

UNCLASSIFIED

THE KREMLIN'S FORGOTTEN ASIAN EMPIRE

The Communist Smokescreen

One of the myths of Soviet propaganda is the blatant assertion that only Western powers have been or are guilty of imperialism and colonialism. In the USSR, so the line continues, oppression of minorities, including the 26 million or so Asians now under the Kremlin's direct rule, was ended with the overthrow of the Tsarist Empire. Asians and other Soviet minorities have allegedly been given a new deal. Their beliefs, customs, national and cultural institutions were "guaranteed" to be free and inviolable by such declarations as the proclamation addressed to "all Moslem toilers of Russia and the East" signed on December 7, 1917, by Lenin and Stalin. The minority peoples of the former Tsarist Empire were even offered the right to secede from the new Soviet state should they care to do so, a right which was later written into the 1936 Constitution still in force in the USSR.

"The complete solution of the problem of nationalities and that of the cooperation of nations in the USSR is of world historic importance," declared Radio Moscow on December 3, 1952 in a typical Soviet assertion on the subject. "It is a model for all the peoples who are struggling for their liberation from imperialist oppression. The experience of the USSR is being successfully emulated by all the countries of People's Democracy which have embarked on the path of the building of a new life."

What are the facts of the matter? The facts are not only that the USSR has been and is guilty of the most reprehensible practices for which it castigates the old Tsarist regime but has even intensified these evils and

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

2

created new ones. Far from assuring its Asian and other minorities "a new life" it is continuing practices of which the Western Powers were never guilty even at the high water mark of colonial expansion. Such are the facts which a careful study of Soviet sources will corroborate.

The real situation has been obscured for too long by a number of factors, chief among which is the intensive propaganda barrage laid down on the subject for the purpose of discrediting the Western powers and gaining the support of colonial peoples for Communism. Then, too, it has been difficult for the outside world to learn the true facts with regard to Soviet treatment of their minorities, especially the Asian peoples. The Iron Curtain has always been especially impenetrable around Baku and Tashkent even from the early days of Soviet rule. The few travellers that have been allowed into areas where the bulk of the Soviet Asian peoples are concentrated have usually consisted of individuals favorable to the cause of Communism or persons whisked about from city to city on the Intourist magic carpet with little or no opportunity for independent observation.

Statistics and information about the area, even the Tsarist archives covering the pre-Soviet days, are carefully guarded by the Soviets so that the only information forthcoming is what the Soviets release themselves. Furthermore the Soviets have been aided in their deception by the fact that their empire is land-locked. The world has only too readily thought of imperialism and colonialism in terms of overseas dependencies, despite the fact that the Soviets have been carrying on imperialistic practices in most virulent and

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

3

unrestrained forms. And finally it should be remembered that whereas colonial peoples in other parts of the world have the opportunity to make their grievances known to the outside world, Soviet Asians have no such opportunity. The radio, press, and other media of communication are carefully controlled by the Communist Party and the Soviet Regime. Only natives carefully indoctrinated in the tenets of Communism and of proven loyalty are allowed to speak or write and even then only along carefully indicated lines.

2. Political Domination of Asian Areas

Nothing illustrates better the gap between Soviet theory and reality than the question: what share do the Asian peoples of the USSR have in governing themselves? What has happened to the promise of self-determination, the right to secession and of local self-government dangled before the eyes of the inhabitants of the multi-national Tsarist Empire?

On paper the Soviets appear to have lived up to their commitments. The laws appear to grant the nationalities making up the USSR the fullest right to control their destinies and to be freed of the "Great Russian chauvinism" so much decried under the Tsars. The Soviet Union is officially described as a federation of 16 sovereign Union Republics, all with the right to secede from the Union should their respective legislatures choose to do so. Nationalities too small in number or not otherwise meeting the qualifications for a Union Republic are grouped into smaller units such as autonomous republics, autonomous regions, national districts and even national villages so that in theory the rights of even the smallest nationality are guaranteed. Union Republics since

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

4

1944 have had the right to their own Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Each of the Union Republics, as well as the autonomous republics, have their own constitution, legislature, and Council of Ministers. The various units send deputies to the All-Union Council of Nationalities, the second of the two highest legislative chambers in the Soviet Union. The Council of Nationalities has equal rights with the Council of the Union and was designed, as the Soviets have claimed, as a safeguard of the rights of the various nationalities against the great Slav bloc of the population.

