

China's Treatment of the Nationality Problem in Sinkiang

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Like the USSR, China is a multi-national state. Within her borders there live people of some fifty different nationalities and ethnic groups differing from each other and from the Chinese Han people in their cultural, linguistic, historical and social-economic characteristics. However, unlike the non-Russian nationalities in the USSR, whose total population is approximately equal to that of the Russians, the nationalities of China form only about 6 percent compared to the Chinese majority, which accounts for 94 percent of the 650,000,000 inhabitants.

The Party leaders, both in the USSR and in Communist China, claim that they have solved their nationality problems.

Sinkiang's Demographic and Ethnic Patterns

Sinkiang is an extensive territory in the northwest of China. It covers an area of 1,707,000 square kilometers, or about one sixth of the entire territory. It borders on the Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, and Tadzhikistan in the northwest, the Mongolian People's Republic in the northeast, Afghanistan and India in the southwest, Tibet in the south, and northwest China in the east.

	Absolute Numbers	Percentage of Total Population
Uighurs	3,640,000	74.2
Kazakhs	475,000	9.7
Chinese	300,000	6.2
Tungans (Moslem Chinese)	200,000	4.1
Mongols	120,000	2.5
Kirghiz	70,000	1.8
Mandus, Sibo, Solons, Daur	20,000	0.4
Tadzhiks	15,000	0.3
Russians	13,000	0.3
Uzbeks	8,000	0.2
Tatars	5,000	0.1
Others	8,000	0.2
Total	4,874,000	100.0

At the end of the reign of Chien Lung (1736—1795), the population of Sinkiang was officially estimated at 651,475, of which the Chinese comprised only 167,750; in 1888, the total population was estimated at 1,238,583; in 1910, the official figure was 1,768,560, though another official source in 1911 gave a different figure of 2,039,674.¹ The figure of the provincial census of 1940—41, considered by Lattimore to be reliable, was 3,730,000,² while that of the next

¹ Chen Tsu-yuen, *Histoire du défrichement de la province du Sin-kiang sous la dynastie Ts'ing*, Paris, 1932, p. 156.

² Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia—Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, Boston, 1950, p. 103.

... was between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000.³ The figure was, however, only 4,873,608.⁴ According to Bruk, the 1953 ethnic groups of Sinkiang and their numbers and proportion of the total population were as shown in the preceding table.⁵

The majority of these peoples are Moslems, while the rest are Lama Buddhists, Confucian-Buddhist-Taoists, and Greek Orthodox. Racially, the peoples of Sinkiang are mainly a mixture of Alpine and Mongoloid elements.⁶

According to Tolstov, an eminent Soviet ethnographer and specialist on Central Asia, "the main characteristics of the ethnic types of contemporary Central Asia began to be formed in the tenth to twelfth centuries [A. D]." He believes that both indigenous peoples and invaders had contributed to the composition of contemporary Central Asia. The consolidation of the ethnic groups into modern nationalities occurred, however, only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁷

Linguistically the Uighurs, Sinkiang's national majority, are a Turkic people; and racially, according to Lattimore, they are more Alpine than Mongoloid in type.⁸ Their present name of "Uighur" was adopted at a conference of their intellectuals in Tashkent, Uzbek SSR, in 1921.⁹ Prior to that time, these people called themselves after the locality in which they lived (Kashgarians, Khotanians, etc.). Originally the Uighurs were one of the tribes of the Han Union of the third century B. C. to the third century A. D.¹⁰ They are first mentioned in the Chinese T'ang record as pastoral nomads living in the Selenga River basin. On the basis of these records, Bichurin, the eminent Russian Sinologist of the last century, described the Uighur dominion in great detail. According to him, the Uighurs had, in the eighth century A. D., a feudal federated state on the territory of present-day Mongolia. Their nomadic empire fell in 839 as a result of a feud within the government and an attack by Kirghiz tribes. A part of the Uighurs fled to the region of Turfan in Sinkiang, where they settled down and became the rulers, absorbing the indigenous population, which practised Buddhism and spoke an Indo-European language. The remnants of the new Uighur state in this area were investigated by Stein, who found many manuscripts and documents written in the Uighur script, which was probably derived from Sogdian and which also served as the basis for the Mongol, Uzbek, and Manchu scripts. The Khara Khitais brought the Uighur domination to an end in the twelfth century, but they were in turn overthrown by Genghis Khan. As the Mongols' power began to fade in Sinkiang, the

³ *Central Asian Review*, London, Vol. V, 1957, p. 161.

⁴ Theodore Shabad, *China's Changing Map*, New York, 1956, p. 40.

⁵ *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, Moscow, No. 2, 1956, p. 9; *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie*, Moscow, No. 4, 1957, pp. 117-124.

⁶ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁷ Supplement to *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, Moscow, 1947, p. 304.

⁸ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁹ *Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopedia* (Large Soviet Encyclopedia), BSE, Moscow, 1947, 1st ed., Vol. LV p. 720.

¹⁰ Mark A. Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, London, Vol. II, 1912, pp. 186, 349, 358; *Encyclopaedia Sinica*, London, 1917, pp. 580-581; BSE, *op. cit.*, Moscow, 1947, 1st ed., Vol. LV, p. 720; BSE, Moscow, 1956, 2nd ed., Vol. XLIV, 58; Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-128.

religious caste of Khodjas, who came from Samarkand claiming descent from Mohammed, established a ruling caste of theocrats in 1566. Islam became established among the Uighurs during the sixteenth century. The Khodja-Uighur principalities (khanates) fell victim to nomad tribes attacking from Dzungaria and finally were conquered by the Manchus in 1756, when Sinkiang became a Chinese dominion. The Manchus resettled part of the Uighurs from the south of Sinkiang to the Ili Valley in the north.

The Sinkiang Kazakhs are a part of the same national group as the Soviet Kazakhs, with whom they share a common history. As a national and political unit they emerged at the end of the fifteenth century, having been prior to that a tribe of the Uzbek confederation. Later the Kazakh khanates split into three hordes, the easternmost of which occupied the steppes of northern Sinkiang. The Kazakhs are pastoral nomads, speaking a Turkic language and are Mohammedans, though lax in observing the Islamic rules.¹¹

The Mongols of Sinkiang are scattered throughout the country, and are also pastoral nomads. They practise Lama Buddhism. The Manchus, who also include the Solons and Sibos, are late arrivals to Sinkiang, where they arrived in the second half of the eighteenth century. They are agriculturists, but also engage in pasturing and hunting.¹²

The Kirghiz have only recently, under the Soviet regime, been distinguished from the Kazakhs. Originally appearing in the Upper Enisei area, it was they who pushed the Uighurs from Mongolia to Sinkiang. In Sinkiang they live in scattered groups, and are mainly pastoral nomads. They practice Islam, though with strong shamanistic admixtures.¹³

The Uzbeks are an interesting Turkic people in view of their very close relationship to the Uighurs in the linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, and other fields. In Sinkiang, they live mostly in the cities as merchants, and also, like the Tadzhiks, grow cotton.

The smaller national groups in Sinkiang are less important for our purpose.

Chinese Conquest and Subsequent Policy

The first Chinese contacts with Sinkiang occurred during the reign of Wu-ti (140—87 B. C.), at the time of the Hsiung-nu's attacks on the Chinese borders. The emperor sent a diplomat, Chang Ch'ien, to Sinkiang to organize a coalition of princes against the Huns. As a result of this diplomacy, Wu-ti concluded treaties with 36 "western principalities," which gradually became China's vassals. To destroy the Huns, a Chinese army under Pan Ch'ao entered Sinkiang and remained there. In the second century A. D. China lost Sinkiang to the Western Turkic (Uzbek) Confederation, but reoccupied it under the T'ang dynasty in the middle of the seventh century. In the eighth century, the Tibetans temporarily conquered Sinkiang and stayed there until the Uighurs, migrating from Mongolia,

¹¹ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 128—132.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 134—136, 147—149.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 132—134.

overran the country and established a state of their own. A short Arab invasion in the tenth century was followed by Mongol rule. China's contacts with Sinkiang remained quite sporadic under the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), but later, in 1756, the Manchus re-annexed Sinkiang to China. After a series of Moslem revolts against the Chinese, Sinkiang was made a regular province of the Heavenly Empire in 1884. Under the Kuomintang regime of the Republic, Sinkiang was ruled by dictatorial governors and warlords, who were often almost independent from the central government.¹⁴

Most researchers maintain the view that China's expansion into Sinkiang was not guided by typically imperialist motives. Lattimore believes that the primary motive was only to safeguard the frontiers from the "barbarians." He mentions the fact that before the punitive expedition against Yakub-Beg (see below), there was a discussion at the Chinese court on the wisdom of reconquering Sinkiang; the opponents of the reconquest held that Sinkiang was an economic burden for China.¹⁵ That the Chinese expansion into Sinkiang was a result of "geographic and military accidents" is also maintained by another student of the problem, David Ho, who says that during both the periods of imperial and of republican rule, Sinkiang had to be continuously subsidized by the central government. Yet, elsewhere he admits that Chinese merchants had a virtual monopoly on Sinkiang's gold and jade as well as on the exports of cattle, horses, and sheep to China.¹⁶ This may mean, therefore, that in spite of the cost of the central government subsidies, Sinkiang was, after all, profitable to the Chinese.

Until 1882, the Chinese administration in Sinkiang was based on the local tribal princes and chieftains who were vassals of the emperor.¹⁷ Since Han times, the policy was that of "divide and rule," that is, one local ruler or tribe was set against another, and the local groups were often resettled and intermixed. For instance, a part of the Uighurs were resettled in the Ili region, where they became known as "Taranchis" (agriculturalists).¹⁸

Until the eighteenth century, the only Chinese who stayed in Sinkiang for a long time were soldiers attached to the military garrisons. They were transported there together with their families at government expense; each family received a plot of land, seed, a cow, etc., to engage in farming on the virgin lands. Land reclamation by the Chinese soldiers was carried out in order to make the occupation army self-sufficient in provisions, to keep the soldiers occupied, and to subsidize Kansu Province with grain in case of famine there.¹⁹ Similarly, to protect the frontiers from the west, military agricultural settlements of Sibos,

¹⁴ David Ho, *L'oeuvre colonisatrice de la Chine dans le Turkestan chinois*, Paris, 1941, pp. 9-12; *Encyclopaedia Sinica*, *op. cit.*, pp. 578-9; Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-16; BSE, Moscow, 1956, 2nd ed., Vol. XXXIX, pp. 132-3.

¹⁵ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 16, 186.

¹⁶ David Ho, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15, 94-98.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 126.

¹⁹ Chen Tsu-yuen, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-69.

