# ІСТОРІЯ, ФІЛОСОФІЯ, НАУКА ТА КУЛЬТУРА КИТАЮ

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## HOW CHINESE SOVIETOLOGISTS PERCEIVED AND INTERPRETED SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE EARLY 1980S

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This article will examine the analyses of Chinese Soviet-watchers on Soviet foreign policy against the larger context of China's political setting in the early 1980s, before the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, and investigate how those Chinese scholars placed post-Mao Chinese official agendas centrally in their research.

In the early 1980s, when the Sino-Soviet relations were in estrangement and the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had exacerbated the bilateral relations, the CCP regime called for the state-wide denunciation of the so-called Soviet hegemonism (*baquan zhuyi*). After that, Chinese Soviet-watchers became preoccupied with criticizing Soviet hegemonism in their writings. This article will show that both the real Soviet military threat along the PRC border after Moscow's incursion into Afghanistan, and the historical memory of the past Russian invasion of China played key roles in intensifying the hostility of Chinese scholars toward the USSR in the early 1980s. The criticisms gradually receded after Mikhail Gorbachev took power in 1985, and the label of Soviet hegemonism finally disappeared from Chinese Sovietology writings in the late 1980s, when the bilateral relations had normalized.

Moscow's relations with Albania, Yugoslavia and the Third World also became popular topics in the early 1980s Chinese writings. In the case of Albania, although post-Mao China deeply disliked Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha's Maoist isolation policy, Chinese scholars highly appreciated Albania's resistance to Moscow's domination in the early 1980s. Their stand served quite well to China's anti-Soviet position then.

In the early days of the decade, the CCP regime was attracted by Yugoslavia's intransigence toward the Kremlin and, most importantly, Belgrade's trajectory of reform that deviated from the orthodox Soviet model. Many Chinese Soviet-watchers supported wholeheartedly Yugoslavia's stand in its conflicts with Moscow since the end of the Second World War. The trend reflects China's ambition of challenging the Soviet domination of the socialist camp, and its aspiration to embrace Yugoslavia's trajectory of reform, which mixed cen-

tral planning and market mechanism, and is exactly the path the PRC has taken since 1978.

Chinese perceptions of Soviet-Third World relations should also be viewed in the context of China's Third World policy direction in the early 1980s, when the CCP regime was determined to end Maoist isolation and become a partner of the underdeveloped nations. Chinese scholars always had strong sympathy for the Third World and stood by the side of those countries through their criticisms of Soviet aggression in the region. Many of these scholars argued that Soviet behaviours were contradictory to Lenin's internationalism. In the Chinese mind, Moscow's unequal treatment of some Third World states evoked memories of China in the past, when the country had also been bullied and weakened by Tsars and the Kremlin after 1949. Chinese scholars strongly promoted and defended the case of the Third World in their articles. The writings demonstrate China's determination to challenge Moscow's authority, appeal for redress for past historical wrongdoings, and promote the moral superiority of Chinese socialism over that of the USSR.

As such, seen from the early 1980s Chinese criticisms of Soviet foreign policy, Chinese research of Soviet hegemonism, Soviet-Albanian and Soviet-Yugoslavian conflicts, and Soviet-Third World relations all reflected Beijing's ambitions of challenging the orthodox Soviet model of economic development in the socialist world, competing with the Kremlin for leadership in the developing countries, and projecting a fair and benevolent image of Chinese socialism vis-à-vis Moscow.

As has been demonstrated, Chinese Soviet-watchers did not present many vicissitudes of Soviet international manoeuvres in their writings; instead, through research on the formation and evolution of Soviet foreign policy, they attempted to adjust their analyses to align with China's vision of itself and the world. Their writings function to highlight lessons learned from Moscow, legitimize the CCP rule and the Chinese way of practicing socialism, and to envision the future direction of China in the reform era.

In short, Chinese research of Soviet foreign policy in the early 1980s had primarily been to trace problems of Chinese socialism as experienced by scholars at the time of their research; this was done in order to legitimise state agendas, rather than to seek truth about the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

**Keywords:** Chinese Sovietolgy, Chinese Soviet-watchers, the Soviet Union, foreign policy, socialism, Afghanistan, Albania, Yugoslavia, Third World.

## ЯК КИТАЙСЬКІ РАДЯНОЛОГИ СПРИЙМАЛИ ТА ІНТЕРПРЕТУВАЛИ РАДЯНСЬКУ ЗОВНІШНЮ ПОЛІТИКУ НА ПОЧАТКУ 1980-Х РОКІВ

*Цзє Лі*

У статті розглядаються аналітичні матеріали китайських радянологів, які аналізували радянську зовнішню політику ширшому контексті політичної ситуації в Китаї на початку 1980-х років, до приходу Михайла Горбачова в 1985 році, а також досліджується їх науковий фокус на політичному курсі Китаю після Мао.

На початку 1980-х років, коли радянсько-китайські відносини були в стані відчуження, а радянське вторгнення в Афганістан у 1979 році загострило двосторонні відносини, режим КПК закликав до загальнодержавного засудження так званого радянського гегемонізму (*baquan zhuyi*). Надалі китайські радянологи почали активно критикувати радянський гегемонізм у своїх працях. У цій роботі демонструється як реальна радянська військова загроза кордонам КНР після вторгнення Москви в Афганістан, так і історична пам'ять про минуле

російське вторгнення в Китай зіграли ключову роль у посиленні ворожості китайських вчених до СРСР на початку 1980-х років. Критика поступово згасла після приходу до влади Михайла Горбачова в 1985 році, а ярлик радянського гегемонізму остаточно зник із китайських радянознавчих праць наприкінці 1980-х років після того, як двосторонні відносини нормалізувалися.

Відносини Москви з Албанією, Югославією та Третім світом також були у фокусі уваги китайських праць початку 1980-х років. Що стосується Албанії, попри те, що Китай після Мао не розділяв маоїстську політику ізоляції албанського диктатора Енвера Ходжі, китайські вчені високо оцінили опір Албанії домінуванню Москви на початку 1980-х років. В той час їхня думка цілком сприяла антирадянській позиції Китаю.

На початку десятиліття режим КПК був вражений непоступливістю Югославії Кремлю і, що найважливіше, розвитку реформи Белграда, яка відхилялася від ортодоксальної радянської моделі. Після закінчення Другої світової війни багато китайських радянологів щиро підтримували позицію Югославії в її конфліктах з Москвою. Така тенденція показувала амбітність Китаю кинути виклик радянському домінуванню в соціалістичному таборі та його прагнення прийняти вектор розвитку югославської реформи, яка поєднала централізоване планування та ринковий механізм та є саме тим шляхом, яким КНР йде з 1978 року.

