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**Historiography of allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition**

The subject of allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition has a special place in the historiography of the Second World War. It comprehensive study provides an opportunity to impartially estimate the reasons for the defeat of Nazi Germany, determine the place and the role of world powers in the pursuit of a common victory, give an explanation to the established post-war world order. But the significance of today’s issue is not limited to historical retrospective. Today, it becomes a current issue due to the events in Ukraine that are associated with obvious manifestation of neo-Nazism on a national scale. Under these conditions, the historical experience of cooperation between the USSR and the countries of Western civilization within the anti-Hitler coalition becomes a question of key importance for the formation of a united international front, able to prevent the emergence of a new nationalist state with Nazi ideology in the center of Europe.

We can state the fact that, nowadays, the history of the anti-Hitler coalition is studied in detail in terms of the chronology of the events. The extensive source base, the formation of which began during the war years, contributed to it a lot. Already in the late 50s the correspondence of head of the Soviet government with the presidents of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during World War II was published, as well as the materials of Teheran and
Yalta conferences and the memoirs of prominent Soviet and foreign military leaders and diplomats, that then were repeatedly republished in public media. In the coverage of allied relations between the countries resisting Nazi aggression in the years of World War II, we can point out a number of key aspects.

Allied relations have been studied in the diplomatic, political, economic and military spheres, and, above all, in terms of the contribution of individual members of the coalition to the defeat of Nazi Germany and its satellites. As a rule, the questions of forming an anti-hitler alliance, its composition, aims and objectives have always tended to be in the focus of historians. Both in generalizing works and in special studies they analyzed the policy and strategy of the allies on the issue of opening a second front in Europe; the role of a second front in the war against the aggressor bloc; differences, which explain the reasons for the collapse of the coalition and the emergence of a new global confrontation between the former allies in a «cold war». However, focusing on these problems, and on the whole development of national historiography of allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition, three periods can be pointed out. The first period: beginning of understanding the history of allied relations during the collapse of the anti-Hitler coalition (mid 40's - mid 50's). The second period: analysis of the history of the anti-Hitler coalition in terms of the largest acute confrontation between former coalition allies in the «cold war» (mid 50's - early 90's); and the third - the post-Soviet period of studying the history of the anti-Hitler coalition in modern Russia (early 90’s to present).

In the Soviet Union the study of the history of the anti-Hitler coalition began shortly after the war, but until the mid 50's was not very active due to the limited source base. In the future, as far as historical facts were collected, Soviet historians were able to fully and comprehensively investigate the relationship of the USSR with its partners in the anti-Hitler coalition and make profound scientific conclusions. The achievements of Soviet historiography in this regard are undeniable and deserve the highest assessment.

The study of the array of Russian literature of the period shows that the vast majority of Soviet historians recognized that the anti-Hitler coalition was a powerful weapon in the struggle against Nazi Germany and its satellites. It also notes the most important feature in establishing the military-political union - unification for solving general military-political problems of countries with fundamentally different political systems and ideologies.

144 Correspondence of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR with the presidents of the United States and Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, Moscow, 1957; Materials of Teheran and Yalta conferences, Tehran conference of the heads of the three great powers. International Affairs. 1961. № 7-8; Crimean and Potsdam conferences of the three great powers. - International Affairs. 1965. № 6 - 9; I. Maiskiy, «Memories of the Soviet Ambassador: the war of 1939-1943», Moscow, 1965, and others.
In the coverage of international aspects of the war, Soviet historians have proceeded from a common goal - to show the superiority of the Soviet political system as the most important source of victory. As a consequence - the analysis of foreign policy relations between the Allied Powers contained ideological approach that significantly diminished the role of the United States and Great Britain in the defeat of Nazi Germany. At the same time there was an idea that the United States and the United Kingdom sought to subordinate the conduct of the war and the solution of post-war problems not to universal interests, but achieving only their own selfish purposes. The participation of British and American ruling circles in the war could be explained not only by the need to eliminate their main competitor - Germany, but by the weakening of the Soviet Union. This basic idea was to some extent interpreted in joint works and special studies of G. Deborin, I. Ivashin, N. Inozemtsev, B. Israelyan, L. Pozdeyeva, V. Pozdnjakov, V. Potseluev, G. Rozanov, V. Sipols, V. Trukhanovsky and others.

