

Kazimierz Mijal [15 Sep 1910 - 28 Jan 2010]

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Anti-revisionism in Poland has largely been associated with the varied and complicated career of former resistance fighter, Kazimierz Mijal. He remained a committed Marxist up to his death aged 99 years old and had led a “colourful life” and considered still subversive enough to be arrested by state security at the age of 74. Mijal was an ideological colleague of Bolesław Bierut, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP; Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, PZPR) from 1948 up until his death in 1956. Mijal, a former member of the Central Committee himself, was associated with the Natolinist faction – Polish Communists who in the late 1950's challenged Gomulka opposing the process of de-Stalinisation – that were swept from positions of power during the events of the “Polish October”. Mijal was best known for founding the illegal KPP/ Communist Party of Poland in opposition to the ruling PUWP of which he was a founding member.

Mijal was born on the 15th September 1910 in the Imperial Russian Empire at Wilków Pierwszy. Before the war he worked in a bank and was active in the bank workers union. During the war he was in “Proletariusz” (The Proletarian) group, a communist organization, and was a founder member of the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza) in 1942. With wartime collaborator Paul Finder and Marcelli Nowotko, and then Boleslaw Bierut, Mijal belonged to the group of the most influential Polish politicians. He held several leading posts in the party, was secretary of the National Council, and served in the National Council of the Country (the underground parliament) and the Legislative Sejm.

From 1945 Mijal was a member of the Central Committee of the PLP and later of the ruling Polish United Workers' Party. After the war he held further leading government posts: he

served as Mayor of Łódź, chief of the Presidential Chancellery, chief of the Bureau of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Communal Economy, and director of the Investment Bank. He clashed with Gomulka whom he argued from 1944 and whom he accused of treason; from 1954 he carried out a fight against modern revisionism in the ranks of the UPLP.

Following Nikita Khrushchev's condemnation of Joseph Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, Mijal condemned Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of the PZPR political support for Khrushchev and was an important figure in the so-called "natolińczyków" (Natolin) faction of the party – Mijal denies it was a faction "they were people who wanted to maintain socialism". He was suspected of various pamphlets condemned by the party as dogmatic and Stalinist. As a result he was dropped from the Central Committee in March 1959 and the government. He retained his position at the National Bank.

On the margins of the Third Congress in March 1959, a leaflet appeared accusing Gomulka of supporting the Jews alluding to his wife. Mijal was accused of being its author and referring to Gomulka as "brother in law". His reply is that he had absolutely nothing to do with this anonymous leaflet.

Mijal was accused throughout his political career of anti-Semitic remarks, a charge given credence in two of his writings entitled, "The participation of the Zionists in the destruction of Polish socialist movement" and "Revisionists and nationalists Jewish in the fight with the Polish workers ". In his last major interview with the Polish journalist, Robert Muzurek he was asked about this, and replied, "An anti-Semitic position is alien to me because I look at the class society...I am a Marxist. I not opposed to the Jews, but the Jewish bourgeoisie, as well as any other bourgeoisie." He argued that "if a Jewish minority, the Zionist, strive for the restoration of capitalism, with that I cannot agree. The Zionists in Poland played a shameful role, shameful! The reason that overthrew socialism. And the story does not forget them."

It is a case where the defence remains unproven. The Programme of the KPP published in 1967 contained attacks on "the Zionist-Trotskyite group of Jewish nationalists, which, behind the mask of equality, desires the establishment of the rule of the Jewish national minority over the thirty-million-strong Polish nation."