Solons, Daur, and Manchus were created in Western Dzungaria after the Manchu conquest.²⁰

The Chinese never considered Sinkiang a desirable place to live; to them Sinkiang was the same as Siberia to the Russians. In 1757, the Ministry of Justice proclaimed Sinkiang to be a place of exile for criminals. Deported criminals were given plots of virgin land, seeds, a cow, and some money to erect a house; they could take their wives with them.²¹

The Chinese settlers in Sinkiang were always favored over the Moslems by a discriminatory tax and land policy: the former were taxed according to the amount of land held, while the latter were burdened with an equal per capita tax.²² As a result of this discrimination the number of ruined and landless Moslems greatly increased on the eve of the Moslem rebellions in the 1820's, while the Chinese administrators were confiscating their land for default of taxes and selling it cheap to the Chinese settlers.²³

The Chinese imperial administration also pursued for some time a policy of rigid assimilation of the local population of Sinkiang, but this policy met with failure. Moslems refused to attend Chinese schools, and those who did were considered heretics by their fellow-Moslems. Rich Uighur families even hired poor children to attend the Chinese schools in place of their own children. Accordingly, the Chinese schools for the Moslems were abandoned.²⁴

The imperial economic and cultural policies in Sinkiang produced a series of bloody uprisings, collectively known as the Moslem Rebellions, aimed at driving the Chinese from Sinkiang and at separating Sinkiang from China. The first major insurrection, in 1825-26, was led by Djengir Khodja and assisted by the Khan of Kokand from the Uzbek side of the border. It was followed by new insurrections in 1827, 1830, 1857, and finally in 1862-63, when Sinkiang seceded from China and became an independent Moslem state under Yakub-Beg. The last insurrection was stimulated by that of the Tungans (Chinese Moslems) in Kansu and Shensi. The Chinese army garrisons in Sinkiang, composed mainly of the Tungans, took the side of the rebels.²⁵ During this revolt, Yakub-Beg, an immigrant Uzbek, who had the support of the Khodjas of Kokand, established himself as ruler of Kashgaria, in the southwestern part of the country. Though strongly supported by the British from India and, morally, by the Turkish Sultan, Yakub-Beg's state lasted only seven years. The Russians' massing of troops on the border and their occupation of the Ili region in 1871, as well as the advance of a Chinese expeditionary army under Tso Tsung-tang led to the disintegration of Yakub-Beg's forces. Yakub-Beg died before he could engage the Chinese.²⁶ As far as can be judged from

²⁰ *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

²¹ Chen Tsu-yuen, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-75.

²² David Ho, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-68.

²³ Chen Tsu-yuen, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

²⁴ David Ho, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

²⁵ A. N. Kuropatkin, *Kashgaria; Eastern or Chinese Turkestan*, Calcutta, 1882, pp. 137-139, 141-143, 153-156.

²⁶ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-38; *Central Asian Review*, London, 1959, Vol. VII, No. 4, pp. 403-410.

the accounts of Kuropatkin and others, the Moslem rebellions were accompanied by incredibly cruel mutual massacres: the Uighurs proclaimed a "holy war" against all Chinese and spared no lives, while the Chinese, in turn, retaliated in the same manner when they returned to Sinkiang. Tso Tsung-tang's soldiers killed every Moslem who fell into their hands, including women and children.²⁷

After 1884, when Sinkiang became a province of the Empire, and until 1933, under the Republic, it was ruled by a series of conservative Chinese bureaucrats, such as Yang Tseng-hsin (1912-28) and Chin Shu-jen (1928-33). Both are reported to have ruled by setting one people against another, by permitting no newspapers or books in the Uighur or Kazakh languages, by closing all Moslem schools which taught in Turkic or Arabic, and so forth. Frequently, they also acted independently of the central government, as in the case of the exchange of consulates with the Soviet Union and the expansion of trade with it during the time of the strain in Sino-Soviet relations.²⁸

A chauvinist Chinese policy led to another series of local rebellions against them in 1930-34. These particular revolts constitute the direct background and have an important bearing upon the entire recent history of the nationality problem in Sinkiang. The revolts which again broke out were chiefly on religious grounds, but they ended in the formation of a purely political ideology of modern nationalism in Sinkiang. In 1930 a young Chinese Moslem, Ma Chung-ying, organized a Moslem army in Kansu, staged a rebellion against the authority of the central government, and in 1931 threatened Urumchi. As the Chinese authority over Sinkiang crumbled under the threat of Ma's army in the summer of 1931, a "Republic of Turkestan" was proclaimed in Khotan by the Emir of Khotan, and, in addition, on November 12, 1933, the Uighurs of Kashgaria, strongly supported by the British, proclaimed the establishment of a "Republic of Eastern Turkestan." This time, however, the Moslem religion failed to unite the Chinese Moslems and the Uighurs. Ma Chung-ying refused to support the Republic of Eastern Turkestan, dispatched his army against it, and deposed the government because it was striving for complete independence from China, in spite of the fact that Article I of the Constitution of the Chinese Republic stated that it was inspired by the Koran. The Kuomintang army, in turn, defeated Ma Chung-ying and brought the rebellion to an end.²⁹

With the events of 1930-34, the Pan-Islamist ideology prevalent until that time in Sinkiang, gradually became supplanted by Pan-Turkism and local Uighur and Kazakh nationalism.

From 1933 to 1944, Sinkiang was ruled by Sheng Shih-ts'ai, a governor of wayward policies, whom one author calls simply a warlord.³⁰ Sheng began his rule as an exponent of liberalism and cultural autonomy for the local national groups, though he did not allow them political equality with the Chinese. He put forward,

²⁷ *Uchenye zapiski*, Moscow, 1958, Vol. XVI, pp. 409-412.

²⁸ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-64.

²⁹ David Ho, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-117.

³⁰ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-76, 108-111, 126, 149.

in response to the growth of local nationalism, a program of "Six Great Policies"—anti-imperialism, rapprochement with the Soviet Union, racial or national equality, clean government, peace and reconstruction—but at the same time he worked consistently against the political unity of the Sinkiang nationalities. Some high positions in his government were given to Uighurs and Kazakhs, but Chinese domination was thoroughly preserved; in Sheng's cabinet, there were 27 Chinese, 4 Chinese Moslems, 2 Russians, 5 Uighurs, 2 Kazakhs, 2 Mongols and 2 Sibos.³¹ Yet he also allowed schools and newspapers in the native languages to flourish and various cultural organizations to appear. This new environment became a fertile ground for Pan-Turkism and Uighur and Kazakh nationalism to spring up and spread together with literacy and political consciousness on the part of the local inhabitants.

Until 1940, Sheng's sympathies seemed to lean toward the Soviet Union, but in 1941 he turned back to the Kuomintang. His policy toward the local nationalities changed accordingly. Probably to regain favor with Chiang Kai-shek, who accepted the "Greater Chinese Theory" (Ta-Han Chu-i), according to which the nationalities of China were all "one nation and one race" not only physically but also culturally and therefore should undergo complete assimilation, Sheng Shih-ts'ai began to suppress local nationalists. He dealt even more severely with the local Communists, most of whom he is reported to have eliminated in 1942, including Mao Tse-min, Mao Tse-tung's brother, who was working at that time in Sinkiang.³²

Simultaneously with the deterioration of the political situation in Sinkiang, with the growth of terror and discrimination, the power of Sheng Shih-ts'ai was undermined by economic difficulties, inflation, and corruption in government.³³ The crisis produced a new rebellion. In August 1944, Kazakh nomads and peasants of the Nilkha *hsien*, led by Osman Bator, a young Kazakh chieftain, rebelled against the Chinese officials. The rebellion broke out after the provincial government decreed the requisition of 10,000 selected horses for the army and instituted a fine of 700 yen, twice the price of a horse, for every horse which the peasants and the nomads failed to supply. The insurrection soon spread throughout the districts of Ili, Tarbagatai, and Chuguchak, in the northwestern part of the province. In November 1944, Osman Bator took Kulja and the central headquarters of the insurrectionists moved to that city. There a "Revolutionary Republic of Eastern Turkestan" was immediately proclaimed. Its democratic coalition government, consisting of representatives of several national groups,³⁴ was headed by Akhmedjan Kasimi, a local left-wing Pan-Turkist.³⁵ The Kulja government had a strong guerrilla army and maintained an active front line against the Chinese army. The Soviet Union quickly moved to the support of the Kulja government and dispatched a consul to Kulja. Friendly negotiations resulted in the supply of Soviet arms to the Kulja army, which stiffened its resistance to the Chinese, but at the

³¹ David Ho, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

³² *Uchenye zapiski*, Moscow, 1955, Vol. XI, p. 158.

³³ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-86.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁵ *Uchenye zapiski*, Moscow, 1955, Vol. XI, p. 165.

same time this led to growing Soviet penetration and meddling in the affairs of the young republic. By 1947, the Kulja regime had definitely become a Soviet satellite, leading to a split in its government: Osman Bator rallied his Kazakhs and left Kulja for the north, while Akhmedjan Kasimi began to revise his nationalist past and adjust himself to the Communist line. In one of his articles he wrote:

When our national-liberation revolution began, there were quite a few mistakes in our nationality policy. When our people took to arms . . . they were confident that all Chinese were their enemies. As a result, together with our enemies we have beaten and killed, with the same stick, our own friends [among the Chinese] and protected our fiercest enemies [among ourselves].³⁶

Unable to suppress the Kulja rebellion, the Chinese dispatched a representative, Chang Chih-chung, to negotiate with Kasimi. Three months of discussion resulted in an "Eleven-Point Agreement," which among other things, called for a democratic coalition government in Sinkiang, to include 15 Uighurs and 10 representatives of other nationalities. The agreement also provided for preservation of the Kulja army and for freedom of the press, assembly, organization, etc. Such a coalition government was indeed established in July 1946; it was headed by Chang Chih-chung as chairman and Kasimi and Saifudin as vice-chairmen.³⁷ However, this outcome was not to the liking of the right-wing Kuomintang officers in Urumchi, who refused to submit to this government and, in February 1947, began a campaign against supporters of the "Eleven-Point Agreement."³⁸ As a result, the Kulja delegates left Urumchi and moved to their military bases in the Ili Valley.³⁹ This was, presumably, the reason why Kasimi turned completely pro-Soviet.

In the meantime, taking advantage of Chinese preoccupation with the rebellion in Kulja, the Pan-Turkic and Uighur nationalists in the rest of the province carried on strong agitation for the establishment of an independent Turkestani State along authoritarian lines. The Pan-Turkists took over almost the entire Uighur press and organizations and occupied many positions in the government, army, and schools. In their daily, *Sintsian Gazeti*, and four other periodicals, they propagated the creation of a Pan-Turkic Federation out of Sinkiang and the Soviet Central Asian Republics, including even Yakutia in Siberia.⁴⁰ The Pan-Turkists also penetrated into the territory of the Kulja regime and for some time had friendly relations with its government, while remaining strongly anti-Soviet in their outlook. The Kuomintang did not oppose the growth of the Pan-Turkic movement at this time, probably for fear of pushing the Uighurs into the hands of the left-wingers in Kulja. Instead, the Chinese concentrated their efforts on preventing Sinkiang from falling, by way of Kulja, into the hands of the Soviet Union. The annexation of the Tannu Tuva People's Republic by the USSR in 1944 was clear notice of its intentions. Consequently, the Chinese favored a détente

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

³⁸ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95-99.

⁴⁰ *Uchenye zapiski*, Moscow, 1955, Vol. XI, p. 174.

with the anti-Soviet Pan-Turkists, and in May 1947, after the "Eleven-Point Agreement" with Kulja was abrogated, the Kuomintang appointed Masud Sabri, an Uighur Pan-Turkist and also member of the Kuomintang, to head the provincial government. Masud, however, was more of an Uighur than a Kuomintang nationalist. He promoted the cause of the Pan-Turkists and established relations with the United States mission at Urumchi in search of support for the Pan-Turkic ideas. He also entered into new negotiations with Kulja, in an effort to convert its adherents to his cause. Subsequently, in December 1948, the Kuomintang removed Masud from the government and appointed in his place Burhan, a wealthy, middle-of-the-road Russian Tatar. However, by this time the Communist revolution in China had changed the situation completely.⁴¹

When the People's Liberation Army of the Chinese Communists entered Sinkiang in the fall of 1949, the Communists, accordingly, inherited there: (1) a long and bitter tradition of prejudice and hatred toward the Chinese on the part of the indigenous population; (2) a long history of bloody attempts by the Moslems, and particularly by the Uighurs, to separate from China and to form an independent state; (3) a strong nationalist movement by Pan-Turkic intellectuals; (4) a pro-Soviet regime in the northwestern part of the province, in the Ili Valley; and (5) a keen interest on the part of the Western great powers, particularly the United States, in the situation and in the fate of the province. These were the problems faced by the Chinese Communists. Before analyzing their attempts at solution, it is necessary to discuss briefly their theory of the national problem, which formed the basis of these attempts.

Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist Theories of the Nationality Problem

Neither Marx nor Engels wrote any major study of the problem of nationalities. Yet, whenever they mentioned it—and this was fairly frequently—it is clear that they treated it from a purely political and journalistic point of view and considered it to be essentially of secondary importance in history and worthy only of being treated as tactics, rather than as principle, in the politics of the class struggle. Thrice during their lifetime, both Marx and Engels actively supported nationalist separatist movements in the cases of Ireland, India, and Poland. "The position of the International Association in the Irish question is quite clear," wrote Marx in 1870. "Its main task is to accelerate the socialist revolution in England."⁴² For the same reason they supported India in her struggle against the British. In the case of Poland, however, their support was based on their view of Russia as a reactionary menace to Europe. To stop her advance, they supported Polish separatism.⁴³ However, when the Czechs and Serbs expressed a desire to separate from Austria-Hungary after 1848, Marx and Engels denounced this idea as reactionary and declared that Czechs and Serbs, being "non-historical nations," are "nothing

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175; Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁴² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Sochineniya* (Works), Moscow, 1936, 1st ed., Vol. XIII, Part I, p. 363.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 259-265.

else but pendants of either the German or the Hungarian nation."⁴⁴ They believed that nations were formed only in the period of capitalism, that the bourgeoisie was their creator, and that nationalities which lag behind in their social-economic development were "non-historical nations," never destined for independence. They also believed that all nations would wither away and merge into a single world society when the world enters the era of Communism. Commenting on the civil war between the Federalists and the Centralists in Switzerland in 1847, Engels wrote that, from the proletarian class point of view, it was correct for the bourgeoisie to work through its common market, trade, and industry "to destroy local customs, clothes, and ways of looking at the world" and that the "proletariat needs not only that degree of centralization which the bourgeoisie has just undertaken, but will develop it much farther."⁴⁵ In this paper, Engels unequivocally supported a centralized Swiss state and condemned the separatism of the Federalists. Similarly, while criticizing the 1891 Erfurt program of the German Social-Democratic Party, Engels spurned the concept of a federal republic for Germany as well as for England, Switzerland, and even the United States of America. He said that "for the proletariat, only one form of state is useful — an integral and indivisible republic."⁴⁶ A similar attitude was displayed by Marx and Engels in the case of the civil war in the United States.

Marx and Engels failed to appreciate the problem of nationalities sufficiently, probably because it was not yet acute in their time and place. However, after Marx's death, Engels, presumably underwent a certain degree of evolution in this respect. In replying to Karl Kautsky's question as to what attitude the proletariat should display toward the colonies, Engels stated that after coming to power in the metropolis the proletariat should "lead" the colonies "as soon as possible to independence." "One thing is certain," he declared, "the victorious proletariat can make no foreign people happy by compulsion, without burying its own victory at the same time."⁴⁷ This interesting statement was made only in a private letter (dated September 12, 1882), however, and therefore did not become widely known.

Lenin's stand on the problem of nationalities can be divided into three major periods. During the first period, prior to 1917, Lenin closely followed the position taken by Engels in the case of Switzerland and vigorously opposed the idea of a federal solution of the problem of nationalities in the Russian Empire. He openly favored a rigidly centralized state on the ground that such a state would promote the development of capitalism and therefore bring closer the proletarian revolution. Maintaining that the slogan of the proletariat was "international culture" rather than "national culture," Lenin consistently opposed cultural autonomy for minorities and advocated the "unification of nationalities through education."

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁴⁵ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke, Schriften, Briefe*, Frankfurt a. M., 1932, Section 1, Vol. VI, pp. 347-348.

⁴⁶ Marx and Engels, *Sochineniya*, *op. cit.*, Vol. XVI, Part II, p. 110.

⁴⁷ *Friedrich Engels Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky*, edited by Benedikt Kautsky, Vienna, 1955, p. 63.

The proletariat not only does not undertake to stand for the national development of every nationality, but, on the contrary, it warns the masses against such illusions... and welcomes assimilation.... The proletariat supports everything that would facilitate the attrition of national differences, the downfall of national division, ... all that would lead to the merger of all nations.⁴⁸

At the same time, he said that he was against "compulsory assimilation" and assured his readers that it was unthinkable that the proletariat of a majority nationality could oppress the proletariat of a minority nationality.

Prior to 1917, Lenin did not conceive that the nationality problem in Russia was so acute that the non-Russians would ever attempt to secede from Russia. However, when this actually occurred, he quickly adjusted to the new situation and changed his line. When, immediately after the downfall of the monarchy, the Ukrainians formed a local government and demanded autonomy, Lenin was first among the Russians to express his sympathy for this movement. When one after another the border regions inhabited by non-Russians proclaimed their desire for autonomy, Lenin came to their support, but mainly because the bourgeois Russian parties and the republican government of Kerensky opposed the separatist movement. Under these circumstances, Lenin advised his Communist Party that it should tactically support the slogan of "self-determination of nationalities up to, and including, secession" from Russia, for such a slogan would win the minority masses for the Communist cause and would undermine the Kerensky regime. However, he also explained that the slogan of self-determination should not be construed as a matter of principle for the Party; it was only a tactical slogan, and the Party must decide in each particular case whether or not it should support a given separatist movement. It should support only those minority movements which advance the Party's interests. Consequently, when Lenin came to power, he immediately withdrew all support from the separatists and now attacked them as "agents of the bourgeoisie" who wished to separate from the proletarian revolution in Russia rather than from Russia as a nation. Subsequently, he dispatched his Red Army into the independent republics which had separated from Russia, ostensibly to "aid the proletarian revolution" in them but actually to bring them back into the Russian fold. Thus, during 1918-22, Ukraine, Belorussia, Georgia, Armenia, and Turkestan again became "federated" with Russia.⁴⁹

After the Red Army had recaptured the lost territories, the problem arose how to deal with the problem of nationalities inside a Communist state. Three factions appeared in the Russian Communist Party in 1919-23, each proposing a different solution of the problem. There was a Russian centralist faction headed by Stalin, who advocated granting limited autonomy to the minorities within a Russian Federation. He was diametrically opposed by a faction of the Communists from among the national minorities, who demanded complete independence for their nations from Russia in the form of independent national Communist republics. The only concession the national-Communist faction was ready to make to the Russians

⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin, *O natsionalnom i natsionalno-kolonialnom voprose*, (On the Nationality and the National-Colonial Problem), Moscow, 1956, p. 130.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954.

was an agreement to form a confederation of Soviet republics, in which the Russian republic would be an equal member. Between these two opposing factions, Lenin favored a third faction which finally won a majority vote in the Party. Lenin's solution was that of a compromise between the "autonomists" and the "separatists:" he proposed formation of a "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" in which each major nationality would retain a constitution and the right to withdraw from the Union (this was the element of confederation), but, at the same time, each member republic of the Union would delegate to the Union government a significant portion of its rights and prerogatives, make it possible to establish a centralized authority over the Union as a whole (and this was the element of federation). Russia was to enter the Union only in the capacity of a member, equal in rights with the Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Transcaucasian and Turkestan republics.

At the same time, in 1922-23, Lenin arrived at the conclusion that the antagonism between the Russians and the non-Russians, which had spread even among the Communists, had been caused essentially by traditional and deep-rooted Russian chauvinism, and that local nationalism was only a reaction to and self-defense from Russian nationalism. He also concluded that if Russian nationalism were not condemned and suppressed, it would sooner or later cause the Soviet Union to disintegrate. Consequently, Lenin singled out Stalin and his idea of "autonomization" for open and vigorous criticism. He accused Stalin of being a "Great-Russian chauvinist" and a "brutal oppressor" of the non-Russians, particularly in the Caucasus, called upon the Party to "declare war" upon Russian chauvinism, advised against forcing the Russian language upon the minorities "under pretext of unity," and proposed that the Party adopt a policy of "nationalization" in the Union republics, i.e., that native languages be introduced in government and schools, native Party cadres be trained and promoted, the culture and history of the minorities be studied and appreciated, and so forth. Only in this way, said Lenin, could the Party win over the minorities to the cause of Communism. Consequently, the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1923 approved these suggestions and they continued to be official Party policy until 1934.⁵⁰

Stalin submitted to Lenin's criticism and accepted the new Party line. It is even probable that he was sincerely convinced that the line was correct—but as a matter of tactics, not of principle. At the Twelfth Party Congress and subsequently, Stalin frequently repeated after Lenin that Russian chauvinism, rather than local nationalism was the main danger to the Soviet Union and the Party's cause.⁵¹ However, when in the early 1930's Stalin adopted a policy of accelerated industrialization by means of centralized five-year plans as well as a policy of compulsory collectivization of agriculture, to serve the purpose of capital accumulation for industrialization, he encountered stiff resistance to his plans among the

⁵⁰ KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh sezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK (The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences, and Plenums of the Central Committee), Moscow, 1953, 7th ed. Part I, pp. 709-718.

⁵¹ J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (English ed.), Moscow, 1954, pp. 99-101.

peasantry in the agriculturally rich non-Russian republics and among the newly created national cadres there, which particularly opposed his demands for rigid government centralization in Moscow. On the other hand, the Russian cadres, which naturally were in the majority, supported his ideas on centralization and on limitations on the sovereignty of the local republics. The Russian Communists publicly attacked the Communists of the minorities, whom they accused of local nationalism, of alliance with the local rich peasants and other bourgeois elements, of putting their republics' interests above the interests of socialism in the Union as a whole, etc. At the Seventeenth Party Congress, in 1934, Stalin declared that "local nationalism, and particularly Ukrainian nationalism, is the major danger" to the Party's cause under the existing circumstances.⁵²

Following this switch in the Party line, the application of the "nationalization" policy in the republics was curtailed, numerous "national Communists" were executed or exiled to Siberia, and Russian cadres were sent en masse to curb the unruly minorities. During the German invasion, Stalin not only tolerated but actually fostered Russian chauvinism as a powerful means of raising the spirit of resistance of the Russian people. He openly proclaimed the Russians to be the "most outstanding nation among all the nations comprising the Soviet Union," the "leading nation" of a "bright mind" and "staunch character."⁵³ By implication, all other nations were inferior. This view formed the new Party line for the whole post-war period.⁵⁴

This history has been of extreme importance for the Chinese Communists. It is evident that they could draw from Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism a full gamut of clues for their own attempts at solution of the problem of nationalities—from the idea of a rigidly centralized state to the idea of autonomy or even complete separation; from condemnation of great-power chauvinism to its justification and utilization; they could freely quote one passage from Marx or Lenin and forget about another which contradicted the first because of a change of tactics in the course of time. Yet one postulate in the theory and practice of the Communist classics remained constant. It was the postulate that the solution of the problem of nationalities was subordinate to the supreme cause of Communism and that therefore whatever tactics might be adopted for its solution at any given time, it was correct if it was advantageous to Communism.

As will be seen, in their brief ten years of experience, the Chinese Communists succeeded in applying in practice, to the very letter, almost everything made available to them in the arsenal of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism on the problem of nationalities.

Initial Theoretical Contributions of the Chinese Communists

Neither Mao Tse-tung nor any other leading Communist in China has written any major treatise on the nationality problem. During the "bourgeois-democratic"

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 640.

⁵³ J. V. Stalin, *Velikaya otechestvennaya voina Sovetskogo Soyuza* (The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union), Moscow, 1951, p. 196.

