



Socialist Relations Among Nationalities and Regional National Autonomy

by Our Correspondents Tien San-sung and Kuo Pi-hung

The Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region is a multinational area on China's northwestern frontier. Our correspondents have been to this region where great changes have taken place since liberation. Beginning with this issue, we are publishing their three reports on the fundamental change in relations among nationalities, the introduction of regional national autonomy, the rapid development of the economy and culture, and the growth of minority cadres by large numbers.

The tremendous changes in Sinkiang are a victory for Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and the Party's policies towards nationalities. — Ed.

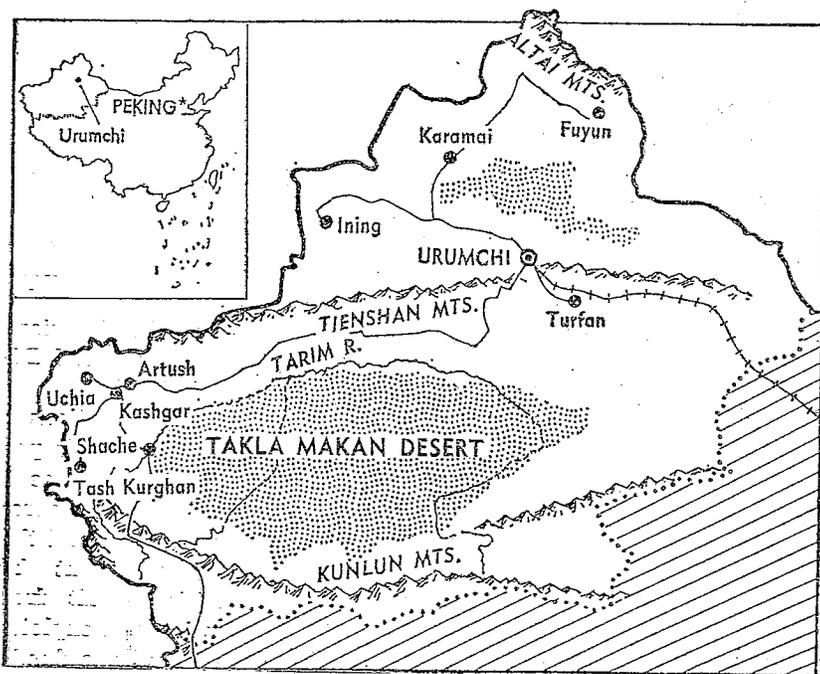
BESIDES the Uighurs who make up the greater part of the population, the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region is peopled by many other nationalities—Kazakhs, Hans, Huis, Khalkhas, Mongolians, Sibos, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Tartars, Tahurs, Manchus and Russians. Before liberation, national estrangement and national oppression were the order of the day as a result of the Kuomintang reactionary rule and the reactionary classes

sowing dissension among the local people. As Chairman Mao pointed out in 1945 in his *On Coalition Government*: "The anti-popular clique of the Kuomintang denies that many nationalities exist in China, and labels all excepting the Han nationality as 'tribes.' It has taken over the reactionary policy of the governments of the Ching Dynasty and of the Northern warlords in relation to the minority nationalities, oppressing and exploiting them in every possible way." With bitter hatred for this reactionary policy enforced by the reactionary governments in the old days, the people of various nationalities in Sinkiang yearned for a change in the situation which saw them oppressed and exploited and deprived of all political rights. Their long-cherished desire was finally realized after liberation.

While in Urumchi, capital of the autonomous region, we visited a number of courtyards in which people of several nationalities live. One is inhabited by some 20 families of the Uighur, Han, Mongolian, Kazakh and Hui nationalities using the same front gate whose beam is inscribed with the words "Unity Courtyard" and flanked by a couplet reading: "The roots of pines in the Tienshan Mountains are intertwined, the hearts of the people of various nationalities beat as one." Derived from real life, these graphic words reflect a living reality. Living in the same courtyard, these people of five nationalities are like members of one big family, respecting each other's customs and habits, helping one another whenever there are difficulties and exchanging greetings during festivals. Of greater importance, however, is the fact that they are closely united politically. Together they form a revolutionary theory study group to study works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and by Chairman Mao and criticize the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao and Teng Hsiao-ping, and advance shoulder to shoulder along the broad road of socialism.

