

# CURRENT

# SCENE

DEVELOPMENTS

IN

MAINLAND CHINA

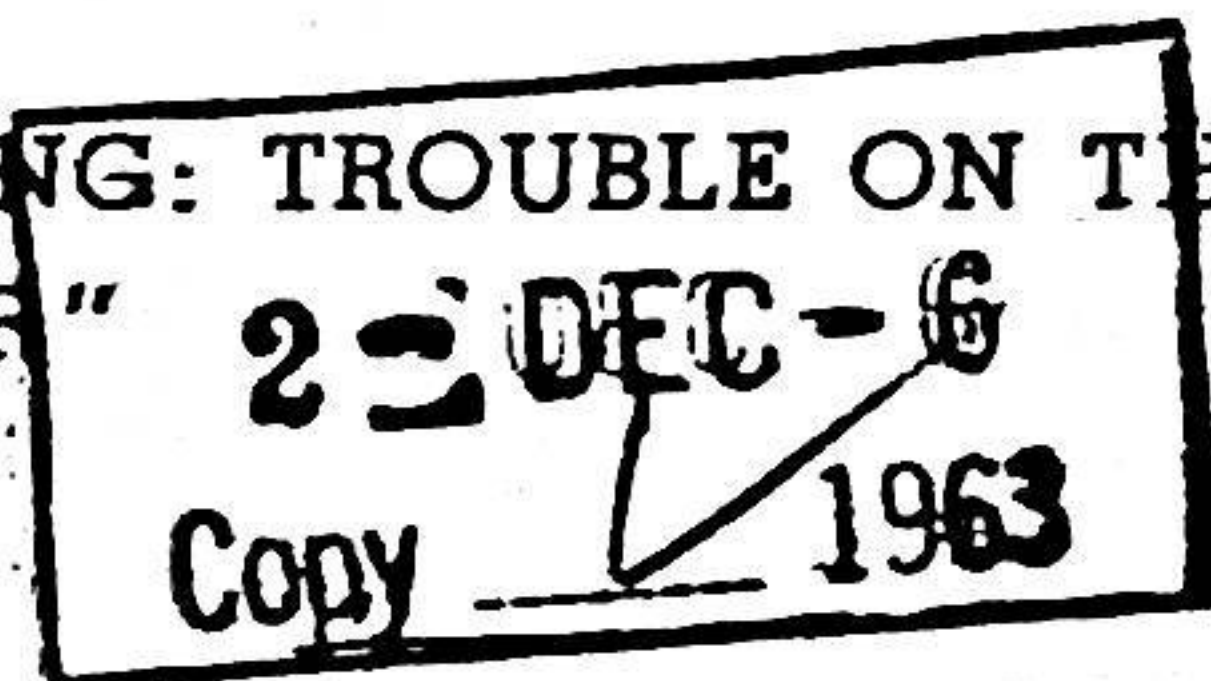
NOVEMBER 15, 1963

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## PEKING'S POLICY TOWARDS SINKIANG: TROUBLE ON THE "NEW FRONTIER"

by

Daniel Tretiak



"In April and May 1962 the leaders of the CPSU used their organs and personnel in Sinkiang, China, to carry out large-scale subversive activities in the Ili region and enticed and coerced several tens of thousands of Chinese citizens into going to the Soviet Union... The Soviet Government refused to repatriate these Chinese citizens on the pretext of the 'sense of Soviet legality' and 'humanitarianism'. To this day this incident remains unsettled. This is indeed an astounding event, unheard of in the relations between socialist countries."

—*Peking Review*, Sept. 13, 1963.

The remote Chinese-ruled region of Sinkiang has frequently occupied the headlines in recent months. Persistent reports of anti-Chinese uprisings were confirmed in September by Hongkong's *Ta Kung Pao*, spokesman for the Chinese communists. Under the bold banner, "Russian Communist Leaders Have Stirred Up Trouble on the Sino-Russian Border", the communist paper on September 6, 1963, openly charged the U.S.S.R. with attempts to subvert Peking's hegemony in this little-known Central Asian arena. Since then, recriminations have been bandied about with increasing frequency between Peking and Moscow, Peking accusing Moscow of enticing and coercing Chinese citizens into entering the Soviet Union, and Moscow alleging that inhuman privations in Sinkiang have driven thousands of refugees to seek asylum in the U.S.S.R.

Peking's plans for Sinkiang include rapid economic development of the mineral-rich, desert-saddled land plus political subjugation and ethnic displacement of its native peoples by Han Chinese. Militarily, Sinkiang provides a route south to the Indian border via the strategic Sinkiang-Tibet highway. But Sinkiang's non-Chinese inhabitants have not accepted Chinese communist domination meekly.