⁵⁴ F. C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Russian Nationalism*, New York, 1956.

stage of the Chinese revolution (1919—49), the solution of the nationality problem was considered of secondary importance, the liberation of all China from feudalism and imperialism being of primary importance. Hence, the Communists engaged in policy-making rather than in theory-making and assumed that the former must be largely based on "study of Soviet experience in construction of a multinational state,"⁵⁵ while the latter was to be based on Marxism-Leninism "put into practice in the Chinese manner."⁵⁶

As early as July 1922, the Chinese Communists announced in the manifesto of the Second Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, that they were willing to establish *autonomous* regions for the national minorities of China, but within a *unified* state.

The Provisional Constitution of the "Chinese Worker-Peasant Democratic Republic," approved by the First All-China Congress of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies in the fall of 1931, proclaimed the "equality of nationalities" in China and, moreover, stated:

In such regions as Mongolia, Tibet, Sinkiang... the nationalities have the right to determine by themselves whether they want to secede from the Chinese Soviet Republic and form their *independent* states, or to join the *Union*..., or to form *autonomous* regions within the Chinese Soviet Republic.⁵⁷

All this was the equivalent of the Leninism of 1917 and the farthest that the Chinese Communists have ever gone in their theoretical concessions. In November 1938, at the enlarged Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee Congress, Mao repeated his offer of equality between the Hans and the minority groups and added that they "must not be forced to study the Chinese language and speech, but... encouraged to develop culture and education in their own tongue." He neglected, however, to repeat the offer of secession or independence.⁵⁸ At the Seventh Congress in 1945, in his report "On Coalition Government," Mao, having denounced the Kuomintang's oppressive policies as those of great-power chauvinists, said that the Communists fully endorsed Sun Yat-sen's position on the nationality problem, which was to grant them "equality" *after* the "liberation of the Han nation," and a right to "self-determination" (but not secession!) within a "free and unified Chinese Republic."⁵⁹

After the Communist victory in 1949, the Party line for the nationalities was limited to the following statement by Chou En-lai and Li Wei-han, the Chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission:

Our task is no longer to help the national minorities in their striving for liberation from national oppression. Our task is to assist them to realize complete national

⁵⁵ *Problemy vostokovedeniya*, No. 4, Moscow, 1959, p. 39.

⁵⁶ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, June 27, 1958.

⁵⁷ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁵⁸ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, September 9, 1953.

⁵⁹ Mao Tse-tung, *Izbrannye sochineniya* (Selected Works), Moscow, 1953, Vol. IV, pp. 549—555.

equality; to assist them, first of all, to raise themselves to the level of the New Democracy and to bring about improvements in their material and cultural life.⁶⁰

To realize this goal, they added, the provisions of the *Common Program* dealing with the problem of nationalities, should be implemented.⁶¹ In practice, this would mean the establishment of local "democratic-coalition" governments with or without regional autonomy, depending on circumstances.

Sinkiang's spokesman during this "new historical stage" of China's nationality problem was Saifudin, former vice-chairman of the Kulja regime and presently the vice-chairman of the Provincial Government of Sinkiang and Fourth Secretary of the Sinkiang Sub-Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party. According to him, since equality had been brought to Sinkiang by the People's Liberation Army, "the problem is no longer to shake off an alien reactionary rule [meaning the Chinese], but how to shake off the yoke of feudal exploitation [meaning of their own nationality]."⁶² In other words, the struggle for national liberation should be replaced by the struggle for social liberation: the nationalities must stop opposing the Chinese and instead turn to fighting the feudal lords of their own nationality.

Saifudin's views were subsequently echoed by Burhan, who continued as the chairman of the Sinkiang government under the Communists. Quoting Stalin's classic dictum that the tasks of the Party in respect to the national problem change with the tasks of the Revolution, and that hence what is reactionary at one time may become progressive at another, Burhan declared:

At this junction, any movement which seeks separation from the Chinese People's Republic for independence will be *reactionary* because . . . it would undermine the interests of the various races, and particularly of the foremost majority of the race concerned.⁶³

Thus, by virtue of this declaration, any idea that the minorities might secede from China was excluded from the policy of the Chinese Communists. At the same time, basing himself again upon Stalin's classic definition of the nation as "an historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological composition manifested in a community of culture," Burhan also attacked the Pan-Turkic ideology of certain Uighur nationalists, which was spreading at that time in Sinkiang, and declared that neither people speaking Turkic, nor practising Islam, formed a single integral nation, for they lacked a common territory, a common economic way of life, and a common culture. He proclaimed that all Pan-Turkic theories were "mistaken from beginning to end."⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that Burhan was at the time not a Communist Party member. It is obvious that he was carrying out orders. For a rich merchant of Moslem background to survive at the helm of the Communist government of Sinkiang, this was the price he had to pay. In return for these services the Chinese granted

⁶⁰ *Policy Towards Nationalities of the People's Republic of China, A Collection of Papers*, Peking, 1953, pp. 25-49.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-53.

⁶² *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, October 2, 1951.

⁶³ *Survey of China Mainland Press*, Hong Kong, March 18, 1952, No. 297, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Burhan a subsequent meteoric career. It is even possible that he was admitted into the Party, for in 1956 he addressed the Eighth National Congress of the Party, where he called upon the Communists to pay more attention to the Arab world, to spread their propaganda among the Moslems, etc. In 1954, Burhan moved to Peking, where he became Director of the Institute of National Minority Languages of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, a Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Committee of Afro-Asian Solidarity, and Chairman of the Chinese Islamic Association. He visited Mecca and a series of Arab countries at the head of a delegation of Chinese Moslems. In Peking, at various receptions for foreign visitors from the Moslem countries, and abroad, at various conferences, Burhan now acts as a spokesman for the Chinese Communists in all matters which concern the Moslem world.

It should perhaps be recalled at this point that the ideology which Burhan was attacking, in its broadest and loosest sense, maintained that all the Turkic-speaking peoples, from Turkey, via Azerbaidzhan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Kazakhstan, the Volga Tatars, Idel-Ural, and as far as Yakutia, and including Sinkiang, form essentially a single nation, with one territory, one culture, and one national consciousness. Particularly in Sinkiang, the Pan-Turkic theory held that the Chinese division of the province's population into fourteen nationalities that had originated with Sheng Shih-ts'ai was an artificial invention, because the Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Taranchi, Uzbeks, Tatars, and Tadzhiks, comprising 86.2 percent of Sinkiang's population, are only one nationality, descended from and forming a single Turkic nation.⁶⁵

Within the narrow scope of Sinkiang, these ethnic groups do, indeed, seem to conform to Stalin's definition of the nation, if the Pan-Turkic claims are correct. Russian authorities, however, like the Chinese, strongly disagree with the Pan-Turkic theory and maintain that "the peoples of the Turkic system do not constitute . . . a single, unified world [but] differ from one another in ethnic origin, language, and culture."⁶⁶ What the Russian ethnographers most stress, however, is the differences in the ethnic origin of the Turkic peoples: they emphasize, for example, that the Kazakhs separated from the Uzbeks in the fifteenth century; or that the Tadzhiks speak a mixture of Turkic and Iranian, are of Iranian origin, and represent the pre-Uzbek indigenes of Central Asia. At the same time, however, these ethnographers conspicuously keep silent on the similarities of these peoples in modern times and disregard the fact that they feel themselves akin today.

Initial Chinese Communist Policies in Sinkiang

If there was some doubt in the Communist ranks as to whether or not Sinkiang was a legitimate part of China for the People's Liberation Army to enter, it was quickly dispelled:

Before the liberation of Sinkiang and during the revolution in the three districts [of Kulja] . . . someone raised the question whether Sinkiang was Chinese territory.

⁶⁵ Owen Lattimore, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 112-113.

⁶⁶ *Istoriya narodov Uzbekistana* (A History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan), Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, Tashkent, 1950, p. 12.

After repeated discussions, it was concluded the *question itself* was erroneous, and the error was corrected. . . . Sinkiang will permanently belong to the territory of the Motherland.⁶⁷

As the People's Liberation Army approached Sinkiang in September 1949, Akhmedjan Kasimi, Saifudin, and other leaders of the Kulja regime left for Peking to attend the People's Consultative Council. While on their way, their airplane crashed under mysterious circumstances, and all the Kulja leaders except Saifudin died in the accident.⁶⁸ In this way, the problem of the Kulja regime was presumably solved for good. At the same time Burhan, the Kuomintang-appointed chairman of the Sinkiang government, accepted an ultimatum by the approaching People's Liberation Army to be "peacefully liberated" and sent a telegram to Peking proclaiming his government's loyalty to the "unified and democratic Motherland."⁶⁹ On October 20, 1949, the People's Liberation Army reached Urumchi, and the Kuomintang army, under General Tao Shih-yueh, defected to its side.⁷⁰

Before anything else could be done, the first task facing the Chinese in Sinkiang was to eliminate all organized nationalist opposition. Article 14 of the Common Program provided for the establishment of a "system of military control" in all liberated territories, so that the local people's governments could be "formed of persons appointed by the Central People's Government or by the front-line military political organs." The system of military government was to last as long as the military and political situation in a given region made it necessary.⁷¹ (It is a remarkable feature of the Chinese revolution that, unlike the Russian revolution, its backbone was the army, rather than any spontaneous popular organs like the early Russian Soviets). The Provincial Government of Sinkiang was reorganized by the army on December 17, 1949. Burhan was retained as its chairman, and it consisted of nine Uighurs, three Kazakhs, four Chinese, two Tungans, and one representative each of all other national groups. The same pattern of national representation was preserved in the formation of district governments in the rest of the province.⁷² The real power in Sinkiang presumably rested in the hands of General Wang Chen, Commander of Sinkiang Military District, and in the hands of the Sinkiang Sub-Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party, headed by Wang En-mao, as First Secretary, and two other Chinese and Saifudin as the other three secretaries.⁷³

Soon after the liberation and the death in the air-crash of the leaders of the Kulja regime, the Kulja armed forces were disbanded and integrated into the 22nd Army Group of the People's Liberation 5th Army. Such a step was necessary,

⁶⁷ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, December 26, 1957.

⁶⁸ *Far Eastern Survey*, New York, January 1956, Vol. XXV, pp. 8, 10-11.

⁶⁹ *Ocherki istorii Kitaya v novyeyshee vremya* (The Outline History of China in Modern Times), USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1959, p. 445.

⁷⁰ *Current Background*, No. 365, Hong Kong, October, 1955, pp. 44-45.

⁷¹ *Zakonodatelnye akty Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki* (Laws of the Chinese People's Republic), Moscow, 1952, p. 54.

⁷² *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, Moscow, 1956, No. 2, p. 96.

⁷³ *Current Background*, No. 158, Hong Kong, February 15, 1952, pp. 1-2.

according to Saifudin, in order to do away with "any suspicious attitudes or mistaken understanding" of this army's loyalty to the People's Liberation Army.⁷⁴ The Liberation of the Kulja area was not quite peaceful, however, for the official sources report that "during the liberation of Altai, armed cabals under the leadership of the American imperialist spy, Osman Bator, staged riots [though] the People's Liberation Army exterminated these bands."⁷⁵

At the same time, the Communists took strong measures to eliminate all suspicious or openly rebellious Uighur elements. It was reported in the *Sintsian Gazeti* that "the security organs gradually liquidated most of the espionage and underground counterrevolutionary groups and organizations." By April 1951, they had uncovered six "espionage centers" and 70 "counterrevolutionary groups," and seized from them more than 5,000 guns, 80 radio transmitters, seven boxes of dynamite, etc. "All these elements came from the local nationalist circles."⁷⁶ It is therefore probable that at least some Pan-Turkic and Uighur nationalist elements fell victim to this first wave of Chinese Communist repression.