Based on the general concept, in studying various aspects of union relations, corresponding partial conclusions were drawn as well. Carried out as a result of research generalizations, they also tended to be subject to political considerations. Thus, Soviet historians of the Second World War, who studied the Mediterranean strategy of the Western Allies, and the other part of it, which was called the «Balkan variant», made immutable conclusion about its anti-Soviet political underpinnings. The differences between the authors were related only to particular and individual parts of the problem.

For example, A. Nekrich believed that the Balkan variant implied set of plans designed to disrupt the landing in France by an attack of the Nazi army in the Balkans. In other words, the Balkan variant was considered as a deliberate action of the U.S. and the UK governments, aimed exclusively at weakening the Soviet Union and had political implications. Moreover, the author believes that this option was implemented mainly by the British.

N. Lebedev completes this view by the fact that the Balkan variant from its beginning was a part of the Mediterranean strategy, the main aim of which was to prolong the war between the USSR and Germany. In general, all the authors come to the same conclusion: the decision of the Allies to concentrate in the

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146 A. Nekrich, «The Balkan Variant», - International Life, 1959, № 8
Mediterranean region in 1942-1943 was attributed to the fact that the American and British ruling circles put their own interests in the first place.

When covering military actions of Soviet allies in the anti-Hitler coalition as a key aspect, Soviet historians pointed out the question of opening a second front by the allies. In the vast majority of works by Soviet authors, the issue of a second front is uniquely evaluated as a direct military aid of the allies to the USSR. But at the same time there was a belief that the United States and the United Kingdom, postponing the start of military operations in Europe, deliberately prolonged the fight on the Soviet-German front in order to weaken the Soviet side.

Different views were expressed over the responsibility of concrete Western powers for the delay in opening a second front. In most voluminous and encyclopedic publications, studies of A. Borisov, I. Zemskov, O. Rzheshevsky, V. Trukhanovsky and many other, the responsibility for the failure of allied commitments to open a second front in 1942 was attributed to the government of Winston Churchill. N. Inozemtsev and L. Pozdeyeva who studied the foreign policy of the United States during the war in detail, tried to refute this standpoint. Based on these studies, historians expressed the opinion that the ruling circles of the United States were guilty of delaying the opening of a second front as well as the British Government, and that the strategic concept of the United States and Britain in Europe, as a whole, matched.

In the post-Soviet historiography after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many obstacles were removed which let Soviet historians give an impartial assessment of controversial issues of the Second World War, including the allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The new political leadership of the Russian Federation officially declared the rejection of ideological values, but for the part of historians old political and moral factors continued to be the priority. In this aspect, changing socio-political realities did not reduce the degree of politicization in the interpretation of the main events of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War. Moreover, in a certain sense it escalated, as a significant number of historians obviously tried to distance themselves from the Soviet past, against the backdrop of sharp ideological battles in the Russian society in 1991-1995, which gave rise to a new round of historical myth-making.

Among those subjects, while covering most of which a desire to correct the history of anti-Russian spirit can be seen, experts distinguish attempts to diminish the contribution of the Soviet Union in the defeat of fascism, as well as attacks on the decisions of the Yalta Conference, primarily relating to the «spheres of influence» of the Soviet Union, United States and its allies.

Nevertheless, it would be unfair to say that the whole historical society in the post-Soviet period of historiography was devoted exclusively to name-calling Soviet military history of 1939-1945, including the efforts of the Soviet Union to curb the aggressor on the international stage. Qualitative change in the conditions
for the development of national historical science after the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed to take a new approach in studies and cover the events of the war, the story of tragedy and the triumph of our people more fully and impartially. New approaches to the study of the history of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War, the desire for accurate reconstruction of their complex panorama are common for the majority of publications in the post-Soviet period.