As a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist, his dissident opposition stemmed from the concept of anti-revisionism, losing his place within the bureaucracy to the Gomulka faction was the result of his ideological opposition; a careerist acceptance of the revisionist course in Poland would have secured his position within the Polish leadership. Mijal recalls that he was approached before the Third Congress:

"Listen, there is such a thing. If you make a little self-criticism, you will still be chosen as a CC member again. "And he explains that it is about three things: the wrong attitude to the Soviet Union, agricultural policy and responsibility for the actions of security."It's not you

write a lot, just a few words." And I told him that I still believe that my position on these issues was the right thing." (Muzurek interview)

Mijal's political opposition and defence of Stalin continued – "Under his rule very backward Russia has grown into a global power" and "The main reason for the collapse of socialism was the degeneration of the party, which began in Moscow since the Soviet Communist Party. Stalin before the war stopped doing purges, he said it was unnecessary! And that's why he lost control of the party" -

He said towards to the end of his life, "I'm a communist, and I do not regret." Mijal retained a hard-line defence in his replies when Robert Muzurek asked him:

Q- Why, in June 1956 in Poznan government he sent tanks against the workers?

- Not against the workers, but against the organizers.

Q- Dozens of people were killed!

- It was a class struggle. Same as during the French Revolution. If the bourgeoisie overthrowing feudalism, stiffened on the guillotine tens of thousands of heads of his opponents, it looks like things have to happen in the construction of socialism. (Muzurek interview)

In 1963, printed by the Albanians and smuggled into the country, more than 10,000 copies of the pamphlet "*Victory Through Struggle – Passivity and Silence Lead to Defeat*" which attacked the revisionist Gomulka clique, were distributed throughout the country. Many Marxist-Leninists were arrested and Mijal was sacked from his posts. The oppositionist underground *Komunistyczna Partia Polski / Communist Party of Poland* was founded, with Mijal as General Secretary, on December 4th 1965, at St. Barbara, in Warsaw. " We knew that government of Gomulka led to capitalism and came to the conclusion that we need to organize. Among the founders they were not just any name. The party had four former members of the Central Committee: Wladyslaw Dworakowski, Hilary Chełchowski, Stanislaw Brodziński and me. The first two were previously even members of the Politburo."

The Chinese informed the Party of Labour that "it knew nothing" about the formation of the KPP Communist Party of Poland, that:

It had not been informed by the Polish Marxist comrades, but also that it did not maintain secret links with them and did not help them apart from the open stand in its press about the struggle against revisionism. ⁱ

KAZIMIERZ MIJAL'S EXILE

In 1966, after facing increased police repression, he left illegally from Poland (using a passport issued from the Albanian Embassy), and it was Tirana that gave Kazimierz Mijal a home and employment in the following year. There he used the Polish-language service of

Albanian radio to broadcast his party's ideas to his Polish homeland, serially transmitting political articles such as "Communist Party of Poland Is a Working-Class Party" and The Program of the KPP.

Diplomatic bags smuggle party pamphlets and the illegal newspaper "*Red Flag*" he edited into Poland, and there also was support from the Belgian *La Voix du Peuple* (*The Voice of the People*), which helped in pamphleteering.

The only in depth *English* language study of the dissent Polish communist Kazimierz Mijal was that produced in 1967 by Antoni Market of the CIA-funded, Radio Free Europe's Polish unit; Mijal, of course, many years later had a Wikipedia entry, but for most of the second half of his life, Mijal was known within Maoist circles (mainly through articles in *Peking Review*, Albanian media sources and meetings in Tirana) but not much beyond that. He had visited China, meeting Mao and the Chinese leadership in 1968.

Just as reports of 'Maoist' activity in Hungary and the Soviet Union were publicised by Maoist groups in the late Sixties, and the creation of the East German branch of the KPD(ML) in the 1970s, Mijal's symbolic significance as a Marxist veteran opposing revisionism in power was greater than the political effectiveness of the KPP. Rather like the minority inner-party opposition in west European communist parties, the far more precarious position of their dissent anti-revisionist comrades east of the River Elba had negligible results in challenging the existing power-holders.

