

Albania and China: A Historical Observation of the World Press - *The Beginnig of The'70s in 20th Century*

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Abstract

The Cold War years presented a variety of dynamics not only in the relationships between the two fronts, but even in the relationships within the socialist front. Albania rolled in close alliances from Yugoslavia, Soviet Union to China. This paper focuses on the beginning of the '70s in the 20th century, on the "fraternal" Albanian-Chinese relationship seen from the political, social and economical aspects. This period would be the beginning of the cold era of the "love" between two countries, and the foreign press would have in observation this relationship, where mainly the left oriented newspapers and magazines and not only presented very interesting articles. From this perspective, the Albanian-Chinese relationship was presented in the Austrian, Italian, French, Turkish, West German, American, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Soviet, East German, Chinese press. The pages of these newspapers and magazines reflected the great support that China had accorded to Albania, the industrial developments which the latest one had realised thanks to this support. It is noted the presence of the Chinese human resources in Albania and the social influence, the Albanian diplomatic war for the acceptance of China in the United Nation Organisation etc. Some objective articles, chronicles and reportages were continuously evaluating some truths on the beginnings of divergencies between Tirana and Beijing. Associating the China approach to USA with the Albanian scepticism, the Albanian discontent started to come to light in this aspect. In the press of the time, the Albanian-Chinese relationship started to be reflected as a friendly correct relationship, in the social and economic plan, but with some discrepancies in the ideological plan.

Keywords: Albanian-Chinese relationship, world press, economy, ideological divergencies

Introduction

The aim of the paper is to present a picture of the Albanian-Chinese relationship seen from the world press point of view and to record the beginning of the break of this friendship. In the beginnings of the '70s in the 20th century, China was considered as

the main ally of Albania, supporting the Marxism-Leninism line and as the main source of economic, social and political support. Within the European geopolitics and even wider, the factor and actor countries of this geopolitics showed interest even for Albania, this reflected through the observations and publications in the press. What is noticed is the fact that many newspapers reflect a propagandistic reality, and realistic writings are rarely published. Differently was with the Beijing official press, where the newspaper "Zhenmin Zhibao", would be very discrete in reflecting this reality, mentioning only news taken from Tirana's official newspaper "Zëri i Popullit", publishing short articles on the Chinese assistance and the Albanian economic and social achievements.

These articles, were translated by the Albanian Telegraphic Agency and were served in the form of Special Buletins, only to the highest ranked state members, who were informed on how and what the world press was writing about the Communist Albania.

Methodology: During the research it has been applied the qualitative method by creating a collective, descriptive and evaluating research.

Economic, political and social aspects are easily noticed in the press, where were presented realistic facts and data, covered with a propagandistic veil.

The Austrian newspaper "Shrichte und Informationen" of Salzburg, on April 3rd 1970, published the news that Albania was taking from China reinforced equipment for its army, was holding trainings for the psychological training during war. The Albanian anti-aircraft defense had taken new missile systems and in the coast had been built radar signaling systems. Near Tirana was being built an average wavelength radiostation which would broadcast even Chinese programmes ("Shrichte und Informationen", 1970).

"Advancements behind mountains, an observation on Albania" is a reportage of Max Dimiter Poyfyss in the Westgerman newspaper "Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung" (Poyfyss, 1970). In this article obviously propagandistic, among other things was written: *"...Albania is not a Chinese colony. Surprisingly you can see only a few Chinese in the streets. Only in the many new factories, which are supplied by China on credit without bank interests, can be seen Chinese specialists that instruct Albanian workers. Differently from Soviet specialists that in their own time, were as the new elite of the country and were often rewarded even better than the head of the Albanian state, Chinese are more modest and zealous. I did not see any Chinese staying without working or giving comments. The friends, who are further away are always the best. Without the Chinese help Albania had to put its independence at risk..."*

In the Yugoslavian newspaper "Magunarodna Politika" (Marmullaku, 1971), on page 6-7 under the headline "Albania on the verge of 1971" it was published the article of Ramadan Marmullaku where in one of the topics was written: *"...How is the Chinese presence displayed in Albania? According to the official organisms data, here are*

present hundreds of Chinese, mainly specialists who work in the object construction and in functioning the new factories. New sources say that in Albania live thousands technicians, planners and economists. Many factories, institutions, departments, schools and the hydropower on Drini river have been baptised with the name of Mao Tse Tung. The economic assistance that China is giving is a fact, because Albania has taken loans for 30 major industrial objects which will be built from 1971 to 1975. Among them there will be a big modern industrial plant with a great capacity to produce iron-nickel and coloured minerals. Although more than half of the Albanian export goes to China, Albania is in such situation that will never be able to pay the loan taken from the Chinese..."

