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THE EVENTS OF 1949 IN CHINA: THE LENINGRAD PRESS REPORTAGE

The formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 was met with great enthusiasm in the Soviet Union. All Soviet newspapers wrote in detail about it: Leningradskaya Pravda, Smena, Vecherny Leningrad, and others regularly published news and reports about these events in China. Among them were reprints from TASS and the Xinhua News Agency. Particular attention was paid to building good-neighborly relations between the USSR and the PRC, as well as the need for the speedy recognition of the government in Beijing by the entire international community. Most articles on international issues published in various Soviet newspapers were identical. But some periodicals published original photographs and cartoons. The regional press also provided information on the reaction of the working people of various cities to the described international events.

Keywords: 1949, Leningrad press, the People's Republic of China, Soviet propaganda, international relations

At the end of the 40s of the XX century, articles and other informational materials on events outside the Soviet Union were presented in the regional press in a rather uniform manner. Of particular significance were the reprints of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS).

In September 1949, the Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly began its work. All newspapers gave detailed reports on the issues that were considered there.

During the work of the Fourth Session of the General Assembly in November 1949, the Central People's Government of the PRC demanded that the General Assembly deprive the Kuomintang of the right to represent China in the UN. The Soviet delegation energetically and unequivocally supported this demand of the Chinese government in Beijing.

In December 1949, the Soviet delegation at a meeting of the Security Council made a statement that it did not recognize the Kuomintang delegation as competent to represent China and warned that it would not reckon with any decision that could be taken at the request of the Chiang Kai-shekists.

At subsequent sessions of the General Assembly and at meetings of the Security Council, the Soviet delegation invariably came out in defense of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations.

From the very first days of the existence of the People's State of China, close cooperation was established between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China both in various fields of economic and cultural life and in the common struggle for peace and international security.

At the same time, a TASS report was published that the Soviet Union now has nuclear weapons, and two German states appeared on the map of Europe: the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic.

But there was still a war going on in Asia. Therefore, in almost every issue of Soviet newspapers one could find articles on the events in China, including with reference to the Xinhua News Agency: "Units of the People's Liberation Army liberated the capital of Ningxia province, Ningxia (Yunchuan) on September 23.

Most of the Kuomintang troops in Ningxia province laid down their arms or went over to the side of the People's Liberation Army. After the transition on September 19 to the side of the People's Liberation Army Zhong Qin — the commander of the Kuomintang 81st Army from the troops of General Ha Hong-gui — on September 21, commanders and deputy commanders of five Kuomintang armies, commanders of nine Kuomintang divisions and two cavalry brigades followed his example. who went over to the side of the People's Liberation Army together with their troops" [1].

On September 30, the Leningrad youth newspaper Smena again with reference to the Xinhua news agency published a piece titled "The Chinese people welcomes the birth of the People's Republic of China". In it, the readers were informed that "the entire Chinese people greeted with joy the news of the establishment of the People's Republic of China.

When the important news about the opening of the People's Political Consultative Conference spread throughout the country, peasants in the liberated regions gathered in rural schools, where teachers read to them the speech of the chairman of the Communist Party Mao Tse-tung and reports on the work of the historic conference in Beijing" [1].

The new government was truly workers' and peasants'. Therefore, as the Chinese news agency reported, "at the mention of the names of the peasant delegates to the conference, those present eagerly expressed their joy. For the first time in Chinese history, peasants are participating in the development of national policies. "This shows", they declare, "that we peasants are now free both economically and politically. Now, under our own government, we will begin life in conditions of peace and abundance" [1].

All cities in China were preparing to celebrate the founding of the People's Republic. Demonstrations and rallies took place everywhere. "The birthday of our own republic has come", the jubilant Beijing workers declared, "the days when the imperialists could sit on the necks of the Chinese people are over" [2].

On October 2, the front pages of Soviet newspapers published the "Declaration of the Central People's Government of China", signed by Mao Tse-tung. It said the following: "Since the time when the reactionary government of Chiang Kai-shek betrayed its homeland, it entered into a conspiracy with the imperialists and began a counter-revolutionary war. The people of all China were plunged into severe suffering and misery.