Уявлення Китаю про відносини Радянського Союзу і Третього світу слід також розглядати в контексті політичного напрямку Китаю щодо Третього світу на початку 1980-х років, коли режим КПК був сповнений рішучості покласти край маоїстській ізоляції та стати партнером слаборозвинених країн. Китайські вчені завжди симпатизували країнам Третього світу і підтримували їх, критикуючи радянську агресію в регіоні. Багато з них стверджували, що радянська схема поведінки суперечила інтернаціоналізму Леніна. У свідомості китайців нерівне ставлення Москви до деяких країн Третього світу викликало спогади про Китай у минулому, коли країна також зазнавала знущань та була ослаблена царями та Кремлем після 1949 року. У своїх статтях китайські вчені активно підтримували і захищали позицію третього світу. Роботи демонстрували рішучість Китаю кинути виклик владі Москви, закликати її спокутувати минулі історичні злочини та пропагувати моральну перевагу китайського соціалізму над соціалізмом СРСР.

Таким чином, як видно з критики Китаю радянської зовнішньої політики на початку 1980-х років, китайських досліджень радянського гегемонізму, радянсько-албанських і радянсько-югославських конфліктів, а також відносин СРСР і Третього світу, все це відображало амбіції Пекіна кинути виклик ортодоксальній радянській моделі економічного розвитку в соціалістичному світі, конкуруючи з Кремлем за лідерство в країнах, що розвиваються, і проектуючи справедливий і доброзичливий імідж китайського соціалізму у порівнянні з Москвою.

Як видно, у своїх працях китайські радянологи не освітили багатьох перипетій радянських міжнародних маневрів; натомість досліджуючи формування та еволюцію радянської зовнішньої політики, вони намагалися адаптувати свої аналітичні матеріали до бачення Китаю себе та світу. Їхні твори мали на меті висвітлити уроки засвоєні з Москви, узаконити правління КПК і китайський

спосіб соціалізму, а також уявити майбутній напрямок розвитку Китаю в епоху реформ.

Отже, китайські дослідження, присвячені радянській зовнішній політиці початку 1980-х років, передусім полягали в тому, щоб відстежити проблеми китайського соціалізму, про що свідчить досвід вчених; це було зроблено для легітимізації державних завдань, а не для пошуку правди про Союз Радянських Соціалістичних Республік (СРСР).

**Ключові слова**: китайська совєтологія, китайські радянологи, Радянський Союз, зовнішня політика, соціалізм, Афганістан, Албанія, Югославія, Третій світ.

## Research Background

In the early 1980s, when the Sino-Soviet relations were in estrangement and the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had exacerbated the bilateral relations, the People's Republic of China (PRC) called for the state-wide denunciation of the so-called Soviet hegemonism (*baquan zhuyi*). After that, Chinese Soviet-watchers became preoccupied with criticizing Soviet hegemonism in their writings. This article will show that both the real Soviet military threat along the PRC border after Moscow's incursion into Afghanistan, and the historical memory of the past Russian invasion of China played key roles in intensifying the hostility of Chinese scholars toward the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the early 1980s. The criticisms gradually receded after the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev took power in 1985, and the label of Soviet hegemonism finally disappeared from Chinese Sovietology writings in the late 1980s, when the bilateral relations had normalized.

Moscow's relations with Albania, Yugoslavia and the Third World also became popular topics in early 1980s Chinese Sovietology writings. In the case of Albania, although post-Mao China deeply disliked Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha's Maoist isolation policy, Chinese scholars highly appreciated Albania's resistance to Moscow's domination in the early 1980s. Their stand served quite well to China's anti-Soviet position then.

In the early days of the decade, the PRC was attracted by Yugoslavia's intransigence toward the Kremlin and, most importantly, Belgrade's trajectory of reform that deviated from the orthodox Soviet model. Many Chinese Soviet-watchers supported wholeheartedly Yugoslavia's stand in its conflicts with Moscow since the end of the Second World War. The trend reflects China's ambition of challenging the Soviet domination of the socialist camp, and its aspiration to embrace Yugoslavia's trajectory of reform, which mixed central planning and market mechanism, and is exactly the path the PRC has taken since 1978.

Chinese perceptions of Soviet-Third World relations should also be viewed in the context of China's Third World policy direction in the early 1980s, when the PRC was determined to end Maoist isolation and become a partner of the underdeveloped nations. Chinese scholars always had strong sympathy for the Third World and stood by the side of those countries through their criticisms of Soviet aggression in the region. Many of these scholars argued that Soviet behaviours were contradictory to the first Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin's internationalism. In the Chinese mind, Moscow's unequal treatment of some Third World states evoked memories of China in the past, when the country had also been bullied and weakened by Tsars and the

Kremlin after 1949. Chinese scholars strongly promoted and defended the case of the Third World in their articles. The writings demonstrate China's determination to challenge Moscow's authority, appeal for redress for past historical wrongdoings, and promote the moral superiority of Chinese socialism over that of the USSR.

As such, seen from the early 1980s Chinese criticisms of Soviet foreign policy, Chinese Soviet-watchers not only attempted to learn from the negative lessons of Moscow. Most importantly, those scholars also endeavoured to propagandize and justify PRC's post-Mao domestic and international agendas through their subject study.

Regarding the Chinese academic journal articles consulted in the article, it should be mentioned here that this research is based wholly on the "national core journals" (*Guojiaji hexin qikan*) published in the PRC. All of them are available for purchase in Greater China and downloadable from any recognized Chinese university. The article engages mainly with the following four categories of journals for investigation:

The first are those journals focusing on research in the humanities and social sciences in general (*Social Science Research*; *World Economics and Politics*). Second are those journals dealing with problems of socialism or communism in the world (*Problems of Contemporary World Socialism; Socialism Studies*). The third group forms the core of this research; they concentrate on questions and issues relating to the former Soviet Union (later the Russian Federation and other Commonwealth of Independent States after 1991) (*Matters of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; Russian Studies*). Last, the research scope also includes relevant articles in various university journals (*Journal of Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Journal of the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*).

All the journals selected for this project accept submissions from all over China[1]. Most (but not all) of the contributors are academics, and the journals maintain acceptable quality standards and have a good reputation in the Chinese academic world. Some of them, such as *Matters of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* and *Socialism Studies*, are the very best PRC journals in their fields.

