in touch with parts of the disobedient youth which was present in the great anti-imperialist explosions of the years 1963-65 in Greece. This youth was more receptive of the radical ideas which came up during the Cultural Revolution, but it was more unstable and less experienced in class struggle compared to the veteran communists. Later on, and because of severe blows during the fascist dictatorship 1967-74 (a lot of arrests, including the central leadership), the leadership passed in the hands of young people. During these difficult years there were those cadres who easily “discovered” revisionism among our own lines and advanced –the same easily- into new splits. Since “one is divided deterministically into two, and the two-line struggle is inevitable”, everything was acclaimed “deterministic” as a justification of new splits. Thus, the M-L current was recorded as a current of continuous splits and seemed to be away from the Greek reality and the developments, particularly in the turmoil of the '70s.

A document of our organization, KOE, contains the following general assessments for that period:

It was not accidental that the organizational separation of the Greek M-L movement from the revisionist CPG (started with the publication of the review *Anagennisi* in 1964) was the result of the struggle and initiative of middle cadres of the old CPG, and not of leading, high ranking cadres. Despite the revolt of the rank and file against the CPSU 20th Congress and the so-called 6th Conference of the CPG, it did not originate as a result of a two-line struggle or a split in the leading bodies of CPG. The reason for this lies in the peculiar composition of the leading bodies of CPG (under the direct CPSU guidance) and in specific perceptions that dominated the CPG for decades.

But even after the publication of *Anagennisi* and later, in the entire course of this movement, a leading M-L core with clarified, common points of view and planning was never constituted. This was the main source of the problems, of the instability, of the setbacks that were expressed within the Greek M-L current and led finally to its dissolution.

However, the M-L movement in Greece exceeded the scales of a small group that published a magazine; it obtained a mass-base, it was embraced by a lot of militants and created a large cadre pool. This was due mainly to the fact it proved to be capable, to a large extent, of analyzing and shaping programmatic assessments and estimates.

We support the view that *Anagennisi* formulated important programmatic elements, confirmed by the developments. Such elements were: The position of Greece and the special role of the anti-imperialist struggle in our country, the assessment for the role of revisionism and the need of regroupment of the left movement, the support of the international communist movement and a rather clear position on the confrontation that was taking place at

that time, the formulation of criteria on critical subjects (such as obtaining roots in the masses, cultivating an “independent” spirit instead of depending on international centers), the assessment of critical questions of the past Greek communist movement, and simultaneously the confrontation with other currents and “fashions” of that time, and the insistence in the choice of mass people’s struggle.

Despite the fact that the consolidation and deepening of these critical elements was attempted in the beginning, finally this target was not accomplished. The results of this weakness were expressed in the course: permanent vacillation, setbacks and inversion of cohesive relations, permanent crisis in the leadership, at the same moment where the spread and influence of this movement among the masses required a different course. This crisis intensified in the late ’70s, when the international horizon darkened, when “certainties” and international “bases” ceased to exist, and when several “circles” and “personalities” developed, shaping an environment which was already irreversible.

The second peculiarity of the Greek M-L movement is the fact that its political organization never obtained an essential political operation that could face problems like the above, or problems of development. This issue acquires more importance because this was not a weakness realized at the end of the course of this movement, but already from the beginning. Actually, the overcoming of this weakness was never really attempted. Such an attempt would require the adoption of the necessary political and organizational measures, and mainly the entanglement with activities that would lead to the change of the class base of this movement, in order to obtain deep relations and roots in the people’s masses.

On the contrary, what prevailed was the logic of “heavy activism” and “making noise” without taking care about the political and ideological lines of the movement, that is to say the programmatic elements that needed to be redefined in a period of big changes and realignments in the whole world. Instead of a heavy and cumbersome organizational form with very insufficient content of internal discussion, what was necessary was a political operation that would arm the whole organization for the particular needs of an ideological, political and organizational strengthening. At the same time, measures should be taken against the creation of “independent kingdoms” inside the organization in several Greek cities, against the strangling of the desire for study and research, against dogmatism and blind self-confidence, against the cultivation of several “mythologies”.