In actual practice this is an elaborate facade. The apparently generous provisions just cited which are contained in the 1936 Constitution are to a large extent nullified by others. In the first place, Article 14 of the Constitution reserves control over a wide range of questions to the central government. These include such matters as diplomatic relations, war and peace, enforcement of the Constitution, alteration of the frontiers of the constituent republics, organization of defense and direction of the armed forces, all foreign trade, all state security and secret police. Most of the other vital functions of government are also covered by Article 14.

Overriding legislative power is reserved to the central government by two other articles, the 19th and 20th, the first stating that laws of the USSR have equal force within the territory of every Union Republic, the second stating that in case of conflict between a law of the USSR and of a Union Republic the former shall take precedence. The right given to each Union Republic to enter into direct relations with foreign countries has never been exercised, the amendment in fact being added to the Constitution in 1944 to

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

5

secure the entry of Belorussia and the Ukraine into the United Nations and thus increase the Soviet vote. The Ukrainian and Belorussian delegates have always voted with the Soviet delegate as one and have never shown the slightest degree of independence in their conduct.

As for the right of secession, there is no public record that even a discussion of the possibility of secession has ever taken place. On the contrary, writers and officials who merely advocate a greater measure of autonomy within the Soviet Union are savagely attacked as "bourgeois nationalists." In 1929 the Tatar leader, M. Sultan-Galiev was executed after the so-called Pan-Turanian trials on the charge he had fomented an anti-Soviet conspiracy among the Soviet Turkic peoples. The purge of the two leading officials of Tadjikistan at the end of 1955 and the replacement of the entire leadership of the Tadjik Communist Party was motivated by the charge that they were following a national Tadjik rather than Communist line. Faisulla Khodshayev, Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, and Akmal Ikramov, First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, both old time Communists, were both defendants during the great purge trial of March 1958. It is evident from the testimony given at the trial that Khodshayev and his colleagues sought to lessen the economic dependence of Uzbekistan on the rest of the Soviet Union by seeking to produce less cotton and more grain, although there was no thought of separation from the USSR. He and Ikramov were convicted and executed for the crime of taking too seriously Bolshevik propaganda that each nationality in the Soviet Union was free to develop its own national life.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

6

The Soviet Government has in practice attached little importance to the units it has created. "National districts" and "national areas" have passed silently out of existence, whole slices of territory have been detached from one republic and added to another, capitals of republics shifted about, and so on. Two Moslem autonomous republics, the Chechen-Ingush and Crimean ASSR's and one partly Moslem Republic, the Kalmyk ASSR, were abolished in the course of the war and the inhabitants forcefully removed to other parts of the Soviet Union for allegedly aiding the enemy. The Karachai Autonomous Region was similarly liquidated, while the Dagestan ASSR was diminished in size, with land north of the River Terek being added to the newly-formed Grosny Region. In 1947 it appeared that the name of the Kabardino-Balkar ASSR in the electoral lists had been changed to Kabardin ASSR. The Balkars have also disappeared as a geographical or administrative entity. In the case of the Karachai, Balkars, and Kalmycks no governmental decree was issued concerning their disappearance as national units; only later, when new editions of the Soviet Gazetteer and new maps appeared was their fate revealed.

The same may be said of the officials heading the native republics. The Kremlin, largely for propaganda purposes, has been anxious to mask its real control of native areas by training more native personnel to fill republic positions. However, such officials are hand-picked and consist only of persons who have proven their loyalty to the regime and party.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

7

3. Russians Control Party Machinery

If these methods of ensuring control were not enough the Kremlin has still another very effective way of dominating native republics -- through the Communist Party. All Communist Parties of the various republics are strictly subordinate to the All-Union body. All elective posts in the national governments are filled either by Communists or persons approved by the Party via the usual single-slate manner of conducting a Communist election. The Party also extends its control over every other activity and institution by virtue of its constitutional position as the "leading core" of all governmental organs and of all administration. (Article 126 of the Soviet constitution.)