In addition, the research intends to examine the thinking of Chinese Sovietologists against the backdrop of political and social changes in China in the early 1980s. The research will be based not only on the analysis of primary sources already undertaken, but will also attempt to locate the developments of Chinese Sovietology amid the rapid changes in the social and political environment of post-Mao China in the early 1980s. Such a methodology should give readers a clear picture of the evolution of Chinese Sovietology, and a sense of how the wider arena of Chinese social and political history had an impact on these scholarly writings. Therefore, in order for this research to be successfully located in the rich fabric of the intellectual activities of contemporary China and in the changing environment, the investigator has also identified the following three kinds of documents that may be beneficial to the research:

**Articles in PRC official newspapers and journals concerning aspects of the former Soviet Union**: *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily, owned by the CCP Central

[1] For a list of the 1980s PRC journals on the Soviet Union, see Gilbert Rozman, 2010: 440-41.

Committee); *Guangming ribao* (Guangming Daily, published by the CCP Central Propaganda Department); *Hongqi* (Red Flag, renamed as *Qiushi* or Seeking Truth after 1988 and under direct control of the CCP Central Committee); *Beijing Review* (China's only national English weekly news magazine published in Beijing by the China International Publishing Group), etc.

**Writings and speeches of PRC officials and leaders on the matters of the Soviet state**: *Mao Zedong wenji* (Selected Works of Mao Zedong); *Deng Xiaoping xuanji* (Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping); and other contemporary Chinese leaders' related speeches scattered among the current Chinese newspapers.

**Chinese and English translations of works and speeches of Soviet leaders from Lenin to Gorbachev**: as Chinese scholars always cite the words of Soviet leaders (such as works of Lenin) to support their arguments in articles, it is important for the researcher to check the accuracy of those quotations.

In this article, the researcher will follow Robert Daniels in defining Sovietology as "the specialized study of the Soviet Union from the standpoint of the familiar academic disciplines: history, economics, geography, occasionally sociology and anthropology, and above all political science" [Robert Daniels 1999, *115*]. In Daniels's opinion, "Sovietology, of course, was never a discipline unto itself, let alone a monolithic academic cult", [Robert Daniels 1999, *115*] and "Sovietology did not constitute a peculiar discipline, a unique method, or a single set of conclusions" [Robert Daniels 1999, *120*]. Some Western scholars also draw a clear line between Sovietology and Kremlinology, the latter being defined as either "an approach that seeks to explain Soviet society primarily in terms of the political jockeying for power that takes place among the men in the Kremlin" [Harold Fisher 1959, *78*] or as "a subcomponent" of Sovietology [Steven Rosefielde and Stefan Hedlund 2008, *56*]. In this research, like Daniels, the investigator does not separate the two disciplines and uses the term "Sovietology" in an inclusive way, encompassing the study of all aspects of the Soviet Union.

The use of the term "Sovietologists" (or Soviet-watchers) in this article for those who study and research the state of the USSR is based on Christopher Xenakis' definition. Xenakis defines US Sovietologists broadly, to include "political scientists, economists, sociologists, historians, diplomats and policy makers, working in academia, government, private think tanks, and the media" [Christopher Xenakis 2002, *4*]. He uses the terms "Sovietologists," "Soviet experts," "foreign policy analysts," "Cold War theorists," and "political scientists" interchangeably, citing the examples of George Kennan, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Pipes, and Strobe Talbott. These individuals are both Soviet-specialists and policy makers, while Hedrick Smith and Robert Kaiser are also Soviet-watchers and journalists simultaneously [Christopher Xenakis 2002, *4*].

In terms of this elastic definition of the field and the diversity of scholars' backgrounds, the situation in China is generally similar to the situation in the US as described by Xenakis. For example, although some Chinese scholars specialize in either Soviet or world communism, most of those mentioned and quoted in this article are generalists rather than specialists in Soviet studies. On the other hand, unlike the US, some Chinese writers mentioned in the article do not have academic qualifications. They are either Party bureaucrats or media reporters, whose thoughts on the problems of the Soviet Union have been published in various academic

journals and official newspapers. Their articles often express more political zeal than scholarly expertise or analytical insight. Generally speaking, the descriptions by Xenakis of US Sovietologists could also be applied to the Chinese situation. Chinese Soviet-watchers are a diverse group, rather than representatives of a single school of thought or central theory. Their publications never imply a complete homogeneity of views. However, although their academic training is in different disciplines and by no means confined to Soviet studies, their research and publications are relevant to Sovietology in one way or another[2].

Analyses of Soviet hegemonism

After the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan in 1979, not only did the Kremlin become a global political target, but the event also became a source of escalated tension between Beijing and Moscow – and this at a time when bilateral relations had been handicapped by conflicts since the 1960s. Deng Xiaoping, who was the vice-chairman of the Military Commission and already the preeminent leader of China after the passing of the Mao Zedong era, understood the gravity of the Soviet military threat to Chinese security. In a Chinese Communist Party Central Committee meeting in 1980, he claimed that "opposing hegemonism will be on our daily agenda," and "the struggle against hegemonism is a grave task constantly confronting our country" [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *241*]. Deng also realized that, by siding with the world to resist Soviet hegemonism, China would be able to re-embrace the global community after the long isolation under Mao. The situation was no doubt beneficial to his reform and open door policies. As he stated in the meeting, the event had "provided us with rather favourable international conditions for our four modernizations," and "expanded the ranks of the international forces ranged against hegemonism" [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *248*].

Deng Xiaoping once defined "hegemonism" (*baquan zhuyi*) as denoting the situation when a country "becomes arrogant" and "acts like an overlord and gives orders to the world" [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *123*]. David Shambaugh in his book on Chinese scholarly perceptions of America has devoted several pages to ascertaining the Chinese concept of hegemony. A Chinese scholar at Renmin University defined the term in the following words during an interview he gave to the author:

When we use this term in China, we mean big countries that try to control or interfere in smaller countries. Many scholars mix up imperialism and hegemony. We do not know if it is a system or a policy. Before the 1980s we thought it was a system, like Soviet social-imperialism. We now define hegemony as a policy. For example, in the past when we called the United States imperialist we meant the system; today we use hegemony to describe its foreign policy [David Shambaugh 1991, *79*].

Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, accusations of so-called Soviet hegemonism had carried weight within Soviet studies in China. In the first issue of *Contemporary International Relations* in 1981, the editorial board stated clearly that the journal was committed to "opposing hegemony, safeguarding world peace, and striving for a favourable international environment" [Zhao Long 1981, *64*]. In

[2] Similarly, Robert Desjardins in his book on post-war French Sovietology also includes not only the scholarship of French Soviet specialists but also the writings of French historians, economists, and political scientists, whose works are orientated only incidentally toward the USSR. See Robert Desjardins, 1988: 10.