Reports of unrest and rioting have filtered sporadically out of the tightly sequestered region for several years. Peking continues to dispatch Han Chinese to colonise Sinkiang. The Islamic faith, the languages, the loyalties and even the survival of the Sinkiang peoples are at stake. In these circumstances, it is pertinent to examine Communist China's policies and practices in this westernmost "new frontier", the English meaning of "sinkiang".

DANIEL TRETIAK, a grantee of the East-West Center (Honolulu), now resident in Hong Kong, has studied Communist China's frontier regions intensively.



### The Seesaw Struggle

Situated northwest of China, Sinkiang is a land of desert and mountains, more than 650,000 square miles in extent. Its main economic assets include cotton, wheat, oil, iron and steel, uranium, sheep, cattle and the beginnings of light industry.

Its population is primarily Turkic, with Uighurs, who are predominantly Muslims, forming the main group; there are eleven other non-Chinese groups including the Kazakhs and Mongols. The Uighurs are primarily small-agriculturists, the Kazakhs and Mongols herdsmen.

Although Sinkiang has for many centuries served as an *entrepôt* for Central Asian commerce, only during the last two centuries has it aroused acquisitive instincts. Historically, Russia, China and, to a lesser degree, Great Britain and Japan have all manifested interest in controlling it, but only the Russians and Chinese have been close enough geographically to further their ambitions by concrete action.

Sinkiang's recent history particularly has been marked by ceaseless Sino-Russian competition and the ill-defined border has given rise to repeated conflicts. The critical border zone of Kuldja (also known as Ili and Ining), though claimed by China, was occupied by the Czarist government in 1871. Not until 1881 did China finally gain control. At that time, under the leadership of Tso Tsung-t'ang, Chinese suzerainty was re-established throughout the area and

Sinkiang became a Chinese province in 1884. Local warlords ruled the region during the early years of the Republic of China but the Soviet Union continually encouraged separatist movements. The Russians regained power briefly in the 1930s when they supported the then anti-Kuomintang Chinese governor, General Sheng Shih-ts'ai. In 1944 General Sheng, thoroughly disillusioned with communism, ousted the Russians and joined the Kuomintang. But the Russians were not so easily discouraged. From 1944 to 1949 a series of anti-Chinese rebellions took place with tacit Soviet approval and support. A short-lived anti-Chinese "Eastern Turkestan Republic" composed of Uighurs, Kazakhs and White Russians was established in 1945 under Russian guidance; the "Republic" was to be an independent state in the Sinkiang area but, like Outer Mongolia, under Russian hegemony.

When the Chinese communists gained control of mainland China in 1949, the U.S.S.R. tried, through joint-stock companies, to maintain its foothold in Sinkiang. Chinese rule was completely restored in 1954 with the closing of these companies.

The Chinese communists have specific, well-tried methods for maintaining and expanding their control over border areas like Sinkiang, usually involving Han Chinese immigration, economic development, Chinese monopoly of power in a non-Chinese area and cultural reforms. The application of these methods in Sinkiang and the local reaction to them deserve close examination.



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### The Han Colonizers

Incomplete information on population in Sinkiang reveals that the increase which was noted in 1950 was further accelerated after 1956.

Population distribution in Sinkiang before the communists came to power was as follows:

Uighurs	2,941,000
Kazakhs	319,000
Han Chinese	202,000
Hui Chinese	92,000
Kirghiz	65,000
Monogolians	63,000
Others	26,500 <sup>1</sup>

Using the 1953 census of the Chinese communists, a later report gives the following figures:

Uighurs	3,640,000
Kazakhs	475,000
Han Chinese	300,000
Hui Chinese	200,000
Kirghiz	70,000
Mongolians	120,000
Others	15,000 <sup>2</sup>

Thus, according to available sources, the total population in Sinkiang was approximately 4,820,000 at the end of 1953. Uighur percentages varied from 70% to 80%, the latter figure probably being more accurate, Kazakhs constituted about 10% of the population and Han Chinese less than 10%.

However, since the beginning of 1956, there has been a massive influx of Han Chinese *emigrés* so that within two years the population of Sinkiang

had increased by nearly 1,200,000 over the census figures already cited.<sup>3</sup> By late 1962 it had reached 7,000,000.<sup>4</sup>

Statistics available for certain cities in Sinkiang also reflect this increase in population; for example, Urumchi shows the following increase:

Pre-"liberation"	80,000
1959	200,000 <sup>5</sup>
1963	over 400,000 <sup>6</sup>

The population of Hami has risen from 10,000 before 1949 to 100,000 in 1960.<sup>7</sup> Two years after exploitation of petroleum deposits in Karamai began in 1956, the population of this brand-new town had reached 43,000.<sup>8</sup>

After seven years of steady immigration, the Han Chinese now account for nearly 2,000,000 of the 7,000,000 inhabitants of Sinkiang, or nearly 30% of the total. This increase in the percentage of Han residents also reflects the deportation by force of many of the minority racial people into the depths of China, according to recent claims by a Kazakh writer of Chinese nationality who sought refuge in the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> In Urumchi, where the population has doubled in four years, the majority is now Han Chinese.