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of each republic normally has three secretaries. The second secretary is often a Russian, leaving the position of first secretary for a local native figurehead. Thus the position of second secretary in the Central Asian republics is occupied in Kirghizia by V.N. Churkin; in the Uzbek SSR by R.E. Melnikov; in the Tadjik SSR by P.S. Obnosov and in the Turkmen SSR by F.A. Grishnyenkov -- all of whom are Russians. In Kazakhstan even this facade of native rule was destroyed early in 1954 when a top-ranking Communist was sent in from the outside to become first secretary. The move was apparently connected with the vast "new lands" campaign announced by N.S. Khrushchev, in which Kazakhstan is scheduled to play a leading part, and it represented a desire by the Kremlin to exercise even closer control over the area. It shows how easily the Kremlin brushes

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

8

aside even pretenses of local rule when it deems it necessary. Zh. Shayakhmetov, first secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party for 15 years, was replaced by USSR Minister of Culture Ponomarenko. At the same time I.I. Afonov was replaced as second secretary by L.I. Brezhnev. Ponomarenko has been connected with Belorussia and Brezhnev with the Ukraine and Moldavia.

Russians occupy leading positions on oblast and lower party levels, their number in some cases outweighing their representation in the population of the respective administrative unit. Communist officials are trying to augment the number of reliable natives in leading positions in the Party but the progress has been slow.

4. Economic Control:

Assurance that Asian border areas will never secede is assured in still another way -- via economic controls. One method has been to tie four union republics to over-specialization on one crop, that of cotton, and in this way to help ensure the dependency of the latter for its food supply upon the USSR. Uzbekistan, the chief cotton producing area in Central Asia, provides some 70 percent of the Soviet Union's cotton crop while Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan add further to this production. Azerbaijan, the major source of Soviet oil, is in addition an important producer of Soviet cotton. The dependency of the Central Asian area for its food supplies dates back to Tsarist days when large quantities of food were shipped in from Siberia and European Russia on terms which meant the doom of the native food producer. Central Asians still remember the terrible famines which resulted when this area was cut off from the rest of Russia during the Civil War.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

9

5. Economic Inequality and Exploitation of Asians

a. Job discrimination

The Soviets have always been highly critical of the favored position which Great Russians enjoyed in Asian areas under Tsarist rule. In Turkestan, for example, less than one-fourth (25 percent) of the workers in factories were Great Russians. These were employed as skilled workers while the remaining 77 percent of the workers were natives performing the heaviest manual labor.¹ The same held true of the railroads where the skilled jobs were monopolized by Great Russians, while the remaining unskilled and poorly paid jobs were left to the natives.² Great differences existed as to pay, conditions of work, benefits, and so forth.

That the bad conditions of which Soviet writers complain of did exist is borne out by the facts. What is important to emphasize here is that conditions have not improved greatly over Tsarist days. Asians are not, for the most part, competing with the Russians in their territories on equal terms and the best jobs still only too often go to the latter.

Here, by way of example, is an item printed in the September 1, 1950 issue of Pravda Vostoka concerning the continuing disregard of Uzbek workers at the Stalin electro-chemical combine:

1. A. M. Pankratova and A. L. Sidorov (Editors) The Revolution of 1905-1907 in the National Districts of Russia. Collected Articles /In Russian/ 1949, p. 520.
2. Georgi Safarov Colonial Revolution, Turkestan's Experience. /In Russian/ Moscow, 1921, p. 41.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

10

Among those working here there are only seven to eight percent Usbeks, most of whom are occupied with secondary tasks.

Little is done for the organized recruitment of Usbek workers and even less to retain them in production.

Instruction in the native language is not organized in the circles of the technical schools, in the Stakhanovite schools, or in the schools for masters of socialist labor.

The assistant director of personnel travels to Moscow in search for workers to serve as chiefs of the branches, while at the same time there are many literate people with initiative who could become good production foremen.

Similar conditions exist in other factories and enterprises in this area.

Indications of job discrimination such as these have been confirmed by travellers to the area, among them Dr. Riaz Ali Shah, a prominent Lahore medical specialist. His personal observations, made in May 1952 in Soviet Central Asia, appeared in the Pakistani English language newspaper Dawn for July 28 and 30, and August 1 and 3, 1952:

...Another feature that we noted in Tashkent was that the better dressed men, women and children were usually Western European Russians. Although there were a number of Usbeks in responsible posts, the Russians outnumbered them by a wide margin.

And further:

...sixty percent of the persons in responsible jobs in Alma-Ata are Western Russians who have come to settle there permanently. It was also observed that the better dressed and better fed children and adults were as a rule Western Russians.