However, our People's Liberation Army, with the support of the people of the entire country in a heroic selfless struggle in the name of protecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our homeland, in the name of protecting the life and property of the people, saving the people from suffering, ensuring their rights, destroyed the reactionary troops and overthrew the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang government" [3].

This Declaration highlighted the beginning of a new stage in the centuries-old history of the Chinese people: "At present, the people's liberation war has been largely won and the majority of the people of our country have been liberated.

On this basis, the People's Political Consultative Conference of China was convened, at which delegates from all democratic parties and groups, people's organizations were represented" [3].

Soviet newspapers, publishing the Declaration, recognized the fact of the full legitimacy of the body of the people's representation, which was then working in Beijing, and of all important decisions taken there. "The Central People's Government Council of the People's Republic of China took up its duties in the capital today and unanimously adopted the following decisions: to proclaim the creation of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China" [3].

In the same issue was published a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Republic of the People's Republic of China Zhou Enlai to the Soviet Consul General in Beijing. It said the following: "I hereby inform you that today the Chairman of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, Mao Tse-tung, has published a declaration.

In my letter I am sending you this declaration and I hope that you will forward it to the government of your esteemed country.

I believe that the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and various states of the world is necessary" [3].

On October 2, several materials on the events in China were again published on the pages of the Leningrad newspapers. One of the main ones was the "Declaration of the People's Political Consultative Conference of China" [4].

Leningrad newspapers, recognizing the importance of the decisions of the People's Political Consultative Conference of China, quoted the following words from its decisions: "Now the Chinese people have already defeated their enemy, changed the face of China and founded the People's Republic of China. We, the 475 million Chinese people, have now risen, and the future of our nation is infinitely bright"[4].

It was decided that Beijing would be the capital of the People's Republic of China. The conference approved the red five-star flag as the national flag of the PRC and the Volunteer March as the national anthem, decided to introduce the calendar used in most countries of the world, and elected the National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Council of China and the Central People's Government Council of the People's Republic of China.

The conference participants addressed both all progressive people of the world and their compatriots. "Compatriots of the whole country! The People's Republic of China was proclaimed and the Chinese people now have their own central government. This government will exercise the dictatorship of the people's democracy within China's borders in accordance with the general program of the People's Political Consultative Council. This government will lead the People's Liberation Army in bringing the revolutionary war to the end, in the destruction of the remnants of the enemy troops, the liberation of the entire territory of the country and will complete the great work of uniting China" [4].

This Declaration emphasized that the new Chinese government will lead the people of the entire country in overcoming all difficulties, will carry out economic and cultural construction on a large scale, put an end to poverty and ignorance left in the legacy of old China, will gradually raise the material and cultural level of the people.

The Declaration paid close attention to the country's defense capability: "This government will strengthen the People's Army, Air Force and Navy, strengthen the national defense, defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of China, and resist any aggression by the imperialist countries". [4]

The Declaration named the Soviet Union and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe as the main allies of the new China: "This government will unite with all peace-loving and freedom-loving countries, nations and peoples, and first of all with the Soviet Union and the countries of the new democracy as allies in a joint struggle against imperialist conspiracies aimed at provoking war, and will fight for a lasting universal peace" [4].

Of particular interest was the Xinhua news agency's statement "Solemn declaration of the Chinese people to the whole world", published at that time in Soviet newspapers. It said the following: "The People's Political Consultative Conference of China unanimously decided today that the Central People's Government will soon be formed, which will address the UN General Assembly with a statement that the People's Republic of China has been established. The Central People's Government, elected by the People's Political Consultative Conference of China, is the only government that can represent the Chinese people. The delegates sent to the UN General Assembly by the fictitious government of the remnants of the reactionary forces in Canton have no right to represent the Chinese people" [4].

In the Soviet Union, all these statements received unconditional support. The victory of the communists and their allies in China was perceived as a victory for all progressive forces. Therefore, the desire of the new Chinese state to be represented in the United Nations was especially welcomed: "This will be a solemn declaration of the Chinese people, who are the masters of their country, to the whole world, which fully corresponds to the actual political situation in China, which has radically changed and reflects the common will and desires of the entire Chinese people" [4].