June of the year, the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies (ISEES)[3], which is the largest powerhouse in research of the former Soviet Union in the PRC and is China's most prominent organization specializing in the humanities and social sciences and under the control of the State Council and Party supervision, expressed its founding mission in a proposal submitted to the leadership of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). One of its agendas was "serving the global struggle against hegemonism and achieving our socialist modernization" [Mao Sheng 2010, *48*]. Even other institutes within CASS, such as the Institute of West Asian Studies and Institute of African Studies, all indicated in their founding reports that, *inter alia*, the guiding principles of their research would be "studying the implications of Soviet hegemony for those regions" [Mao Sheng 2010, *51*]. Meanwhile, in the first issue of *Matters of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, ISEES Vice-Director Liu Keming criticized the Soviet leadership for causing the first socialist country to degenerate into "a social imperialist state," and making the USSR become "the principal source of turmoil in the international society" [Liu Keming 1981, *1*]. The author argued:

In order to safeguard world peace, it is essential to do research on policies, theories, and origins of Soviet hegemonism, reveal the true face of it, and make people realize its nature and danger. This is an important mission of our studies of Soviet problems [Liu Keming 1981, *1*].

The application of the term hegemonism throughout the history of the PRC has been quite evolutionary. In the early days of the regime, the use of the term was in the context of confrontations between the "two camps" during the Cold War. It was limited to describing the capitalist US and its allies only [Mao Zedong 1993, *354*]. During the early days of Sino-Soviet discord in the late 1950s, China started to criticize Moscow's policy of peaceful coexistence with the West and its intention to control Beijing via the construction of long-wave stations in Chinese territory [Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong 1998, *270*]. In the early 1960s, when Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, the PRC intensified its attack on the USSR, accusing Moscow of promoting its own values and institutions abroad in a way that resembled 19th century colonialism [Jeremy Friedman 2015, *40*].

According to Shambaugh, the changing point occurred in 1968, when the term "hegemonism" was employed by the Chinese to denounce Soviet aggression of Czechoslovakia and the "Brezhnev Doctrine" [David Shambaugh 1991, *78*]. This is because the Brezhnev statement justifying the Soviet invasion had provided a basis for possible future intervention in other socialist states. China immediately felt the danger of such logic and responded vociferously to Moscow [Peter Boyle 1993, *161*]. The occasion stood as the major component in the escalation of Sino-Soviet tensions and the Kremlin was thereafter equated with hegemonism in China. By the early 1970s, Chinese scholars had begun to fuse "social-imperialism" together with "hegemonism" when referring to the Soviet Union, which was being described as "socialist in word, imperialist in deed." In their point of view, "Imperialism refers to capitalist countries while hegemonism refers to countries regardless of system" [David Shambaugh 1991, *79*]. It should be noted that under Mao, the Chinese definitions of

[3] The Institute of Soviet and East European Studies was renamed as the Institute of Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies (IREECAS) in 1992. It is affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

both "imperialism" and "hegemonism" were highly emotionally charged rhetorical notions intended for ideological polemics that undercut adversaries' positions – rather than rigorous concepts. The label of hegemonism pegged by the Chinese was an indication of the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, and of Mao's intention to challenge Moscow's leadership and authority in the communist world once Stalin had departed. After this point, China no longer recognized the USSR as a socialist state and started to identify Moscow as equal to the imperial West.

After the passing of Mao, many Chinese scholars were still locked in Maoist rhetoric in the early 1980s. In 1981, CASS Vice-President Qian Junrui demanded that Chinese scholars use "Mao Zedong Thought" to "guide our research on the present questions of international relations." He emphasized that Mao's "Three Worlds" concept was still "our theoretical basis and strategic framework," which guided "the country's cooperation with the Third and Second World, and resistance to the superpowers and Soviet hegemonism in particular" [Qian Junrui 1981, *3*] [4]. To take an example, the prestigious ISEES scholar Xu Kui used the words "hegemonism," "global expansionism," and "socialist imperialism" more than ten times to depict Soviet activities in the world in his 1981 five-page article [Xu Kui 1981, *10–14*].

Chinese scholars may define hegemonism by the West as the oppressiveness of capitalism and colonization[5]. In the case of the Soviet Union, they used the term to refer not only to the Soviet Union's violation of others' sovereignties, but also Moscow's poking its nose into other countries' affairs, as well as its unequal treatment of the socialist member states by subjecting them to the Soviet model. It was a term used by the Chinese to target Moscow's paternalism or paternalistic vision in the socialist camp of which China was a member. Up to the early 1980s, using the language of hegemonism to portray the Soviets in the PRC reflected China's ambition of competing with the Kremlin for leadership in the Third World and the socialist camp. The term, as used by the Chinese, attempted to emphasize that China was a true socialist country while the USSR was not, and to emphasize that the faults of Sino-Soviet conflicts were on the side of the aggressive Moscow.

Chinese criticism of Soviet hegemonism is not only the legacy of the Mao era. The Chinese have long had vivid memories of Tsarist Russia as one of the Western intruders who conspired to take over China over the centuries. In their research on the history of Russian invasions of China and its killing of Chinese inhabitants during the Boxer Uprising and Russo-Japanese War in the early 20th century, Chinese scholars in the early 1980s always equated Tsarist behaviours with contemporary Soviet chauvinism [Liu Jialei 1980, *167*; Zhou Shengde 1983, *92–96*]. In the eyes of the Chinese, Moscow's present search for global supremacy was no more than a Tsarist tradition, "disguised by the cover of 'socialism'" [*Li Yuanming* 1981, *25*]. Moreover, some Chinese scholars in the early 1980s tended to fault the present Soviet regime for being reluctant to abrogate the unequal treaties that the Tsarist government had signed with imperial China. In their writings, they demanded the return of the lost territories that had resulted from those treaties [Zhou Weiyan and Shi Yikui 1980, *104–112*; Chen Liankai 1981, *46*]. By presenting the

[4] On Mao's "Three Worlds" theory, see Mao Zedong, 1993: 441.

[5] For a case study on the perceptions of contemporary Chinese scholars on Western imperialism, see David Shambaugh, 1991.

history of Soviet hegemonism and aggression in China in this way, these scholars hoped to mobilize support for China's stand in the Sino-Soviet border negotiation taking place then[6].

Moreover, at the time the Sino-Soviet relations were still in a stalemate, aggravated by the long-time shadow of Tsarist intrusions and Sino-Soviet conflicts since the 1960s. It is thus no surprise that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, a country neighbouring China, would produce a grave perceived threat to the PRC in the early 1980s. In January 1980, an anonymous commentary with a sinister tone appeared in *Renmin ribao*:

Once the Soviet Union has pushed its military force into the Persian Gulf and Indian subcontinent, it sends a dangerous signal. It shows that the USSR will continue its attack on Iran, Pakistan, and other countries. People should not assume that Moscow would target Afghanistan only. There is an urgent question before us: which country will become the next Afghanistan [Feng Xiaomei 1980, *1*]?