Confirmation of these observations have been made by other travellers. Visitors and delegations to Tashkent, for example, are shown the European

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

11

section of the city on the usual Soviet guided tours; the native section is too squalid. Great Russians are usually better off economically in other Asian areas as well. The Buryat-Mongol ASSR, located in the Lake Baikal area, had in 1948 over 7,000 specialists with middle school and higher educational experience who worked in the various sectors of the country's economy; only 1,579 of these, however, were Buryat-Mongols (Izvestiya, June 6, 1948).

b. Resources of Asian areas exploited by Kremlin for own advantage

One of the commonplaces of Soviet propaganda is the charge that the so-called imperialist countries have exploited colonial areas for their own advantage. The truth of the matter, if one may be permitted to quote an old Russian proverb, is that "The shoe, old woman, is on the other foot." Though the Asian areas of the USSR represent a substantial proportion of the resources, industrial capacity, and national product of the Soviet Union, little of this has filtered down to benefit materially the indigenous population.

A good example of this is Soviet Central Asia. Under the five year plans a huge mining industry has developed, especially in Karaganda, the coal basin of Kazakhstan, as well as in oil, and non-ferrous metals. Cotton ginning and textile manufacturing plants, silk mills, sugar refineries, tanneries and other plants for processing agricultural products have been established. Moreover, electric power has been developed and, especially around Tashkent, heavy industry has been introduced in the form of metallurgy and machine construction. The former areas of Turkestan in the years 1947, 1948 and 1949 contributed a major share to the total production of the USSR in many important and strategic

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

12

goods; in silk and tobacco, 80%; cotton, 91%; copper ore 85%; sulfur, 80%; mercury 80%; semi-metals, 77%; as well as 10 percent of coal production and 15% of oil production. Kazakhstan alone produces 2/3 of all molybdenum and 4/5 of all lead produced in the Soviet Union.

While this exploitation of local resources should bring increased material wealth for the population, this has not happened. The development of building, trade, consumers goods production, and the basic elements of public health have lagged far behind.

The city of Angren in Usbekistan is a case in point. This city, which mushroomed during World War II to become a major industrial center and the source of 40 percent of all coal mined by the Central Asian Coal Trust, lacks many of the most elementary facilities of city life.

As Izvestiya stated:

It is necessary to solve practical problems of industrial construction to complete the miners' club, hospital, ten-year school, store and restaurant; to lay roads and pavements; to lay out a park of culture and rest; and to establish municipal transportation. It is time that the Ministry of Communications looked after the construction of a city telephone station.

(12 April 1955)

This situation is not, however, true merely of the newest centers which have mushroomed since the war but of established industrial bases such as Karaganda, already rather well developed by 1959. Here, too, Izvestiya admitted:

Housing and cultural-welfare construction, as well as the planning and organization of the city's services to the people, have lagged considerably behind industrial development and population growth. Small services line up alongside the mines with neither water supply, sewerage, or well-planned roads and sidewalks. The quality of construction work is very poor; there are many unfinished jobs on the buildings and excess expenditures in funds and materials are allowed.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

13

Disregard of the wants of its Asian minorities is evident in other fields, such as education. Overcrowding, lack of transport for students living in remote areas, poorly-trained and under-trained teachers, run-down school buildings and inadequate equipment and textbook shortages are frequent complaints voiced in the regional press. Many students drop out long before the completion of the 7 year incomplete middle school despite the Soviet claim to have achieved universal, compulsory seven year education two years ago.

6. Exploitation of Women for Work in Factoriss, Fields and Mines

One of the most familiar propaganda claims of the Soviets is that they have emancipated women from the routine of housekeeper and mother, especially women in Moslem areas. Yet the facts of the matter, as indicated by the Soviet newspapers themselves, show that the provision of crèches and the separation of women from their domestic round is hardly disinterested solicitude on the part of the Kremlin. Rather it shows the desire of the Kremlin to get as many women as possible for work in the factory, field and mine, often at the most arduous and back-breaking work.

What this alleged transformation in the status of women has meant in Kazakhstan was indicated by Kazakhstanskaya Pravda of March 7, 1954. According to the paper "women constitute 40.4 percent of workers and employees in factories and plants and in transport and construction in Kazakhstan. Women constitute 60 percent of workers in agriculture" where they take part in all manual operations. In Uzbekistan "approximately 45 percent of workers, employees, and engineering-technical workers in industry are women."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

1A

Further indication of the exhausting labor performed by women in Asian as well as other parts of the USSR was given by Kazakhstanskaya Pravda of March 7, 1954. The paper's editorial noted that,

The Communist Party has opened the wide road to active labor and social-political activity for Kazakh women. Thousands of women are working in the coal mines of Kazakhstan.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

15

7. The Great Russian Influx

One of the contentions of the Soviets in writing about the Tsarist period is that the "Great October Revolution" saved the various Asian peoples from inundation by Great Russians coming into their areas and, in the case of some peoples such as the Kirghis, from actual extinction. That such colonization occurred is true, especially after the Revolution of 1905, so that in Russian Central Asia, for example, some 8 percent of the population were Great Russians by the eve of World War II. What is false is the implication that the Soviets have done anything to halt this inundation. On the contrary, the Soviet Union has pursued a program of colonization in Asian areas to an extent never attempted elsewhere by the Western Powers, with the possible exception of the Italian colonization of north Africa.

In Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, for example, the Azerbaijani together with their cousins from neighboring Iranian Azerbaijan, constitute only about one-half of the population, while Russians are clearly in the majority in the industrial and oil-producing sections of the city. The strong Russian element in the city is indicated in the following figures for the composition of the Baku school population. In 1949 there were some 46,000 Azerbaijani, 47,800 Russian and 19,000 Armenian school children in the city. While the percentage of Russians is not nearly so great in the hinterland, the introduction of further industrialization in other parts of the republic means the entry into the country of large additional contingents of Russian specialists and skilled workers to staff these enterprises.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

16

Russian immigration into Kirghizia has been especially great so that at present the Kirghiz constitute at best not more than one-half of the population. The Turkmen have made out somewhat better. In 1939 they still constituted about 70 percent of the population of the Turkmenian SSR. A continuing influx of Russians and others into the country is, however, a virtual certainty if only because of recent economic developments in the country. The cultivation of new lands, the greatly increased industrialization, and the generation of hydro-electric power in connection with the Main Turkmen Canal have and will continue to make great demands upon manpower which the slender Turkmenian population -- some 770,000 in the republic as of 1939 -- will be quite unable to fill.

Strengthening of the Russian element in Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan has taken place, though not as extensively as in some of the other Central Asian Republics.

The influx of Great Russians is especially great in the large cities of Central Asia, travellers to this area in recent years report. The percentage of Russians is greatest where economic activity is on the upswing in line with their tendency to monopolize the skilled and better occupations. Their number is significantly less in cities which are retrograde economically. Thus there is only a minority of Russians in Bukkara and Namangan.

The most menacing situation for Asian peoples in the USSR at the present time exists in Kazakhstan. The entry of Russians, Ukrainians, and others into the area had persisted from Tsarist times to such an extent that the republic did not have a Kasakh majority even before the "new lands" campaign. The census of January 17, 1939 revealed that the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

17

local population of Kazakhstan numbered 6,146,000 persons while the number of Kazakhs in the entire Soviet Union was placed at 3,098,000, of whom at least 10 percent are living in other parts of the Soviet Union. The settlement of Russian peasants on Kazakh lands was especially extensive after the terrible famine and Soviet misrule of the early 1930's when many Kazakhs died or fled to Sinkiang province in Western China. The number of Kazakhs in the Soviet Union dropped from 3,968,000 in December 1920 to 3,098,764 in January 1939, a decline of about 869,000 persons. Even at the slow rate of increase in the whole of the Soviet Union during the years of collectivisation the Kazakhs should have numbered 4.6 million by 1939, or an increase of 631,000 over the 1926 figure. The flood of Russians is especially noticeable in the large industrial centers like Karaganda. In Alma-ata, capital of the Kazakh republic, non-natives number about 90 percent of the city's population, of whom Russians constitute the largest number.

Events during the past year indicate a further swamping of the Kazakh population in their own republic so that soon they will constitute a definite minority. A great influx of non-Kazakh peoples, especially Great Russians and Ukrainians, is currently taking place in connection with the vast "new lands" campaign. Kazakhstan's share of the 28 to 30 million hectares to be harvested by 1956 is large, about one half or more, exact figures not being available. The additional manpower that must be brought into the area must be very large if these goals are to be achieved, since 28-30 million hectares is somewhat larger than the entire sown area of Canada. At least one million persons will be needed, according to the estimates of one British economist specializing on Soviet agriculture, even

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

18

allowing for the maximum economization of labor upon which the Soviets are apparently counting. The labor force must include not only the persons actually working the land but also handlers of fuel and transport, plus workers to distribute consumers' goods, staff the grain elevators, schools, and hospitals. There will in addition be a large contingent of dependents, especially if Khrushchev's advice to Komsomolists to have many offspring is heeded. Other estimates state that eventually two million persons will have to be sent into the "new lands" area, at least one half of which would go to Kazakhstan and large additional numbers into the Altai region, the ancestral home of the Turkic peoples. An indication of the polyglot nature of the "new lands" area was given on January 14, 1955 by the paper Agriculture. The paper reported the secretary of the Party organization of the new grain sovkhos "Stalingrad" of the Kokchetav Oblast of the Kazakh SSR, a man by the name of Neshivikh, as stating that the members of his sovkhos organized last spring came from 20 different oblasts of the USSR and represented 13 different nationalities. While Soviet sources do not disclose the relative proportions of the various nationalities sent into Kazakhstan the largest numbers appear to be Great Russians followed by Ukrainians.