The proclamation of the PRC would have been impossible without the successes of the People's Liberation Army, which by that time had crossed the Yangtze River. The Declaration noted that "The remnants of the Kuomintang troops who fled to South China will soon be completely destroyed.

The remnants of the reactionary bloc in Canton, Formosa and elsewhere are no longer the government, but are just a handful of bandits who have absolutely no right to represent the Chinese people" [4].

But not all countries were ready to recognize the new Chinese government. A very important issue was the representation of the PRC in international organizations, primarily in the UN. Then in Soviet newspapers it was written that "The presence of Jiang Ting-fu at the UN General Assembly as a delegate to the Cantonese gang not only disgraces the Chinese people, but also damages the authority of the United Nations itself.

The UN is the organization of nations dedicated to the maintenance of global peace and security after the Second World War.

The bandit Chiang Kai-shek, who has no right to represent the country, dared to use the rostrum of the UN General Assembly for slander, trying to mislead public opinion and slander the Chinese people and the Soviet Union, which is a friend of China" [4].

The Soviet leadership fully shared the point of view that the UN General Assembly "immediately terminates the activities of Jiang Ting-fu and other representatives of the Kuomintang gang and immediately deprives them of their rights of representation at the General Assembly" [4].

On October 2, 1949, Soviet newspapers published a detailed account of the discussions at the UN General Assembly. Almost all of them were devoted to events in China. Leningraders actively discussed the events in New York about the plenary meeting of the General Assembly held on September 29, at which the issue of including in the agenda the essentially provocative statement of the Kuomintang government about the "threat" to the independence and territorial integrity of China and peace in the Far East was discussed.

Leningradskaya Pravda wrote: "This slanderous pettifoggery of the representative of the Kuomintang government was introduced by him to the Assembly in order to raise a provocative clamor directed against the Soviet Union. They wanted to mask from the world public opinion the real reasons for the collapse that the Kuomintang clique has now come to" [5].

The USSR delegation resolutely spoke out at a meeting of the General Committee against including this issue on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The head of the USSR delegation, A. Ya Vyshinsky, in his speech at a meeting of the General Committee revealed the provocative essence of the Kuomintang complaint and convincingly showed that there are no formal, legal or any other grounds for its discussion in the General Assembly.

However, the US delegation and its allies insisted on including this issue on the agenda of the meeting. As for the Soviet Union, on October 3, 1949, the answer of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Andrei Gromyko to Zhou Enlai was published on the front pages of newspapers. It followed that "the Soviet Government, driven by a constant desire to maintain friendly relations with the Chinese people and confident that the Central People's Government of China is the exponent of the will of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people", decided to establish diplomatic relations between our countries and exchange the plenipotentiaries.

It should be noted that on the fourth page of this printed publication ("Smena") information was given "On the termination of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the government of Yan Xi-shan in Canton" [6].

In the same issue, the "General Program of the People's Political Consultative Council of China" was published on almost two newspaper pages [6].

Titles of articles such as "Celebrations in Beijing on the Occasion of the Proclamation of the People's Republic of China" indicate that the Soviet press presented this event as a genuine holiday.

On October 5, Leningrad readers learned the names of the ambassadors of the two countries in Beijing and Moscow. These were the Soviet diplomat NV Roshchin and the Chinese diplomat Wang Jiaxiang [7].

Almost the entire fourth page of the Smena newspaper for October 5, 1949 was devoted to the reaction of various states: the USA, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Poland, Finland, Hungary, France, Sweden — to the recognition of the PRC by the Soviet Union. There was also information about the recognition of the new Chinese government by the leadership of the countries of Eastern Europe. Similar materials were published for almost a week.

The next day, the Leningrad newspapers reprinted the October 5 editorial of Pravda. It was called "The Historical Victory of the Chinese People" [8].

Large portraits of Mao Zedong, Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi and Zhou Enlai were also published here.