Despite uprisings in Sinkiang against the Han Chinese in 1957 and 1958, there was no reduction in the number of Han immigrants. The Chinese communists continued to plan future development around Han Chinese rather than the local populace. The local attitude has been characterized by considerable resentment towards the Chinese,



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who are regarded as intruders, and by a deep-seated fear that local customs, traditions and language will disappear in the wave of Han immigration.

Nevertheless, Chinese communist reports from Sinkiang blandly reiterate that the local populace have given the Han immigrants warm and enthusiastic welcomes. In the words of one report:

"The Han people arriving in Sinkiang were given a rousing welcome, warm hospitality and proper accommodation. Members of people's communes placed their houses at the disposal of the young people and delivered milk to newly arrived women and children; they comforted them like members of the same family. Peasants of the Ho-tien *hsein*, on hearing that 170 Han people had come to local farms, visited them, bringing wheat bread and holding a fraternal meeting with the newcomers."<sup>10</sup>

Some of the Han *emigrés* had technical skills which could be used to improve agriculture or light industry; tactless and arrogant claims were made that while production in certain factories had been quite low, the arrival of new Han workers had increased it considerably.<sup>11</sup>

However, the majority of Han colonizers were less well qualified to do what was required; for example, after experimenting unsuccessfully with growing wheat in the same way as they had done in China, Han farmers of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) were

forced to admit that the local system for winter wheat growing was superior for local conditions.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the general hostility towards the Chinese colonizers of Sinkiang, Peking obviously feels they serve several useful functions. The communists undoubtedly consider that without a sufficient number of Han workers in Sinkiang economic development would be neither rapid nor successful. Communist China, desperate for oil and urgently needing to develop new areas for raising wheat and cotton, has not hesitated to send workers and Party cadres to Sinkiang to meet these needs.

In addition, immigration into frontier areas traditionally has had a semi-defensive function and the Chinese communists have found it strategically important to keep a considerable military garrison in Sinkiang. In 1949, nearly 200,000 PLA soldiers were transferred to Sinkiang ostensibly to engage in agricultural, grazing and manufacturing pursuits. Since that time, however, PLA units in Sinkiang have also seen action in military campaigns undertaken to suppress local rebellions. According to recent Soviet charges, highly active PLA border forces have repeatedly violated the international boundary separating Sinkiang from the U.S.S.R. Besides fulfilling its military function in Sinkiang, the PLA, in fact, has been used for land reclamation, wheat and cotton growing, grazing, oil production and the development of light and heavy industry. Peking claims that the PLA has been a significant economic force in Sinkiang.



### Economic Development

Economic organization has been one of the more publicized aspects of Chinese communist domination in Sinkiang. Agriculture has been placed under state-control, co-operatives established, land reclaimed, irrigation systems improved. According to Peking, Sinkiang has become an important producer of cotton, wheat and other agricultural products. However, there is also evidence of agricultural failures in Sinkiang due in large part to the defective commune system introduced in 1958. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of these failures, although an AFP report from Moscow of September 12, 1963, stated that approximately 60,000 refugees, mainly of Mongol and Turkmen stock, had crossed into Kazakhstan last spring because of famine in Sinkiang.

Industrially, mining remains of prime importance, although some light industry has been established in Urumchi. Sinkiang's oil industry, supported financially and technically in the early 1950s by the Russians, has only recently begun to fulfil Chinese hopes. The published goal for 1960 oil production was 1,650,000 metric tons or 31.73% of the national total.<sup>13</sup> It is estimated that production for 1962 was considerably below that figure. Over-estimating Russian aid, over-optimism about future prospects and inefficiency in operation have contributed to achieving less happy results than were expected.

Iron and coal as well as uranium are found in Sinkiang, although iron production for steel remains low.

Hydroelectric power, another component of modern industry, has shown a sizable increase since 1949.<sup>14</sup>

There have been vigorous attempts to improve public transport in Sinkiang since 1949. Perhaps the most impressive single aspect has been the near-completion of the Lanchow-Sinkiang Railway, stretching from Lanchow in Kansu Province to Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang. The railway was designed both to facilitate commerce between Sinkiang and China and to serve Sino-Russian trade through Sinkiang.

