

## A Study on the Magazine *Sino-Soviet Culture*

JIANG Na<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Lecturer, College of Historic Culture & College of Nationalities, Southwest University, Chongqing, China.

\*Corresponding author.

**Supported by** Southwest University 2010 Central University Fundamental Scientific Research Funding Project “Sino-Soviet Cultural Association During the Second KMT-CPC Cooperation Period” (SWU1003080).

Received 28 July 2015; accepted 12 September 2015  
Published online 26 October 2015

### Abstract

As the official magazine of Sino-Soviet Cultural Association, magazine *Sino-Soviet Culture* carried out extensive and in-depth introduction to Soviet Union for cultural exchanges. It created a good pro-Soviet atmosphere among Chinese people, played a great role in promoting Sino-Soviet diplomacy, and had a great encouragement to Chinese people’s anti-Japanese mood. Meanwhile, *Sino-Soviet Culture* deliberately played down ideological difference, which largely removed the biggest obstacle for the second KMT-CPC cooperation.

**Key words:** Sino-Soviet culture; Sino-Soviet diplomacy; KMT-CPC cooperation

Jiang, N. (2015). A Study on the Magazine *Sino-Soviet Culture*. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 11(10), 50-53. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/7655> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/7655>

### INTRODUCTION

On October 25, 1935, Sino-Soviet Cultural Association (abbreviated as Zhong Su Wen Xie) was established, whose official magazine was *Sino-Soviet Culture*. In early 1936, Sino-Soviet Cultural Association set up the magazine *Sino-Soviet Culture*, whose president and deputy president was chaired by KMT central standing committee members Xu Enzeng and Zhang Chong. The

publishing expense was borne by Soviet Foreign Cultural Association at 7,000 yuan monthly, subsidized by KMT central executive committee secretary at 200 yuan monthly, and the deficiency was subsidized by National Government Legislature. The main source of writings came from Soviet Foreign Cultural Association and the embassy, and KMT, CPC politicians, cultural elites also published articles in it. A folk cultural publication received so much attention from Soviet government, KMT and CPC, and was published from Vol.1, No.1 issue on May 15, 1936 to Vol.20 No.5 issue on May, 1949 without interruption, which was a rare case among numerous publications during the war.

### 1. SINO-SOVIET CULTURE SPREAD SOVIET CULTURE

The president of Sino-Soviet Cultural Association Sun Ke wrote the title for *Sino-Soviet Culture*, and clearly expressed that, in order to learn from the Soviet experience and promote Sino-Soviet cultural exchanges, we established Sino-Soviet Cultural Association. For this purpose, *Sino-Soviet Culture* opened the following columns: Soviet Union today, Sino-Soviet half monthly, Soviet Union communications, Soviet Union studies, selected news of Soviet Union, introduction to the republics of Soviet Union, Soviet Union of socialist victory, Soviet revolution, Soviet scientific research, Soviet military research, Soviet economy study, Soviet economic and commercial relations monograph, Soviet finance and economy, great Soviet’s third five-year plan, from the second five-year plan to the third five-year plan, Soviet socialism and children, labor and life, Soviet educational research, Soviet history, geography and science, Sino-Soviet history, Soviet Union’s new social rule and scientific research, Soviet culture and education, Sino-Soviet cultural communication, Soviet cultural message, cultural revolution of Soviet construction, and review on Russian historical personage, etc.. For major

issues there were specialized researches, such as “Soviet industrial construction special”, “Soviet collective farm special”, “introduction to Soviet construction special”, “Soviet diplomacy special”, “Soviet national defense construction special”, “Soviet new constitution special”, “a comparative study of the Sino-Soviet ethnic issues special”, “Soviet sports special”, “Sino-Soviet non-aggression treaty special”, “Soviet Communist Party 18<sup>th</sup> general assembly special”, “Soviet anti-German war special” and so on.

Among *Sino-Soviet Culture*'s propaganda to Soviet Union, the translations of Soviet literature had the most far-reaching influence. It opened literary columns as follows: Sino-Soviet literature and art, art, literature, introduction to Soviet writers, Russian literary studies, introduction to Sino-Soviet classics, Russian literature—an artist review, Soviet new society and new art, Sino-Soviet voice, poetry • report • fiction, art, culture • philosophy • family, and Soviet literature and art during the wartime, etc. *Sino-Soviet Culture* often published special issues to commemorate Soviet writers and introduce Soviet literature. In 1945, when talked about foreign literature exchanges, Mao Dun also pointed out that Soviet literature became the main influential source for China to absorb the world literature (Mao, 1945). This undoubtedly generated a directional influence to the art of war, art of liberated area and even art of a considerable period after the founding of new China.

