

'Liberated China' from Pravda (1 October 1949)

Caption: On 1 October 1949, on the occasion of the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, the Soviet daily newspaper Pravda praises the Chinese people, led by Mao Tse-Tung, for their efforts in this successful revolution.

Source: Pravda. 15.12.1949. Moskva. "V svobodnom Kitae' ".

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Liberated China

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1.

At 3 p.m. on 1 October 1949, the red flag of the People's Republic of China was slowly and ceremoniously raised to the top of the flagpole in China's ancient capital city, Peking. A large gold star stands out in the top-left corner of the flag, symbolising the driving force of the population — the Chinese Communist Party, and, as if eager to follow in its wake, four little stars, symbolising the national unity of the new China's democratic force.

Two hundred thousand people bared their heads and greeted the national flag of the young republic with triumphant cheering and applause. The People's Liberation Army, galvanised in battles against domestic and foreign foes, saluted the flag. Volleys of salutes proclaimed to the world that the old China, scorned by the foreign imperialists, betrayed and humiliated by domestic reactionaries, had left the past behind once and for all, and a new China had been born — a liberated, independent and great China of popular democracy.

The leader of the new China, Mao Tse-tung announced the declaration of the Central Popular Government. The Chinese troops took to the square, their American weapons shining and ringing out. The whole world could be sure that six billion Trumans, or at any rate those who had not been turned into smoke and ash in the civil war — had been transferred from the hands of the traitor Chiang Kai-shek to the hands of the Chinese people. Not without reason, the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army nicknamed the Kuomintang Army 'the army of expendables'.

An open gallery in a pagoda-type building with a two-tier roof served as the rostrum where the members of the government were seated, having once been the main gates into the grounds of the ancient imperial palace.

Columns of troops ceremoniously marched past the rostrum as if on parade, and once past broke into a light, swift run such as often adopted by the People's Liberation Army on similar marches.

It should not be forgotten that even now, in southern and south-western regions of the country the army is advancing at a run, covering between 50 and 75 kilometres per day on the heels of the fragmented and scattered enemy, through mountains and deep rivers such as the Yangtze. We watched a Chinese documentary film showing how tens of thousands of soldiers of the People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtze River under enemy artillery and small-arms fire on fragile junks and burst into Shanghai at a run. On 1 October the army was still a long way from Canton, but within the two weeks that we spent in Peking, and then by train to Shanghai, the army had crushed the foe and reached and occupied Canton. And as I write this article, the Chinese People's Liberation Army has occupied Chuntsin.

2.

In every nation's history there are days of such activity when the nation's past, present and future appears before you as if lit up by a flare, melded together in an unusually clear picture. We, the Soviet people, with the volleys of the Aurora in October and the roar of the gun-salute above Red Square on Victory Day over fascist Germany permanently etched on our hearts, feel and understand such moments as these in the lives of other nations.

We shall never forget the triumphant crowds flowing past the government's rostrum in Peking, the huge meeting one night in Tientsin where 300 000 people gathered — thousands of flags flying, countless torches burning, the boom of drums and fireworks, and the white doves of peace released from the crowd soaring into the night sky, illuminated by the red light of the torches and fireworks.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge how often this powerful wave of national feeling swept across the city

squares towards us, the envoys of the Soviet people, showing just how much love the Chinese people felt for the Soviet Union. We can never forget how we were met in every city by the rapturous voices of tens and hundreds of thousands of people, singing praise to the great Stalin: 'May Stalin live for ten-thousand years!'

During this historical time of popular enthusiasm, one could particularly sense the vast expanse of this great country, the countless millions of inhabitants, and the labour of thousands of years in its fields and cities, depicted on the many architectural monuments of bygone days and on the structures to which the people themselves gave the name 'great' — the Great Wall of China, the Great Canal, or on the unique art of the sculptors, the wood and bone carvers, all attesting to the exceptional talent of the Chinese people.

The peaceful and hardworking people of China saw much fighting throughout their thousands of years of history; in unjust wars such as the civil conflict of the feudal lords or wars between various military factions covertly funded by foreign capital. But their fighting was all the more often just and fair, in battles against foreign aggressors, in the numerous peasant uprisings against their domestic and foreign oppressors, in the long and difficult war against Japanese imperialism and, finally, in the people's revolution that led them to victory and lasted twenty-two years. It began when the Kuomintang betrayed the legacy of Sun Yat-sen and became the counter-revolutionary force, and the Chinese Communist Party became the leading force of the revolution.

Looking upon the triumphant crowds of victorious people, one must not forget the Shanghai workers' blood spilled on Nanching Road, becoming a sort of Red Presnya for the Chinese working class, the great Northern Expedition of the Chinese Red Army, life in the caves and mountains of Yan'an and this derelict province where fate decreed that the headquarters of the Chinese Revolution would be for so long. Nor should one forget the tireless, heroic struggle of the Chinese Communist Party for the political enlightenment and unity of the people, and the creation of a multi-million strong army. All these incredible efforts and sacrifices showed above all the traits of a great nation.