The Chinese were to build their section from Lanchow up to the Soviet border; the Russians undertook to cover the relatively short distance from Alma Ata (capital of the Kazakh S.S.R.) to the Sino-Soviet border. Although the entire line was supposed to be connected by 1960, it has only reached Urumchi, some 300 miles from the Soviet border.

General economic problems which have plagued the whole of Communist China have no doubt contributed to this failure to complete the line, particularly in light of the nation-wide steel shortage. Although the line now serves a large part of Sinkiang and provides an extremely useful link between the border region and the rest of China,<sup>15</sup> the Chinese communists, in view of their deep differences with Moscow, have been increasingly reluctant to embark upon economic enterprises which would bind them closer to the Soviet Union. As Peking searches for sources of trade outside the communist world, the need for a rail link with the U.S.S.R. becomes less economically pressing and perhaps politically undesirable.



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Besides the main railway into Sinkiang, the Chinese have also attempted to increase the number of trunk-lines in the region. At the same time, there has been some road construction. It is not yet possible to gauge these developments in terms of mileage.

### Chinese Monopoly of Power

Until 1959, less than 10% of the total population of Sinkiang was Han Chinese but even then they dominated the administration of the area by dominating the Party organs where power resided. The local population severely criticised this monopoly of power. Peking answered by importing more Chinese colonials into Sinkiang rather than by delegating more political authority to local people.

For example, in 1958, 14 - or 61% - of the 23 members of the Urumchi Chinese Communist Party municipal committee were Chinese, while 9 - or 39% - were non-Chinese.<sup>16</sup> By increasing the number of Chinese in Urumchi, the distribution of members has been made to appear more equitable without actually giving the local people more of a voice in the Party councils.

The composition of the all-important Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region Committee of the Chinese Communist Party best demonstrates the thoroughness of Han domination. Since 1955, the first secretary of the Committee has been Wang En-mao, a native of Kiangsi province, who has served in various capacities in Sinkiang since 1949. Apart from two Uighurs serving as secretaries of the Committee

(Saifudin and Sai-fu-la-yeh-fu), the other secretaries, alternate secretaries, chief executive officer and deputy-chief executive officer all appear to be Han Chinese.<sup>17</sup>

The direction of departments of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region Committee of the CCP also reflects suspicion of the local population since the Chinese communists make certain that either the director or his deputy in each department is a Han. Nearly all positions of power in the region are filled by Han Chinese, although at the lowest level, the *hsien*, the majority of posts are occupied by local people.

### Language Reform

The communist leadership has evinced a determination to increase the use of Mandarin, at the expense of local languages. The advantages of having a common language to disseminate the Marxist line among the various ethnic groups are obvious. In Sinkiang, Uighur could serve as the *lingua franca* but the Han Chinese have made little attempt to learn it, preferring, in the style of most colonizers, to impose their own language on the local populace. The latter's response has been less than eager despite the realization that Chinese is essential for entrance into even the lower echelons of government.

Latin script was adopted to facilitate Peking's nation-wide plans for teaching and writing Mandarin but, for the minority languages in Sinkiang, Cyrillic script was chosen at first. This action in part reflected the friendly Sino-Russian relations of the period; it was



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also done because Chinese linguistics personnel, acting on specific advice from Russian specialists, argued that it was preferable to use a Cyrillic script rather than a Latin one. Early in 1958 Premier Chou En-lai announced that the Latin alphabet already in use for Mandarin would be adopted for all languages in Communist China and its Autonomous Regions. In this way the differences between Han and local nationalities would be lessened. The switch from Cyrillic to Latin partly reflected an increase in Sino-Russian tensions.

The decision to use a Latin script—which has not been very effectively implemented since Sinkiang newspapers are still published in Arabic script—was accompanied by an intensified campaign to teach Chinese throughout the country. Uighur remains an important language in Sinkiang; other local languages are rapidly losing their importance, particularly for official use.

Furthermore, Chinese is constantly glorified as the language required for technical and educational advances and it is gaining ascendancy in Sinkiang's educational institutions. According to recent Soviet disclosures, a Kazakh writer who fled to the Soviet Union alleged that the imposition of everything Chinese was being carried to such extremes that history books and records were being rewritten to convince the Kazakhs in Sinkiang that they are Chinese.<sup>18</sup> Teachers and students have been learning Chinese in increasing numbers so that advanced materials written in Chinese may be consulted; the Chinese evidently have not translated technical volumes into local languages.<sup>19</sup>

### Islam in Sinkiang

Chinese communist press reports reveal little of the state of Islam in contemporary Sinkiang. Occasionally a brief column will state that mosques were filled for a major Muslim holiday, that special foods were made available for the populace celebrating the holiday and that guests from nations with predominantly Muslim populations attended the celebrations. For show and control, a Sinkiang Muslim Association has been established but the Chinese communists have made no secret of their avowed policy that "religion... must eventually follow the path of extinction".<sup>20</sup>

One non-Muslim resident of Sinkiang has reported Chinese communist attempts to discredit the Islamic faith and its institutions in Sinkiang by attacking the elders of the faith for being old-fashioned, while at the same time appealing to Muslim youth to cut their ties with a religion which demands spiritual allegiance and financial support by the membership. Religious celebrations, the communists often complain, curtail working hours.

