

TRANSFORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF SOVIET–BRITISH RELATIONS IN THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE BRITISH ALLY WEEKLY (1942–1950)

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The article reveals the essence of the transformation of the image of Soviet-British relations in the publications of the weekly «British Ally in 1942-1950» and indicates the role of the transformation of the image of the ally and then how this image changed. Based on a study of the publications of «British Ally», the article shows the transformation of the image of Soviet–British relations during the period of 1942 to 1950. As a result, the author concludes that the weekly «British Ally» can be used in the study of other foreign publications in Russian during the period of the World War II. The article is recommended for students, researchers and all interested persons in the history of Soviet-British relations and newspapers study.

Key words: transformation of the image; Soviet-British relations; British ally; weekly.

Great Britain has always had a reputation as a stable and progressively developing major power with a classical type of parliamentarism, therefore it was the object of close attention of Russian publicists of the XVIII–XIX centuries and a kind of reference point for state transformations in Russia.

In Russian studies by N. Yerofeyev, V. Shestakov, S. Kotov, S. Kozlov [5, 16, 9, 6] based on the memoirs of representatives of the Russian intelligentsia N. M. Karamzin, A. I. Herzen, V. S. Pecherin, A. S. Khomyakov, I. A. Goncharov, M. I. Mikhailov, etc. according to the smallest details, a complex and amazing image of Great Britain of the XVIII–XIX centuries with a very specific and unique character was assembled into a single whole. In the works of historians V. Popov, L. Pozdeyeva, V. Kulish, I. Undasynov [13, 12, 10, 15] the foreign policy of the British government during the Second World War is comprehensively analysed. Their point of view is supported by many scientists engaged in the study and analysis of the relationship between the USSR and Great Britain.

However, the approaches of Russian researchers do not always give an objective assessment of the events that took place, because they do not coincide, and sometimes conflict with the assessments of British historians and political figures such as D. Garnett, V. Elvi, G. Feis, A. Calder [19, 21, 20, 18].

Among foreign authors of historical research, the opinion prevails that hurdle in relations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain lies in the level of distrust and aggressiveness of the policy of the USSR leadership, the

formation of the «enemy image» among the Soviet people by propaganda methods.

In historical science, the study of any «image», its transformation, is relatively new. The problems of studying the classical image of the state or people are dealt with by researchers in the field of the scientific discipline imagology. Imagology (from Lat. *Imago* – image, view) is a scientific discipline about the laws of creation, functioning and interpretation of images of «other», «alien», foreign objects for the perceiver. Historical imagology studies the images and stereotypes of perception of the surrounding world that existed in the past [22]. One of the definitions of the concept of «image» gives E. Egorova-Gantman in the study «*The concept of image and stereotype in international relations*». «An image is a representation formed in human consciousness about an object that only approximately corresponds to the real one due to the subjective perception of reality through different channels of human communication with the world» [4, p. 23–24].

One of such channels is the mass media and, first, periodicals, including the weekly «*British Ally*». Using the example of the weekly publication of the Ministry of Information of the United Kingdom «*British Ally*», it is necessary to identify the transformation of the image of Soviet–British relations during its publication from 1942 to 1950.

It is important to take into consideration that the weekly «*British Ally*» was practically not censored by the Soviet authorities, these facts can be considered quite reliable [1, p. 75–76].

Soviet–British relations, in addition to the contradictions that existed in history, were burdened with deep political and ideological ones, which gave them constant inconsistency and instability. The questions of post-war relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union are particularly poorly studied in modern national and foreign historiography.

In the dissertation research of M. Lavrentieva, the works of E. Kotelenets, in part, the research of E. Kokkonen on the analysis of publications of the weekly «*British Ally*», it is concluded that the main, promising purpose of the publication was the information struggle of two social systems and foreign policy propaganda, where the magazine was a tool for achieving the propaganda goals of Great Britain in the USSR [11, 8, 7].

The opposite point of view is expressed by M. Koltsov in his dissertation study «*Great Britain in the information policy of the Soviet leadership (1945–1951)*». The author, based on the analysis of the media, concludes that the decisive role of Soviet propaganda in the formation of a stable «enemy image» in the face of Western states among the citizens of the Soviet Union.

During the Second World War, with the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition, there was an understanding that the peoples of the allied states have ex-

tremely scarce information about each other. Due to the constant ideological confrontation, the Soviet press was limited to publishing information about anti-government demonstrations, the successes of the proletarian movement, strikes and rallies, etc. In turn, the British governments, fearing the spread of communist ideas in the country, restricted the British in getting information about the Soviet Union.