BREAKING WITH TIRANA

After a decade in exile in Albania, Mijal political stance again saw difficulties with the state's political authorities. He said,

"The relationship suddenly and seriously deteriorated after the Albanian leadership openly attacked the theory of the three worlds at the 7th Congress of the PLA in 1976. I personally didn't take part in that Congress -we only sent a letter with our greetings." ⁱⁱ

Supporters of the Albanian positions claim that after the 7th Party Congress,

"The Albania-hostile activities of the Chinese leadership in particular were reinforced under the banner of revenge against the PLA, which had exercised a principled critique of the anti-Marxist theory of "Three Worlds" at its 7th Party Congress. It tried to sabotage the Party Congress by directed provocations. The exiled president of the illegal Communist Party of Poland, Kazimierz Mijal, had been incited by the Chinese and was supposed to provoke at the Party. So he rioted in Tirana under the influence of alcohol, called the Central Committee of the PLA and Enver Hoxha traitors and much more." ⁱⁱⁱ

The Swedish Maoist monthly *Gnistan*, reported a different experience for Mijal. In a report, later supported by Mijal's own testimony, *Gnistan reported that* Mijal left Albania after

Tirana had sent an agent to Poland to split the KPP Polish Communist Party by means of establishing secret contacts with certain party members, some of whom had been "removed from the party leadership. Moreover, secret meetings in a West European capital between three members of the Polish Communist Party and a member of the Albanian Politburo, it is claimed, constituted part of the Albanian "splitting" efforts. ^{iv}

Enver Hoxha recorded his view in his private political diary on 'The Charlatan <Advocate> of the Rotten Chinese Line' as he refers to "Kazimierz Michal (sic), General Secretary of the Communist Party of Poland". Hoxha regarded him as belonging to those "clear and dangerous renegades, hence the fire must be concentrated against them, to destroy them like rats!"^v

Serious Albanian "provocation" *Gnistan* reported forced Mijal to applied for political asylum in China:

In the first place, his exit permit was delayed for 25 days while Mijal was under house arrest, the security surveillance around his residence was intensified in a conspicuous manner, and his telephone line was cut. . . upon his departure, he was not allowed to take with him his party files. . . . He characterized the entire affair as political terrorism and abuse of power, showing the real face of left-wing revisionism. ^{vi}

In his political diary Hoxha deals at length with Mijal's "defection"; accuses Mijal of betrayal and ingratitude and calls him the "charlatan advocate of the rotten Chinese line." In a note of February 1977, soon after the Albanian party congress, Hoxha points out that in the wake of Australia's Hill and France's Jurquet "another renegade from Marxism-Leninism has come out to attack the Marxist-Leninist theses of the 7th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania. He sends us his criticisms in writing, in a letter, allegedly as decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Poland with which he has not had any contact for seven or eight months". After having asked "why on earth" did he change his colours, proceeds to relate:

We welcomed him, made sacrifices for him, and did everything in our power to ensure that he felt at home when he was here. We had no contentions with him over political and ideological opinions, and gave him only one piece of advice: that contacts should be established outside Poland with some comrades sent from the PUWP CC, because such contacts could not be made through our embassy. ^{vii}

Having thus deplored Mijal's ingratitude toward his Albanian hosts, Hoxha disingenuously proceeds to claim that in the past the "Pole" had shown little sympathy for the Chinese, and that once he had spoken furiously against the Chinese because he had been "totally ignored" (But photographed with Mao – EROL note) during a visit to Peking. He then attacks Mijal for accepting what Hoxha claims to be the line propounded by Keng Piao, but which is in full accord with the tenets of a Polish "nationalist," to wit, that, for the Polish Communist Party, the "external enemy" is the Soviet Union, and the "internal enemy" is Gierek, and that in

order to fight these two the Communist Party of Poland "must unite, even with the blackest reactionaries." Mijal's support for the Chinese line was denounced in the following colourful terms:

The Pole, Mijal, is becoming "more Catholic than the pope." He is like that frog in the fable which wanted to be as big as an ox and, to this end, blew its sides out until it burst. And the Pole, Mijal, in order to defend the reactionary revisionist line, blew himself up until he burst, and revealed all the inner rottenness and that of the Chinese at the same time.