The threat to Asian peoples is no less grave in areas other than Central Asia. In the Buryat-Mongol ASSR Russians formed 52.7 percent of the population as early as 1926. This number was further increased during the first Five Year Plans when Russians and other Europeans were brought in to provide the skilled labor force for industry. The rapid expansion in the size of Ulan Ude, capital of the Buryat-Mongol ASSR, was due almost wholly to the arrival of Russian workers. Buryat Mongols seem at no time to have formed more than 20 percent of the population of their capital.

UNCLASSIFIED

In the case of the Far Northern nationalities their number has always been so small that relatively few settlers would be needed to threaten them with extinction. The proportion of "natives" in the population of the Soviet Arctic dropped from 56 to 35 percent between 1926 and 1935, according to one authority, and has now shrunk below 20 percent. "The National Areas of the Far North," he goes on to say, "are becoming more and more unreal and in the long run only propaganda interests can vindicate their continued existence."¹

Kolarz, W. Russia and Her Colonies (London, 1952), p. 63

The grim threat of Russian colonization to the Asian peoples within the USSR is obvious and makes Soviet talk about "Western imperialism" all the more hypocritical and sanctimonious. A comparison of Soviet policy, say, in Central Asia, and British policy in India, a comparison often made, is most edifying. While the proportions of non-natives (chiefly Russians) to natives in Central Asia is not less than one to four, in India this never exceeded one to 4,000, including British military forces stationed there.

The presence of ever-increasing numbers of Russians within Asian republics is an added guarantee that the so-called right of secession granted them by the Soviet constitution will never be exercised.

In addition to the grim threat of Russian immigration Asian peoples have been arbitrarily shifted from one part of the USSR to another at the whim of the Kremlin. The case of the Crimean Tatars, Balkars, Karachai, Chechen-Ingush and Kalzuks has already been mentioned. These mass transfers were carried out in the most brutal and callous manner. Less well known, perhaps, is the mass transfer in the period 1936-1938 of Chinese and Koreans from the Soviet Far East, where they had been settled since Tsarist days.

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

20

These peoples were arbitrarily shifted to other parts of the Soviet Union, especially Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, on charges that they were carrying on espionage activities in favor of the Japanese. These mass removals were carried on in great secrecy. Only later did indirect evidence appear in the Soviet press to suggest the fate of these peoples.

B. Destruction of Asian Culture

Asian peoples of the USSR have been bound so firmly politically and economically to the central government in Moscow that there can be no question of the slightest degree of independence. It is sometimes suggested, however, that while independence admittedly does not exist in these spheres the Asian peoples are allowed to develop their own language and culture.

While there is some truth in this latter assertion, acquaintance with the facts indicates that this claim relates to externals rather than essentials. Asians are allowed to retain their native dances, dress and architecture. Ancient masterpieces of architecture are restored and kept up - some which show up well in Soviet propaganda photographs, films and accounts to the outside world. In no more profound facets of national culture, such as history and literature a policy of distinct justification is pursued. Still other facets such as music and painting occupy an intermediate position in that while national forms of representation are clearly apparent, the subject matter is nevertheless heavily influenced by the central government.

The vast chasm between Soviet claim and reality is readily apparent in the field of literature. Boasts are loudly made of the large amount of books printed in the various minority areas and support of native writers is professed. In fact, the ill-considered and systematic policy of the Soviet Union of destruction of the sources of published books indicates however that many of these are translations in large quantities

DECLASSIFIED

of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and other Communist writers as well as Russian classical authors. A body of native literature has been built up, but writers must conform closely to Party dictates. It is not sufficient for a writer merely to say nothing derogatory in his works about the Soviet regime. He must write in a fiercely partisan manner about Soviet life and about the wonderful things supposedly accomplished by the Soviet regime. Thus, Turkmenkaya Iskra of September 21, 1951 sharply criticized a short lyrical poem written by a Turkmenian poet entitled "My Turkmenistan". The latter was severely taken to task because in his eulogy of Turkmenistan he had not made it clear that it was Soviet Turkmenistan that he was praising and not Turkmenistan "in general."