It can be seen that *Sino-Soviet Culture* covered Soviet politics, economy, military, education, ethnic issue, scientific research, literature, art and various aspects of social life. Its introduction to Soviet Union was unprecedented in depth and breadth, especially the popularization of Soviet literature and art, which created a good pro-Soviet atmosphere in China, and largely helped defuse Chinese people's anti-Soviet sentiment caused by Soviet's sale of Middle East Railway to Japan after the “September 18” Incident.

## 2. INSPIRATION TO CHINESE PEOPLE'S ANTI-JAPANESE MOOD

After outbreak of the war, *Sino-Soviet Culture* opened a “War Special”, including columns of front line, national salvation work, enemy study, crisis in Central Europe, Soviet Union research, Japanese in the crash, experience of the revolutionary war, European situation and the Far East, Soviet Union and international critical situation, study of European war and Soviet Union's view on anti-Japanese war, etc., which paid close attention to China and the international political situation.

*Sino-Soviet Culture* decided to publish a special fortnightly of anti-Japanese war from November 1, 1937, and clarified in the first issue: the magazine was renowned for the great work of promoting Sino-Soviet cultural exchanges, but at the moment when the whole

nation was in the war against Japan to fight for freedom, independence and happiness, in addition to carrying out extensive public work and organizing all-participating and protracted resistance, the magazine would also be actively engaged in analyzing the evolution of international situation, studying revolutionary diplomacy, and learning from the abundant experience of Soviet revolution to overthrow the invader. Thus, introduction of the Soviet struggle of armed intervention, its present construction, defense, revolutionary peaceful diplomacy as well as how to create a great country from hardships became the current work of Sino-Soviet cultural communication.

On the setup of columns, the war special of *Sino-Soviet Culture* added “salvation work”, “enemy research”, “revolutionary experience” and so on. The periodical analyzed the situation and future of the Chinese anti-Japanese war with a clear and firm political position, popularized the strategic thought of a lasting resistance, criticized the surrender of pro-Japanese traitors, guided people to correctly understand the prospect of the war, and called for overcoming despair and negative thoughts. *Sino-Soviet Culture* published Jiang Jieshi's report to all Chinese people *As Long as We Take Long-Term Resistance Victory will Belong to Us* in Vol.1, 4<sup>th</sup> issue on January 1, 1938, and published his conversation to the correspondent Xi Shi of Paris Evening *Fight the War to the End for Victory* to keep popularizing the thought of lasting resistance. The purpose of opening the column “Enemy Research” was to analyze the enemy and strengthen the confidence of victory through the analysis of Japan's economy, politics and diplomacy.

## 3. SINO-SOVIET CULTURE PROMOTED SINO-SOVIET DIPLOMACY

The Soviet ambassador Baogemuoluofu published an article on the first issue of *Sino-Soviet Culture*: “The work scope of Sino-Soviet Cultural Association will be very broad in the future. The cooperation of Sino-Soviet Cultural Association and Soviet Union Foreign Cultural Association can organize cultural exchanges between the two countries.” (Baogemuoluofu, 1936) In fact, the close contact between the two countries was mainly conducted by *Sino-Soviet Culture*. According to the headquarters of Sino-Soviet Cultural Association of Chongqing, during the war, “various books and newspapers of Soviet Union Foreign Cultural Association have been continuously dispatched to us and our branches all over China.” “*Sino-Soviet Culture* has tried to publish the translations of Soviet articles as much as possible, and mailed the publications on a regular basis.” (Second Historical Archives of China, 1998)

Soviet Union Foreign Cultural Association appeared to be a cultural organization, but was in fact controlled by CPSU Central Political Bureau directly. It made contribution to Xu Beihong, Mei Lanfang, Zhou Jianyun,

Hu Die's visits to Soviet Union which was milestones in the Sino-Soviet diplomacy. Sino-Soviet Cultural Association also had a clear semi-official color, whose president Sun Ke was delegated by Jiang Jieshi to take charge of the Soviet affairs during the war. Therefore, Sino-Soviet Culture not just reflected cultural exchanges between the two countries, but in fact largely demonstrated the diplomatic attitudes of the two governments. The most typical example was that in July 1938, Soviet-Japanese Zhanggufeng armed conflict broke out. The Chinese people generally expected Soviet Union to declare war on Japan. Sun Ke made a special exchange of views with Stalin during his visit to Moscow. Stalin said that Soviet Union would only participate in the war against Japan under three conditions: "a) Japan attacks Soviet Union; b) If Britain and America join the war against Japan; c) If the League of Nations instructs the Pacific countries to declare war to Japan." (Wang, 1995) In short, Soviet Union was not likely to dispatch troops to Japan at that stage. In order to reduce the public's suspicion of the Soviet Union, on January 7, 1939, Sun Ke gave a speech at Chongqing cultural circle's reception. He said: "If we want them to send troops, three conditions have to be met: Firstly, League of Nations implements the covenant and calls on a joint punishment on violence, then Soviet Union will perform the task; If a sanctions has not been approved, at least Britain, America and France will ally Soviet Union to take an joint action to punish the violence; If the above two points cannot be met, then only when the Japanese invades the Soviet border, it will of course combat the aggressor for self-defense." (Sun, 1939) This lecture was also published in *Sino-Soviet Culture*, and by comparison it was not difficult to find that Sun Ke's explanation to Soviet Union's position was almost the quotation of the Soviet government policy.