Kazimierz Mijal took Hoxha catholic jibe and, replied that: "The PLA leadership suffers from infallibility in revolutionary theory and practice, and socialist construction. They look upon Tirana as the "Rome" of Marxism-Leninism and as the centre of world revolution and socialism. Enver Hoxha says; "The party is never wrong". The Pope is also infallible -but only in things which don't belong to this world."^{viii}

In November 1977 Hoxha wrote, "Last evening Hsinhua gave long excerpts from a major hostile, revisionist article which Kazimierz Mijal, who claims to be general secretary of the Communist Party of Poland, has sent to Peking through the Chinese embassy in Tirana. Without knowing anything about the past of this revisionist, we have supported him for years on end in the work which he did in the leadership of his Communist Party, have provided him with every political, ideological, moral and economic facility. However, it turned out that he is nothing but a renegade from Marxism-Leninism, a disguised enemy of the Party of Labour of Albania, and therefore it is not necessary to extend here on his hostile work, which was discovered two years ago... In the letter which he sent us, he says that he is ready to make an alliance even with the devil himself provided only that he is against Soviet revisionism. Amongst other things he supports the thesis that a country, a people, or a party cannot have two main enemies, but only one, and the main enemy is the Soviet Union, and not the United States of America, as well. Therefore he, and allegedly his party, are ready to collaborate with the whole of reaction, even with the reaction of his own country, and world reaction, against Soviet imperialism. This is the thesis of the Chinese, the thesis of the 'third world', the thesis of 'relying on one imperialism to fight another imperialism'."^{ix}

RETURN TO POLAND

After leaving Albania, Mijal was in exile in China; ultimately a frustrating experience away from Poland. Mijal could comment in support of the working class struggle against the Polish regime, without mention Solidarność, officially Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity", the main vehicle for that resistance and the fulcrum of change within Poland.

Mijal secretly returned to the country in the early 1983 to re-commence political work. The KPP had not survived under revisionist rule. Mijal was arrested by the authorities in November 19, 1984, for distributing pamphlets but was not charged. Behind the scenes, Norwegian Marxist-Leninists and others were campaigning for Mijal to be adopted as a

“prisoner of conscience” by Amnesty International. There was a ludicrous attempt to implicate him in the murder of the prominent anti-communist priest, Jerzy Popieluszko. Mijal was released after three months.

Mijal attempted to revive the KPP/ Communist Party in 1997. He was a staunch opponent of NATO and the EU, and attracted marginal interest both from the far left and far-right but nothing substantial developed. He abandoned political organising for periodical journalistic activity.

He died aged 99, on January 28, 2010 in Warsaw, Poland. He was buried on the grounds of Warsaw Reformed Cemetery on Zytnia street.

ⁱ REFLECTIONS ON CHINA I 1962—1972. THE «8 NĚNTORI»PUBLISHING HOUSE 1979 p218
MONDAY DECEMBER 27 ,1965
http://www.enverhoxha.ru/Archive_of_books/English/enver_hoxha_reflections_on_china_volume_I_eng.pdf

ⁱⁱ THEY CONDEMNED ME TO PASSIVITY AND SILENCE *an interview with Kazimierz Mijal.*
RCLB, *Revolution* Vol 4. No.2 January 1980

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://espressostalinist.wordpress.com/marxism-leninism/enver-hoxha-page/>

^{iv} *Gnistan*, 19-25 January 1979

^v REFLECTIONS ON CHINA II 1973—1977. THE «8 NĚNTORI»PUBLISHING HOUSE 1979 pp 443-456.
February 14, 1977.
http://www.enverhoxha.ru/Archive_of_books/English/enver_hoxha_reflections_on_china_volume_II_eng.pdf

^{vi} *Gnistan* 19-25 January 1979

^{vii} *Reflections on China* Vol. II, p. 443. February 14, 1977

^{viii} THEY CONDEMNED ME TO PASSIVITY AND SILENCE: *an interview with Kazimierz Mijal.*
Revolution Vol 4. No.2 January 1980

^{ix} *Reflections on China* Vol. II, pp. 708-709.

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<http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/tablica/wywiad-z-kazimierzem-mijalem-robot-mazurek-czesc-1666,270154,41011260,watek.html>

Kazimierz Mijal writings

<https://maopd.wordpress.com/>