In pre-liberation days, Urumchi was called "Tihua" which meant "enlightenment, inculcation and assimilation," a name adopted by the reactionary rulers who took an attitude of great-nation chauvinism

SKETCH MAP OF THE SINKIANG UIGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGION



towards the minority nationalities. This name was abolished after liberation according to the relevant stipulations laid down by the State Council to do away with all names implying an insult to the minority nationalities, and the city resumed its original name "Urumchi," meaning "beautiful pastureland." What is left of this pastureland today can still be seen on the city's southern outskirts, though it has mostly given way to rows of factories and office buildings.

"Unity courtyards" like those in Urumchi are a common sight in many other places. The word "unity" also is widely used to name people's communes, production brigades and streets as well as irrigation channels, shelter-belts, etc. "Collectives for united struggle" in factories and mines consist of workers of different nationalities. The local people all take pride in such new-type relations among nationalities. Socialist in nature, they find concrete expression in equality, unity, mutual assistance and fraternity. We were deeply impressed by such an all-pervading spirit and atmosphere wherever we went.

Class Struggle Is the Key Link

How did the change in relations among nationalities in Sinkiang come about? In our interviews with ordinary herdsmen, grass-roots cadres and leading comrades of various nationalities north and south of the Tienshan Mountains, we found that their answers to this question boiled down to the terse remark: Class struggle is the key link.

The course traversed by the people of Sinkiang over the 27 post-liberation years has been one of carrying out class struggle and of continuing the revolution. In the early years after liberation, the people of different nationalities became their own masters after smashing the reactionary ruling apparatuses at different

levels, rounding up bandits and establishing a democratic government — all serious class struggles. Under the Party's leadership, they later unfolded the large-scale movement for democratic reform to put an end to the oppression and exploitation by feudal landlords and herdowners, followed by the socialist transformation of agriculture, animal husbandry, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce. As a result, the age-old system of class exploitation was uprooted, and with it the root cause of national oppression was eliminated by and large.

After the basic completion of the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production, the struggle between restoration and counter-restoration remained very acute. Cloaked in national or religious garb, the overthrown feudal landlords and herdowners as well as a handful of reactionaries of different nationalities tried by hook or by crook to regain their lost "paradise" and frequently engaged in disruptive activities and made trouble. Their insidious activities actually were supported and connived at by the bourgeoisie inside the Party. These local reactionary elements did not even hesitate to gang up with the Soviet social-imperialists to engage in subversive and splittist activities. It was precisely by firmly grasping class struggle as the key link that the people of various nationalities in Sinkiang foiled one scheme after another of the class enemies. Thanks to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius and the current struggle to criticize Teng Hsiao-ping and beat back the Right deviationist attempt at reversing correct verdicts, the revolution has continued to deepen, Sinkiang has taken on an ever changing new look and the new socialist relations among nationalities have consolidated and developed with each passing day.

Comrade Waliszuchiang Tuerhti, a Uighur cadre and chairman of the revolutionary committee of Karamai, a petroleum base in Sinkiang, told us: The class enemies want to cover up the class essence of the national question, but we must do just the opposite and expose their intrigues. Lenin said: "In any really serious and profound political issue sides are taken according to classes, not nations." (*Critical Remarks on the National Question.*) Chairman Mao also pointed out: "In the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle." (*Statement Supporting the Afro-Americans in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism.*)

In accordance with the instructions of the revolutionary teachers, Sinkiang's people of various nationalities have come to the clear understanding that national oppression is, in essence, class oppression and that the antagonism and estrangement between different nationalities result from the system of class oppression and exploitation. Hence, they have found the funda-



Residents of various nationalities in Urumchi's Unity Road reading the newspaper.

mental way to solve the national question. Take class struggle as the key link, uphold the Party's basic line and carry the socialist revolution through to the end.