The Establishment of Regional Autonomy

With the suppression of organized nationalist opposition, the ground was broken for major administrative reforms. Because of the unstable situation, the introduction of civilian government and autonomy in Sinkiang was overdue. The year 1953 was characterized by the Commander of the People's Liberation Army units in Sinkiang as one when the "social order became stable" for the first time.⁷⁷ In many other national minority regions of China local autonomy had already existed for three years and to introduce it here was the next task to be carried out in Sinkiang.

A draft program for the introduction of regional autonomy for the nationalities was formulated at the Second Enlarged Session of the Nationalities Affairs Commission in December 1951,⁷⁸ and, after passing several other levels, was finally ratified by the Central Government Council on August 8, 1952.⁷⁹ This program proclaimed that "all national autonomous districts shall be inseparable parts of the territory of the People's Republic of China," while all their organs "shall be local state power organs under the *unified* leadership of the Central People's Government." The program foresaw three types of autonomous units: (1) a unit inhabited by a single national minority; (2) a unit with one large majority within which local minorities were to have their own sub-autonomous units; and (3) a unit with several minorities, none of which was in a majority, in which case each would have a joint autonomous coalition government. Han Chinese living within autonomous

⁷⁴ *Far Eastern Survey*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷⁵ *Hsinhua News Agency Releases*, Peking, October 7, 1954.

⁷⁶ A. G. Yakovlev, *Reshenie natsionalnogo voprosa v Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respublike* (The Solution of the Nationality Problem in the People's Republic of China), Moscow, 1959, pp. 179-180.

⁷⁷ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, September 27, 1955.

⁷⁸ *Hsinhua News Agency Releases*, Peking, August 12, 1952.

⁷⁹ *Survey of China Mainland Press*, Hong Kong, No. 394, August 14, 1952, p. 12.

districts "need not introduce regional autonomy," i.e., they would have extra-territorial rights. The administrative status of the autonomous units was to be of three types: *hsiang*, *du*, and *hsien*. The government of an autonomous district "shall be formed principally of personnel of national minorities," but it should also include Chinese. The autonomous governments were given the right to "adopt national languages" in their organs as well as in cultural and educational establishments. They also acquired the right to "train minority national cadres" (though only such as "love the Motherland," that is, China); develop the economy, but "within the framework" of the centralized plans; develop national culture, education, arts, and health; organize public security and local militia units, but only "according to the unified military system of the state;" etc. The autonomous governments also had the right "to enact their own independent laws and regulations," but these had to be approved by the superior government organs "of two levels above" and finally registered with the Central Government. Last but not least, Article 40 of the program stated that the "right to interpret and revise this program shall belong to the Central People's Government."⁸⁰

The peculiar features of this Chinese-style autonomy are that: (1) it is extremely centralized and limited, and that (2) autonomous units can be formed without regard to the size of the population of the nationality group and that the same group can have several autonomous units in different places of China. In the latter respect, the system differs from the autonomy practiced in the USSR, and this difference seems to be an improvement; but in the former respect, Chinese autonomy is equivalent only to that of the USSR "autonomous oblasts" and falls far short of the rights of the Soviet autonomous republics, not to mention the Union republics.

The Chinese Communist Party leaders and the press hailed the new program. A *Jen Min Jih Pao* editorial hailed the autonomy program as the "basic policy for the solution of China's nationality problem, employed by Mao Tse-tung by use of the theory of nationalities in Marxism-Leninism." The editorial emphasized, however, that "nationalization of the autonomous organs" was the "crucial problem in the policy of autonomy"; it conceded that where autonomy was already practised, "Han cadres try to monopolize the tasks," and, as a result, local cadres "have posts but no authority"; the editorial criticized this feature, but justified it on the ground that the Hans were an "advanced nationality," whereas the minority masses often "have no resources to enjoy fully the rights they have won."⁸¹

That there were some misconceptions regarding the implementation of autonomy was revealed by Ulanfu, vice-premier of China and chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission:

Some people among the national minorities consider autonomous districts to be independent states, not subject to guidance by the people's governments at a superior level . . . Some also considered that . . . Han Chinese are not required.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-16.

⁸¹ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, September 9, 1953.

⁸² *Hsinhua News Agency Releases*, Peking, August 12, 1952.

On the other hand, Ulanfu also complained that some Han cadres had certain doubts and misgivings in respect to enforcement of regional autonomy, assumed that with liberation came the end of national oppression, and that therefore regional autonomy was not necessary and could be an obstacle to national unity by fostering local nationalism.

Preparations for the implementation of regional autonomy in Sinkiang began in September 1952, when a preparatory committee was set up, headed by Burhan, Kao Chin-ch'un, and Saifudin. Its tasks were to develop propaganda for autonomy, to study the nationality problem in the area, and to initiate the establishment of autonomy in places where the agrarian reform had been completed.⁶³ During 1954, this Committee helped to form five autonomous *diou* and six autonomous *hsien* in Sinkiang.⁶⁴ In February 1955, a special committee to prepare for the regional autonomy of Sinkiang as a whole was created. In August 1955, the provincial government adopted a resolution calling for regional autonomy. The First Sinkiang Provincial People's Congress approved this plan in September 1955 and dispatched it to Peking. There the State Council and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress approved it on September 13, 1955, and as a result the Sinkiang Uighur National Autonomous Region came into being on October 1, 1955. It is of the second type of national autonomy units mentioned in the program above. At the same time, a new government for Sinkiang was formed with Saifudin as its chairman.⁶⁵

Social-Economic Reforms

Simultaneously with the political-administrative reforms, a series of reforms was being carried out which have fundamentally altered the former social-economic pattern of the country. The social-economic reforms in the minority areas were carried out in two stages: a "democratic reform," the aim of which was "to redistribute the land and to abolish oppression and exploitation," and a "socialist reform," the aim of which was "to change the system of private ownership of the means of production, to establish a system of socialist collective ownership, and eventually a system of ownership by the whole people." Yet in the minority areas both types of reform were to proceed very slowly and were to be accompanied by the development of a class struggle. Although the provisions of the agrarian reform in China were announced in Article 27 of the *Common Program*, in Sinkiang the introduction of this measure was greatly delayed. According to a Soviet researcher,

it was first necessary to change basically the relations between the nationalities of the provinces as well as between them and the Chinese people. It was necessary to overcome the influence of narrow nationalism upon the toiling masses.⁶⁶

In a preparation for the agrarian reform, a preferential tax policy was first put into effect in Sinkiang and a "campaign against evil landlords and despots,"

⁶³ *Survey of China Mainland Press*, Peking, No. 416, September 1952, p. 20.

⁶⁴ Yakovlev, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

⁶⁵ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 365, October 25, 1955, pp. 3-4.

⁶⁶ *Uchenye zapiski*, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

accompanied by a general rent reduction, was carried out during 1950. The Communists deliberately employed local poor peasants to collect taxes in order to raise their "class consciousness" and to set them against the rich of their own nationality. The Chinese had learned this practice of fomenting class struggle from the Russian Communists, who had applied it widely among the non-Russian nationalities in the USSR in the 1920's. The tax and rent campaign resulted in liquidation of the landlord monopolies on irrigation systems, annulment of rent arrears and debts, etc. The significance of this campaign consisted in the fact that, on the part of the peasants, this was "the first open resistance against their tribal oppressors," whom they had not dared to touch before. The campaign "helped them to overcome the nationalist ideology" of class unity and friendship within their nationality groups.⁸⁷

Next, the Second Provincial Conference of Representatives of All Nationalities and of All Sections of the People resolved in August–September 1952 to carry out the agrarian reform in Sinkiang. The reform was to be carried out in five stages: (1) explanatory work, (2) determination of the class status of the population, (3) confiscation of landlord property, (4) redistribution of such property, and (5) development of a movement for consolidation of agricultural production.⁸⁸

As in the rest of China, the execution of this reform was placed in the hands of the poor and middle peasants, and other "democratic elements" in the villages. However, unlike the program in China proper, ecclesiastical property was left untouched in Sinkiang, in order to placate the Moslem leaders. Also, to prevent the landlords from influencing their expropriators by appealing to their feelings, many local people were first educated for the purposes of reform. Everything was organized in such a manner as to create the illusion that it was not the Chinese, the foreigners, but people of their own nationality who were waging the class struggle and expropriating their own rich. It was upon this principle that the brigades for implementation of the agrarian reform were organized; the majority of their participants were of the same nationality as the landlord whose property they were to expropriate.⁸⁹

In redistributing the confiscated land and other property, careful measures were taken to divide them justly among different nationalities of the area to prevent quarrels.⁹⁰

After the agrarian reform was completed, the creation of agricultural cooperatives was promoted in Sinkiang. Its purpose was to increase agricultural production and to concentrate agricultural surpluses in the hands of the government. By 1954, 32.84 percent of Sinkiang's peasants had joined the mutual-aid teams; there were also 79 producer cooperatives and one cooperative of a higher type.⁹¹ In 1957 Saifudin, in an interview with a Soviet journal, *Sovremenny Vostok*, stated that "more than 95 percent of the peasants are now united in agricultural producer

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 245–254.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 254.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 251–254.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

cooperatives of a higher type."⁸² Finally, the communes began to be established in 1958. In another statement, Saifudin revealed that the communes were "universally established in the agricultural and pastoral areas throughout Sinkiang in 1958, and numbered 451."⁸³

With regard to the reforms in the pastoral areas of Sinkiang, a different policy was first adopted, and its principle was "no struggle; no class demarcation; mutual benefit to herd-owners and herdsmen."⁸⁴ In addition, the herd-owners received all the aid possible to encourage the increase of livestock. It is probable that, appreciating the weight of animal produce in the exports needed to pay for the industrialization of China, the Communists wished to prevent the painful experience of their Russian comrades in the USSR, where in the 1930's most of the livestock were slaughtered by the peasants who wanted to avoid giving them gratis to the collective farms. Unlike the program in agricultural areas, the campaign of class segregation, of open struggle of the poor against the rich, etc., was avoided in the pastoral areas of Sinkiang. The wages of the shepherds were fixed after consultation between them and the herd-owners. Neither the pastures nor the livestock of the rich were confiscated for some time, and ecclesiastical property was also left untouched.⁸⁵

However, between 1956 and 1958 the policy changed and the socialist transformation was carried out throughout the pastoral zone. As has been noted, by the fall of 1958 the communes were established even there. In the process of this transformation, however, because of the "nature of the class structure of the nomad society and their religious prejudices," it was urged that there be "no rushing of those who were still unwilling" to accept the reforms.⁸⁶ Yet Saifudin says that in establishing pastoral cooperatives the same measures were adopted as in the agricultural ones.⁸⁷ The animals owned privately were pooled together and the profits were shared by all according to the number of animals contributed and the work done. When the commune system was introduced, all animals were simply bought up by them at a fixed price.

It is obvious that the agrarian reform, the creation of cooperatives, and communization have radically changed the traditional social and economic patterns of the peoples of Sinkiang. The Communists were accustomed to promise that their aim was to carry out these reforms "peacefully"; whether they were, however, is doubtful, for it is utterly incredible that the breaking up of an ancient way of life could be devoid of opposition and struggle. And, indeed, Soviet sources note that the land reform in Sinkiang was accompanied by "a fierce class struggle, assassinations, etc."⁸⁸ contrary to the assurances of Saifudin and others that it was carried out "smoothly" and "without sabotage." After the campaign to

⁸² *Central Asian Review*, London, 1958, Vol. VI, p. 77.