With the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, a wave of interest and sympathy for the peoples of the USSR who entered into a deadly battle with Nazi Germany is rising in British society. In 1941, the information department of the Embassy of the Soviet Union, with the permission of the British government, began publishing a daily newspaper and a weekly in English, Soviet war news, to inform British citizens about the situation on the Soviet-German front. The British Ministry of Information, through Ambassador A. Kerr, proposes to start publishing a weekly newspaper in Russian in the Soviet Union. Realizing the importance of such cooperation, Stalin personally ordered to urgently consider and work out the proposal of the British allies. On August 16, 1942, the first issue of the weekly «*British Ally*» was published.

British Minister of Information B. Bracken [2, p. 2] defined the main tasks of the weekly «*British Ally*», which consist in giving the peoples of the Soviet Union relevant information every week about the British military efforts, the multilateral activities of the Royal Navy, Air Force and Land Army, the work of British industry, agriculture, the life and everyday life of ordinary Englishmen, various cultural phenomena, achievements science, art, etc.

The weekly «*British Ally*», as a government mouthpiece, systematically, from 1942 to 1950, published excerpts from speeches of prominent politicians, public figures, and publicists, posted materials in accordance with the established thematic plan.

The transformation of the image of Soviet-British relations can be divided into three main periods:

1942–1944 – the period before the opening of the Second Front.

1944–1945 – the period before the end of the defeat of Nazi Germany.

1945–1950 – the period of the beginning of the Cold War.

The proposed periodization is based not only on event chronology, but also taking into consideration global problems in the foreign policy of Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

The first period is characterized by the greatest friendliness and openness. The publications are imbued with the sincere desire of the British to help the Soviet Union, admiration for the courage and steadfastness of the defenders of Stalingrad and besieged Leningrad.

«I, John Brigge, am the oldest worker of our tank factory. I'm eighty years old. I thought about retiring, but now I can't rest. Now we need to beat Hitler» [3, p. 3]. So did his factory mates and thousands of Britons.

In the second period, the long-awaited opening of the Second Front smoothed out some contradictions between the allied powers. «*British Ally*» in its publications tries to convincingly show the world community and the Soviet people the resolute desire of the Allied forces to complete the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies. The main topic of publications of this period is characterized by the successes of the Allied forces in Northern France, the carpet bombing of industrial centres in Germany, the active actions of the Royal Navy in all regions of the world Ocean.

In April – May 1945, articles, essays, and reports appeared in almost every issue of the «*British Ally*», calling for bringing all criminals to justice by the International Court of Justice. Great Britain saw the USSR not only as an ally in military operations, but also counted on its assistance in creating an international court that would consider cases of war crimes.

At the third stage, the weekly becomes an instrument of psychological struggle for the minds and consciousness of Soviet citizens in the Cold War. The weekly's publications are changing their focus. The front page publishes materials aimed at preventing the strengthening of Soviet influence in Europe. Notes of protest by the British government against the actions of the Soviet Union, materials on achievements in improving the armament of the army, aviation and navy begin to appear. Successes in the field of restoring industry, agriculture, and improving the standard of living of the population are actively promoted.

The study concludes with an analysis of the reasons for the decision of the leadership of the Soviet Union to terminate the activities of the weekly «*British Ally*» in the USSR. The methodology proposed in the study for evaluating a foreign publication by means of describing a historical event and studying its consecration in the publications of the weekly «*British Ally*» can be used in the study of other foreign publications in Russian during the Second World War.

One of the leading Russian historians in the field of Soviet–British relations, academician V. Trukhanovsky, says: «Our country's relations with Britain are characterized by an amazing phenomenon. Over the past two centuries, Russia and Britain have gone through three great wars when they were in terrible danger, and it was about the survival of states and peoples. In these three epochal trials, both powers united in a close alliance against a common enemy, rallied other countries around themselves in powerful coalitions and as a result secured three of the greatest victories in world history. But as soon as these victories were won, the allied relations collapsed and were replaced

by an acute confrontation» [15]. Therefore, he urges when assessing relations between the UK and Russia to remember more about the good, about what brought them closer. Moreover, in the socio-political and cultural life of both countries there was a tendency towards rapprochement, mutual understanding, and even mutual sympathy [15].

In my opinion, this can be considered as the main conclusion.

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