During the anti-Japanese war, especially after the Soviet-Germany war broke out, the Chinese community also demonstrated support to Soviet Union through *Sino-Soviet Culture*. The magazine published *China National Theatrical Circle Anti-Japanese Association's Letter to the Theatrical Circle of Soviet Union*, *China National Film Industry Anti-Japanese Association's Letter to the Film Circle of Soviet Union* in the 1940 4<sup>th</sup> issue, published *To the Soviet People* by China Post Association, China Industrial Cooperative Association and Military Council Political Department Child Troupe in the 1941 1<sup>st</sup> issue, published *China National Literature and Art Circle Anti-Japanese Association's Letter to the Literature and Art Circle of Soviet Union*, *China National Music Circle Anti-Japanese Association's Letter to the Music Circle of Soviet Union*, and *Chinese Women's Letter to the Soviet Female Comrades* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue, published *China National Theatrical and Film Circle Anti-Japanese Association's Letter to the Theatrical and Film Circle of Soviet Union*, *The Letter of All Members of China Symphony Orchestra to the Soviet People*, *Sino-*

*Soviet Cultural Association Anti-Aggression China Branch and China National Diplomatic Association's Letter to the Soviet People* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> issue, and published *China Symphony Orchestra's Letter to the Music Circle of Soviet Union* in 1941 5<sup>th</sup> issue.

Sino-Soviet relation was the most important diplomatic relation to China during the war, especially after the "September 18" Incident and before the outbreak of Pacific War, due to the reluctance of British and American to involve in Sino-Japanese war, Soviet Union was the country giving the largest aid to China. *Sino-Soviet Culture* made undeniable contributions in promoting the Sino-Soviet diplomacy.

#### 4. SINO-SOVIET CULTURE PROMOTED THE SECOND KMT-CPC COOPERATION

*Sino-Soviet Culture's* publicity of Soviet Union and its leaders was unique in the KMT-controlled areas during the war. On every memorial day of Lenin's death, Stalin's birthday, anniversary of the October Revolution, Soviet Red Army Day and other major holidays, *Sino-Soviet Culture* would issue a memorial special to publish Lenin, Stalin's articles and discuss Marxism-Leninism. As the chief editor of *Sino-Soviet Culture*, Hou Wailu said, "(in the KMT-controlled areas) to publish articles of the Communist leaders and systematically propaganda Leninism, in addition to *Xinhua Daily* and *The Masses*, we have to say that only *Sino-Soviet Culture* has this possibility." (Hou, 1985) The most fundamental difference between CPC and KMT came from the ideologies. In order to strengthen the propaganda of Soviet Union, *Sino-Soviet Culture* deliberately downplayed ideology, which cleared the largest obstacle for the second KMT-CPC cooperation.

Because *Sino-Soviet Culture* was regarded as a common window for Soviet Union, KMT and CPC were very cooperative in terms of maintaining the image of Soviet Union. On August 23, 1939, *Soviet-Germany Non-Aggression Treaty* was signed, which caused a public outcry in the world and was referred as "this century's largest diplomatic bomb" by the American historian Hughes (1984). The signing of the treaty also caused a great impact to KMT and CPC. On August 27, Sun Ke visited Moscow and said that, the National Government was quite worried that the change of Soviet-Germany relation would cause a chain reaction to the Soviet-Japan relation. On November 6, the Communist International published *Declaration to Commemorate the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the October Revolution*, claiming to support *Soviet-Germany Non-Aggression Treaty*. This is in fact abandoned the policy of building a world anti-fascist united front, and caused a panic among communist parties all over the world. As Zhou Enlai said, "As Soviet Union and Germany signed the non-aggression treaty, capitalist parties were disadvantaged and highly

confused.” (Zhou, 1984) This negative impact would certainly spread to CPC.

