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SOURCE Jen-min Jih-pao.

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN NORTHWEST CHINA
 MINORITY NATIONALITY AREAS, 1951

Top leaders of minority nationality affairs in the Northwest, Southwest, and Central and South China regions gave progress reports on the establishment of nationality regional autonomy and democratic administration in their areas before the second plenary conference of the Commission of the Affairs of Nationalities of the Central People's Government from 14 to 31 December 1951.

Conference statements made by the chairmen of the nationalities affairs committees of the Military and Administrative Committees of the Northwest China, Southwest China, and Central-South China included progress reports on other important developments in the field of agriculture, trade, health, education, and cultural affairs.

On 10 February 1952, the Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao published the statement of Wang Feng (汪 逢), Chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Committee of the Northwest China Military and Administrative Committee, entitled "All Minority Nationalities Advance in Unison Under the Banner of Mao Tse-tung" which included the following report concerning the progress and problems of autonomy and democratic administration in the Northwest China.

In the minority nationality areas, regional autonomy has been advanced and self-governing organs above the ch'u level have been established. These localities include the T'ung-hsiang tribal area of T'ung-hsiang, the Mongol nationality areas of A-la-shan Ch'i, O-chi-na Ch'i, and Su-pei Hsien, and the Tibetan nationality areas of Cho-ni Hsien, T'ung-te Hsien, Hsia-ho Hsien, T'ien-chu Hsien, and Wu-p'ing Hsien. In addition, in the Yu-shu Special Ch'u and in all the hsien of the nomadic districts of Tringhai Province, preparations are being actively made to complete regional autonomy and to establish democratic administration.

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In accordance with the practical conditions of the minority nationalities in each province, Sinkiang, Kansu, and Ningsia are coordinating all types of practical work and are earnestly and gradually pushing these projects. Although many minority nationalities in various ch'u, hsiang, and hsien have not announced the establishment of self-governing organs, the local nationality cadres have assumed essential leadership responsibilities, and many of the working personnel are also local nationality cadres. For example, in T'ung-hsin Hsien in Ningsia, where Moslems constitute 77 percent of the population, not only is the hsiang magistrate a Moslem, but one half of the cadres are Moslems.

In the five provinces of Sinkiang, Kansu, Ningsia, Tsinghai, and Shensi, nationalities democratic coalition governments have been established wherever there are multinationality districts. In general, all nationalities in the government have representatives, proportionate to their population, to carry on important responsibilities or to participate in leadership work. Minority nationalities, whose numbers are few, are given special consideration.

In the provinces of Sinkiang, Kansu, Tsinghai, and Ningsia, among the 16 chairmen and vice-chairmen of the provincial people's governments and the 117 committee members, there are 55 minority nationality committeemen and six minority nationality chairmen and vice-chairmen. Eighty percent of the administrative cadres in all the offices and departments of the Sinkiang People's Government, and in the ten special ch'u under its control (including 80 hsien and municipalities) above the ch'u level, are minority nationality cadres. According to statistics, in May 1951, in 35 hsien and municipalities of Sinkiang and Ningsia, there were 22 hsien magistrates and deputy magistrates belonging to the Moslem, Tibetan, and Mongol nationalities. In the six hsien and one municipality under the control of the Lin-hsia Special Ch'u in Kansu, there were three hsien magistrates and two deputy magistrates and one municipal mayor who were Moslem cadres. In K'ung-ho Hsien, Tsinghai, there was one Kazakh autonomous hsiang which had one Kazakh on the membership list of the hsien people's government even though the hsiang population was only 130. In this way the minority nationalities really have equal rights in the organs of administrative authority.

All-nationalities, all-circles people's representatives conferences have been held from one to five times in minority nationality districts or multinationality districts. In some localities, these conferences have exercised the authority of the people's congresses. The number of minority nationality representatives is generally in proportion to the size of the minority nationality population and are rationally distributed among the list of representatives. For instance, in Lin-hsia Hsien, the Chinese constitute 52 percent of the population and the Moslems 48 percent. The ratio of representatives for each nationality is generally proportionate to its population, 56 percent of the representatives are Chinese and 44 percent are Moslems. At the third session of the First All-Nationalities All-Circles People's Representatives Conference in Yin-ch'uan there were 43 Moslem representatives among the 211 representatives attending. The ratio of Moslem representatives was slightly higher than their population warranted.