The Italian newspaper "Avanti" (Barberi, 1970) publishes an article with the title "With the red books came the techniques and economic assistance". After giving a description of the development that Albania has had, it values the key role that China has had for the built factories, for the help of many Chinese technicians to prepare Albanian engineers and technicians. It is written that after the technical help year after year, the Chinese left and the responsibility for the operation of the factories was of the Albanian specialists.

The German newspaper "Die Presse" (Hoorn,1972) publishes a reportage with the title "A visitcard of the Chinese technicians" Among other things the writer says: *"...He who wants to see Chinese factories has no need to go to China, but in Albania, he can just visit some of the factories built with the assistance of China. Albania is a visitcard of the Chinese technicians, as an example it can be mentioned "Mao Tze Tung" hydropower, the Fierza hydropower which is under construction, where all the machineries and turbines are Chinese production. At the same time with the Chinese assistance it is being built the metallurgical plant. Now Albania does not explore copper as a mineral, but with Chinese help, processes it and 80% of the production is exported. Albania does not produce tractors, but produces all the spare parts..."*

In this period many articles reflect the role of the Albanian government in the recognition of China by the UN.

The French newspaper "Le Figaro" on November 16th,1970 published a reportage with the title "Beijing wins votes in UN: Italian, Canadian, Kuwaiti", in which among other things it is said: "Albanian representative in UN, who being right or wrong, plays the role of Beijing's spokesman, has called it as contradictory to vote for China and to call its recognition as an important issue that requires two thirds of the votes..." ("Le Figaro",1970).

In the French television (FTV,1970), in the 20:00 news programme as breaking news was the beginning of the debates in the General Assembly of the UN, for the Chinese issue. The programme started with the Albanian Foreign Minister Nesti Nase, in the pulpit, talking for more than five minutes.

The French newspaper ("Le Figaro", 1970) in a correspondence from New York, accompanied with a picture of the Minister Nesti Nase with the saying "Albanian delegate holding his speech", among other things writes: *"Once a year, Albania holds high the Chinese defence flag in UN, now it is practically the official spokesman of the Chinese government in the General Assembly. It is Albania, which with the mouth and an excellent French of its Foreign Minister Nase, to open the debate to affirm that is more necessary than ever to give China its rightful place in UN and to immediately expell Chiang Kai shek'.*

The other French newspaper "Soir" writes that Albania is the one that opened fire by presenting a resolution supported by 22 countries that can be summarized in: *"The people's China enters United Nations, the national China is expelled"* ("Soir", 1970).

The American journalist Henry Tanner publishes a series of articles in "The New York Times" (Tanner, 1971) regarding this issue. In the article "Albania tries to hamper American plan for China" it is said that the Albanian ambassador Reiz Malile, had said that it will hold an unconditional battle for the Beijing acceptance in UN. The General Assembly Committee voted 12 to 9 in favor of the Albanian demand entitled "The restoration of the lawful rights of People's Republic of China in UN" to be included in the agenda. The Albanian resolution calls for the acceptance of Beijing as "the only lawful representation" of China and the exclusion Chiang Kai shek government. While in the article "Beijing enjoys the sweet smell of success" it is said that: *"...Albanians that are the directors of the Beijing's campaign in the UN, have decided to compete with the American determination and fight them in every case, where many procedural confrontations were held in some sessions to protect the Chinese issue..."*.

A summary of the debates held in UN, for the Chinese issue were published in Beijing's newspaper ("Zhenmin Zhibao", 1970).

But the changes in the foreign politics of China during the '70s in the 20th century brought the beginning of a breakage in the Albanian-Chinese "fraternity". In relation to this, the foreign press was very attentive in its observations.

The newspaper "The Christian Science Monitor" of May 3rd, 1972 published the article of Paul Wohl entitled: "Albania and China change a little the pace of walking together", in which it is argued that based on some programmes broadcasted by Beijing Radio there have been found some differences between them: Firstly Tirana has impliedly criticized the Sino-American release, issued in the end of the Nixon visit in Beijing. Secondly, Beijing is being friendly with the Common European Market, which according to China, may oppose Moscow's and Washington's hegemony in Europe, however, Tirana Radio has described The Common Market as a "complicated node of the contradictions between imperialists" (Wohl, 1972).