⁸³ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, October 25, 1959.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, September 25, 1955.

⁸⁵ Yakovlev, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁸⁶ *Central Asian Review*, London, 1957, Vol. V, p. 159.

⁸⁷ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, October 25, 1959.

⁸⁸ *Uchenye zapiski*, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

create cooperatives, the peasantry, having lost their newly acquired land and reluctant to work in the collectives, moved to the cities en masse, so that the Chinese ordered an intensification of propaganda and repressive measures "to dissuade peasant migration into the cities where they cannot find work."⁹⁹ As recently as December 1959, a *Sinkiang Jih Pao* editorial admitted that "in agricultural and pastoral areas, the class struggle has not yet been extinguished," the well-off and middle peasants opposed the communes and "cherish capitalist ideas," while the "counterrevolutionaries . . . do not want to wait for destruction passively." All this led to a decision to develop at the beginning of 1960 "a mass movement for overhauling the people's communes" in Sinkiang.¹⁰⁰

A few words should be said about the interesting role played in the agricultural reform by the People's Liberation Army in Sinkiang. Obviously copying the imperial and Kuomintang traditions described above, a decree of January 20, 1950, provided that, for the purpose of "actively helping the state to develop the economy," 110,000 out of the 193,000 People's Liberation Army soldiers stationed in Sinkiang were to engage in "productive work." To become self-sufficient in provisions the army established a series of army farms, "where the soldiers spend three fourths of their time, using the last quarter for military training." Subsequently, these farms were reorganized into military cooperatives. In December 1954, the "production units" of the People's Liberation Army were reorganized into "production-and-construction units" and also put to work in industry.¹⁰¹ It is remarkable that when late in 1958, North Vietnam was collectivizing its agriculture, the Vietnamese army sent observers to Sinkiang to study the experiences of the People's Liberation Army and upon their return, set up a series of similar military farms in some of Vietnam's provinces.¹⁰²

Like the implementation of the regional autonomy and the carrying out of agricultural reforms, the industrial development of the national minority areas is assumed in official theory to be an important "key to the transformation of national minorities into modern nations!"¹⁰³ Soon after the liberation, it was officially proclaimed that "Northwest China, hitherto one of the nation's most backward and underdeveloped areas, has all the material prerequisites for becoming, like Manchuria, another major industrial center of China."¹⁰⁴ Hence it was intended that Sinkiang, with its reportedly rich resources, would be made into an industrial base for China as a whole. Consequently, the prime purpose of industrialization there has been not only, and probably not so much, to elevate the minorities from their backwardness as to serve the interests of China as a whole. Sinkiang's resources include oil, coal, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, silver and rare earths, as well as cotton, silk, grain and livestock. However, the numerical estimates of its

⁹⁹ *Sinkiang Jih Pao*, Urumchi, June 18, 1954.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1959.

¹⁰¹ *Kratkiye soobscheniya*, Vol. XXI, Moscow, 1956, pp. 144-152.

¹⁰² *Survey of China Mainland Press*, Hong Kong, No. 1972, March 13, 1959, p. 39.

¹⁰³ *Materialy VIII Vsekitaiskogo Sezda Kommunisticheskoi Partii Kitaya* (Documents of the All-China Congress of the Chinese Communist Party), Moscow, 1956, pp. 144-152.

¹⁰⁴ *People's China*, Peking, April 16, 1950, p. 1.

mineral resources have not yet been reported, nor is the quality of ores, etc., known. Therefore, one must be cautious in assuming how rich Sinkiang really is. In 1957, the value of the gross industrial output of Sinkiang amounted to 444 million Jans and was 66 times higher than the level in 1949. Yet, such a rate of growth does not mean much since the development began almost from nothing. A more impressive figure, for example, is that of the production of steel. In 1959, Sinkiang produced 250,000 tons of steel, which makes 50 kilograms per capita, whereas in China as a whole, the per capita output of steel amounted to only 15 kilograms.¹⁰⁵ Yet in spite of a decade of noticeable industrial development in Sinkiang, and in spite of the fact that its rate of growth has been ten times greater than that of the rest of China, it is still not quite clear whether or not Sinkiang is profitable to the Chinese. Huge amounts of capital are being poured into the province but it is not certain whether the investment is paying dividends. The strategic position of Sinkiang as a deep inland base is also no longer justifiable because of the development of modern weapons. On the other hand, if the resources of Sinkiang have not been overestimated, it must be assumed that in the long run Sinkiang may become a prize for the Chinese, whose population may pour into the area. In 1959, the Sinkiang Party Committee adopted a resolution to transform the province into "a base in the Motherland for the iron and steel, petroleum, coal non-ferrous metals, textiles, sugar refining and other industries as well as a base of cotton production." Consequently, "to overcome the shortage of labor in Sinkiang, the Chinese Communist Party decided to transfer workers from Kiangsu, Hupeh, Anhweid and Hunan provinces. Kiangsu, Hupeh, and Anhwei sent more than 100,000 young and able-bodied persons to aid Sinkiang [in the summer of 1959] and have decided to continue to send large numbers of them."¹⁰⁶

Chinese Cultural Policy

Local autonomy, industrialization, and similar undertakings require the training of cadres from among the national minorities. The All-China Minority Nationalities Education Conference, held September 20-28, 1958, announced that "the foremost task in national minorities education policy is the training of cadres."¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, two schools for the training of cadres were established in Sinkiang, which, between 1952 and 1955, graduated 10,000 local inhabitants. In addition, classes to train the cadres were also established in other parts of the province. By September 1955, there were approximately 36,000 members of cadres of local nationalities in Sinkiang, or approximately 70 percent of the total in the province.¹⁰⁸ In 1956, the number of minority trainees jumped to 61,772, but in 1958 there were still only 62,000, or 53 percent of the total in the area.¹⁰⁹ The slow-down might have reflected losses in the antinationalist campaign that was

¹⁰⁵ *Survey of China Mainland Press*, Hong Kong, No. 2140, November 20, 1959, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁷ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 152, January 15, 1952, pp. 8-11.

¹⁰⁸ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, September 24, 1955.

¹⁰⁹ *Kuang Ming Jih Pao*, Peking, September 30, 1955.

then taking place, while the decline of their proportion in the total number certainly was due to the influx of Hans into Sinkiang.

The above-mentioned Education Conference of 1951 also resolved to reform the existing public education system in the minority areas, to introduce the native languages into the schools wherever possible and to re-educate the teachers in new political doctrines. This program was implemented in Sinkiang in 1952.¹¹⁰

The changes in Sinkiang education facilities have, according to reports, been quite impressive. While before liberation there was only one higher educational institution in the province, there were eight in 1959; the number of primary schools increased from 1,335 to 13,952, and the number of middle schools from 20 to 628.¹¹¹ In 1958, universal education was said to be in effect in two thirds of the counties and cities of the region.¹¹² Judging from the statement that the native languages are used "for teaching in primary and middle schools,"¹¹³ it may be concluded that in the higher educational institutions of Sinkiang Chinese is probably used as the medium of instruction. Only scattered figures are available on the number of the native students in the higher educational institutions. It has been reported, for instance, that in 1956, 96 percent of the 1,240 students at Sinkiang College were of the local minority nationalities.¹¹⁴

Saifudin once reported that in Sinkiang "periodicals are being published in seven languages; the central newspapers are published in Uighur, Chinese, Kazakh and Mongolian."¹¹⁵ As early as 1952, over 2,500,000 books in the local languages were published in Sinkiang, with the works of Mao Tse-tung predominating.¹¹⁶ It is remarkable that much of the publishing for Sinkiang is being done in the Uzbek SSR by request of China. In 1956 alone, 500,000 books and pamphlets were printed in Tashkent.¹¹⁷

Of special interest and significance is the Chinese linguistic policy toward the minorities. In this connection, the Chinese have rich Soviet experience to draw upon. The Communists speak clearly about their motives for the establishment of written languages for ethnic groups which lack them. They argue that such minorities "have found it all the more difficult to study the various policies of the Party and the Government, and to master production techniques." For example, some minorities in China are said to have understood the official term "unified tillage of land" to mean the "unification of gold and silver," and this has "increased the ideological worries of the masses"; such errors, it is officially complained, "have greatly delayed the tasks of socialist transformation."¹¹⁸ Accordingly in February 1956 the Institute of National Minority Languages was formed as

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, September 25, 1955.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Kuang Ming Jih Pao*, Peking, September 29, 1959.

¹¹⁴ *Sovetskaya etnografiya*, Moscow, 1956, No. 2, pp. 102-3.

¹¹⁵ *Central Asian Review*, London, 1958, Vol. VI, pp. 77-8.

¹¹⁶ *People's China*, Peking, 1954, No. 3, p. 43.

¹¹⁷ Yakovlev, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹¹⁸ *Hsin Chien She*, Peking, April 1957.

part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Burhan was transferred from Sinkiang to become its head.¹¹⁹ Several Nationalities Languages Investigation Teams were also formed in various localities, including Sinkiang, as branches of the Institute. The Institute was charged with the task of creating by 1960 written languages for all nationalities which lacked them. A Soviet expert on the creation of minority languages, Serdyuchenko, was called in from the USSR to serve with the Institute as an advisor.

In 1955, a research team of the Chinese Academy of Sciences which was visiting Sinkiang recommended reforming the Uighur language because it was "difficult to master."¹²⁰ Since then, the linguists from Peking have visited Sinkiang almost every year, and Serdyuchenko has reportedly been pressing for the adoption of a Cyrillic alphabet for several Sinkiang languages.¹²¹ In any case, on August 15-22, 1956, a First Conference on Alphabetic Reform in Sinkiang was convened at Urumchi. It apparently resolved, after a bitter struggle, on the adoption of a Cyrillic alphabet for the written languages of the Uighurs, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, and Sibos, instead of the Arabic which they were using; the Uzbeks and Tatars were to use the same Cyrillic writing as their brothers in the Soviet Union, while the Mongols were to adopt the Cyrillic script used in Mongolia.¹²²

Some observers in the West have advanced an interesting thesis, which may be correct, that the Uighur and Kazakh nationalist-minded intellectuals in Sinkiang, who have been known for their pro-Soviet orientation, favored the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet as a means toward cultural unity with their literally more advanced brothers across the border.¹²³ Such tactics on their part, if connected with their subsequent demands for establishment of a Soviet-type union republic in Sinkiang, seem quite plausible. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that there were two more groups in Sinkiang at the time, both keenly interested in the linguistic controversy. Many other Uighurs and Kazakhs undoubtedly favored the preservation of their ancient Arabic script, while the Chinese and their supporters favored the adoption of a Latin alphabet, based on the system of phonetics adopted at the same time in Peking for the Han Chinese language.

It is not clear what actually happened at the August 1956 conference at Urumchi. That it had adopted a Cyrillic alphabet is officially reported. However, a year later an authoritative Chinese writer stated that the conference had actually adopted a Latin, rather than a Cyrillic, alphabet,¹²⁴ while from still later Chinese reports it is evident that in practice neither Cyrillic nor Latin was adopted but Arabic was continued in use.¹²⁵

It is therefore possible that although the August 1956 Urumchi conference adopted the Cyrillic alphabet on paper, Peking simply vetoed the decision, and

¹¹⁹ *Handbook on People's China*, Peking, 1957, p. 148.

¹²⁰ *Hsinhua News Agency Releases*, Peking, December 15, 1955.

¹²¹ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, February 10, 1960.

¹²² *Hsinhua News Agency Releases*, Peking, August 28, 1956; *Central Asian Review*, London, 1958, Vol. VI, pp. 81-2.

¹²³ *The China Quarterly*, London, July-September 1960, pp. 36 et seq.