In the years that a different course was possible, particularly after 1974 and the fall of the military fascist junta, an inversion of basic programmatic political elements took place, setbacks from previous positions were expressed, disorientation from main and basic tasks was developed. The “fare politica” (negative term from the Italian movement), the economism and the blind copy of other experiences, as well as suivism of CPC, dominated.

Yiannis Hontzeas, the most luminous and fresh mind of this current, who played an important role in the initial political and ideological configuration of the Greek M-L movement (he was

arrested during the fascist junta in what proved to be the most heavy blow against the Greek Marxists-Leninists) but also, later on, of our organization, KOE, wrote in a note:

The "beginning" and the "result" do not give anything substantial as a conclusion if the "development" is ignored. The "development" is always an annoying story for the "calm" consciences.

(Notes for the Workers' Movement and Leninism, page 55, A/synechia 1996)

KOE disagrees with those who, only now, support that the "bad start" was the uterus of the final crisis and dissolution in the early '80s. For, the "bad start" did not prevent in certain moments this movement to rally around it thousands of militants, to play an important role in mass events, to concentrate the necessary mass of forces so as to develop roots in the people's masses, to become an attracting pole for broader sections of militants. There were certain possibilities that were not utilized in the way they should. Conclusively, the "result", that is, the dissolution in the early '80s, does not allow for adopting pragmatist arguments, like "since this was the result, then this or the other thing in the beginning would inevitably drive to that result" etc., without examining the real terms and the causes of the result, that is to say, the "development".

Maoism as an international ideological and political current in the '60s and '70s

"The following 50-100 years will be an epic era of fundamental changes in the world social system, an era of quakes and turnovers, an era unparalleled to any other in history. To live this era we must be prepared to experience great struggles, which from many aspects will be different from the great struggles of previous times".

(Mao, 1970)

Such as Bolshevism was a distinct political and ideological current of the revolutionary movement within the national frame of Russia, Maoism developed and was formed in the frame of China.

After the victory of the October Revolution, Bolshevism gains world glory and forms an international political and ideological current within the world proletarian movement. The 3rd International is, to some extent, the expression of this formation.

Respectively, Maoism acquires international dimensions, that is, it is formed into an international political and ideological current in the mid-60s, but with certain particularities:

1. It does not derive directly from the victory of a revolution, such as the October Revolution, but from the need to confront the standstill of revolution and the danger of capitalist restoration.

2. It meets with all processes of the storms of the '60s and affects them to a great extent. It does not consist only of a procedure of polemics in the communist movement, but rallies around it many and different forces which, in this or in the other form, fight against the uniform system of social relations in East and West: national liberation movements and fronts, youth movements all over the world, the Cultural Revolution movement in China, the black movement in the USA, anticapitalist movements in capitalist metropolises etc.

3. It is not mainly related to formation processes of a current on international level after a revolutionary turmoil. There were several reasons for this. Basically, because the restoration move and class struggle in China was raging violently and the question about who would defeat whom, had not been answered yet.

4. There were heterogeneity and deviant objectives even within the antirevisionist forces' front, both internationally and in China itself.

5. This movement too did not escape the negative influence of statism (worshiping of the state and prevalence of the state's interests over the movement's interests), which inevitably existed and altered many elements.

These particularities do not rebut nor do they invalidate the assessment that this political-ideological current has been the most important one born from the storm of the '60s, for the following reasons:

1. The extent, depth, rallying of forces it achieved and the influence it exerted.

First of all, one has to weigh up the Left in China and the movements it launched, especially the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Secondly, one has to take into account all the national liberation movements in the world and the fact they adopted the slogans and politics of the "Chinese" General Line at the time. Many guerilla and other movements were based on the People's War theory, they studied and were taught by the military works of Mao.

Then one must estimate the influence and impact Maoism exerted on the world youth, all over the planet.

Moreover, one must account the influence it exerted on uprising movements, as the Black Panthers movement in the USA, anticapitalist movements like that of May '68, etc.