Genuine Political Equality

The situation in which people of various nationalities in Sinkiang were deprived of all political rights was fundamentally changed when regional national autonomy was effected after liberation. Under the leadership of higher state organs, as stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, different national autonomous areas (this refers to the autonomous regions, prefectures and counties — *Tr.*) are set up, according to the population and size of an area, in areas inhabited by national minorities. And corresponding organs of self-government are established with working people of various nationalities governing the internal affairs of their own nationalities. An autonomous area equivalent to a province, the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region was founded on October 1, 1955. Under the autonomous region, five autonomous prefectures and six autonomous counties all had been set up in 1954 and are mainly inhabited by nationalities other than Uighurs.

How is regional national autonomy brought about in actual life? Using his county as an example, Comrade Apuchaerh, Vice-Chairman of the Tash Kurghan Autonomous County of Tajik nationality, said: "Our autonomous county on the Pamir plateau comprises the following nationalities: Tajiks, Uighurs, Khalkhas, Hans and Sibos. Eighty-eight per cent of the population are Tajiks. The county organs of self-government are the people's congress and its permanent organ, the revolutionary committee (or the county people's government). As specified in the Constitution, the people's congress is elected through democratic consultations. Worker, peasant and soldier deputies form the main body of the people's congress. Every nationality in the county has its own deputies. Elected by the county people's deputies, the county revolutionary committee exercises its power of governing the autonomous county on behalf of the people of various nationalities, guarantees putting laws and decrees into effect and gives leadership in carrying out various work in socialist revolution and construction. There are cadres of various nationalities in the county revolutionary committee and other county organs."

The Tajik vice-chairman of the county revolutionary committee introduced us to how big efforts went into training nationality cadres. He said: "Nearly all the cadres in the organs at the county level and in the ten communes under the county are local nationality cadres. The key point is that our cadres see to it that they maintain the characteristics of the working people; they are fundamentally different from the new-type bureaucrat monopoly capitalist class ruling the Soviet



People of various nationalities in Sinkiang.

Union. In other words, we must ensure that political power is in the hands of the minorities who are Marxists and working people."

Comrade Apuchaerh continued: "Regional national autonomy has greatly stimulated the enthusiasm of the people of various nationalities in the county to take part in state political life and to build the socialist motherland. In addition to electing deputies to the county people's congress and to the county revolutionary committee, they also have deputies in the people's congresses at various levels above the county, including the Fourth National People's Congress. There also was one deputy to the Tenth Party Congress. The slaves of the past have become masters of the country."

Comrade Apuchaerh also briefed us on the similarities and differences between the autonomous and the ordinary county. Both are local administrative units at county level in the People's Republic of China; both are led by the Party and government organs at the higher levels and both persist in taking the socialist road in line with the stipulation in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. The differences are: The autonomous county enjoys the right to self-government empowered by the Constitution in addition to exercising functions and powers of all other local organs of state power. Regarding the right to self-government, Comrade Apuchaerh added three points: The autonomous county can: 1) make rules and regulations for a specific locality and amendments according to law; 2) develop the economy in line with actual conditions and characteristics in the nationality areas; and 3) manage the local areas' finances.

Great achievements have been made in Tash Kurghan County through carrying out the policy of "mainly developing animal husbandry, integrating agriculture and animal husbandry, adapting to local con-

ditions and ensuring all-round development" in economic construction. Food grain was scarce in the past and the local people lived on wild herbs half of the year. They now have surplus grain and livestock which they sell to the state commercial departments. Other undertakings such as agricultural machinery, hydropower stations and communications all have made rapid headway.

Comrade Apuchaerh continued: "Such developments are impossible if we rely solely on the autonomous county's revenue which is devoted entirely to the needs of the local county. The state also allocates large amounts of subsidies and investments to the county. Thanks to the state's energetic support and the warm assistance from other fraternal nationalities like the Hans and the Uighurs, as well as the spirit of hard struggle and self-reliance of the county's people, the county has been completely changed, bringing an entirely new life to the Tajik people and other nationalities."

It can be said that regional national autonomy in Tash Kurghan County is a miniature of that in Sinkiang as a whole. In other places in the autonomous region, we saw how large numbers of national minority cadres have matured, as described by Comrade Apuchaerh. Generally these cadres can speak more than two national minority languages, especially in areas inhabited by several nationalities.