Chinese scholars not only were critical of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but also felt suspicious of Moscow's desire in advancing on China. ISEES scholar Yu Sui warned, "Both the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its support of Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia would pose a grievous threat to the security of Asia and China" [Yu Sui 1983, *5*]. Xing Shugang, an ISEES specialist in Soviet foreign relations, pointed out that "Soviet troops stationing in Asia is nothing other than encircling the PRC, sowing discord between China and its neighbouring countries, and obstructing the progress of China's modernization" [Xing Shugang 1981, *4*]. It seems that Chinese accusations of Soviet hegemony were not merely politically motivated. The Chinese did not want to see Moscow's expansionism becoming rampant in the world, as China would likely suffer from this situation. Chinese denunciation of Soviet hegemonism indicated not only China's long memories of Russian humiliation, but also its feeling of being uncomfortable and insecure when Moscow extended its large military presence on the Chinese border.

In reality, Chinese perceptions of Soviet hegemonism were quite evolutionary throughout the 1980s. In the early days of the decade, compared to the US, the USSR was described by a scholar as being "the most ferocious hegemonist" [Shi Xiaochong 1980, *147*] *Beijing Review* once stated that "the US is on the defensive in their contention, therefore, the major threat to world peace today comes from the Soviet Union" [Mu Youlin 1982, *3*].

After Gorbachev took charge in 1985, the negative view of Chinese scholars gradually abated while the positive assessment became more prominent. In his 1987 article Xing Shugang argued that China should not condemn the Soviet Union as being non-socialist merely because of its display of erroneous hegemonist tendencies before. He remarked that hegemonism was only "a policy of Moscow" but it was "the nature of imperialist and capitalist states," and predicted that "hegemonism would by no means forever exist in Soviet foreign policy formulating" [Xing Shugang 1987, *6*]. In 1988, Gu Guanfu, a professor at the China Foreign Affairs University, even suggested that Soviet foreign policy should not be described as being purely hegemonic after the 1970s, as "it has contributed to national liberation and anti-colonization movements in the Third World to some extent," and it was

[6] On the Sino-Soviet border talk in the early 1980s, see Li Huichuan, 1981.

different from "hegemonism of the imperial West" [Gu Guanfu 1988, *31*]. In light of Deng Xiaoping's remark in 1978 (that socialism is incompatible with hegemonism) the change of Chinese perceptions from the mid-1980s onward indicated not only the improvement of Sino-Soviet relations, but also China's recognition of the USSR as a true socialist country[7].

As demonstrated above, from the mid-1980s Chinese scholars no longer viewed hegemonism as the inherent nature of the Soviet system; rather, hegemonism was perceived as only a temporary policy of the Kremlin. As long as Moscow reversed such policies, China would drop the denigrated term accordingly. Indeed, the Chinese label of hegemonism in describing the Soviet Union was mostly related to China's security concern of the three obstacles (the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, its large troop deployment along the border with China, and Moscow's support of the Vietnamese military intervention in Cambodia) in preventing the Sino-Soviet rapprochement in the 1980s. Once those obstacles were removed and Sino-Soviet normalization finally came in 1989, the term "Soviet hegemonism" gradually faded from Chinese writings.

Moreover, China under Deng Xiaoping adopted a pragmatic approach in domestic and foreign policies: it would no longer engage in Maoist radicalism. During the 1989 Sino-Soviet summit, Deng frankly told Gorbachev that he personally hated the senseless polemic exchanges between both sides under Mao [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *285–287*]. Deng might not want to see Soviet hegemonism rippling across the world, but what he needed most was a peaceful international environment conducive to China's modernization. Once the bilateral relations improved and the demise of the Soviet Union became reality, language surrounding Soviet hegemonism thus ground to a halt and the coinage was no longer valid in Chinese vocabulary.

In the 1990s, when the USSR had ceased to exist, the PRC no longer pegged the Soviets as hegemonists. Instead, owing to the Western sanction after the Tiananmen Incident, "hegemonism" or "power politics" (*qiangquan zhengzhi*) became synonymous with the West (particularly the US) [Jiang Zemin 2006, *314*]. Chinese officials used these terms to describe those countries that invoked the banners of human right and democracy to force their values and political systems on the Third World – the so-called "peaceful evolution"[8].

## Treatment of Soviet relations with Albania, Yugoslavia, and the Third World

With regard to Soviet foreign relations with other countries in the early 1980s, the analysis of Chinese scholars corresponded closely with the tone of post-Mao China's state policies. They attempted to respond to and legitimize China's official agendas through their research.

In the early 1980s, the small European socialist country Albania was by no means of a favourite in PRC media, due to its dictator Enver Hoxha's legacy of self-exclusion, which was at odds with post-Mao China's reform and open policy. However, some

[7] On Deng's 1978 remark, see Deng Xiaoping, 1995: 123.

[8] According to Wang Zheng, the term "peaceful evolution" was first introduced by George Kennan, US ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1947. John Foster Dulles, US Secretary of State, made it famous in the 1950s. In China, this US strategy was pointed out as a major threat after the demise of the USSR. See Wang Zheng, 2008: 783–806.

papers in MSUEE focusing on Soviet-Albanian relations then remained positive towards Hoxha's non-reconciliation with Moscow, despite the critical Chinese official view on Albania's radicalis[9]. ISEES scholar Wang Xianju briefed the history of Albanian foreign relations since the 1970s, and noticed that, while having slightly increased its trade volume with the West, Tirana still "refused to have normalization with the Soviet upon the request from Moscow, and fought resolutely against the superpower's aggression and hegemonism" [Wang Xianju 1982, *34*]. In the view Wang Hongqi (another ISEES scholar), Hoxha's unwillingness to repair the relations with the USSR was because "Albania has perceived the Soviet as a social fascist and imperialist nation, and its policies as military conquest and exploiting people from all over the world" [Wang Hongqi 1983, *94*]. The words describing Albania's attitude towards Moscow used by the authors above were little different with China's official propaganda targeting on the Kremlin in the early 1980s (as mentioned in the last section of the article). The scholars put the course of Albania's anti-Soviet policy into the same direction of Deng Xiaoping's accusation on Moscow's hegemonism, despite Albania's self-isolation that sharply contrasted with post-Mao China's direction. However, the highlighting of Albania's intransigence towards Moscow by Chinese scholars merely reflected the Chinese appreciation of Albania's unwillingness to turn itself into the pawn of Soviet hegemony. Apart from sharing hostilities towards Moscow, China in fact found Tirana little useful in its strategic balance of international policy, because not only Albania's Maoist domestic policy, but also Sino-Albanian relations in the early post-Mao period were far from in the spirit of bonhomie[10].