Creative workers in literature, music, painting, sculpture and the other arts are expected to look to Great Russian works for their models since "socialist" culture is synonymous with Russian culture. It was in this spirit that Soviet Art of May 23, 1950 sharply criticized Uzbek composers for not writing operatic works "in accordance with the laws of Russian classic opera."

Russification is actively pursued in the linguistic sphere. Most instruction at the university and upper level is conducted in Russian which the native student must know in addition to his own language if he is to receive a higher education. And he must know Russian if he hopes to hold down any kind of responsible job. As Radio Tbilisi declared on September 10, 1953, "the mastering of the language of the Great Russian people is of extremely great significance in the preparation of highly qualified cadres. The Russian language is particular...ensures the possibility of progress in the culture of the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union." Or, as one high education official in the Turkmen SSR wrote in Turkmenkaya Iskra of

December 29, 1973.

UNCLASSIFIED

22

The teaching of the Russian language and literature occupies a large place in the teaching work in Turkmen schools. The language of the Great Russian people has become the second native language of all nationalities in our country. Its knowledge permits communication with the many-centuried culture of the Russian people.

But though these extensive steps are taken to teach the Russian language, complaints are often voiced in the press with regard to the low level of instruction in the language in the schools of Asians and other minorities.

The native languages themselves are becoming more and more Russified as time goes on. By 1941 the Russian Cyrillic alphabet had been imposed on virtually all Soviet Asian languages. Since that time the "Elder Brother" theme has been more and more insisted upon, especially since 1970 when Stalin issued his famous pronouncements on the linguistic question.

While the principles and mechanics of the various minority languages are retained, Soviet authorities do all they can to "develop" and "enrich" them, that is, by introducing as many elements of the Russian language as they can. Not content with the imposition of the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian loan words the Soviet authorities even envisage the modification of grammar and phonetics.

UNCLASSIFIED

Reports concerning the 2nd Turkmen Linguistic Congress meeting in the fall of 1954 indicate the progress made and plans for the future.

Commented Turkmeneskaya Iskra of October 6, 1954:

The mass introduction of Russian and international words into the Turkmen language was begun in the Soviet period as a result of close relations with the Great Russian people.

Of great significance in the enrichment of the vocabularies of the peoples of the Soviet Union is the language of the Russian people -- one of the most developed and richest in the world.

Large numbers of Russian political, economic, agricultural and industrial words are now commonplace in the Turkmen vocabulary.

Another report concerning the congress carried in the same issue of the paper states:

In the Soviet period the basic enriching role in the life of the Turkmen language is the Russian language, our second native tongue. Here the plan [reference to resolution of the 2nd Turkmen Linguistic Congress] is correct when it provides a broad opportunity for tracing and borrowing directly from the Russian language or from other languages through the medium of the Russian language.

Comments similar to the above were contained in an article in Sovetskaya Kirghizia of August 10, 1954. Referring to a monograph published recently by a Kirghiz linguist entitled "The Development of the Kirghiz Language after the Great October Revolution" the article commented:

It was properly noted in the work that the chief sources for the enrichment of the vocabulary are the internal resources of the Kirghiz language itself and its enrichment through Russian. There was illustrated with concrete material the beneficial influence of the Russian language on the development of Kirghiz.

The "Elder Brother" theme which all Soviet Asian historians must follow is insisted upon with as much force in the field of history as linguistics. The theme is this: that the Russian people from their first contacts with the "backward" Asian peoples of what was to become the