Finally, we must not neglect to mention its influence on intellectuals all over the world (Jean Paul Sartre, Charles Bettelheim, Robert Linhart, Benjamin Coriat, William Hinton, Edgar Snow, Thompson, Samir Amin, La Grassa, Rossana Rossada, Luis Althusser, etc.)

2. It has been the only international ideological and political current calling out for decisive struggle against imperialism.

Thousands of fighters emerged from its ranks and clashed with reaction and imperialism with heroism and abnegation. The militancy and heroism of this current, its capability of uniting with the poor and oppressed, helped it to gain roots in the reality and the life of several countries and regions, and to open new paths of struggle.

It developed particularly in the “storm zone”, in the so called Third World countries, where important national liberation movements were active and where agrarian uprisings and revolts broke out. In these areas there are decades of examples of this movement’s leaders and cadres who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the people and found tragic death in the hands of the counter-revolutionary forces.

3. Its positions and theory were confirmed in important issues of historical character.

It was the only section of the then “official” communist movement, which saluted, participated in, played a role in the storm of the ’60s. This is an extremely important element itself.

It was the only section that went forth to reveal and denounce modern revisionism and called the communists to revolt against it.

It was the only section, which foresaw and warned about capitalist restoration, which shed light on class contradictions in socialism, which launched or supported the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China.

In a few words,

Contrary to other existing currents, such as Guevarism-Fokism and Trotskyism [which did not apprehend the character of the period, what was at stake internationally and also had some false basic positions which led them to political mistakes - mainly of left subjectivism for the first and right subjectivism for the second, which sometimes led the trotskyites even to the adoption of pro-imperialist positions], Maoism was better grounded on real problems, gathered broad and probably heterogeneous forces in its ranks, it was a front that imperialism and reaction had to take into account, and to a great extent determined the correlation of power on a worldwide level.

It is not accidental at all, that the defeat and retreat of the Left in China in 1976 was the milestone for a generalized frontal counterattack of the bourgeoisie, imperialism and revisionism. This reactionary counterattack resulted in capitalist restoration, perestroika’s “New Thought” and, right afterwards, to the New World Order.

A short reference to the weaknesses and shortages of this current:

1. “Partiality” (unilateral way of thinking and acting), spontaneity, voluntarism are quite explicable phenomena during the first steps of such an ideological-political current, when revolution seems close and under circumstances in which heterogeneous forces come

together. We have the historical precedent of Lenin's intervention against "partialities" with his work "Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder", which was addressed to the liveliest members of the proletarian left of that time, and invited them to form significant communist parties and to win the majority of the working class. The particularities of the class struggle in China did not allow similar necessary interventions.

2. Forms in which partiality and spontaneity are expressed are:

Dragging to the edges the right position that political and ideological line is decisive for everything. This has led to a series of splits and to paying little attention to the issue of unity, outside maturing processes and the creation of bonds with the people's masses. It also led, in some cases, to the self-isolation in microcosms that had little contact with reality.

The position that everything is at stake in the storm zone (the so called Third World) led a number of forces in capitalist countries to downgrade the need for systematic effort to break fresh ground in their own countries, and consequently to become just backers and supporters of other countries' movements.

The mechanistic and sometimes exaggerated contradiction of Stalin against Mao.

3. The course of class struggle in China, the foreign policy it followed and the involvement of statism which emerged in the early '70s with the wrong "Three Words' Theory", set Maoism as an international current in great adventures and gave birth to suivism within it, which did not differ, from a qualitative aspect, from revisionism. All these practically slandered Mao's work and Maoism.

4. At that time, as well as in the following decades, certain forces showed a tendency of shrinking Maoism to the strategy of People's War and acclaimed that People's war is the General Line of the communist movement. This position obstructed this current from studying in depth the changes that were taking place in the world all this time.