From what is known of their efforts to reform the language, the Chinese communists appear to be trying to exclude Arabic texts and therefore to isolate the Sinkiang Muslims from their co-religionists in other Muslim areas and to weaken their knowledge of their cultural and religious heritage. If Chinese claims regarding education are even partially reliable, they may have developed a more knowledgeable Sinkiang populace, perhaps even anti-



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clerical, but this new breed appears to be as stubbornly opposed as the older group to the colonising of Sinkiang by the intruding Han Chinese.

The fact that the Sinkiang nationalities are permitted at best only limited entrance into the upper echelons of the power structure in Sinkiang may cause the Chinese communist overlords to be faced by as intense an anti-Han sentiment as that generated by the more religiously-oriented leaders of previous years. For, although the power of organized religion itself appears to have declined, the Islamic faith in Sinkiang, as in the Soviet Union, still survives "as a powerful social bond, linking people who often reject its basic tenets and rituals..."<sup>21</sup>

#### Anti-Chinese Feeling in Sinkiang

At the time of the "hundred flowers" campaign in June, 1957, an extremely vocal and well-organized group of Sinkiang people, centred in the traditionally anti-Chinese Kazakh areas, but including representatives of other nationalities, raised strong objections to the Chinese communists. Searching criticisms were levelled against both Party and State, culminating in a demand for genuine autonomy in Sinkiang, if not complete independence from Chinese communist rule.

The Sinkiang dissidents considered that there were too many Han cadres and too few from the local nationalities. Furthermore, many of the Han cadres were ineffective as they did not speak the local languages. The dissidents also criticised the PLA, saying that

soldiers who had been assigned to non-military tasks to assist national development had grown lax and had begun to show

"a lack of consideration for the interests of local inhabitants when it came to building barracks, defence works, drilling grounds and air-strips."<sup>22</sup>

Some sixty charges were brought against the PLA in Sinkiang alone.

Strong nationalist feelings were clearly evident among the youth of Sinkiang and even among members of the Young Communist League. According to one Chinese supporter:

"Local nationalism has developed among the minority youth of Sinkiang ... Some want to found a republic and exclude the Han people. Not knowing the historical relationship between various nationalities of the Motherland, they proceed from narrow national sentiments and show no inclination to co-operate with other nationalities (Han people in particular) in building socialism. Ignoring the history and distribution of the nationalities of China and the different conditions prevailing in the Soviet Union, they take the Soviet Union as an example and hold it up as the sole form of rule which can promote political, economic and cultural growth among minority nationalities."<sup>23</sup>

Chinese communist attempts to improve educational standards in



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Sinkiang had not succeeded in allaying the basic hostility of the educated local people who were well able to discern the discrimination practised by the Hans and were eloquent and constructive in their criticism. Nor was this rebellion limited to the educated classes. Uighur farmers revolted against the co-operative system, preferring the traditional less-centralized system of agriculture.

The volume of anti-communist and anti-Chinese criticism in Sinkiang precipitated by the "hundred flowers" campaign took the communists by surprise. According to one account, "... enemies still existed in the autonomous region... and had definite social foundations for their operations". Finding themselves almost engulfed by this wave of anti-Chinese feeling, they naturally assumed that its ultimate goal was the removal of the Chinese from Sinkiang and the subsequent establishment of either the "Eastern Turkestan Republic" or "Uighurstan".

Local uprisings occurred at this time against the Chinese as they occurred a little later in Tibet. It is difficult to assess how fierce these attempts were but it seems certain that the Chinese were menaced from three main cities, Urumchi, Kuldja and Kashgar, and in those places, as well as in several smaller towns, the rebels were severely suppressed and charged with crimes against the State.

The Chinese communists claimed that the movement for a change in government was supported by former Kuomintang agents and anonymous "imperialists" and they emphatically

rejected the charges which had been brought against them by the local rebels.