UNCLASSIFIED

24

Tsarist Empire stood in the role of mentor or "elder brother" owing to their higher culture and superior technical and economic ability. Great benefits were conferred upon the Asian peoples by the imposition of Tsarist rule. The extension of Tsarist hegemony over these peoples was sound in policy and brought benefits which the toiling masses of these areas were beginning to appreciate in increasing measure. Only the means by which the invasion and subsequent rule of the various areas were carried out were bad -- the alliance with the native feudal lords and religious leaders. The results of the incorporation of the areas into the Tsarist Empire were good as they brought contact with the Russian people and their "superior civilization." This beneficial contact was brought to a still higher stage with the coming of Communism to power. Asian national heroes must now be evaluated according to their stand with regard to the Russian conquest of their area. Thus the great Moslem hero Sheikh Shamil, who led the fight against Tsarist incorporation of his peoples from 1834 to 1859 in Daghestan and Chechenia is now called a black reactionary despite the fact that Marx himself once called Shamil a "great democrat." Facts are also violated to show that the Bolsheviks had great popular support from among the common people of the various Asian areas before the Revolution, a completely erroneous position. The Kremlin has even suppressed national epics concerning periods of time before the coming of the Russians. The great Kirghiz epic Manas, portraying the struggle between the Kirghiz people and the Chinese, once viewed with favor by the Soviet authorities, is now condemned as "anti-popular" and "reactionary" since the Chinese Communists have taken over the state. Other folk epics such as the Azerbaijani Dede Korkud and the Turkmen Korkud Ata have been condemned for other reasons. Native historians and leaders must emphasize at every

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

25

opportunity that all progress and achievement in any Asian area is due to the "Communist Party and the Great Russian people." A typical effusion on this theme was contained in the paper Zarya Vostoka of May 29, 1954 on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the "union" of Russia and the Ukraine. In an article entitled "The Elder Brother", Stalin Prize Winner Cherishvili states that:

"The Georgian people owe much to its elder brother, the Russian people. For more than a century and a half, the Georgian culture grew, strengthened, and matured in close unity with Russian culture. Socialist Georgia owes the development of its economy and culture to its strong friendship with the Russian people, and their constant, disinterested, and sincere assistance. The wise Lenin-Stalin nationality policy of the Communist Party unites the Georgian people with the Great Russian people, the people of the glorious Ukraine and all the nations of the vast country."

Still another example of the tributes of servile flattery required of native peoples to the Great Russian people was contained in the tribute paid the latter by B. Yunusaliev, rector of the Kirghiz State University, as reported by Sovet Kirghizia on November 7, 1954:

Such truly grandiose success of the Kirghiz people were attained only through the revolutionary-transforming role of the Soviet government, the wise leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the constant brotherly help of the Great Russian people.

Therefore during the celebrations of the Great October Revolution the Kirghiz people from the bottom of their heart glorifies the Communist party and thanks the Great Russian people. The sources of friendship of the Kirghiz people were created long before the October revolution.

9. In Summing Up

The Asian peoples of the USSR are subject to a rule far more tyrannical than that of the much-abused predecessor of the Soviet regime, the Tsarist Empire. For though the latter did little for their Asian subjects,

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

26

they did not interfere actively in the institutions, culture and way of life of these peoples. The Asian peoples of the USSR have little to show materially in recompense for the economic exploitation, spiritual impoverishment, political bondage and interference with their lives to which they are subjected. They are continually reminded of their "backward" state before contact with Great Russians, and must acknowledge this. The Soviet Asian peoples must be thankful of any alleged benefits they have received and obsequiously thank the "Communist Party and the Great Russian people."

In still further contrast with other Asian peoples is the terrible feeling of isolation. All news from the outside world, except what the Soviet authorities want them to know, and that in a distorted manner, is carefully filtered out before it reaches them. They have no opportunity for contacts or travel outside of the Soviet Union or even contacts with Asians and others coming from the outside. A few delegations have been allowed into the Soviet Union but these have been carefully shepherded around. Soviet Asians are denied access to the press of the free world and to other media of communication. The only comparison they are allowed to make is with their condition under the old Tsarist Empire and even here the facts have been painted blacker than they really were. Even in the USSR the Soviet authorities have done their best to separate the Asian peoples by a policy of accentuating differences between related Asian languages, gerrymandering of the boundaries of ethnic areas so that large groups are left out and foreign groups included, through the splitting up of the religious jurisdiction over the various Moslem groups into four, and through other devices. The greatest vigilance is maintained against the development of Pan Turkic, Turanian, Mongolian or any other association with Asian peoples across the Soviet borders.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

27

Yet despite the tremendous barrage of propaganda and their Protean subterfuges the Soviets have not deceived their Asian minorities nor won their affection. Though the various cultures have been thrust into the Soviet mould, the smouldering resentment remains. The great numbers of Central Asians whom the Germans were able to enlist in their armed forces during World War II to fight against the Soviets is a vivid and positive demonstration of the bankruptcy of Soviet nationality policy. The spread of education which the Soviet regime has promoted among its Asian peoples, however one-sided and illiberal it may be, must in the final result encourage the Asians to think for themselves and to feel even more deeply the heavy yoke of Communism.