Wherever the systems of democratic centralism and the people's representative conference are applied in establishing regional self-governing organs or coalition governments, they have been universally welcomed by the minority nationalities. They are valuable instruments in pushing forward the unity of the masses, the implementation of administrative orders, the organizing of cadres, and the restoration and development of political, economic, and cultural activities of the people of all nationalities. It is difficult to describe the degree of enthusiasm shown by the minority nationalities when they observe their own cadres undertaking leadership in all levels of administrative authority and use their own methods to manage their nationality affairs.

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Hereafter we must universally and earnestly push regional autonomy in the minority nationality districts. This is the central point of political development in the minority nationality localities. During 1952 - 1953, we must definitely reach the goal of establishing self-governing organs in all localities where they should exist. In the localities where coalition governments have been established and regional autonomy has been advanced, the governments should thoroughly carry out the people's representatives conference system so that it can advance toward complete establishment.

The coalition governments of the multinationality localities must be set up in accordance with the population ratio, properly apportioning representation and participation by all classes and levels of people in the administrative organs of government. All levels of all-nationalities, all-circles people's representatives conference must convene on schedule and include representatives from all levels and classes of the people to discuss and decide all important problems confronting them. When conditions are ripe, they should immediately assume the authority delegated to the people's congresses, elect all responsible officials of all levels of the people's government, and thereby make the people's representatives conferences a truly strong organization to unify the masses, to promote the implementation of administrative orders by the masses, and to realize self-management of their own affairs. Moreover, in accordance with concrete conditions and past experience in Northwest China, there must be orderly implementation of nationality regional autonomy.

During the implementation of nationality regional autonomy, the agricultural districts must join together in rent reduction and land reform; the nomadic livestock farming districts must join together in providing medical services, and promoting trade and other practical work activities. In any event, the agriculture and nomadic districts must unite in the Resist America, Aid Korea Movement, the Patriotic Movement, and the Internationalism Movement.

At the same time, before the establishment of self-governing organs, they must establish preparatory organizations, in accordance with the size of the minority nationality localities. They must use individual methods of nomination, election, and appointment to bring in persons who broadly represent all levels to participate and actively promote all activities that relate to the establishment of autonomous administration. They must especially expand the educational and propaganda movement for the advancement of regional autonomy, among all levels of people, and stimulate discussions among the electors of the people's governments of autonomous regions.

Because a segment of the minority nationality masses at first failed to understand the promotion of regional autonomy, many of them incorrectly believed that after regional autonomy is in effect, the Communist Party must leave, and they feared that after the departure of the Communist Party there would be no policy on how to carry out autonomy. Those who still embraced feelings of "narrow nationalism" thought that after establishing regional autonomy, they could go their own way independently and leave the Communist Party. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that systematic educational and propaganda campaign must be expanded among the masses to advance regional autonomy collectively.

Consequently, the process of advancing regional autonomy is a process of education and of raising the political consciousness of the masses. To push regional autonomy successfully, there must be continuous prevention and surmounting of the remnant deviations of the doctrine of "great nationalism," and such impressions as "minority nationality caecae are backward and do not know how to manage affairs, and if administrative authority is given to them

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they would ruin everything." Experience proves that in advancing regional autonomy the attitudes of procrastination and impulsiveness are incorrect and so are unpreparedness, disorderliness, and irresponsibility.

The organizational form of regional autonomous administration must be appropriate to the immediate conditions and level of political and economic development. It must have passed through a period of consultation and study, and obtained the willing consent of a majority of the local minority nationalities. We cannot transfer the system of administrative authority from a ch'u, hsiang, or ts'un of a Chinese nationality or of an agricultural district and mechanically apply it to a minority nationality or nomadic livestock farming area.

The organizational form of nomadic tribes of 1,000 or 100 families and the meng and ch'i, with the consent of these minority nationalities, can be retained and gradually indoctrinated with the people's democracy principles. When there are a new progressive developments in the minority nationality democratic economy, politics, and culture that require the use of new forms of government organization to replace the present which may become inadequate, and if the broad masses and the leadership that is capable of unifying the masses desire a change, naturally there should be one.

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