Despite the obvious seriousness and depth of opposition in Sinkiang, *Jen-min Jih-pao* (People's Daily) attempted to minimize it by saying:

"... a handful of local nationalists in Sinkiang have fomented dissension and disunity among the people, particularly among the national minorities and the Han people. These enemies call themselves Marxists and Leninists but they are revisionists... Some have even established relations with the imperialists or engaged in sectarian activities prompted by imperialists. Their activities have received no sympathy from the populace."<sup>24</sup>

However, Wang En-mao, first secretary of the CCP in Sinkiang, pointed out that attacks against the Han were even more serious from within the Communist Party. According to Wang:

"Another distinguishing feature of the rightists rebels in Sinkiang was that the rightists in the Party attacked the Party more ferociously than those outside."<sup>25</sup>

#### Secessionist Movements

Wang also pointed out that there was a secessionist element of long standing in Sinkiang which had revealed itself in 1943-44 during the chaotic period which followed the departure of General Sheng Shih-ts'ai. At that time, with Russian guidance, an attempt had



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been made to expel the Kuomintang from Sinkiang and to establish an "independent" republic in Sinkiang, under Soviet suzerainty.

A further anti-Chinese attack was launched in late 1958 by members of the supposedly loyal Islamic Federation of Sinkiang. The leaders of this federation and also the leaders of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee were charged with separatist activities after a joint meeting of the two organisations in the winter of 1958-9. They were also accused of attempting to form a separate state and of using religious arguments to rouse "backward elements" against the State.<sup>26</sup>

Smaller and less publicised anti-Chinese uprisings occurred from 1959 to 1962 as a result of continued Chinese immigration into Sinkiang, refusal to ameliorate the conditions which had caused the 1957-58 outbursts, and the introduction of the commune system. The "great leap forward" added to the disruption: Sinkiang residents were required to donate sheep, cattle and horses to agricultural areas in Central China; the commune system suffered, as it did in China, from poor planning and lack of equipment. Increasing numbers of disaffected peasants undermined Chinese communist rule either by outright opposition or by a "wait and see" attitude.<sup>27</sup>

During this time many local groups specially patronised by the Chinese failed to exhibit loyalty; non-Hans invited into the Party and State structure attempted to upset Han rule; intellectuals, young and old, demanded independence for their territory at the expense of the

Chinese. Religious leaders who had suffered persecution, not only personally challenged the Chinese but managed to obtain support among their followers as well. Some of the Sinkiang peasantry further expressed dissatisfaction by seeking asylum in the U.S.S.R. and claiming closer ethnical and religious ties with the indigenous populations of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan than with their Chinese overlords in Sinkiang.<sup>28</sup>

The Chinese communists declared that "foreign imperialists" were responsible for the demonstrations, although no country was specified. This may have been merely an exercise in rhetoric prompted by a reluctance to admit that the Sinkiang opposition was in fact of local origin; it may also have been an early sign of Sino-Russian differences in the border area.

#### Sino-Russian Relations in Sinkiang

Russian influence and direction of events were very evident in Sinkiang before 1949. Even after the Chinese communists took over the area, the Russians retained their hold in the region through joint-stock companies which permitted Soviet economic development and exploitation of Sinkiang's wealth. In 1954 these companies were dissolved and Russian activities in the region were sharply curtailed.

The Soviet Union, however, continued to give technical aid in both agriculture and industry, such as pest control, improvement of cotton production and development of the oil industry. Russian-built hospitals in Sinkiang were transferred to Chinese control.<sup>29</sup>



Since 1954 Russian influence has further declined. In August, 1960, the Soviet consul general in Urumchi did not return after it had been reported in the Chinese press that he had left Sinkiang because of illness; concurrently many Soviet technicians were withdrawn from China.<sup>30</sup> A new consul general finally arrived in 1962 but midway through that year the Consulate General was closed down completely, allegedly at the request of the Chinese.

#### Soviet Imperialism

Though careful not to say that Sino-Soviet relations were jeopardized by friction in Sinkiang in late 1957, the Chinese at the time condemned the "imperialists" in terms now used specifically to castigate the Russians, that is, as traitors to Marxism-Leninism, revisionists, etc. Furthermore, local people who were suspected of being pro-Russian were removed from Party and State positions they held as a further warning to the Soviets. Finally, local opposition and Russian attempts to exploit it were completely suppressed by increasing Han immigration and by sending indigenous people with Soviet sympathies to so-called "labour education camps which were really concentration camps".<sup>31</sup>

Local leaders were charged with attempting to establish an "Eastern Turkestan Republic". The suggestion that the 1957-58 uprising had as its goal the re-establishment of such a republic may have been an oblique way of indicating that the Russians, who had covertly supported the first republic, were clandestinely behind the attempt to resurrect it.

