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Teng Hsiao-Ping: A Political Biography and Imperialism and the Revolution (Book Reviews)

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Book Reviews

by John M. Zinkand

Teng Hsiao-Ping: A Political Biography, by Chi Hsin. Hong Kong: Cosmos Books Ltd., 1978. 274 pages, \$3.95. *Imperialism and the Revolution*, by Enver Hoxha. Tirana, Albania: "8 Nentori" Publishing House, 1979. 464 pages, \$5.50. Reviewed by McKendree R. Langley, Associate Professor, Abraham Kuyper Chair, Lectureship Center.

On September 9, 1976 Chairman Mao Tse-Tung died in Peking. A month later on October 6 Chiang Ching and her three associates, collectively known as the Gang of Four, were arrested by Chairman Hua Kuo-Feng. In July, 1977 at the Third Plenum of the Tenth Chinese Communist Party Congress Teng Hsiao-Ping was reinstated to all his party and state posts. A month later on August 18 Vice Premier Teng gave the closing address at the Eleventh Party Congress calling for "less empty talk and more hard work" to modernize China. During April, 1978 the Albanian party leader Enver Hoxha published *Imperialism and the Revolution* for distribution within the Party of Labor of Albania. On the following July 7 China delivered a note to the Albanian Embassy in Peking declaring that all Chinese economic and military aid to the small Balkan communist nation was being terminated and all Chinese personnel withdrawn. An Albanian letter was sent in response to the Chinese party and government note a few weeks later on July 29 protesting the cessation of Chinese credits and accusing the Peking regime of softening its attitude toward the United States and engaging in hegemonistic plans justified by the false theory of "three worlds." These events marked the end of close relations between China and Albania begun in 1960 during the Sino-Soviet split. This severing of close ideological ties between Peking and Tirana was also indicative of an important realignment now taking place in world politics.

Teng Hsiao-Ping: A Political Biography is a fragmentary but helpful study of the man who now shapes Chinese policy. The book is fragmentary because communist leaders do not usually write memoirs or talk to reporters about their past political difficulties. Yet "Chi Hsin," the pen-name of a Hong Kong-based research group, has gathered all available data on Teng's life and policies, an accomplishment in itself. "Chi Hsin" also includes two writers who studied at mainland universities from 1974 to 1977 and are thus personally familiar with contemporary Chinese politics.

Teng Hsiao-Ping was born in 1904 in Szechwan province, the son of a landlord. Showing promise at an early age, he was sent to France where he worked from 1922 to 1925. In France he became acquainted with Chou En-Lai and joined the European branch of the Chinese Communist Youth League. During 1925-26 he studied at the Sun Yat-Sen University in Moscow and joined the Chinese Communist Party. Upon returning to China Teng gained experience by holding various administrative, military, and party posts in the growing revolutionary movement of Mao Tse-Tung from the 1920's to the 1940's. In August, 1952 he became a vice premier and in May, 1954 he was appointed secretary-general of the Party's Central Committee. Teng headed several Chinese delegations to various international communist meetings in Moscow to defend China's ideological and political independence in the early 1960's resulting in the Sino-Soviet split. During April and May, 1966 Teng took part in the talks with the visiting Albanian delegation headed by Premier Mehmet Shehu. At this point China wanted Albania's help to improve its international standing at the United Nations as well as ideological support for the violent Maoist line. After criticism by the Red Guards as a bourgeois leader, Teng fell from power in 1967, having confessed his own guilt (text, see pp. 54-64). Reinstatement as a vice premier came in April, 1973.

Teng went to New York to present Mao's theory of the "three worlds" to the U.N. on April 10, 1974 (text, see pp. 164-175). From this viewpoint the First World is made up of the American and Soviet super powers, the Second World includes the developed countries of Western Europe and Japan, and the Third World is comprised of the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Teng emphasized that China is a part of the Third World and opposed to the policies of the super powers. Then as Premier Chou En-Lai's health deteriorated, Teng assumed the responsibilities of acting premier. In January, 1976 Teng delivered the memorial speech at the funeral of Chou En-Lai. Probably due to the influence of the radical Gang of Four, Teng was again purged the following April. His full reinstatement came in July, 1977 and on August 18 he gave the con-

cluding address at the Eleventh Party Congress in which he praised Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and called for "... less empty talk and more hard work." The new goal was to "make China a great, powerful and modernized socialist country by the turn of the century..." (p. 151).