¹²⁴ *Hsin Chien She*, Peking, April, 1957.

¹²⁵ *Sinkiang Jih Pao*, Urumchi, December 17, 1959.

it was never put into effect. At the subsequent Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in September 1956, there was again some discussion of the written language for the minorities,¹²⁶ while in October 1956, at the meeting held in Kweiyang and sponsored by the Institute of Minority Languages of the Academy of Sciences, "all agreed on the adoption of written languages based on the Latin alphabet [which] will especially be of great convenience to the minority nationalities in their study of the Han language."¹²⁷

Again it was Burhan who was made the official Chinese spokesman for the new line which heralded an important switch in the nationality policy. Recalling the October 1956 meeting in his speech to the fifth session of the National People's Congress in February 1958, Burhan attacked all who "prefer a foreign language to the Han language"; he praised the Chinese language as a "highly developed" tongue of "progress and refinement" which should be studied by the national minorities "to learn the advanced culture of the Han nationality." He went even so far as to proclaim Chinese to be the "second mother tongue" of all the nationalities of China¹²⁸—an expression borrowed directly from Russian propaganda currently being carried on in the USSR, which proclaims that Russian must be accepted as the "second mother tongue" of all Soviet nationalities.

Following these new developments, a Second Nationalities Languages Conference convened in Urumchi in the first half of December 1959. Attended in full body by the provincial government and the Regional Party Committee members, it decreed the "replacement of the current Uighur and Kazakh languages, written by means of the Arabic alphabet, by new writing based on the Han Phonetization Plan," and the borrowing of new terms from the Chinese, so as to promote the "natural union between various nationalities of the Motherland."¹²⁹ An editorial in the *Sinkiang Jih Pao* hailing the decision of the conference was even more outspoken in its demands than these resolutions; it stated bluntly that "since nationality work was part of the program for building socialism, it must be necessarily geared to the needs of socialism," whereas the "languages [probably meaning the scripts] of the national minorities have become incompatible with the needs of the leap forward in economic construction and cultural revolution"; as far as the borrowing of words from Chinese is concerned, the editorial said that this was a "natural trend of development," a "process of natural union," rather than a form of assimilation, and that, because it was "natural," it should be supported and encouraged.¹³⁰ Since opposition to language reform was to be expected, a clear warning was sounded in advance:

Unwillingness to accept the Han Phonetization Plan would be tantamount to disapproval of the efforts of the peoples of all the nationalities of Sinkiang to achieve socialism and Communism.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Hsen Chien She, Peking, April, 1957.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, February 15, 1958.

¹²⁹ *Sinkiang Jih Pao*, Urumchi, December 17, 1959.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, December 18, 1959.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

This was an obvious reminder that such disapproval would be dealt with by the security forces.

In all their reforms, the Chinese Communists were probably most cautious with regard to religion, which they recognized as still a dominant force: "Where religious problems which the Party and the government frequently meet in carrying out their reforms are concerned, they are handled with caution and treated separately." Cadres are urged to make a distinction between "normal religious activities and extortions," between "religious people and counterrevolutionaries operating under the cloak of religion," the former should be "won over" and the latter combatted.¹³² In practice, however, these distinctions can probably seldom be clearly drawn.

Communist Party Tactics in the Conflict Between Han Chauvinism and Local Nationalism

Chinese social-economic reforms in Sinkiang were not welcomed by the groups of the local population whose material interests they greatly affected. It is for this reason that one meets time and again in official documents and the press reports mentioning stiff resistance to the Chinese policies. Saifudin revealed that at the end of 1954 some resistance groups had "attempted a counterrevolutionary insurrection at Hotien";¹³³ Burhan mentioned that in 1959, at Changki, "there was an attempt to sabotage domestic solidarity by a landlord" who was "aided by the Tadzhiks," but all were successfully "smashed."¹³⁴ The *Ili Jih Pao* reported on March 14, 1959, that in the Kazakh pastoral areas some people "quit the communes under various pretexts and depart for the Soviet Union" to live there in exile.¹³⁵

Other groups of the local population, probably less affected by the social and economic changes or more aware of the hopelessness of armed resistance and exile, attempt to adjust to the new conditions and to improve their lot by legal means and loyal opposition. The real nature and the direct political consequences of the Chinese Communist Party's nationality policy are most clearly revealed in its political tactics toward precisely these groups, for each time a group is eliminated which has become involved in open rebellion or exile, the groups which remain sooner or later become focal points of the hopes and desires of the masses of the local population, and the Chinese have to deal with and through them. What has happened in this respect in Sinkiang had an exact precedent in the Soviet Union. There, too, in all the non-Russian republics, by the middle of 1920's armed resistance and exodus into exile came to an end, and only groups loyal to the Communist cause were left on the surface of society. Most of these were made up of Communists of the local nationality, the so-called "national Communists." Some were really devoted and convinced idealists; others were opportunists, who had adjusted themselves to the new situation; still others only tactically adopted

¹³² *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, September 27, 1959.

¹³³ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 356, September 13, 1955.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 365, October 25, 1955.

¹³⁵ *Est et Ouest*, Paris, No. 237, 16-31 May, 1960.

the Communist slogans in order to be able to legally pursue their own policies. All of them knew the conditions under which members of their own national group lived better than the Russians did. Consequently, those who were convinced Communists demanded that Communism be brought to their national groups in their own native form rather than in the Russian form; that is, that Communist slogans and ideas be taught in the native language rather than in Russian and that schools, the press, etc., be developed in the language of the local nationality; that Communist reforms be adjusted to local conditions and local native cadres of Communists be charged with carrying them out on the spot. In other words, the national Communists proposed to facilitate the introduction of Communism to their own people by making it more acceptable in the local, national form; they argued that if it were introduced by Russians and in the Russian language, without regard to local peculiarities, it would be viewed by the local people as something forced on them from outside and that this would only stiffen their resistance against it. On the other hand, those among the national Communists who were more nationalist than Communist, as well as various local non-Communist groups, saw in these demands of the national Communists an opportunity to advance the interests of their national group. Consequently, they not only joined in the demands but went farther in requesting not only more native schools and periodicals but greater autonomy in government and a greater voice in politics. The Soviet Communist leaders in turn, partly because they were themselves chauvinists and nationalists, and partly because they regarded the demands of the national Communists as a form of opposition to the centralization of resources and efforts required for carrying out the rapid construction of socialism, branded these demands and their spokesmen as evidence of "local nationalist deviation." A number of prominent national Communists in the non-Russian republics of the USSR now even went so far as to call for secession of their republics from the Union on the ground that the Russian Communists had become chauvinists and betrayed the ideals of Communist internationalism and brotherhood. The struggle ended in victory for the stronger; in the early 1930's all the leading national Communists in the non-Russian republics were liquidated: Skrypnyk, Shumsky, and Khvylyovy in the Ukraine, Cherviakov in Belorussia, Mdivani and Makharadze in Georgia, and the whole group of Pan-Turkic national Communists led by Sultan Galiev (including Ikramov, Khodzhayev, Ibragimov, Adigamov, Validov, Yenbayev, Shamigulov, Riskulov, Khalikov, Murtazin, Firdevs, and scores of others), who were undoubtedly well known to the Pan-Turkists of Sinkiang. Similar purges of the national Communists have recurred periodically in the Soviet Union although on a lesser scale than in the 1930's. National Communism also appeared in Eastern Europe—in Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary, although there, unlike the national Communists in the Soviet republics, Tito and Gomulka controlled their national armies and police and the Soviet leaders abstained from bloody suppression, except in Hungary.

A similar type of national Communism has appeared in Sinkiang, and the pattern of its development closely parallels that in the USSR and Eastern Europe, which implies that the Chinese have not yet learned enough from Soviet expe-

rience. With regard to the Chinese Communist Party's attitude toward the nationalisms of the Chinese and the minority national groups there are discernible two distinct periods, each characterized by a "deviation" which appeared to constitute a major danger to the Communist cause at the time. The turning point was the year 1957.¹³⁶

Until 1957, Han chauvinism "inherited from the old society" was considered "the major danger to the solidarity and unity of the Motherland."¹³⁷ Two nationwide checkups on implementation of the nationality policy in 1952 and 1956, confirm this conclusion although it was emphasized that local nationalism "still existed."¹³⁸ Recognizing that Han chauvinism was the cause of local nationalism and influenced by the policy of "let one hundred flowers bloom, let one hundred schools of thought contend," voiced by Mao Tse-tung in May 1956, the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in September 1956—the general aim of which was to "make further efforts at invigorating the democratic life of the country"—called upon all Party members to "oppose great-nation chauvinism" and to "protect the equal rights of regional autonomy in the areas populated by national minorities."¹³⁹

In line with this policy, it was admitted that "it would be erroneous to consider that China can be built into a socialist society with the efforts of the Han nationality alone."¹⁴⁰ It was also recognized that "only by overcoming and preventing the tendency of greater nationalism, can the tendency of local nationalism be overcome and prevented."¹⁴¹ To overcome Great Hanism in practice, it was suggested, "the mentality of Han should get used to equality," which was lacking because of chauvinism's "long history" in China, in the course of which it "has certainly yielded more harmful effects than local nationalism."¹⁴²

Han chauvinism manifests itself, according to official statements at the time, in various ways. One is that Han leaders, thinking that the Chinese "are superior in everything to the national minorities . . . , disregard the minorities' rights," prevent the training of local cadres, and, if these are trained, give them responsibility, but no authority. The Han leaders also mechanically applied experiences in the Han areas "without considering local conditions." They did not wish to learn the languages of the minorities, or, if they knew them, were not willing to speak them. They disregarded the local customs and traditions of the minorities, "laughed at their traditional dresses and hats," being themselves "under the wrong concept that only when people wear the cadres' uniforms and speak the Han language, may they be considered as progressive." And as if this were not enough, these Han chauvinists did not even let the minority people complain, and if they did,

¹³⁶ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 495, March 5, 1958, p. 7.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Kung Ch'an Tung, *The Eighth Chinese Communist Party Congress; Proceedings and Related Materials*, Peking, 1956, Part III, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰ Shih Shih Shou Ts'e, Peking, No. 24, December 25, 1956.

¹⁴¹ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 402, July 24, 1956, p. 22.

¹⁴² Cheng Chih Hsueh Hsi, Peking, No. 10, October 13, 1956.

they were accused by the Han cadres of local nationalism. Under such pressures, "the national minority cadres reluctantly discard their national dresses and languages, and with them their contacts with the masses."¹⁴³

Although this catalog of abuses was compiled for an official statement of condemnation, it clearly illustrates how matters were in reality in China's national minority areas. In consequence in 1957 the spokesmen for the national minorities taking advantage of the opportunity of freedom of thought and criticism proclaimed in the "hundred flowers" policy, launched a series of caustic attacks on the Han Communist cadres. This criticism was apparently merged with the general attack by the "rightists" on Party policy, and consequently, when the "hundred flowers" faded and the Party line switched to the left, the attitude toward criticism by the minorities changed as well.