In order to strengthen people's anti-Japanese confidence, Jiang Jieshi declared in the August 27 telegraph to the military governors in all provinces, “the move of Soviet Union and Germany made the enemy's atrocities lose its basis, and be greatly attacked in spirit. The enemy's anti-communist policy was smashed..... this is the most favorable for our war of resistance” (Qin, 1984). *Sino-Soviet Culture* took a close cooperation with this public opinion direction. *Special for Commemorating the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Soviet October Revolution* of November 11 carefully published the congratulations and articles by Sun Ke, Feng Yuxiang, Shao Lizi, Chen Lifu, Li Jishen, Chen Cheng, Liang Hancan, Zhang Qun, Lü Chao, Zeng Kuoqing, Wu Dingchang, Zhou Zhongyue, Zhang Fakui, Zhu De, Li Hanhun, Wu Yuzhang, Zhang Chong, Zhang Ximan, Mao Zedong, Hou Wailu, Huang Songling, Shen Zhiyuan, Zou Taofen, Zhao Keang, Qian Junrui, Pan Zinian, Bai Tao, Han Youtong, Zhang Youyu, Zheng Boqi, Jian Bozan, Xu Dixin, Xiang Linbing, An E, Luo Sun, Ge Baoquan, other KMT government and military dignitaries and cultural elites. So many KMT and CCP dignitaries echoed each other for the same incident in the same magazine, which was rare throughout the war. What's the most notable were Mao Zedong's article *The Consistency of Soviet's Interests and the Interests of Humanity*, which was Mao Zedong's first published article in the KMT-controlled area after the breakdown of the first KMT-CPC cooperation. Faced with the concerns caused by the Soviet-Germany treaty in China and the world, Mao Zedong asserted, “the situation after the signing of Soviet-Germany Non-Aggression Treaty greatly attacked the Japanese, strengthened China's position of resistance and fought against capitulators. Chinese people's welcome to the treaty is correct.” (Mao, 1939) This view was the same with Jiang Jieshi's tone in the August 27 telegraph. Later, Sun Ke also depended Soviet Union in terms of the Soviet-German treaty.

the Soviet Union finds that it's impossible to seek peace with Britain and France, and is under the threat of Germany. Germany is also threatened by Britain and France, and fears to be further threatened by Soviet if it allies with British and French. Soviet Union, like Germany believes that the other is the source of threat, so signed a non-aggression treaty with the other to reach a mutual understanding.

Soviet Union was the promoter of KMT-CPC cooperation and the mediator of the frictions between KMT and CPC, playing a vital role in the formation and maintenance of the second KMT-CPC cooperation. A series of moves of KMT and CPC in *Sino-Soviet Culture* clarified their solidarity and cooperation on the Soviet issue to the public. As long as the Soviet Union banner

did not fall, the two sides still had the possibility of cooperation.

---

## CONCLUSION

---

During the anti-Japanese war, to China, Soviet Union was the most important international relation, and KMT-CPC cooperation was the most important political relation. Throughout the war, CPC, KMT and Soviet Union were the three major factors to ensure the victory of China's war of resistance. Sino-Soviet Cultural Association was the most active foreign cultural organization during the period. *Sino-Soviet Culture* obviously played an important role in improving the Sino-Soviet diplomacy, promoting the second KMT-CPC cooperation, and in the name of cultural exchanges, provided a platform of exchanges and cooperation for KMT, CPC and Soviet Union. Therefore, the magazine *Sino-Soviet Culture* was characterized by the multifaceted nature of politics, diplomacy and culture, and its importance cannot be outweighed by any other publication during the war.

---

## REFERENCES

---

- Baogemoluofu. (1936). The mission of Sino-Soviet culture. *Sino-Soviet Culture*, (1).
- Hou, W. L. (1985). *Tough pursuit* (p.95). Beijing: Joint Publishing Co.
- Hughes, S. (1984). *Modern history of Europe* (p.395). Beijing: Commercial Press.
- Mao, D. (1945). Introduction of foreign literature in recent years. *Wen Shao*, (1).
- Mao, Z. D. (1939). The consistency of the interests of Soviet Union and the interests of humanity. *Sino-Soviet Culture*, (Special issue for The 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the October Revolution).
- Qin, X. Y. (1984). *Collected speeches of president Jiang Jieshi* (Vol. 37, p.194). Taipei: Central Relics Supply Agency.
- Second Historical Archives of China. (Ed.). (1998). *Report of the third annual meeting of Sino-Soviet cultural association*. Collections of Historical Archives of the Republic of China (5<sup>th</sup> series, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., p.516, Culture II). Nanjing: Jiangsu Ancient Books Publishing House.
- Sun, K. (1939). Sino-Soviet relation and the future of our Anti-Japanese War – President Sun's speech at Chongqing cultural circle's conference on January 7. *Sino-Soviet Culture*, (5).
- Wang, Z. (1995). Selected documents of Sino-Soviet relation at the early stage of Anti-Japanese War. *Historical Archives*, (3), 74.
- Zhou, E. L. (1984). Communist international and Communist Party of China. *Selected works of Zhou Enlai* (Vol.2, p.312). Beijing: People's Publishing House.