

KOREA: BALLYHOO FOR THE REPUBLIC

17 Sept 48

Korea

Again this week Moscow radio proclaims, with great enthusiasm, the glories of the Pyongyang Government of Kim Il Sung. Broadcasts and TASS dispatches report successive steps in establishment of the regime, proclaim its formation as "an important historical event in the life of the Korean people" and in general extol the Republic the northern Koreans, and the Soviet Union which made the whole thing possible.

As is customary, this praise for the north is generally interspersed with criticism of the U.S. and of the Syngman Rhee Government. These criticisms generally revolve around the charge of American-sponsored terror and oppression against "democratic" Koreans--a charge kept in the limelight by the claim that south Koreans who voted in the "secret" August elections are being jailed by the police.

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"An Important Historical Event": PRAVDA's editorial marking the formation of the "Korean People's Democratic Republic" strikes the keynote of the commentaries broadcast this week. Replete with references to the "truly democratic" elections in the north, the "truly democratic" constitution of the north, and the "truly democratic" program outlined by the Kim Il Sung Government, the editorial is a self-righteous hymn of praise. Danilov, Ermashev, Alexandrov, and unnamed commentators indulge in equally flamboyant applause for the Republic, its officers, and its program.

One aspect of that program, the request that all foreign troops be withdrawn from Korea, receives special emphasis. TASS transmits the text of the official statement issued in Pyongyang (in English Morse to North America, 13 September 1948) and Moscow reports to the Soviet Far East on 14 September that the TASS report of the request was published in all the central Soviet newspapers.

b. Terror and Dismay in Seoul: The salutatory commentaries noted above include as much criticism of alleged American policies as praise of Soviet policies. Thus Ermashev, after a brief recapitulation of U.S.-USSR negotiations concerning Korea declares that:

"The policy of the U.S. authorities in Korea stands as an example of a policy of dismemberment carried out in the interests of imperialist expansion. In order to camouflage this policy the U.S. authorities in southern Korea staged the farce of elections which were held on May 10th in an atmosphere of unprecedented terror. The result of this farce was a puppet national assembly consisting of out-and-out reactionaries, obedient agents of the occupation authorities. These traitors to the people set up a self-styled Government...."

TASS also reports that the "successful" elections in the Soviet zone aroused "dismay and frenzy" in Seoul and led to "wholesale arrests" and "brutal reprisals" among patriots, school children, and journalists. (in English Morse to North America, 13 September 1948)

Moscow adds to the blackness of the American character with a report that General Hodge recommended use of former Japanese officers in the training of Korean troops:

"The Japanese officers will work under the American instructors and help train soldiers for South Korea. The so-called President of South Korea, Syngman Rhee, has not raised any objections to this." (in Japanese, 10 September 1948)