

The China Crisis on the Pages of Georgian Newspapers

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The article shows how Georgian newspapers discussed the tense political-economical situation in China in 1914. From the article one can clearly see that Georgian newspapers report significantly on existing problems in China and clearly express their attitude towards the processes ongoing there. They do not like the quality of democracy in France and say that it is not high enough; they also did not justify relation of Russia with the regime of Yuan-Shi-Kai (Dictator of China). Authors believe that the big states of Europe fulfilled an important role in negation of constitution and establishing the dictatorial personality of president Yuan-Shi-kai.

Georgian newspapers cover the tense situation that has taken place in China and inform Georgian readers about this; in this way Georgian newspapers first of all fixate their clearly negative attitude towards Japan's, European countries' and Russia's intervention into China's domestic affairs.

In Georgian historiography reveals that the first stages of the First World War and the political orientation towards China in published materials in 1914 regarding the issue, are not yet fully studied and highlighted. Thus this article represents a small attempt at fulfilling the gap.

In 1914, the penetrating eye of the Georgian press did not miss the tense situation in East Asia. Since April, the Georgian newspapers began intensively providing information about the situation existing in China.

This subject made it onto first pages of the following 5 newspapers issued in that period: *People's Paper*, *Thought*, *Batomi Newspaper*, *Our Nation*, and *Opinion*. As it became clear in the *People's Paper* (1914), the political and economic situation in China was extremely tense. (see issues:#1155, #1156, #1176). Newspapers started to publish extensive analytical articles in addition to short information, to give deeper understanding to Georgian readers regarding the ongoing processes in China.

The newspaper *People's Paper* published a series of articles with the heading "In Expectation of Revolution." The author of these articles was N. Abesadze. According to abovementioned articles, according to the author, the political situation in China was abnormal; the author also tried to explain the reasons for this to the readers. More precisely, the author thinks that, "President Yuan-Shi-Kai's dictatorial politics dig a grave for China's republic" (Abesadze, 1914, p.3) for which people have struggled and lost so much blood during the 1911 revolution. The President was not able to solve any of the agenda's problems. Instead of spending a 30 million loan received from Austria on the reorganization of the army and the destruction of criminal gangs, he spent the money on the destruction of the people's most faithful Guomindan's party "and in order to retain his dictatorship he is trampling the people's right" (Abesadze, 1914, p.3). The Parliament is in fact inactive, because, according to the author, if anyone dared to tell the truth "Yuan-Shi-Kai severely persecuted and forever resettled them from homeland" (Abesadze, 1914, p.3). For that reason the President has been requested to dissolve the inactive Parliament, which has been financially supported by people. The President has agreed to it, because based in the author's view "Yuan-Shi-Kai is really an enterprising European diplomat." He knew in advance that the meeting of the administration of the President would be his obedient slave and he himself would avoid any responsibility. Abesadze, who is very well aware of the problems existing in China considers that all existing problems are accompanied by extreme economic poverty. The treasury is empty actually and that

caused protests against the existing regime. Sun-Yat-Sen's command leaflets had been spread all over the country, calling for people to rebel. From the viewpoint of the author, this action resulted that organization "White Wolf" gradually taking political control. At the same time, the President had opposition in his own office. The President tried to destroy it, but that was practically impossible. Extremely strained by the political and economic situation, the Representative Committee was forced to determine: "that existence without the Parliament does not fit the Republic and it is impossible to postpone convocation of the Parliament." Thus the government recognized that the convocation of the Parliament was compulsory. Yuan-Shi-Kai also agreed to this, due to the fact that based on the electoral statute principals only his supporters could get into the Parliament and there was no place for ordinary people in Parliament. As per author's viewpoint: "This was Yuan-Shi-Kai's diplomatic trick to cheat people." Due to the chaos existing in the country the President has finally awoken "and he applied to the old, overgrown with moss, fighting rule – Repression, not able to predict how worried people will become". Repression was reflected on the one hand by maximally constraining the press and on the other hand by appointment of military supervisors in colleges to eliminate in children any inclination to revolution. This fact caused reinforcement of organization "White Wolf", the large part of the regular army moved to their side. The organization has additionally received USD 200,000 of loan and what's more and most important the Japanese have taken responsibility to train the army.

In *People's Paper* the author tried to report and to show, within the range of possibility, to Georgian readers the ongoing processes within the China, and concludes: "It is true that today Yuan-Shi-kai tries to fight over this movement, but it is too late. A big revolution is starting in China, which is caused by Yuan-Shi-Kai's politics and which, in this new age, has turned into grate liberation movement, the main aim of which has become to overthrow usurper and to declare the Republic" (Abesadze, 1914, 3).

The newspaper *Opinion* covers the same problems in its article "China's Trial". Based on the article, the President has established real autocratic regime and "confiscated Republic of China, to judge his bloody

dictatorship". During the overview of China's political situation the author concludes that China "may be said to exist only by name" and assumes that "the history will not digress from its own way, whatever happens; the victory of people is inevitable" (*Opinion*, 1914, p. 42).

The newspaper *Batomi Paper* published an extensive analytical letter with the heading "China at the Start of the Third Revolution". In the article the current political and economical processes are appraised from different points of view. The author analyses the international events and concludes that they could play a significant role in the formation of a dictator out of the President Yuan-Shi-Kai and overruling of the constitution has played an important role in the big European countries, namely Russia and France. The France has given a loan to China in the amount of 625 million dollars for burying the Republic and indeed with this money Yuan-Shi-Kai has undermined the republic. As reported by the author, despite the Sun-Yat-Sen's, a freedom fighter's leader, persistent request not to issue the loan to China, the request was left inattentively by the European Parliament. Based on the author's view, a respective loan that has been issued gave Europe the opportunity to see Yuan-Shi-Kai's true face. He "Absolutely did not justify a European country's trust and did not deserve the name of a wise and discerning politician and leader" (*Batomi Paper*, 1914, p.4). However, based on the author's assumption, in case Europe would have once more held a helping hand to him, he would manage to extinguish the third revolution and this will be his road to Emperor. Based on the abovementioned the author assumes that the only way to release China from dictatorship is that the world's society should stop provision of further help. "Further not to declare trust as to the untalented leader." (*Batomi Paper* 1914, p.4).

Georgian newspapers also predicted, according to a story from May 1914, the President would issue a new constitution, which awarded the president the rights as a dictator and practically led him to the announcement of his position as an Emperor. Respective predictions point to the high level of qualification of Georgian publicists.

This way, analysis of the above presented materials gives scholars the opportunity to conclude, that even before the beginning of the First World War (January-June), the tense political and economic situations existing on various corners of Earth in the year 1914 led the Georgian

press to the conclusion that the world would gradually become very much like a war camp.

Georgian press speaks directly to the problems existing in China and does not hide its position regarding the processes ongoing there. Precisely, they evaluate the quality of democracy of French government as very low and poor, they also dislike the Russia's relationship with China's dictator. They believe that the big European countries have played a crucial role in turning the President Yuan-Shi-Kai into dictator and disregarding the constitution.

Thus, Georgian publications, through reporting ongoing processes existing in far China and bringing the issue to the light with attention and discussion in Georgian society, outline their sharply negative position on any acts of aggression.

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