An important pre-condition for a more thorough and objective study of the history of the war in the 1990’s was the gradual declassification of archival materials. The publication of collections of diplomatic documents, among which the first place belongs to other volumes of an ongoing series of the Russian Foreign Ministry, called «Foreign Policy Documents» was of great importance for studying international relations, problems of development and the strengthening of international cooperation between the countries of the anti-military and political cooperation. They were complemented by a series of topical collections; some previously unknown documents were published in journals, supplements to monographs and so on.

One of the most important trends in modern historiography is an intention to objectively reveal the coalition nature of the Second World War, to show the importance of military operations of Anglo-American allies in the development of events on the Soviet-German front and their assistance to the Soviet Union under Lend-Lease.

At the same time modern Russian researchers do not abandon the fundamental idea of Soviet historiography, according to which the Soviet Union has become a major force in the fight against Nazi Germany and its satellites, and that it bore the brunt of the Second World War on its shoulders. This basic conceptual position finds reasoned justification as a result of the use of a wide range of new domestic and foreign documentary sources. One example is the beginning of the preparation of 12-volume history of «The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945», which was started in 2008 by the President of the Russian Federation. In June 2011, the first volume of this series was released, and today the eighth volume of this fundamental military-historical work is almost ready to meet the bookshelves.

The diplomatic history of the relationship within the anti-Hitler coalition is now considered primarily as a partnership in the context of military and economic strategies of the three powers. This does not prevent their confrontation in achieving their own geopolitical goals. Along with the new interpretation of the history of international relations during the Second World War, objective and subjective factors of post-war confrontation are being estimated in a new way.

In the post-Soviet historiography of the allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition, it is possible to state the emergence of new research directions. In particular, nowadays Russian historians are increasingly turning their attention to interpersonal relationships among the leaders of the allied states and their influence on forming the strategy of foreign policy. We study the attitude of American and Soviet societies towards the actions of allies, the place and role of
various socio-political organizations of the USA and the USSR in policymaking.

A review of the historiography of allied relations within the anti-Hitler coalition cannot be considered settled without an analysis of foreign literature. However, this is the subject of a special study, which can be thoroughly revealed only as a part of an independent scientific research. Here we only note that the Western, especially Anglo-American historiography, shows increased interest towards the problems of the anti-Hitler coalition and has its own, distinct from the Soviet (Russian), standpoint on a number of aspects. In total, the conclusions presented by foreign historians are sufficiently reasoned, though at some moments they cannot be recognized fully convincing. However, in spite of the difference in methodological approaches and the final conclusions of the Soviet (Russian) and foreign historians, today there are opportunities for effective scientific cooperation aimed at the convergence of conventional conceptual positions.

The convergence of a number of conceptual positions of Russian historians with the positions of foreign authors can be noted as the most important feature of modern Russian historiography of international relations of the USSR with the Allies. A concrete result of joint research of Russian, British and American historians was the publication of the monograph «The Allies in the war» in 1995. The work analyzes the strategic interaction of the anti-Hitler coalition, the impact of military operations on the Soviet-German front, of the developments on other fronts of WWII. It also points out the role of economic and military-technical assistance to the «Lend-Lease» allies, etc.

Thus, historiography of allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition is an integral and inheritable part of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War historiography. Over the 70 years that have passed since the Allied victory over Nazi Germany and its satellites, the facts of the events were sufficiently studied in detail. A lot of research in this direction has been done by Soviet historians, and it is currently ongoing on the basis of new documentary sources. And this despite the peculiarity that, in view of various kinds of factors, especially socio-political content, even fundamental scientific works of the Soviet historiography bore the stamp of the political environment.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the change in the political system, opened up new possibilities for impartial and unbiased analysis of historical events, but did not completely eliminate the ideologization of historical research.

The stage that Russia, its people and national historical science are going through nowadays, obliges historians to give a searching look what was achieved in covering facts, events and episodes, to re-evaluate the answers to the complex questions of the last war that seemed to be correct. Without that kind of inventorying and critical analysis of all written about the war, it is impossible to move forward.