Deep down the Chinese people are similar to the Russian — their sense of humour, modesty and self-sacrifice does not only develop into heroism at the individual level, but on a mass scale; not to mention their unprecedented stamina, patience and love of labour — a labour that is tireless and can overcome all difficulties.

Stalin said that in China, 'the struggle against imperialism should have a widely popular and clear national character that should get stronger and stronger until it recklessly challenges imperialism and shakes the very foundation of imperialism throughout the world.'

And that is what happened.

The ideological, political and organisational experience of the Chinese Communist Party was evident in the victory of the Chinese people, in coordinating the masses for such a victory, in the discipline and control of the Chinese People's Army, in implementing a new, popular power, and even in the efficient conduct of the demonstrations and meetings to plan the new way of life for the Chinese people.

We were in contact with the leading figures of the Chinese people on a daily basis and often heard it said that the Chinese learned their organisational skills and much else besides from us, and that their victory was inspired and facilitated by the very existence of the socialist Soviet Union, the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, our party's and people's experience with revolution and our brotherly love towards the Chinese people.

This thought was clearly expressed by Mao Tse-tung in his renowned article: 'The Dictatorship of Popular Democracy': 'If it were not for the Soviet Union, if it were not for the victory in the anti-fascist Second World War, and of particular importance to us, if it were not for Japanese imperialism, if countries of the new democracy had not appeared in Europe ... then of course the pressure of reactionary force would have been much stronger than it is now. Could we have achieved victory in such circumstances? Of course not.'

The millions of ordinary Chinese people are aware of that fact. It explains the sense of adoration that

surrounded the Soviet cultural delegation during its six-week stay in China.

We perceived this sincere, popular feeling of adoration at the All China Conference of the Society of Friends of the USSR, when the illustrious commander of the People's Liberation Army, Chu The, read out the telegram he had only just received concerning the recognition of the national government of China by the government of the Soviet Union. He received a standing ovation and rapturous applause. There were cries of 'Glory to the Soviet Union!', 'May Stalin live for 10 000 years' — the hall trembled. People jumped up from their seats and began hugging and kissing us with tears in their eyes. Soong Ching-ling, the widow of Sun Yat-sen left the presidium and walked around the delegation, shaking everyone's hand. The ovation continued for over half-an-hour.

At the open-air student gatherings where 15–20 000 students were assembled, our hands were grabbed as soon as we got out of the car and we were led to the rostrum. At the end of the meeting, they cried 'Long Live the Soviet Union!' and the happy, friendly crowd surrounded us and led us to our vehicles by the hand.

And no matter where we went — from children's and student's halls, to city meetings, to conferences of this or that society, to factories or to villages, we were passed presents from hand to hand as if on a conveyer belt. They were brought by delegations of societies and organisations, individuals, children. There were flags, old books, picture books, paintings and photographs, valuable embroidery, vases, stoneware, bone ware, and occasionally touching drawings from children and simple letters expressing their love. The All-Union Society of Cultural Overseas Communications to which we passed our presents could have held an exhibition simply entitled Sino-Soviet Friendship.

And wherever we went, we were handed gifts to be passed on personally to comrade Stalin — sometimes this would happen during a ceremonious occasion, and other times at simple occasions of friendship, with expressions of such love that said more than words.

We were pleased to be able to present the Society of Sino-Soviet Friendship with fifteen films, a thousand gramophone records, a library of Russian classics and Soviet authors, several sets of our school text-books for all classes and textbooks for higher educational institutions.

The Soviet delegation went from Peking to Nanching, from Nanching to Shanghai, from Shanghai to Chinan, from Chinan to Tientsin, Mukden, Harbin, riding on a powerful wave of love of the great Chinese people to the Soviet Union and to comrade Stalin, a friend of the oppressed, a friend of those struggling for their liberty with one foot already on the happy path to nationhood.

3.

What is essentially happening in China at the moment can be summed up in a few words: China is building a popular state and is going through a learning process.

The People's Republic of China has inherited an outdated economy, its development held back by the imperialists and their lackies, those who prospered on the destitution of the people, the reactionary traitors to the national interest.

People's China is striving to eradicate the feudal remnants once and for all, and foremost among its tasks is to complete their land reforms by transferring the ownership of the land to the peasants.

People's China is striving to develop its national industry and more particularly, its national state-owned industry. In a people's democracy the working class traditionally plays the leading role, and in this case, the Chinese working class has increased productivity and is more frequently demonstrating proletarian heroism in transport and coal-mining.

The Chinese peasants, who for centuries have been eking out their half-starved existence, understood that the only way to achieve humane living standards was to unite with the working class. The people's

revolution brought about such a union, and the Chinese Communist Party enjoys unrestricted authority amongst the peasantry.

Stalin foresaw that things would progress as they did some twenty-two years ago when he predicted that the then left-wing Kuomintang would shift to the side of the counter-revolutionaries, thus alienating the peasantry; the peasantry was convinced that only the Communist Party could break the people free of the shackles of the landowners and bureaucrats.

That the overwhelming majority of democratic intelligentsia supported the new China was a great achievement, both of the popular powers in China and of the Chinese Communist Party. The small groups of intelligentsia running from the Kuomintang were worthless on their own and had no political weight.