The need for regroupment of the communists on the basis of a General Line

It is true that many years have passed without any serious discussion regarding the General Line of the communist movement in contemporary conditions. The last serious attempt to put forth issues of General Line in the world communist movement was made at the beginning of the '60s by the Communist Party of China; however, since then many years have gone by. Today's picture of the world is very different from its picture at the beginning of the '60s. Many changes, turnovers in the correlation of power, retrogressions took place, until we reached today's situation. Many battles of historical significance were fought, such as the incomplete storm of revolutionary struggles in the '60s, with its peak, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. The historical question which has been set and asks for an answer is whether the course of revolutionary movement could have been different, that is whether the several battles could have been fought from better positions, whether serious

attempts were made for a common and all-sided confrontation with the bourgeois and revisionist line.

This exact question accompanies and connects all the problems with the issue of the General Line. The lack of recognition of the significance that the issue of the General Line always had and still has, had disastrous effects for the Marxist-Leninist movement, especially in the '80s. The Marxist-Leninist movement went through great ordeal and disintegration in that decade. Despite the honourable exceptions of parties and movements which held the flag of revolution high under extremely difficult conditions, the majority of parties and organizations experienced big crises and their strength shrank significantly.

This process of moving away from the problematics of a General Line, as well as the evident crisis of the Marxist-Leninist movement (which had emerged previously, as well, through the adventures, the "line" and the position of the two "centres", China and Albania), led either to insufficient substitutes of the General Line (and this was the "best" case), or to an important endistancement from the antirevisionist positions, even to pro-social-imperialist stands and to a silent denial of all issues brought to the surface by Mao Tsetung's work.

However, even after the difficult '80s, during the '90s and at the beginning of the 21st century, in conditions of gradual regroupment of the revolutionary movement and of more and more intensive emergence of people's discontent globally, one observes that several initiatives and rallies of communist parties and organizations do not focus the discussion on the vital subject of the General Line. The degree of coordination is very low and other priorities seem to motivate the various initiatives, instead of a stable and resolute promotion of debate and discussion on the General Line. All this happens in circumstances under which great changes take place around us, great turmoil is caused by the course of capitalist/imperialist restructuring, and the ideological-political arsenal of the bourgeoisie manages to set issues and take the initiative on a worldwide scale.

The requirements of the new stage of revolutionary movement impose the existence of parties and organizations which stand on the ground, stand on their own feet and think with their own mind, are capable of analyzing the specific conditions of specific situations and gain the ability to break fresh ground, to open new paths. These requirements cannot be fulfilled if we do not face with self-criticism the fact that great harm has been done by: (a) survivalist, (b) lack of opinion on a number of important and crucial issues, (c) poverty in issues of General Line, and (d) "easy" ideologicalization of all issues.

In our opinion, modern revisionism in all its variations, including the neo-revisionist one, has to be exposed in the international communist movement. The essential and specific characteristics of revisionism have to be studied and generalized, in order to track the revisionist rust, to localize the revisionist influence and to isolate revisionists (no matter what they call themselves; revolutionaries, Marxist-Leninists, internationalists, etc. etc). We believe that the main features of modern revisionism are the following:

Modern revisionism opposes the deepening of class struggle. Consequently, it is led to cooperation with the bourgeoisie, it pursues a concertation with the bourgeois state of things. In capitalist-imperialist countries, modern revisionism supports the “national interests” and the “democratic institutions”. It participates or tries to participate in governmental formations together with the bourgeoisie, and it is inspired by governmentalism, offering absolution to the bourgeois anti-people policy and moreover directly helping its realization. It strikes the flag of the anti-imperialist struggle and promotes a “responsible and realistic stand” of complying with the conditions of the imperialist New World Order. Modern revisionism refuses to fight against imperialist integrations and the results of capitalist restructuring. It does not fight back all dividing policies in the masses and working class, it does not fight back racism and xenophobia and it continuously discovers “national routes to socialism”.

Modern revisionism supports the theory of productive forces, it adopts productivism. It limits the role of the masses to the “duty” of speeding up a supposed automatic process through “scientific and technical progress”. It adores the “scientific-technical revolution” and considers it an objectively progressive, positive and neutral process. Modern revisionism admired capitalism’s “successes” and attempted to “import” them in the transitional societies, aiming at “speeding up development and increasing productivity”. The result was of course different than expected, because this is exactly how capitalism was restored. Even nowadays, modern revisionism praises “market socialism”.