Teng's policy received amplification in an important editorial on the "three worlds" theory in the authoritative *People's Daily* of Peking on November 1, 1977 (text, see pp. 218-241). Quotes from Lenin and Mao were presented in support of "three worlds." Since the bourgeois and socialist camps were fragmented beyond repair, the editorialist called for a new Chinese global strategy which included the recognition of the Soviet Union as more dangerous than the U.S., even though both super powers were seen as imperialist. An independent Third World was seen as the main defense against the plans of the super powers, with China playing a leading role in this movement. At the same time, the editorialist pointed out, China was forming an anti-Soviet united front in the world which included bourgeois powers (such as the U.S. and Western Europe) whenever possible. By such a realignment China under the leadership of Teng Hsiao-Ping is seeking to protect itself from a war with the Soviet Union. While quite sympathetic to Teng's modernization and Third World strategy, "Chi Hsin" was mainly concerned to understand the current Chinese line while refraining from giving a substantial critique.

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Imperialism and the Revolution was published under the auspices of the Institute of Marxist-Leninist studies which is the theoretical department of the Central Committee of the Party of Labor of Albania. The book's author, party leader Enver Hoxha, has been in power since 1944 and, along with President Tito of Yugoslavia, is the only communist leader who defeated the forces of Hitler and Mussolini without the help of the Soviet Red Army. Albania had close ties with Yugoslavia (1944-48), the Soviet Union (1948-60) and China (1960-78). But Hoxha broke the alliances with these powers because, as he publically stated, they had rejected pure communism to become revisionists. *Imperialism and the Revolution* is the major ideological statement of the new independent Albanian line as emphasized by the North American service of Radio Tirana during the past year. The underlying theme of the book is that ideologically pure Albania, not China, should lead the world communist and liberation movements. Thus there is a sustained polemic against the U.S., U.S.S.R., and China. In rejecting Teng Hsiao-Ping's theory of "three worlds" Hoxha proclaims the

theory of "two worlds:" Albania's revolution versus the imperialism of the other powers. The Albanian Marxist-Leninist perspective on contemporary world affairs is given in detail.

Three main themes emerge in the Hoxha book: 1) the bitter denunciation of "imperialism" (the U.S., the Western powers, Japan, the U.S.S.R., and China), 2) a refutation of the current Chinese line, and 3) the presentation of Albania as the only true communist leader of the developing nations.

Under the general heading of imperialism there are three main subdivisions: a) imperialism proper (the U.S. and the Western allies), b) social imperialism (the U.S.S.R. and China) and c) revisionism (for example, Yugoslavia, Cuba, and Eurocommunism). All of the powers in this category are seen as strengthening world capitalism. Hoxha therefore believes that Washington, Moscow, and Peking are equally bad and competing with one another or even cooperating at times to take over the developing countries. The fact that both major communist powers are charged with being guilty of social imperialism and war-mongering by a veteran communist party leader in power makes the book somewhat unique.

The strong denunciation of the current Chinese line includes a refutation of the "three worlds" theory, a negative evaluation of Peking's plan to become a super power, a sketch of Sino-Albanian relations from 1956 to the 1970's to expose Peking's nationalistic pragmatism and the categorization of Mao Tse-Tung thought as anti-Marxist. Hoxha felt that Mao was not a true Marxist-Leninist, but a progressive revolutionary democrat with an eclectic philosophy of Marxism, idealism, ancient Chinese philosophy, great nation chauvinism, and the pretension of infallibility. In effect Hoxha affirmed the typical difficulty Westerners have in understanding Easterners: "... in some ways China, Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party of China remained a great enigma to us" (p. 386). Thus the change in Peking's line symbolized by President Nixon's trip to China in 1972 was a shock to Hoxha. The return of Teng Hsiao-Ping to power was greatly regretted since the Albanian leader termed him the "Chinese Breshnev," seeking to make himself into "an all-powerful fascist dictator..." (p. 451).