Apart from Albania, there is a more significant example of the Chinese treatment of the Soviet-Yugoslavian relations. Although Mao Zedong once branded Yugoslavia as "revisionist" [Stuart Schram 1974, *189*] a derogatory term used to stigmatize any socialist countries opting for capitalist reforms, in the 1980s Yugoslavia became the centre of attention in the PRC. Under Deng Xiaoping, China's foreign policy resembled Yugoslavia's stance of being non-aligned and non-confrontational [Luo Minghui 1984, *2*][11]. Chinese leaders greatly admired Belgrade's spirit in defiance of what was seen as Moscow's overlordship, evidenced by Party Secretary General Hu Yaobang's 1983 high appraisal of "Josip Tito's principles of independence and equality among all communist parties, and of opposing imperialism, colonialism, and hegemonism" [Zhou Zezong 1983, *2*].

Some articles by Chinese scholars in the early 1980s shared the official claims to promote the case of Yugoslavia in their research. Jiang Qi, a professor of international relations at East China Normal University, regarded Moscow's expelling Belgrade from the socialist camp in 1948 as owing to the latter's uncompromising attitude. He remarked, "It was the origin of anti-hegemony struggle in Eastern Europe" [Jiang Qi 1983, *7*]. Cai Kang, another scholar at East China Normal University, wrote, "The non-aligned policy has evolved from a strategy of Yugoslavia to an international movement," and "it has broken through the shadow of Soviet-type foreign policy model first time in socialist history" [Cai Kang 1984, *43*].

[9] For China's criticism on Hoxha's tough policies, see Jin Liangping, 1985: 14.

[10] For Sino-Albanian relations after Mao, read Elez Biberaj, 1986.

[11] The Editorial stated that both "China and Yugoslavia are pursuing independent and self-reliant foreign policies, and regarding world peace and human progress as major goals of our common international agendas."

Apart from its non-aligned foreign policy, Yugoslavia's economic model (which had shaken the dominant position of Soviet-style socialism) also became an important reason to gather the Chinese support of Belgrade's struggle against the Soviet rivalry. When ailing President Josip Tito's health condition deteriorated, the event became a paramount concern of *Renmin ribao* in the first half of 1980. At the time, the official organ of the CCP carried day-to-day reports from Belgrade, wishing for Tito's recovery and glorifying his contributions. After Tito's death, during the memorial ceremony held in the Yugoslavian Embassy in Beijing, the first CASS President and Party ideologue Hu Qiaomu paid the following tribute to Tito and Yugoslavian inspiration:

Comrade Tito's greatest contribution to the contemporary communist movement was that he and his close comrades-in-arms were the first ones to recognize that socialism should not be confined to one model. He initiated a new way of building socialism suited to the concrete conditions of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia, under the leadership of President Tito, had boldly begun exploring the ways of socialist construction in the early 1950s. It did not follow the over-centralized economic pattern introduced by the Soviet Union. Led by Tito, the Yugoslav people have broken away from the conventional Soviet methods which were formerly considered inviolable, and have blazed a new trail to develop a socialist economy. The Yugoslavian example provided valuable experience for other countries to choose their own road of socialist construction according to their specific conditions [Pan Dahai 1980, *2*].

In the mid-1980s, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang expressed his gratefulness to the Yugoslavian hosts, for "their experience of building socialism has greatly encouraged the Chinese people to draft our own reform programs" [Ma Wenge 1986, *4*]. As one scholar commented:

In the contemporary international socialist development, Yugoslavia's socialist path is the most remarkable. Not only because it has turned itself from one of the most backward European nations to a moderately developed country, but also because it has contributed immeasurable theories of practicing scientific socialism to the world. The Yugoslavian experience of socialism has never been an easy journey, its lessons are worthy of study and attention [Zhao Naibin 1984, *74*].

In the wake of the Maoist decades, China found that the Soviet model disguised by Maoism had turned China poor and backward. China under Deng was eager to find a new way to make China a prosperous and strong socialist country. Yugoslavia's reform experience initiated by Tito, which included the mixing of central planning and market mechanism, and took a distinctive approach to socialism by disregarding the orthodox Soviet methods, struck a chord with the Chinese. Such a distinctive model is exactly the direction of post-Mao China's reforms. Many academic articles throughout the 1980s expressed their approval of Yugoslavian socialism in preference to the dogmatic Soviet orthodoxy, and showed a strong desire to learn from Belgrade [Jiang Qi 1982, *36–58*; Wang Yiying 1984, *26–32*; Zhao Naibin 1984, *74–77*; Dong Bainan 1988, *6–9*; Xu Wanming 1989, *28–35*].

Even in the wake of Yugoslavia's falling apart in the 1990s, Chinese Sovietologists still attributed the Soviet-Yugoslavian rift after World War Two to the Kremlin, and put the blame squarely on Moscow's chauvinism and intolerance of Belgrade using its own method to construct socialism [Li Xing and Zhou Xuemei 1996, *61–69*; Shen

Zhihua 1999, *13–18*]. In 1996, four years after China had joined the Non-Aligned Movement as an observer [Bai Menghan 1992, *4*], Li Xing and Zhou Xuemei (both were scholars at Beijing University) argued that the 1948 Soviet-Yugoslavian confrontations had inspired many subsequent dissent movements in the socialist camp, such as the 1968 Prague Spring and the 1980 Polish Solidarity uprising. They remarked that "the Yugoslavian model had shaken the dominant position of Soviet socialism and inaugurated the diversification of socialist models in the world" [Li Xing and Zhou Xuemei 1996, *64*].

As such, Chinese scholars' open advocacy of Yugoslavia's position in its conflicts with Moscow was due to not only China's similar stance in non-aligned policy and anti-Soviet hegemony, but also to China's receptivity to Yugoslavia's unique reform experience. After the PRC became economically successful in the 1980s, Chinese scholars would sometimes speak of Yugoslavia as a sort of maverick, as a countervailing weight to the Soviet brand of socialism. This in turn would validate the exception of the Chinese way of practicing socialism. The treatment of Yugoslavia, in particular, reflects the increasing confidence of Chinese scholars. They were arguing that Moscow should accept a less centralized and more diverse socialist world[12]. Chinese scholars' clear-cut stand on supporting the post-Mao CCP policy of integrating Marxism with China's concrete circumstances, and heralding the vision of the rise of Chinese-style socialism, could be reflected in their analysis of Soviet-Yugoslavian troubled relations.

Having said this, it should be noted that China was extolling Yugoslavia mainly because it was disobedient to Moscow and committed to building a version of socialism that was independent of the Soviet model. It does not mean that Chinese scholars would be supporting any deviation from orthodox socialism. In reality, China's endorsement of the Yugoslavian example is a sign of China's determination to reform socialism – but not to renounce it.