A general "rectification campaign" was ordered by the Central Committee in June 1957. Accordingly, at the Third Enlarged Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee Congress, on September 23, 1957, a new Party line on the nationalities problem was officially announced by Teng Hsiao-ping, the Party general secretary: "Socialist education and anti-rightist struggles among the national minorities have the same content as in the Han areas, but stress should be laid on opposition to nationalist tendencies." He directed the Party organizations to prepare plans for a new "socialist education of the masses" as well as for criticism of "nationalist tendencies among Party members" in the national minority areas; the political re-education of the cadres was to put new stress on the class struggle and Marxist-Leninist nationality theory.¹⁴⁴

Following these directives, in the spring and summer of 1958 an Enlarged Conference of the Sinkiang Party Committee convened at Urumchi with the specific task of combatting local nationalism and the bourgeois rightists, who were "disguising themselves as supporters of 'national interests'" and who called themselves Marxists-Leninists but were actually revisionists.¹⁴⁵ This peculiar conference lasted for four and a half months and heard 1,278 speakers. Finally, "a decisive victory was scored in the struggle against local nationalism" and the latter was officially proclaimed "a major dangerous tendency currently existing within the Party in Sinkiang." The victory was followed by adoption of a resolution "On the Overcoming of Local Nationalism" and by expulsion of an unspecified number of "nationalist comrades" from the Party. At the same time, Wang En-mao, First Secretary of the Sinkiang Party Committee, instructed "all Chinese Communist Party organizations of the *hsien* level and above [to] develop the struggle against local nationalism, and through this struggle make the cadres realize the major distinction between Marxism-Leninism and nationalism."¹⁴⁶

Although the number of national Communists expelled from the Party in Sinkiang has never been disclosed, it probably was small. It was at one time

¹⁴³ *Shih Shih Shou Ts'e*, Peking, No. 24, December 25, 1956.

¹⁴⁴ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 477, October 25, 1957, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 512, July 10, 1958, pp. 1-7.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 512, July 10, 1958, pp. 37-8.

reported that in 1958 the Sinkiang Party organizations numbered altogether over 50,000 members, of which the representatives of local nationalities, that is, the non-Chinese, made up some 47 to 50 per cent.¹⁴⁷ It is not clear, however, whether those are pre-purge or post-purge figures. Yet in 1959 the total number of Party members in Sinkiang jumped to 130,000, of which members of the local nationalities comprised 62,000, or 47 per cent.¹⁴⁸ Thus the proportion of the local party members had not increased at all, but had possibly even decreased from 50 percent, in spite of the fact that the total membership was 2½ times as large.

Several names of expelled national Communist leaders have since been mentioned in the press. Among them were *Znya Saimati*, former chairman of the Writers' League of Sinkiang and director of the Cultural Department of the Sinkiang government; *Ibrahim Turdi*, former director of the Civil Affairs Department of the Sinkiang government; *Abdul Rizak Kari*, former deputy director of the Commerce Department of the Sinkiang government; and *Abdurahim Aissa*, deputy head of the government of the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Chu.¹⁴⁹

Western observers have noted in addition that the head of the government of the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Chu, the president of its People's Court, and the vice-chairman of propaganda of the Ili Kazakh Party Committee were also victims of this purge.¹⁵⁰

From numerous articles and press references to a national Communist faction in the Sinkiang Party organizations, the following political platforms of the opposing sides can be deduced.

Asserting that Sinkiang had never been an indigenous part of China, the Sinkiang national Communists expressed a demand for some degree of separation from China: they wanted either an "independent republic within a Union" or a "federal republic," both presumably similar in status to the Union republics of the USSR. They also wanted to change the name from Sinkiang to either "Uighurstan" or "Eastern Turkestan." Their position was that Sinkiang's rich resources would make it self-sufficient and hence independent from China. It was not by accident that the Sinkiang Communists brought up the example of Soviet republics. After all, according to Stalin's own theory, Sinkiang has all prerequisites to be a "union republic." Stalin argued that a nationality has the right to a union republic status if (1) its territory borders on foreign states and, consequently, has an exit in case it would wish to leave the Union; (2) its population is more or less numerous, numbering "at least one million"; and (3) that population lives as a compact mass on its territory.¹⁵¹

The Chinese reaction to this demand was to call it "anti-history" and "anti-socialism." Wang En-mao bluntly declared that Sinkiang had always been an

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 34.

¹⁴⁸ *Jen Min Jih Pao*, Peking, October 25, 1959.

¹⁴⁹ *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 512, July 10, 1958, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ *The Chinese Quarterly*, London, July-September 1960, p. 34.

¹⁵¹ J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, *op. cit.*, p. 705.

inseparable part of China and concluded that since China "was already a unified country in the days before liberation, should we, in the days after it, divide the big socialist state into a number of small states? It is not necessary that China become a federation of republics." This argument based on the pre-liberation integrity of China seems, indeed, unbecoming of a Communist revolutionary, and this is presumably why the Sinkiang national Communists accused the Chinese of being chauvinist and maintained that they, the national Communists, were the real Marxists-Leninists. The Chinese also held that "national interests," that is the interests of the national minorities, under which the local nationalists were said to have taken cover, "cannot be separated from the interests of the whole country and of its 600 million people," for their fate "was, is, and will be identical." The abundance of natural resources, the Chinese argued, were not sufficient for Sinkiang to become an independent, modern country, because labor and capital are essential for their development, and these Sinkiang lacks. Consequently, if Sinkiang should separate from China, the Western imperialists would penetrate it and seize its natural riches, and it would lose its independence.

It was precisely the economic aspect of the Chinese argument that irritated the Sinkiang nationalists most. For they understand that Chinese investments in capital and labor in the development of Sinkiang inevitably mean the gradual occupation of Sinkiang by the Chinese. The coming of Han cadres and settlers to Sinkiang has been the focal point of conflict. The incoming Chinese are called colonizers in Sinkiang. The nationalists complained that although there was autonomy, it was the Han nationality that "manages the household and is the master." Consequently, they demanded 100 percent, or at least 75 percent, "nationalization" of the government and the Party on the grounds that the local people could properly serve their own nationality best. They maintained that the Chinese were not needed for the development of Sinkiang: "We do not need foreign people here; if we do not have enough people, we can call back the Uighurs and the Kazakhs from the Soviet Union"! The nationalists criticized with especially great severity the People's Liberation Army stationed in Sinkiang. They maintained that it was an occupation army and that the relations between the Han soldiers and the members of the local nationalities were "relations between armed and unarmed peasants."

The Chinese answer to this was that the local cadres did not possess sufficient skill, quality, and political consciousness to be entrusted with full authority in the province. They said that if the local cadres were left alone, local counter-revolutionaries would easily penetrate them and would sabotage the construction of socialism. Without Chinese labor and capital, the development of Sinkiang's resources would go slowly, which would hinder the construction of socialism both in Sinkiang and in China. It was for the sake of accelerated socialist construction that the Chinese must come to Sinkiang. Whoever opposed their coming, opposed the construction of socialism and was an agent of the bourgeoisie.

The national Communists also complained about the cultural policies of the Chinese Communist Party. They charged that the Chinese promoted a compulsory

"Hanization" of the national languages and that they deprived the local nationalities of their national self-respect when they ridiculed their cultures and customs. The Chinese answer to this was that there was no compulsory assimilation of nationalities in China, but a process of fusion of nations was taking place in the form of a natural law which should not be opposed.

It is difficult to appraise objectively the extent of the national Communist opposition in Sinkiang without statistics. However, on the basis of available evidence, it may be concluded that the opposition in Sinkiang was concentrated mainly against the top of Party and government cadres. At one time it was stated explicitly that "the seriousness of local nationalism lies not in the cadres in general, but among the leading cadres." On the other hand, the Chinese charged that the national Communists had fomented dissention and disunity among the masses, which, if taken literally, means that they must have been popular and had enjoyed a following. They were also accused of being involved in unspecified counter-revolutionary riots, which, however, might have taken place in the past. There is no doubt, however, that the Chinese have appraised the opposition in Sinkiang as a serious problem. Wan En-mao defined it as belonging to the category of "contradictions between the enemy and the people," rather than to that of "contradictions within the people." In the light of this statement, it is not surprising that "a heavy blow was dealt to the enemy" by the security police in the summer of 1958, and "a number" of them were "punished."¹⁵²

Conclusions

On the basis of what has been said, it seems clear that in dealing with the nationality problem, the Chinese Communists did not develop any new line or original approach to its solution. Their policies contain three elements: (a) some prescriptions of the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theory, (b) some experience of the USSR, and (c) a number of pre-revolutionary Chinese traditions.

As far as Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theory is concerned, the Chinese have certainly taken from it one basic precept, viz., that the problem of nationalities must be subordinated to and solved in the way which is currently most useful to the interests of Communism. However, it cannot be said that the Chinese Communist Party followed Engels' warning of 1882 that the Communists should not make foreign people "happy by compulsion."

From the experience of the USSR, the Chinese have taken many tactical measures (such as fomenting class struggle within the nationalities), but also the justification of sudden turns in the Party line from one "major danger" to another. The possibility should not be excluded that in the future they will also, like the Soviet leaders, justify great-power chauvinism as useful for Communist purposes. By now, the Chinese have already relaxed their opposition to Great Hanism, and

¹⁵² Sinkiang Jih Pao, Urumchi, February 3, 1959.

their line today is approximately equivalent to that of the Soviet Communist Party's position in the 1930's. From the prerevolutionary traditions, the Chinese Communist Party has taken some political arguments against the minority nationalists (such as the pronouncement by Wang En-mao to the effect that Sinkiang has been an integral part of China in the past) as well as some practical policies of the resettlement of Chinese in Sinkiang (the military farms, and the like).

Can it be said that after a decade of efforts the Chinese Communist policies have succeeded in solving the nationality problem in Sinkiang? The Communists say they have succeeded, and from their point of view, in terms of their frame of reference, to some extent they seem to be at least partially correct. Their frame of reference is socialism and its interests. In its terms, one must agree that most of the political-administrative and social-economic reforms as well as the spread of literacy and education, which the Chinese have brought to the national minorities of Sinkiang, have succeeded in harnessing the minorities' creative power for the construction of socialism. As a result of Chinese reforms, the minority peoples have certainly become more productive and efficient, and, to this extent the policies of the reforms have been successful in the interests of socialism.

However, some of the aspects of Chinese nationality policy after 1957 may be detrimental to socialism. The attack upon local nationalism may have a harmful psychological effect upon the minority masses, by increasing nervous tension and the sense of oppression. An even worse effect may be expected from the elements of compulsion in applying cultural policy. Although, at the first glance, it may seem to be in the interests of socialism for the minorities to abandon their cultures and languages and become assimilated as quickly as possible, in practice this cannot be easily achieved. Such a policy may result not only in mounting tensions, but also in reduced productivity and creativity among the minorities and may lead to administrative difficulties. People can think and work best only in terms of their native languages and cultures, and can accept foreign influences only gradually. From the point of view of the national minorities, on the other hand, the nationality problem in Sinkiang has certainly not been solved at all. On the contrary, it has even become more acute, so that even Communist Party members have become infected.

A major hindrance to the real solution of the nationality problem in Sinkiang is the fact that the interests of the Hans and the interests of the accelerated construction of socialism in China are one, while the interests of Sinkiang's nationalities, being opposed to the interests of the Hans, are therefore also opposed to the interests of socialism. The Hans are obviously right when they say that if Sinkiang were left alone the development of its resources would be slow and that this would slow down the development of China as a whole. Yet when they arrive in Sinkiang as the representatives of economic and technical progress, they are from the point of view of the Uighurs and Kazakhs only foreign colonizers who are flooding their territory and threatening in the long run to assimilate them completely.

From the Communist Party's point of view, Uighur or Kazakh opposition to Chinese penetration in Sinkiang constitutes opposition to socialism. Hence, the Chinese Communist Party feels justified in combatting local nationalism by all possible means. Yet, by doing so, it also, if even indirectly, fosters Han chauvinism, which, in turn, generates more local nationalism, in a vicious circle. In such a circle the nationality problem becomes perpetuated rather than solved, and continues to be acute as long as the assimilation of the national groups is not complete. And, whether it can ever become complete under modern conditions of mass lower and higher education and the growth of consciousness, human dignity, and self-respect, is a very large question.