

June 9, 1954

Telegram, Li Kenong to the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regarding the Chinese Delegation's Meeting with the Delegations of Various Popular French Organizations

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Summary:

Li Kenong reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chinese delegation liaison team with the French delegations. Li describes the attitudes of most of the delegates as pro-Chinese and anti-American. The North African delegation, whom Li also meets, is described as anti-French government. Additionally, Li reports on propaganda materials (e.g. literature, buttons, etc) distributed during these meetings.

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

During the 32 days from 6 May to 6 June, the liaison team of our delegation has hosted 256 delegations of Frenchmen, totaling 2,015 visitors.

(1) The French popular delegations consisted of many social groups and various professionals. Some of them belonged to the French National Labors Federation and came as worker representatives from many regions (provinces, cities, and towns) and from different industries, factories, or shops. Some were local citizen representatives. Some belonged to the French Peace Movement Committee and came as local branch committee members. Some were local representatives of the French Women's Union. There were also representatives of students, teachers, veterans, disabled veterans, city council members, farmers, journalists, and missionaries. The workers' delegations had the largest number among the others, about 36.5 percent of the total; the citizen delegations as the second, 21.1 percent; the women delegations, 14.6 percent; and the Peace Movement Committee delegations, 14.2 percent. These four groups totaled 86.8 percent. Most of the citizen representatives were the local organizers of the Peace Movement Committee, using the name of the local citizen delegation. They included the local political parties (mostly the Communist Party, Social Party, and Progressive Social Party) and many professionals. They had a very broad representation. Most of these delegations came from cities like Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and their surrounding towns. Each delegation had no more than ten representatives at the most, and two or three at the least.

(2) During the meetings, all the delegations usually first expressed their full understanding and trust of China's policy for peace, and then showed their appreciation of China's efforts at the Geneva Conference. Some of them presented certain gifts (for example, candies and books on New China by the French Communist Party). Two of the delegations found the 1920 photos that the Chinese students celebrated the "Double Tens" at St. Etienne. They said the premier [Zhou Enlai] was there. One of the delegations presented us the receipts of French donation and aid to China during the Anti-Japanese War. They said that the receipts had been buried underground during Hitler's occupation, and were retrieved after the war and kept well until now. Since many of them had been ignored by the French and American delegations, they complained loudly and called Bidault an American lap dog, not French. They also complained of the French government's corruption and the people's suffering. They hope that we understand the French government and that Bidault by no means represents the French people. They appreciate our reception and hospitality during their visits. They also asked us to pass on their respects to Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou. Some of them were touched with tears (mostly the workers and women who were harmed by the war). The journalists from the Marseille Daily headlined their visit in their newspaper, emphasizing China's sincerity for peace. During their visits, they also raised some questions. Mostly, they asked about the conference's progress and requested that China make all efforts to quickly stop the Indochina war. They hoped to see an establishment of a Sino-French diplomatic relationship in the near future and an expansion of the economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Some asked for the information on the development of New China. A few visitors, however, asked if China had ever provided military aid to Vietnam; whether China would also intervene if the United States wanted to internationalize the Indochina war; and if China had religious freedom, etc. Some stated that they knew the American and French governments [started] rumors that China aided Vietnam with war materiel. But they still asked for further explanations since they did not have any strong evidence to convince the public. In meantime, we also hosted two North African worker delegations (ten people) who were visiting France. They were so excited about the Chinese people's achievement of their liberation. They complained about the suffering of the North African people under French imperialist exploitation and expressed the North African People's strong desire for immediate independence.

(3) The French Communist Party works with the French Labor Union and the Peace Movement Committee, which initiated and organized the French popular delegations' visits. Their efforts will be continuing according to the ongoing visits (an average about 70 to 80 visitors everyday). Their visits to a certain extent promote the development of the peace movement in France, and enhance the mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese and French peoples. The visitors expressed particularly their hatred toward America and their complaints about the French government. They trust peace-loving and democratic nations' sincere efforts for peace. Therefore, [they] should have our attention.

(4) We have appointed certain persons in charge of these meetings. The reception room is decorated with Chinese carpets, palace lamps, traditional paintings, and other artistic displays. Chinese wine, tea, and cigarettes are served and propaganda materials and other souvenirs are offered. By 6 June, 398 Chairman [Mao]'s buttons have been given (mostly to the workers), 300 pigeon buttons, and 5,370 pictorial or literature materials (including the English publications of the 1953 National Game, People's China, New China's Children, New China's Women, China Reconstruction, Chinese Folk Arts, Chinese Literature, and New China in the Eyes of Children; and the Journal of China in French). There have been thirteen photo pictures taken, 600 feet of film made, and twelve news reports published. Usually, as soon as the visitors arrived, they were met with kindness and enthusiasm. All of their questions during the meetings were answered. The delegations received adequate information on New China according to their different backgrounds. So far there have not been any problems. Since the buttons and propaganda materials were not stocked enough beforehand, they have to be shipped in again and again. Only one publication is in French (but only a few visitors speak English). In the meantime, the other shortcomings include the lack of systematic reading materials on various aspects of New China, and not enough news coverage on these meetings. These need to be significantly improved.

Li Kenong
9 June 1954