In the early 1980s China did not fail to notice the rise of the Third World, which would play a crucial role in international relations and become a partner with China to contain the superpowers – at least in the CCP's strategic worldview. During his 1982 talk with Javier Perez de Cuellar, secretary-general of the United Nation, Deng Xiaoping remarked that the international influence of the Third World "has increased considerably," and "cannot be overlooked." He stated that the foundation of China's foreign policy was "opposing hegemonism and safeguarding world peace," which was also "the position and immediate interests of the Third World." Therefore, it would be essential for China and the region to "strengthen unity and cooperation" [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *408*]. Concomitant with this strategic perspective, Chinese scholars attempted to use post-Mao China's Third World policy as their theoretical framework for analysis. Quoting from ISEES scholar Zhang Jinglin:

The foundation of our foreign policy is unifying the Third World, allying with the peoples who cherish peace and justice and oppose hegemonism. Our scholars should comprehend and resolutely carry out those policies as a whole and undertake the battle against superpowers' hegemony in a more effective way [Zhang Jinglin 1982, *1*].

[12] The Soviet Union in the early 1980s was still unwilling to recognize that China's post-Mao reforms are genuinely socialist in nature. See Christopher Marsh, 2005: 131-32.

As will be discussed, Chinese scholars in the 1980s seemed to view Soviet relations with the Third World through the prism of Sino-Soviet friction. Their arguments on the subject look more like explaining and demonstrating China's different treatment of the Third World, rather than genuine research of the Soviet policy in the region. In their articles, Chinese scholars strenuously promoted and defended the case of the Third World. Their arguments indirectly symbolized China's stance in challenging the Soviet authority, appealed for the redress of past historical wrongdoings on China done by Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, and promoted the moral superiority of Chinese socialism over that of the USSR.

During Mao's later period, China did not receive much goodwill from the Third World, mainly owing to Mao's excessive obsession with bringing Chinese-based socialism to the poor nations. Such a strategy of exporting revolutions had caused resentment in numerous countries, particularly those in Southeast Asia, where it led to a widespread anti-China sentiment [Paul Bolt 2000: *43–47*]. With the onset of the Cultural Revolution, the foreign policy of China had become heavily ideology-driven. Before Mao's death in 1976, the PRC was crippled not only by economic stagnation but also international isolation. In the wake of Maoist decades, the new leader Deng Xiaoping expected PRC foreign policy to detach from the radical determinant of Maoism and return to the realities of modern international politics [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *249*]. The post-Mao leadership envisioned that China would become a progressive anti-colonial Asian power symbolized by its break with the Kremlin and the Maoist burden, and a true friend of the underdeveloped world[13].

In tune with the official view, some Chinese scholars portrayed Moscow as having taken advantage of numerous turbulences to interfere in the Third World, subjecting others to its beck and call [Xing Shugang 1981, *9*; Zhang Zhen 1982, *19*; Xie Xiang 1984, *45*]. These articles tend to exaggerate the gravity of Soviet hostility and Moscow's ability to dominate the world, although such radical views had trailed off after Gorbachev's accession. Most of the writings presented above seem to conclude that the Soviet Union had achieved complete failure in its relations with the underdeveloped countries, become the only troublemaker and common enemy of the world, and ended up in having no friend in the global society. As Ma Yaohui remarked:

When facing the tension brought by Moscow, peoples from different countries should control their own lives and curb the interference from foreign force. We should unite together for safeguarding world peace and countering Soviet influence. Chinese people will work closely with other people in the world to achieve this common goal [Ma Yaohui 1980, *48*].

Meanwhile, Chinese official organs attempted to foster a new image of China. They posited that the country was far from being isolated in the international community after the death of Mao; rather, it had joined the whole world to contain the advance of the superpowers[14]. In 1981, Foreign Minister Huang Hua suggested to his Canadian colleague Mark MacGuigan, that China and the West should establish close ties on the basis of containing Soviet aggressive behaviour in the Third World [Chi Shangbin 1981, *4*]. On another occasion, he remarked that by carrying the

[13] This point is illustrated by the following source: Zhang Lei, 1985: 42.

[14] For details, see Wang Tiying, 1980: 2; Liang Yuanshen, 1981: 25.

banner of anti-hegemony, China would be able to increase its influence in the Third World, which would be conducive to its global status and open door policy [Tian Lengqing 1981, *2*].

In 1982, ISEES scholar Zhang Jinglin claimed that, along with a broad base of the Third World countries, "An international anti-Soviet camp consisting of China and the West has developed rapidly" [Zhang Jinglin 1982, *3*]. Two years later, both Li Jingjie (an ISEES researcher) and Zhou Jirong (a professor of political science at Beijing University) agreed that after becoming stabilized and strong, China would play a larger role in international affairs, namely by halting the war and safeguarding peace [Li Jingjie 1984, *19*; Zhou Jirong 1984, *23*]. These authors seemingly made use of their subject study to argue that China after Mao was far from being separated from the world. Instead, China under Deng was re-engaging the world and earning respect from international society by joining the global campaign against the Soviet advance. As a result of such sharp Chinese denunciations of Moscow's expansionism, the West became eager for Chinese cooperation and sought to aid Chinese reforms, in order to ally with China in resisting the USSR[15].

There are three other reasons for why Chinese scholars had a strong bias toward the Third World and sympathized with those countries involved when it came to Soviet-Third World relations. The first one may be historical. In the eyes of the CCP, both China and other underdeveloped countries shared the common experience of falling prey to imperialist encroachment in the past,[16] and China, in particular, had been invaded by Tsars since the early modern period and treated unfairly by the Soviet regime after 194[17]. This historical background of complicated Sino-Soviet Russian relations was deeply rooted in the collective Chinese mind, and inevitably affected the writings of Chinese scholars[18]. Several articles in the 1980s evidenced a strong grudge against the unequal relations between Moscow and the Third World. They condemned the forced Soviet model of socialism as a kind of neo-colonization, which did not benefit the Third World, but instead made them backward and isolated [Zhang Jinglin 1982, *6*; Yu Sui 1983, *4*; Hong Hai 1983, *49*].

Moreover, in the early 1980s some Chinese writings voiced their criticisms of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as being contradictory to Lenin's principle of internationalis[19]. On the other hand, they portrayed China as having wholeheartedly supported the Afghan resistance and the emancipation of other Third World nations, while never meddling in their affairs. According to those writings, China was the true disciple of Lenin's teachings, while Moscow's behaviour was incompatible with Leninist internationalism [Shen Yi 1981, *24*; Li Ning 1983, *10*].[20] This picture of the

[15] For details, see Alexander Lukin, 2003: 216.