As to the spoken and written languages, the Constitution stipulates: "All the nationalities have the freedom to use their own spoken and written languages." This stipulation has been fully carried out. A responsible comrade of the publications department told us there are 120-odd newspapers and magazines in national minority languages in Sinkiang. The main daily, *Sinkiang Ribao*, is published in the Han, Uighur, Kazakh and Mongolian languages and the Sinkiang People's Broadcasting Station transmits in the four languages. Many literary and art performances

which have their own national features are presented in national minority languages. While in Sinkiang, we saw a special kind of shops where special products catering to the daily needs and habits of the different nationalities are supplied, such as embroidered caps and boots, atlas printed silk and national musical instruments. There's also a large production network to manufacture goods like these. In addition, workers, staff and cadres of various nationalities are all treated equally in their work and in wages and welfare facilities.

Nationality equality and unity, a principle adopted by the proletarian political party to solve the national problem, has been fully manifested in Sinkiang with the exercise of regional national autonomy.

Safeguarding State Unification

Such regional national autonomy has proved a great success in the autonomous region. But enemies at home and abroad are not reconciled to their defeat.

While in Ili Prefecture, on several occasions we heard people denouncing the Soviet social-imperialists' crime in carrying out subversion and sabotage. In 1962, the social-imperialists created dissension among nationalities, manufactured rumours to deceive the people in the prefecture and abducted more than 60,000 people on the frontier to the Soviet Union. In May that year, the Soviet social-imperialists plotted a counter-revolutionary riot aimed at severing the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture from our great motherland.

Naturally, we recall that from 1882 to 1884 it was precisely in Ili area that tsarist Russia abducted over 70,000 Chinese citizens to Russia and from 1871 to 1881 it occupied Ili for 10 years. The new tsars are stepping into the shoes of the old tsars by either sending in secret agents to commit sabotage, buying national splittists to be their lackeys and agents, nibbling away at our territory or carrying out armed aggression and military provocations.

At an interview with us, Ismayil Aymat (Uighur), Secretary of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Vice-Chairman of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Revolutionary Committee, emphasized: "As an outpost for combating revisionism, Sinkiang shares over 3,000 kilometres of common boundary with the Soviet Union. Since the late 50s, the new tsars have never let up in their subversion and sabotage against Sinkiang. To consolidate the fruits of regional national autonomy, Sinkiang's foremost task is safeguarding the unification of our motherland and opposing foreign aggression and subversion. The Constitution stipulates: 'The People's Republic of China is a unitary multinational state. The areas where regional national autonomy is exercised are all inalienable parts of the People's Republic



Ismayil Aymat (second from right) with commune members of different nationalities.

of China.' Taking over the mantle of the old tsars, the Soviet revisionists bought over a handful of traitors in Sinkiang and openly incited them to create riots so as to split our great motherland. This is absolutely impermissible. A handful of traitors and national splittists, who willingly acted as the social-imperialists' stooges, are betrayers of the national interests. Their acts are only a manifestation of the death-bed struggle by the old and new bourgeoisie and other domestic reactionary and dying classes. We must take class struggle as the key link, uphold the Party's basic line, persist in exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie and adhere to the socialist road, so as to create step by step conditions whereby it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes to exist or a new generation of them to arise. In this way, the national minority reactionaries will be completely isolated and the national question thoroughly solved. In the meantime, we must heighten our vigil-

ance and strengthen preparedness against war so as to prevent sudden Soviet social-imperialist attacks and smash all disruptive conspiracies of the Soviet revisionists and a handful of national splittists who sold themselves to Soviet revisionism."

He continued: "Chairman Mao teaches us that 'the army and the people' are 'the foundation of victory.' We should make use of regional national autonomy, a form of proletarian dictatorship, to enable the people of various nationalities in the region to fully exercise the right to be the masters of the state and build up and defend the motherland's northwestern frontier."

Once they are masters of their own destiny, the people will never yield and be slaves. Marching along the bright road of socialism, the people of different nationalities in Sinkiang are building the region into a bulwark of steel to combat and prevent revisionism on our motherland's northwestern frontier.