According to some news in the newspaper "Magyarország" of Budapest, among other things, it is written that the entrance of China in the heart of Europe composes a serious threat. Albanian leaders follow this threat day by day worryingly. The

supporters of Mao Tse Tung politics in the Albanian army are being cleared. The Chinese military works were the cause for the low living standards of the population by damaging the economic conditions ("Magyarország", 1970).

On May 22nd, 1972 the Turkish newspaper "Xhuhurijeti" published an article by professor Ullmaz Alltug, a specialist in the foreign politics, entitled "Albania and China". Among other things, it is stated that between Albania and China there are some disagreements: Firstly, different from Beijing, Tirana is against the empowerment of the Common European Market. The Party of Labour of Albania considers many of these parties as deviations of Marxism-Leninism and as revisionist parties. Thirdly, Albania has different point of view from the Chinese regarding the Nixon visit in China. In an article in the "Zërit të Popullit" of March 7th, 1972 there is a quotation of Enver Hoxha: *"Imperialism, with the American one as a leader, does not change neither its skin, nor its hairs, nor its character. Even if it has just one toothe left in its mouth, it will bite"*. This remark contradicts the Sino-American common communication (Alltung, 1972).

"How did the table tennis diplomacy affect the Sino-Albanian friendship?" was written in the Hungarian magazine "Magyar Orszap" of May 1972. Among other things it is cited that the Albanian public propaganda means, reflected the Nixon visit in Beijing with a complete silence. According to some observers, this is because for many years Albania has emphasized the antiamerican politics, and now it cannot declare so easily that China, its ideological ally, thinks differently. Even for the improvement of the relationship between China and Yugoslavia in 1970, the Albanian press stayed silent, although between Beograd and Beijing a diplomatic relationship was created ("Magyar Orszap", 1972).

On 3rd July 1972, in "Die Presse" the journalist Hoorn, writes that Albania is following its politics, independently from Beijing. According to him, Albanians have even a joke: *"Zhivkov holds the open umbrella in Sofia when it rains in Moscow. But Albanians don't do this when it rains in Beijing. Albania is grateful to China for the material and moral assistance, but Albanians cannot become slaves or imitate Beijing. With the great changes that are happening in the world and in Europe, there risies a question how would Albania adapt to these changes?..."*(Hoorn, 1972).

The newspaper "Washington Post" August 13th, 1972 published an article of Erik Bourn written in "London Observer", entitled: "Chinese assistance is still essential in Albania", where among other things is written: *"...Albanians still have not accepted the reception that was done to their enemy Richard Nixon in Beijing. But China remains the only "presence" here, the only trusted friend of this country which sees itself surrounded from all sides, even with the carefull relations of this country with the neighbouring countries and Europe. Chinese technicians and consultants are still seen here, taking a tan and sunbathing in the beach at the weekends, or eating in the provincial hotels close to the construction sites where they are working..."*(Bourn, 1972).

In the beginning of 1973 there can be seen a deepening of the divergencies between the two allies.

The newspaper "Sydentche Zeitung", publishes the article "The relationship between Beijing and Tirana is at a turning point". According to this newspaper the main problem of the divergencies is the question which is more dangerous, USA or the Soviet Union? Tirana regards as important the war between these two fronts, while Beijing dims the war towards USA, regarding The Soviet Union as more dangerous. These divergencies were officially confirmed in the beginning of November 1973, when the Albanian Minister of Defense, Beqir Balluku, in a reception in Beijing opposed the Chinese point of view as unacceptable for the socialist Albania ("Sydentche Zeitung", 1973).

Conclusion

The relationships with China continued even for a few years, they did not have that "pure love" anymore because of the ideological divergencies. In this aspect the world press played an important role in reflecting this reality of the isolated Albania in the international arena.

Seen from this point of view, the research of the foreign press in the aforementioned years is quite important in completing the historical picture of this period. The way foreigners look at the events, despite Albania's isolation, showed the interest that different countries had for our country. For this reason, it is important that such studies be deepened further, as they fill possible gaps in Albanian historiography.

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