Events in China became one of the main topics of Soviet newspapers in October 1949. TASS reports were published from Beijing and Shanghai: "The Chinese people enthusiastically welcome the decision of the Soviet government to recognize the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China" [9].

The famous Leningrad artist Vladimir Galba during the Great Patriotic War, as a master of political cartoons, received the status of "Adolf Hitler's personal enemy". In 1945—1946 he attended the Nuremberg trials of German war criminals as a correspondent artist. It was he who was commissioned by the editorial board of Leningradskaya Pravda on October 9, 1949 to illustrate the events that were taking place then in China.

The Soviet newspapers covered in great detail the creation of the All-China Society of Sino-Soviet Friendship. "About 1,500 delegates and representatives of various public organizations gathered in Beijing today for the founding meeting of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society. The meeting was also attended by a Soviet delegation of cultural figures headed by Alexander Fadeev.

The opening speech was made by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of the Sino-Soviet Society, Song Qingling. She recalled the words of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, said 32 years ago: with the advent of Soviet Russia, humanity had hope for its liberation” [10].

Alexander Fadeev conveyed greetings to the Chinese intelligentsia and the people on behalf of the workers of literature, science and art of the USSR, A.Fadeev dwelt in detail on the literary ties between China and the USSR.

The assembled delegates listened with great attention to L.V.Dubrovina's speech on the successes of public education and cultural development about the USSR. Dubrovina, on behalf of 34 million Soviet schoolchildren, conveyed greetings to the Chinese children.

Thus, it was only after the formation of the People's Republic of China that the country acquired real sovereignty and real national independence. China's role as a great power, formally recognized by the whole world since the Second World War, actually began to manifest itself in 1949.

With the formation of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, a new era of good-neighborly and partnership relations began in Soviet-Chinese relations.

The union of China and the USSR in the 1950s was seen as a guarantee of the unconditional joint victories of the two socialist states. These countries suffered the greatest losses during the Second World War. No wonder in the final part of the film “The Immortal Garrison” (1956), dedicated to the heroic defense of the Brest Fortress in 1941, the voice-over says that the victims of the defenders of the hero-fortress were not in vain, that now “not 200, but 900 millions of people all over the world are marching under the banner of socialism”.

1. «Смена», 28 сентября 1949 г.
2. «Смена», 30 сентября 1949 г.
3. «Ленинградская правда», 2 октября 1949 г.
4. «Смена», 2 октября 1949 г.
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6. «Смена», 3 октября 1949 г.
7. «Смена», 5 октября 1949 г.
8. «Ленинградская правда», 6 октября 1949 г.
9. «Смена», 8 октября 1949 г.
10. «Смена», 7 октября 1949 г.

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5. “Leningradskaya Pravda”, 2 oktyabrya 1949 g.
6. “Smena”, 3 oktyabrya 1949 g.
7. “Smena”, 5 oktyabrya 1949 g.
8. “Leningradskaya Pravda”, 6 oktyabrya 1949 g.
9. “Smena”, 8 oktyabrya 1949 g.
10. “Smena”, 7 oktyabrya 1949 g.

Ковалев Б.Н., Гао Сюли. Отражение событий 1949 года в Китае в ленинградских газетах. Образование Китайской народной республики в 1949 году было с огромным воодушевлением встречено в Советском Союзе. Об этом событии подробно писали все советские газеты. На страницах ленинградских СМИ: «Ленинградская правда», «Смена», «Вечерний Ленинград» и др. — регулярно появлялись материалы о событиях в Китае. Среди них были перепечатки из ТАСС и агентства Синьхуа. Особое внимание уделялось выстраиванию добрососедских отношений между СССР и КНР, а также необходимости скорейшего признания правительства в Пекине всем международным сообществом. Большинство статей по международным вопросам, опубликованных в разных газетах в Советского Союза, были идентичными. Но в некоторых периодических изданиях могли публиковаться оригинальные фотографии и карикатуры. Также региональная пресса давала информацию о реакции трудящихся их города на описываемые международные события.

Ключевые слова: 1949 год, ленинградская пресса, образование Китайской народной республики, советская пропаганда, международные отношения.

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