

CHINESE COMMUNIST POWER AND
POLICY IN SINKIANG, 1949-73:
REVOLUTIONARY INTEGRATION VS.
REGIONALISM.

MCMILLEN DONALD HUGH

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CHINESE COMMUNIST POWER AND POLICY IN SINKIANG,
1949-73: REVOLUTIONARY INTEGRATION VS. REGIONALISM

by

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M.A., University of Colorado, 1967

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate
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Department of History

1976

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Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Sinkiang, 1949-73: Revolutionary Integration vs. Regionalism.

Thesis directed by Assistant Professor Noel R. Miner

This dissertation examines Chinese Communist Party rule in Sinkiang and the policies by which it sought to achieve the political, socio-economic, and cultural integration of the region with the People's Republic of China from 1949-73. The primary sources used in this study are Sinkiang Daily, Urumchi Radio, and other publications in Chinese from Mainland China.

Chapter I describes Sinkiang's setting and its pre-1949 history highlighting the emergence of several historical problems and special conditions accruing to Sinkiang and its peoples which were to have a continuing and crucial impact on later Party power and policy. These include the traditional anti-Han sentiments and separatist ambitions of its predominantly non-Han, Muslim population; its great distance from Central authority in China Proper; its strategic location along the Sino-Russian border which had permitted substantial Soviet penetration and influence in the region; its relatively backward economy; and its wealth of natural resources.

Chapter II discusses the establishment of Communist authority in Sinkiang after 1949 by First Field Army units of the People's Liberation Army. Until 1968, Han elements affiliated with this group, and headed by Wang En-mao, came to monopolize all key posts in the regional leadership, while minority nationals were normally relegated to nominal positions of prestige.

Chapter III examines and evaluates the various policies implemented in Sinkiang by Wang En-mao prior to the Cultural Revolution. Based upon his long tenure and experience in Sinkiang, Wang increasingly recognized that Party policies should be implemented firmly, but flexibly and in accordance with the special problems and conditions extant there. Generally, he did not emphasize the more radical, ideologically-oriented, and universalistic policy line advocated by Chairman Mao for fear it would arouse the sensitivities of the minorities and encourage Soviet meddling. Wang did not deny the future relevancy of Mao's vision in Sinkiang, but rather felt that Sinkiang and its peoples were not yet ready or willing to embark on a wholly Maoist revolutionary course. The available data supports the conclusion that Wang's policies had succeeded in achieving national security, establishing internal unity and law and order, initiating the gradual cultural/ideological transformation of the non-Han groups; and developing a modern economy in Sinkiang by 1966, thus paving the way for the region's virtual integration with China Proper. However, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution neither Wang's well-entrenched regional power base nor his policy stance endeared him to the Maoist ideologues in Peking who felt that he had come to personify the evils of regionalism and revisionism.

Chapters IV and V describe the Maoists' protracted political struggle to remove Wang En-mao during the Cultural Revolution from 1966-69. Wang was successfully removed, his power base was destroyed, and a new, more responsive collective leadership composed of various factional representatives was installed in Sinkiang by

the Central authorities by mid-1973. The debate over regional policies, which had been virtually subsumed in the political struggle until Wang's demise in 1969, is analyzed in Chapter V. By all indications the Maoists ultimately failed in their efforts to introduce more radical, ideologically-oriented policies in Sinkiang and, in fact, their attempts to do so only worsened the dislocations and tensions which had emerged during the power struggle against Wang. As a result, in late 1971 the Central authorities sanctioned a return to many of the more moderate policies which had been advocated by the now departed Wang. The main thesis of this study, therefore, is that while the Central authorities managed to remove the well-entrenched regional leadership of Wang, they ultimately were compelled to retain many of his regional, and avowedly revisionist, policies.

This abstract is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Signed NOEL R. Miner
 Faculty member in charge of thesis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. SINKIANG: SETTING AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW TO 1949 . . .	1
THE SETTING,	1
Geographical Regions	3
Economic Geography	6
Natural Resources	11
Ethnic and Demographic Conditions	16
Major Urban Centers	22
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW TO 1949	28
Sinkiang Prior to the Ch'ing Dynasty	28
Sinkiang Under the Manchus	33
Warlordism and Soviet Influence in Sinkiang	38
KMT Rule and the Ili Rebellion	42
Sinkiang On the Eve of Communist Take-Over	46
CONCLUSION	48
II. THE EVOLUTION OF SINKIANG'S LEADERSHIP, 1949-65	52
THE SUPPRESSION OF ACTIVE OPPOSITION IN SINKIANG	
BY THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY	53
THE ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE IN SINKIANG, 1949-65	56
The Leading Post-Liberation Administrators of	
Sinkiang	57
The Establishment of Military Control in	
Sinkiang	68

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Emergence of Elected Governmental Organs and the Creation of the SUAR	83
THE MILITARY ELITE IN SINKIANG, 1949-65	94
Military Reorganization and Leadership in Sinkiang after Liberation	94
The Sinkiang Military Region from 1955	98
The Emergence of the Sinkiang Production and Construction Corps	102
THE CCP IN SINKIANG, 1949-65	119
Party Leadership	119
CCP Membership and Composition in Sinkiang, 1949-65	125
CONCLUSION	136
III. POLICY PATTERNS IN SINKIANG, 1949-65	141
PARTY-BUILDING AND CADRE RECRUITMENT POLICIES, 1949-65	143
Policies in the Early Post-Liberation Period, 1949-56	143
The Swing Toward Radical Policies, 1956-60	151
The Period of Retrenchment, 1961-65	163
MILITARY POLICIES, 1949-65	171
The Military as a Combat Force	171
The Military as a Political Force	174
The Military as a Work Force	177