While the above explanation can only be considered tentative at this writing, last year's uprisings are less difficult to document. One recent report supplements the Chinese accusation that the Russians were associated with anti-Chinese demonstrations in Sinkiang. On May 29, 1962, a large number of Uighur and Kazakh youths in Kuldja protested in front of the Government headquarters in that city. They forced Chinese officials in the building to flee and tied up Uighur employees. The youths dragged the Uighur employees to the local Communist Party office and once again began to demonstrate against Chinese rule. Here, however, Chinese soldiers fired on the demonstrators, killing some and arresting others. Some fled to the Soviet Union's consulate in the city to ask for help but this was denied. Shortly afterwards, in early July, the Russian consulate in Kuldja was closed. The Russian Consulate General in Urumchi was closed in late July.

Thus, there is impressive evidence that Russia has had a hand in steering recent events in Sinkiang. The Kuldja residents went to the Soviet consul for aid only because they assumed that they would receive assistance. The Russians were unwilling to come out openly against their Chinese allies but were nevertheless indicted by "association".

#### "Factual Inequality"

The record of Chinese communist colonization in Sinkiang over the past decade has failed to make Chinese hegemony acceptable to the Uighurs, the Kazakhs and the other tribes who have called Sinkiang their home for



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centuries. The tendency of the U.S.S.R. to stir the troubled waters has created the irony of a people fleeing from the tyranny of Chinese communism across the only available border to a more sophisticated form of the same ideology. The grim satire implicit in the spectacle of Communist Russia opening its arms to refugees from communism has not been lost on Moscow's leaders.

But the natives of Sinkiang are unlikely to embrace this expedient in significant numbers. Traditionally far from docile, they are equally unlikely to acquiesce in rule by the Chinese communists as long as Peking continues to operate on the Orwellian premise that some members of the establishment are more equal than others, as expressed by Ku Feng last year in the following passage on minorities:

"There is not an insignificant difference in the level of economic

and cultural development between many minority nationalities and the Han nationality in our country... Some minority nationalities... had no proletariat of their own. Some nationality regions had not even the elementary cultural and educational facilities... It is impossible for these nationalities to enjoy equal right in fact like the Han nationality... This state of affairs is commonly referred to as factual inequality by the Marxists... The elimination of factual inequality will not and cannot be the main task of the Party in solving the nationalities problem."

Given this condescending outlook by the Chinese communist overlords, and given the possibility of Russian collusion, the independent-minded tribesmen of Sinkiang are likely to roil the waters on the "new frontier" for some time to come.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1) Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia*, (Little, Brown and Company, Boston 1950), p. 106; Lattimore's total is 3,729,000. Thus, Uighurs form 79% of the total, Kazakhs 9% and Han Chinese about 5½%. Lattimore's percentage for Uighurs virtually agrees with *NCNA*, Sian, April 25, 1951, in *Survey of China Mainland Press* (hereinafter *SCMP*), No. 99, p. 29, which reported that Uighurs constitute more than 80% of all the people of Sinkiang.
- 2) W. A. Douglas Jackson, *Russo-Chinese Borderlands*, (D. van Nostrand Co., Princeton, N.J., 1962), p. 12. His total is 4,874,000. Of the 300,000 Han Chinese, Jackson advises that 193,000 were PLA men (p. 77). His percentages are: Uighur 75%, Kazakh 10%, Han Chinese 6%. Figures released in 1952 by the Sinkiang administration prior to the main Chinese communist census, reported the following data:

Uighurs	3,400,000
Kazakhs	400,000
Han Chinese	500,000 (approximately)
Hui Chinese	300,000 (approximately)
Others	126,000

*Jen-min Jih-pao* (hereinafter *JMJP*), June 6, 1952, cited in *Current Background* (hereinafter *CB*), No. 195, p. 6. The total was 4,857,000; percentages were: Uighurs - 70%, Kazakhs - 9%, Han Chinese - 10% (approximately).

- 3) J. P. Lo, *China Quarterly*, "Five years of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region", No. 8, October-December 1961, p. 101; a similar figure appears in *NCNA*, English, Urumchi, January 2, 1959; and in Allen Whiting, *China Quarterly*, "Sinkiang and Sino-Soviet Relations", No. 3, July-September 1960, p. 35, footnote 8; the figure is verified by a November 1959 release.