[16] The point is illustrated by Zeng Zikui, 1983: 2. The commentary called upon China to side with the Third World for fighting with the "power politics," because of the "common history of having been oppressed and enslaved."

[17] See Deng's long talk with Gorbachev on how China had been bullied by Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, during their summit meeting in 1989. Deng Xiaoping, 1995: 285-87.

[18] For how the loss of territories to Tsarist Russia and the atrocities committed by the Soviet army in Northeast China toward the end of World War Two had traumatized PRC intellectuals after 1949, see Yan Li, 2012: 37.

[19] For details, see Cheng Xionggao, 1983: 17; Fang Lianqing, 1982: 35.

[20] On Lenin's definition of internationalism, see Vladimir Lenin, 1967: 26-29.

PRC as enlightened and committed to fulfilling its internationalist responsibility to the Third World is not a contemporary invention. Mao Zedong once put forth that CCP members should "build China into a great and powerful socialist country, and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfilment of our great internationalist duty" [Mao Zedong 1993, *320*]. In the 1980s, Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang said that the aid work to the Third World was China's "compelling internationalist obligation" [Bao Gonghou 1983, *4*]. As Liu Fengming (a professor of international law at Wuhan University) summarized in 1983:

Our foreign policy is proletarian internationalism as well as the socialist foreign policy with Chinese characteristics. The starting point of our independent foreign policy is in the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and the peoples around the world. It is the combination of patriotism and internationalism. It is for safeguarding world peace. As a member of the Third World, China will unswervingly safeguard the unity and right of the region, and regard financially supporting those countries as our major international responsibility [Liu Fengming 1983, *10*].

Thus, we can see that post-Mao China was aspiring to gain the upper hand over the Soviet Union in the name of the struggle against hegemonism, and more importantly, in the fight for moral leadership over the Third World. By using Lenin's internationalism to accuse Moscow of being chauvinistic, self-serving, and exploitative in its relations with the underdeveloped countries, Chinese scholars instead would project a fair, humble, and benevolent image of Beijing, enabling it to assume the moral high ground vis-à-vis Moscow.

Last, from the early 1980s onward the post-Mao reforms led to substantial expansion of Chinese national power and a notable growth in its international prestige and influence, while the Soviet Union was in the grip of economic difficulties. Chinese scholars shared a growing pride in what China had accomplished so far vis-à-vis what they saw as the demoralized USSR. Yang Zhangming, a professor at Tongji University in Shanghai, said that many Third World states had been influenced by China and Yugoslavia to develop socialism according to their own conditions, while distancing themselves from "some socialist states that would offer aid, but with aid, came interference" [Yang Zhangming, 1984: 84]. Du Xiaoqiang, a scholar at Qinghua University, suggested that after China's success in reforms, its distinctive style of socialism might "weaken the impact of the Soviet model on the Third World" [Du Xiaoqiang 1984, *6*].

Deng Xiaoping remarked in April 1987 that when China fully developed it should not only "have blazed a new path for the peoples of the Third World," but also "have demonstrated to mankind that socialism is the only path and that it is superior to capitalism" [Deng Xiaoping 1995, *223*]. The Chinese regime at this stage lost no time in seizing the opportunity to portray China as the beacon of the Third World, by professing its respect to other countries' sovereignties and institutions, publicizing its divergence with the Kremlin, and promoting the friendship and brotherhood between China and the developing nations. This was done in the hope that Chinese-style socialism would have greater appeal than the Soviet model, and take root in not only the poor countries but the wider global society as well.

**Conclusion.** This article has studied the analyses of Chinese Soviet-watchers on Moscow's foreign policy against the larger context of PRC's political setting in the early 1980s, and investigated how scholars placed China's official agendas centrally

in their research. In the early 1980s, Chinese discussions on Soviet foreign relations with other countries corresponded closely to PRC's real security concerns on its border, its historical memories of the wrongdoings done by Tsarist Russia and the USSR, and the principle of post-Mao China's Soviet policy.

As has been demonstrated, Chinese Soviet-watchers did not present many vicissitudes of Soviet international manoeuvres in their writings; instead, through research on the formation and evolution of Soviet foreign policy, they attempted to adjust their analyses to align with China's vision of itself and the world. Their research of Soviet hegemonism, Soviet-Albanian and Soviet-Yugoslavian conflicts, and Soviet-Third World relations all reflected Beijing's ambitions of challenging the orthodox Soviet model of economic development in the socialist world, competing with the Kremlin for leadership in the developing countries, and projecting a fair and benevolent image of Chinese socialism vis-à-vis Moscow.

While not a determinant in China's foreign policy making, Chinese Sovietology is not able to remain outside the confines of Chinese politics. The Party guidepost always transcends the academic norm. Seen from the article, Chinese Sovietology, by providing both principles and tactics, had been making assessments and proposing solutions on economic and political aspects of contemporary China, friendships and struggles in PRC's international relations. Through the interplay of politics and scholarship, scholars attempted to legitimise the CCP rule and the Chinese way of practicing socialism, as well as projected and envisioned the future of China in the reform era.

As such, seen from the early 1980s Chinese criticisms of Soviet foreign policy, Chinese Soviet-watchers endeavoured to propagandise and justify PRC's post-Mao domestic and international agendas through their subject study. Most of the time, their research outputs were not the authoritative statements of the Chinese government, but were more likely explaining or confirming Party policies for reinforcing the legitimacy and authority of the CCP rule.

Chinese research on the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, therefore, could be considered as more of a rationalization of their opinions about the legitimacy of Chinese socialism, China's domestic politics, and state agendas, than an academic attempt to reconstruct and discover the Soviet past. Scholars demonstrated the purported causal relations between the Soviet past and the political views they upheld for China's future. They mainly used their interpretation of the events in the USSR to speak for the political agendas that were believed to represent the correct directions of Chinese socialism and modernization, and to justify ongoing reform programs. Thus their research served to render Party policies and principles understandable and plausible.

Central to my analysis is the premise that Chinese Sovietology writings in the early 1980s evolved primarily as a response to China's then-contemporary challenges and concerns facing individuals. Political developments of the PRC and personal involvement (direct or indirect) with ongoing political and social events in this period, influenced and motivated Chinese Soviet-watchers' changing perceptions of their subject study. These writings are inseparable from scholars' own participation in the social and political discourses of contemporary China, and from their embrace or elaboration of ideologies that served and justified their political claims and current state agendas. In short, to research Soviet socialism has primarily been to

trace problems of Chinese socialism as experienced by scholars at the time of their research; this was done in order to legitimize socialist solutions, rather than to seek truth about the Soviet Union.

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