CHAPTER

PAGE

The "Military Line" vs. the "Political Line"	
in the SKMR During the GLF	178
The Resurgence of Politics within the Military	180
POLICIES TOWARD THE MINORITY NATIONALITIES,	
1949-65	189
Minority Policies in Sinkiang, 1949-56	190
Hardline Minority Policies, 1956-60	194
"Moderation" in the Minority Policies, 1960-65	202
Minority Policies in Sinkiang on the Eve of the	
Cultural Revolution	211
AGRICULTURAL POLICIES, 1949-65	
The 1949-57 Period	217
The GLF in Sinkiang, 1958-60	232
Retrenchment, 1961-65	242
PASTORAL POLICIES, 1949-57	
Moderate Pastoral Policies, 1949-57	255
The GLF in the Pastoral Areas, 1958-60	265
Retrenchment in the Pastoral Areas, 1961-65	270
POLICIES IN INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, 1949-65	
The Period of Recovery and the Soviet Model,	
1949-57	275
Industry During the GLF, 1958-61	288
Industrial Retrenchment, 1961-65	296
CONCLUSION	301

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN SINKIANG: THE MAOIST	
CHALLENGE TO WANG EN-MAO, 1966-SEPTEMBER, 1968	305
PHASE ONE: THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION "CONTAINED" BY	
WANG EN-MAO (TO AUGUST, 1966)	306
PHASE TWO: THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION "UNLEASHED" IN	
SINKIANG (AUGUST, 1966-JANUARY, 1967)	318
PHASE THREE: THE "REVOLUTIONARY SEIZURE OF POWER	
FROM BELOW" (JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1967)	335
PHASE FOUR: 1967--THE YEAR OF COUNTER-CURRENTS AND	
CONFLICT IN SINKIANG	355
PHASE FIVE: THE DEMISE OF WANG EN-MAO (JANUARY-	
SEPTEMBER, 1968)	379
CONCLUSION	400
V. POWER AND POLICY IN SINKIANG AFTER WANG EN-MAO,	
1968-73	408
THE REMOVAL OF WANG EN-MAO (SEPTEMBER, 1968 to	
JUNE, 1969)	409
The Lung-Wang Coalition in Sinkiang (Fall, 1968)	409
The Fall of Wang En-mao (November, 1968 to June,	
1969)	419
Regional Policies During the Removal of Wang En-mao,	
1968-69	430
SINKIANG UNDER LUNG SHU-CHIN, MID-1969 TO MID-1971	437
The Struggle for Unity in Sinkiang	437

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Establishment of the 2nd Sinkiang Party	
Committee	448
Policy Radicalization Under Lung Shu-chin to	
Mid-1971	459
Economic Policies	459
Nationalities Policy	463
SINKIANG AFTER THE FALL OF LIN PIAO, 1971-73	467
The Lin Piao Affair and Its Effects in Sinkiang	467
The Emergence of a Collective Leadership in	
Sinkiang	472
Policy Retrenchment and Moderation in Sinkiang	
During the Post-Lin Piao Period	484
Economic Policies	484
Nationalities and Cultural Policies	488
CONCLUSION	490
VI. CONCLUSION	498
BIBLIOGRAPHY	516

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Cities of Sinkiang	29
2. The Sinkiang Elite, 1949-65	72
3. Military Organization in Sinkiang	100
4. Organization Chart of the Sinkiang Production and Construction Corps	109
5. Estimated CCP and Cadre Figures for Sinkiang, 1949-74	126
6. Land "Ownership" in Sinkiang's Oases, 1953	222
7. Estimated Agricultural Production in Sinkiang, 1949-65	226
8. Initial and Revised 1958 Agricultural Production Figures for Sinkiang	239
9. Conditions of the Sinkiang Production and Construction Corps, 1950-75	246
10. Industrial Production in Sinkiang, 1949-65	280
11. Major Red Guard Organizations Established in Sinkiang During the Cultural Revolution	330
12. The Fate of Pro-Wang En-mao Leaders in Sinkiang During the Cultural Revolution, 1966-70	391
13. Leadership Composition on the Sinkiang Revolutionary Committee, September 1968	397
14. Industrial Figures for Sinkiang, 1965-72	435
15. Composition of the 2nd SUAR CCP Committee, May 1971	450
16. Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Sinkiang Revolutionary Committee, Mid-1971	452
17. Changes in Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Sinkiang Revolutionary Committee, 1968-73	454

TABLE	PAGE
18. Composition of Leadership in the SKMR and Sinkiang PCC, 1971	455
19. Leading Cadres of Sub-Regional CCP Committees in Sinkiang, 1971-73	478
20. Sinkiang Leadership in the Autumn of 1973	480

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. LANDFORMS OF THE RUSSO-CHINESE BORDERLANDS	2
2. PASTORAL AREAS IN SINKIANG	7
3. SINKIANG: OASES AND CULTIVATED AREAS	10
4. PETROLEUM, COAL AND MINERALS IN SINKIANG	15
5. URANIUM DEPOSITS AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN THE SINKIANG UIGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION	18
6. SINKIANG - ETHNIC COMPOSITION	20
7. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN THE SINKIANG UIGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION	24
8. HIGHWAYS AND RAILROADS IN SINKIANG	27
9. LOCATION OF THE SINKIANG PRODUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION CORPS UNITS COMPARED TO THE KNOWN AGRICULTURAL AREAS OF SINKIANG	113
10. MEMBERS OF THE SINKIANG PRODUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION CORPS RECLAIMING LAND IN THE TARIM BASIN	115