Modern revisionism is permeated by statism. It reproduces the superstition of worshipping state, something which has nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist view of proletarian power. It is afraid of the mobilization and spontaneity of the masses; it does not trust the masses and the working class. It depends on bureaucratic and administrative methods and increases the distance between the mechanisms and the masses. It carries these views even in relations among communist parties, holding an arrogant position and practice, which has nothing in common with communist ideas. It plays active role in slandering struggles, organizations, individuals, circles of the revolutionary left, it cooperates with the repression forces or it assumes the role of repression itself in specific mobilizations. When in power, it adopts a social-imperialist policy.

Denial of class struggle, class cooperation, productivism and statism are the essential characteristics of revisionism in our era. Declarations, words etc. can obscure this essence only a little. The big-mouthed declarations and the magniloquent oaths of loyalty to Marxism-Leninism can befool only those who want to be befooled, or strongly wish to unite with revisionism... The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution deepened these issues, enriched the communist program, offers rich material and inspires those striving to open new paths for the proletarian revolution in the 21st century.

Outlined and codified, the General Line of the contemporary communist movement could be formulated as follows:

“Resist New World Order, the greatest enemy of humanity! Crush the holocaust being prepared by the imperialist directorate and its servants!

Change on a global level, through struggles and movements, the correlation of power in favor of the forces of progress, promoting the International Community of the Peoples, that is the broad front of classes and strata struggling against New World Order and the dual society!

Step by step, rebuild the communist movement, the necessary and decisive force that can unite and offer perspective to the struggles!

Build the communist program, throwing away anything rusty and anachronistic resulting from the domination of revisionism for over 30 years!

Spread the position for the timeliness of socialism and communism as the unique positive way out of capitalist barbarity!”

By promoting and mainly by testing this General Line, we believe that the communist movement of our era will open new paths, leading to the Proletarian Revolution in the 21st century!

Epilogue

In this small corner of the world, Greece, the communists have to continuously improve and re-found their ideology in a revolutionary way. Mao Tsetung’s work will be a great weapon and lesson in their course. The Communist Organization of Greece, KOE, will continue to study, absorb, take example from Mao and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. KOE will take care to complete with the most essential points of Maoism and of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution the necessary phrasing of the modern communist program and the General Line of the new communist movement. Nowadays, there can be no Revolutionary Marxism without Maoism and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

We honor Mao Tsetung and the Chinese communists’ struggle, we honor the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution by conquering, or re-conquering if necessary, simple Marxist truths, and by deepening our knowledge with the course of the social evolution. We experienced revolutions, but now we are experiencing the domination of counter-revolutions and we are preparing for a new hopeful revolutionary round of struggles all over the world.

Greek communists never forget the general truths formulated by Mao:

We should depend on our own forces. Whenever communists deviated from this principle, victory drew away and new hardships hit our peoples.

We must dare to struggle, we must dare to win. Communists have to be prepared for victory, they should not feel as if they were rearmost, they should be able to solve problems, to lead great battles and great social experiments.

It is right to revolt. It is correct to go against the current. To rebel against injustice, oppression and revisionism, to ignore fashions and easy “solutions”.

We should conquer dialectics. Without dialectic materialism no re-foundation of our ideology to a militant direction is possible.

The party leads, it does not monopolize. Against the strangling of people’s initiative, against “ready solutions”, against administrative methods.

We say no to glasshouse “Marxism”. Marxists are not afraid of confronting wrong ideas. Only through this confrontation can Marxism be forged, invigorated and prevent revolution from “freezing”.

Class struggle, masses and their mobilization, ultimately the human being, are the decisive factors - not technicians, weapons, experts, etc. Productive forces are not independent from class struggle and their development is decisively affected by the course of class struggle.

We must serve the people with all our heart and all our thought, we must be unpretentious and careful, we must protect ourselves from arrogance and petulance.

All reactionaries are paper tigers. We should strategically despise, but tactically consider the opponent, especially nowadays in the struggle carried out by all the peoples against imperialist New World Order and US imperialism!

Communist Organization of Greece