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KOREA'S "SACRED FRIENDSHIP" WITH THE USSR

*Korea*

Soviet-Korean Friendship Week, originally scheduled for 10 to 17 October but actually celebrated 13 to 21 October, continues to be exploited by both Moscow and Pyongyang as an occasion on which to describe in glowing terms the fruitfulness of Soviet-Korean relations. As was true last week, Radio Pyongyang far outdoes Moscow in spelling out the advantages North Korea has received from Soviet friendship--especially as that friendship has been manifested in technical, industrial, social, and cultural guidance. The week-long celebration included such typical events as a rally at Pyongyang's Art Theater on 13 October--at which Ambassador Shtikov delivered an address in Russian--the

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arrival on 21 October of a Soviet cultural delegation, an extensive series of lectures from Radio Pyongyang, and a wreath dedication ceremony on 22 October at which North Koreans allegedly "gave hearty thanks and respect to the Soviet troops which liberated Korea from nearly half a century of the vicious Japanese imperialist yoke."

Although Pyongyang's commentators devoted primary attention to the Friendship Week projects they also took time to castigate the U.N., the U.S., and Syngman Rhee for their sundry efforts to prevent peace and unity in Korea. In furtherance of Moscow-originated propaganda campaigns, Pyongyang lauds the October Revolution for the inspiration and opportunity it offered the world and discusses the Soviet use of the veto as being intended solely to bring peace to the U.N. and the world. Soviet proposals regarding atomic weapons are mentioned in this frame of reference, as are Vishinsky's peace treaty proposals, and Soviet opposition to the Balkan and Korean commissions. (in Korean, 18 and 21 October 1949)

a. Friendship Week: From the titles of the commentaries alone it is possible to indicate the tenor of Pyongyang's broadcasts during the week of good will. These included "The Soviet Union Is the Bulwark of World Peace" (21 October), "The Soviet Socialist Culture Is the Most Advanced Culture in the World" (21 October), "Contributions of Soviet Engineers to the Development of our National Industries" (19 October), "Soviet Sciences Are the Highest of Humanity" (22 October), "Living Standards of the Soviet Laboring People Are Rising" (21 October), "The True Aid of the Soviet Union Extended to the Korean People in their Struggle for Attainment of Unification and Independence for the Fatherland and Democratic Development" (18 October), etc. These various broadcasts review the USSR's contribution to North Korea's progress and prosperity in general terms. The broadcast concerned with Soviet science, for example, recapitulates the ideological advantages of Soviet science, e.g., it serves the people and peace; it is closely connected with the nation's economy. This commentary on science departs from generalities only to the extent that it acknowledges that Soviet scientists are teaching at Korean universities. In general these commentaries adhere to the stereotype in devoting several paragraphs to the contrast between Soviet and American attitudes toward Korea; the U.S. is said to be concerned only to exploit Korea for its own military and economic gains.

Writer Lee Tae Jun takes an overall look at American, Soviet, and Korean culture in a commentary broadcast by Pyongyang on 20 October. He finds that Korean culture--in the North, presumably--has not progressed as much as possible since the liberation because "the feudal customs of several thousand years and the baneful influences of Japanese imperialism... were not so easily eradicated." In South Korea, he declares, "writers and artists" are "also traitors and anti-popular" as an "inevitable consequence" of the American

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occupation; "our southern half has gone under as a colony of drugged culture, including nation-extminating cosmopolitanism, hate, exclusionism, provocation of war, degeneration, and nonsense."

"In South Korea only mercenary writers and artists are carrying the day, arguing about unrealistic romance, pretending that it is national culture to beautify feudal dynasty and that it is patriotism to provoke internecine strife, that literature and arts have nothing to do with politics, let alone encouraging the burning patriotism for the Fatherland. On the other hand, conscientious writers and artists of the democratic camp are arrested, imprisoned, purged and even sentenced to death."

Soviet culture, on the other hand "makes no compromise in fighting decay and putrefaction"; "all the culture developed in the Soviet Union... is forward culture for all nations of the world near and far." Referring to various Soviet plays and novels by name the speaker outlines the ideological lessons which may be gleaned from them. He also quotes Stalin as pointing out the peculiar characteristics of individual cultures and contrasts this attitude of tolerance with that of America and Britain, which, through cosmopolitanism and the North Atlantic Pact, wish to "Americanize" all other cultures. He closes his address with an appeal for haste in "absorbing" Soviet culture:

"Any nation which absorbs the Soviet culture one day earlier will be able to make its own culture that much more excellent and develop it that much more. Again, any nation which absorbs one more point of the Soviet culture will enrich its own culture by that much. The more one knows and understands the Soviet culture the stronger is his might to fight reactionary culture.

"In order to (enhance the fighting might of) our literature and arts and consolidate the foundation of our national culture at a time when we face the historic great task of unifying our Fatherland, the writers and artists of our Republic must first and second study and absorb completely the Soviet literature and arts."

Moscow, although devoting far less radio time to the good will week, sticks as closely to the stereotype as does Pyongyang. Monitored commentaries are entitled "In Regard to the 10-Day Soviet Culture and the Korean-Soviet Friendship-Promoting Drive" (23 October), "Sacred Friendship with the Soviet Union Is a Guarantee of the Korean People's Freedom and Independence" (21 October), and "The Great Power of the Soviet People's Friendship" (22 October). The "brilliant successes" of the Korean people are outlined in these talks and frequent reference is made to the increasing strength of Soviet-Korean friendship and to Soviet recognition of the Korean regime and related developments. And, in a Korean-language commentary of 24 October, Moscow quotes the

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same Lee Tae Jun as pointing out that Soviet literature is very popular in North Korea. Moscow adds that Soviet writers are interested in Korean affairs, that Soviet culture has realized great successes with Soviet aid, and that Korean-Soviet friendship is being consolidated.