If you take an army of educated workers in China, it will conscientiously work towards enlightening the people. The first requirement is to eradicate mass illiteracy. The old Chinese system of writing is a major stumbling block to this noble cause. The new people's power is preparing the ground in order to reform the old writing system and will undoubtedly find the appropriate solution.

A new generation is now pouring into the schools and universities. Most Chinese students supported the people's revolution and on more than one occasion spilt their blood on the streets of Mukden, Peking and Shanghai. Now they are avidly studying and they are consumed with the desire to impart knowledge on the people.

Masses of young students (and not just the young students) have taken up the study of the Russian language.

Never before in the history of the Chinese people has there been such a thirst for knowledge. Reading rooms, libraries, lecture and concert halls, theatres and museums are full to bursting. Soviet cultural figures have spoken many times in front of auditoriums packed with people from various social backgrounds. And it was not only the audience's extraordinary curiosity that excited us, but also the way in which they strived to take some sort of practical knowledge from what they were hearing and apply it to their new lives in China. We received hundreds upon hundreds of questions about all aspects of cultural life in the USSR.

It feels as if the Chinese people and the intelligentsia are striving forwards with all their hearts, believing in their future and willing to build it with their own hands.

One can confidently say that Chinese writers are among the leading ranks of the intelligentsia. And at the source of the new Chinese literature stands the great classic realist Lu Sin, a polymath and a keen social conscience. A devoted friend to the Soviet Union, often making destructive swipes at its foes, he has linked his own fate with that of the people's revolution and with the Chinese Communist Party. He has been named the Chinese Gorky. He has instilled the new generation of writers with a love of Russian classical literature, especially Soviet literature and those books that taught the people to fight. He himself has translated many works of classical Russian and Soviet literature into Chinese.

His creativity and his enlightening and revolutionary labour have left an indelible mark on the subsequent development of modern Chinese literature, firmly setting it on the road to realism and service to the people.

It is characteristic of the development of the modern Chinese literature that the writers who are already considered as representatives of the old generation, such as Go Mo-zho or Mao Dun, demonstrated solidarity with the people from an early age. The writer Din Lin who journeyed with the People's Liberation Army on its extremely difficult march can be boldly proclaimed the daughter of the Chinese Revolution. The people of the new China, fighters and social reformers are now becoming literature's leading heroes.

The people's revolution has already had an effect on all areas of Chinese art. Along with the old classical theatre with its conventionality a new theatre of realism has sprung up. The only similarity between old and new is that they work in the same genre of musical drama. But there is also something new encroaching into China's music: a hugely popular new melody has emerged. Often it begins life in the new theatre and then

comes down from the stage to become part of life itself.

The great Chinese composer and violinist, the director of the State Conservatory Ma Si-sun produces new musical pieces in which national folk motifs are the natural soil for the new music of realism.

With some difficulty realism has managed to break through into decorative art. Here on the one hand the conventional classical style is still strong, and on the other hand there are remnants of the influence of French impressionism. However in China there are excellent realist artists, and in the field of graphic art realism reigns supreme. Graphic art has turned out to be the most lively and active of art forms under the revolution, with its strong motifs of struggle and folk life. Chinese graphic artists have achieved a high perfection of form.

It should not be forgotten that all these new phenomena in China's literature and art were borne of the revolution even before its victory. Literature and art now have such wide horizons that literary thought has not yet caught up. What had already come into being now spreads its wings, and is infused with the incalculable new force of the people and literature and art make a giant, qualitative leap forward. As the people discover and re-discover, for the first time, the great figures in Chinese classical literature, this will have an important impact on their artistic development.

The experience of Soviet literature and art will lend a hand. Much Soviet literature has been translated in China, even under the hostile regime, and it is especially being translated now. It enjoys considerable popularity amongst the intelligentsia. The performances of our singers, musicians and dancers in front of packed halls of up to sixty thousand generated real enthusiasm.

The main thing to note now is that the global and historic significance of China's transformation has uncovered an inexhaustible source of folk creativity in all areas of popular endeavour. The Chinese nation has, in one leap, joined the ranks of the most advanced nations of the world.

The run-of-the-mill bourgeoisie in Western Europe and America are still incapable of understanding what has happened in China. I have already met such people overseas. The bourgeoisie see it thus: 'China is some distant place in Asia and something nasty happened there but what has a civilised man in a hat, sitting comfortably in a café surrounded by the sacred stones of Europe got in common with the Chinese in Asia?'

The poverty-stricken provincial is not able to understand how maliciously mocked them! Is it really not possible to compare the powerful pulse of new life where, it seems, one can hear the very breathe of history, with the stagnant life, devoid of all prospects, of 'Marshalled' countries in provincial Europe?

Great China with its half-a-billion people has joined the global, historical movement, whose goal is Socialism and Communism. The imperialists and their ideological yes-men would do well to recall Stalin's solemn words, uttered back in 1925:

'The force of the revolutionary movement in China is incredible. It has not yet had the impact that it should. It will impact on the future. Rulers in the East and West, who do not perceive and take appropriate account of this force will pay the price.'