# CURRENT SCENE

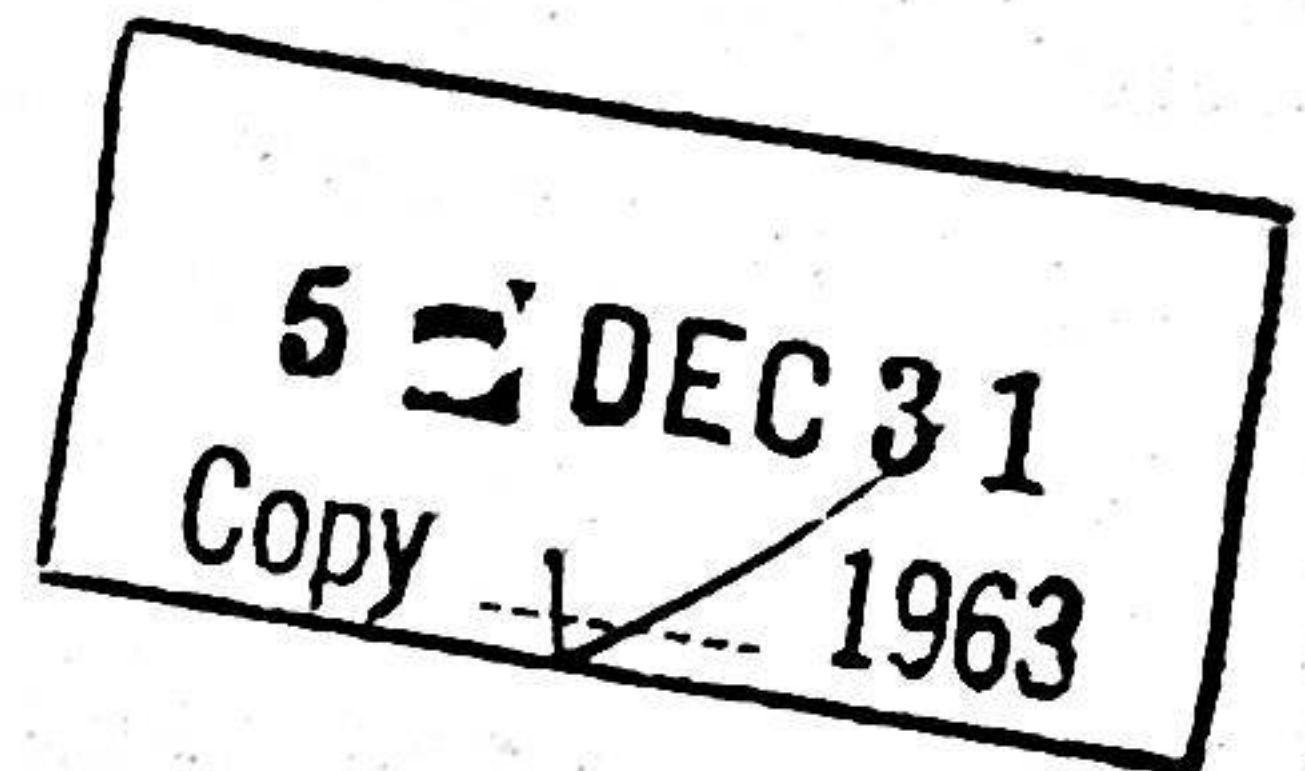
DEVELOPMENTS

IN

MAINLAND CHINA

DECEMBER 23, 1963

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## THE ROLE OF NATURAL CALAMITIES IN COMMUNIST CHINA

by

*Michael Freeberne*

"The successor to the [Chinese] throne is not considered by others or himself the Divinely appointed unless he gives peace and plenty to the empire... Disasters of war, pestilence and famine—even earthquakes and storms of extraordinary violence, are but ways by which Heaven declares that the occupant of the throne is not its chosen representative... In China the rivers rise from their beds, the ground sullenly refuses its fruits, the plains tremble, the hills reel, and the typhoon rages over seas and coasts, all alike uttering a Numbered, Numbered, Weighed and Parted, that is read in anxiety by the people, in dismay and terror by the Prince."

*"The Chinese and Their Rebellions"*  
by Thomas T. Meadows, 1856.

In a continental land mass the size of China, natural disasters are tragically expectable and have been a part of the Chinese burden since the first floods boiled out across the Yellow River delta in the mists of prehistory. Every ruler of China has had to cope with the depredations of rampaging nature but Peking has added a new ingredient. There is considerable evidence which indicates that the Chinese communists have used the terrible spectre of natural disasters, real or imaginary, for propaganda purposes.

Public speeches, statements and articles in Communist China continually imply that considerable damage has been inflicted on the Chinese economy by these disasters. In this context, it has been argued frequently by outside observers that calamities have been employed as a scapegoat for admitted setbacks in terms of production and sectoral planning emphasis and that their extent has been exaggerated. On balance, the evidence indicates that Peking is correct in its claim that natural calamities caused great damage in 1959, 1960 and 1961. But the evidence also clearly reveals that the Chinese communists used the sad fact of these natural calamities to shroud the man-made disasters which resulted from their own policies.

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MICHAEL FREEBERNE, a past contributor to *Current Scene*, is Lecturer in Geography at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.