The book's conclusion is:

The people trust the Party of Labor of Albania because it speaks the truth, and the truth has its source in the Marxist-Leninist theory which has been concretely applied in Albania. The development of our country, its liberation wars, its social, economic, political and spiritual situation

in the past, have much in common with many countries of the world which have suffered or are suffering the savage oppression of internal rulers and foreign imperialist rulers. The experience accumulated by our Party in the seizure of power by the people, in the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism is a concrete example and aid to these peoples. The victories and successes achieved in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania have their basis in the Marxist-Leninist theory, by which it is inspired and which the Party of Labor of Albania applies in practice (p. 456).

It also stated that Albania will always defend ideological purity and actively participate in world revolution as the proper leader of the Third World.

III

What emerges in both books is an ideological struggle between China and Albania for the right to seek to gain the leadership of the developing countries. Thus two important editorials from the Albanian party daily *Zeri i Popullit* were included in the Teng biography opposing both the rapprochement between Tito and Khrushchev in 1963 and the Chinese "three worlds" theory in 1977 (texts, see pp. 177-216). The strategy of Teng Hsiao-Ping in attempting to gain support in the West and the Third World has been to emphasize the Soviet threat and the need for domestic modernization. The Vice Premier has tried to avoid basic political questions of communism versus democracy, while appealing to secular pragmatic indifference

to the Gospel-Revolution antithesis. Hoxha's approach has been an appeal to ideological purity and to his rigid brand of communism. Given Albania's status as a mini-power with a population of two million, Hoxha could hardly do otherwise. The clash between the positions of Teng and Hoxha is related to conflicting party idolatries both claiming to have "the truth" as well as to the collision of national interests. China no longer needs Albania diplomatically and ideologically and Albania no longer agrees with China ideologically. The Hoxha book is a corrective from within the communist movement to the current uncritical attitude toward China. Since 1978 Hoxha has been actively building an independent Marxist-Leninist world movement with headquarters in Tirana. This means that the left-wing politics of the Third World, as well as elsewhere, is getting more complicated with more radical splinter parties. The tension between Albania and China now influencing the world communist movement is a current example of the Revolution within the Revolution. By day Enver Hoxha is the Albanian party leader, but by night he dreams he is the new Stalin with international influence. *Imperialism and the Revolution* is Hoxha's claim to be the ideological successor to Mao Tse-Tung as the world leader of the radical communist movement. From the Chinese viewpoint the Tirana regime favored the radical Gang of Four jailed after Mao's death. Both books make clear that politics is not just politics, but politics based on a world view. In this case it is a consistent rejection of the Gospel in favor of two similar but clashing brands of unbelief now being exported to the Third World. Such spiritual darkness, either from Teng or Hoxha, must be recognized and properly critiqued since it is basic to the modern world.

The Playbook: For Christian Theatre, compiled and edited by Hans Altena. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Young Calvinist Federation, 1978. 49 pages, \$2.95. Reviewed by Michael Stair, Instructor in Theatre Arts.

Christians put up with some very inadequate theatre. Except for the few authors who become famous by leaving their Christian viewpoint behind, the Christian audience looking for an emotionally moving piece without a "hit you on the head message" can expect little but neglect, or at best, rare viewing experiences which are truly stimulating. No one is to blame for this. We are simply too saturated, too patterned to notice the difference between "television type" entertainment and drama with a purpose. Much of the finest drama written today is left unseen by the majority of Christian theatre goers. That Christian theatre has historically found the source of its

greatest strengths in church drama is an old story. It would be foolish to insist that only the Chancel Theatre is worth seeing, but it would be just as wrong to assume that the work published each year by Samuel French represents the extent of Christian theatre being written. We must make the effort to find out what is available.

Consider *The Playbook: For Christian Theatre*. Now in its second year since publication, with seventeen scripts and two preparatory essays, it could be one of the most useful publications available to Christian youth leaders. And yet it probably will not make that much impact on the Christian theatre scene as a whole. There are