

Document 5

Chou En-lai,

RELATIONS AMONG NATIONALITIES (excerpts)*

(October 23, 1951)

In the course of the past year and more, the central government has dispatched visiting missions to areas populated by minorities, and delegates of minorities have also come to Peking for meetings and other purposes. These and other activities have served to strengthen further the ties between the central government and the various minorities, and stimulated the latter's understanding of their motherland. The growth of the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea has further added to the education in patriotism among our minorities whose overwhelming majority deeply love and warmly support Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the central government. The long-standing disunity and antagonism of the past between the nationalities and within each one of them has now given way to unity and cooperation.

Regional autonomy for minorities and democratic-coalition governments of nationalities are now being established step by step. Excluding Inner Mongolia, altogether thirty governments of autonomous areas and fifty-one democratic-coalition governments of nationalities have been established, ranging from chuan-ch'ü to township level. These governments have, on the whole, achieved excellent results.

The state trading agencies are trying in various ways to extend their spheres of work in minority areas. As far as

*Policy Towards Nationalities of the People's Republic of China (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1953), 22-25.

possible they initiate a policy of trading at parity prices, or even at subsidized prices, to organize the exchange of goods. As a result, prices for local products have generally been raised three or four times and even as much as over ten times.

The Ministry of Public Health of the central government and the various local governments concerned have dispatched many medical and anti-epidemic teams to work in minority areas, or have helped the minorities to establish their own medical and health organizations. These teams have been enthusiastically welcomed by the minorities.

At the moment, we have only limited capacity to restore and develop cultural and educational work among minorities. Nevertheless, the central government and the various local governments concerned have all done their best to train cadres for minorities. We have now more than 50,000 cadres of minority origin who are withdrawn from production to engage in full-time work among the minorities in various parts of the country.

All this is only the beginning - a good one at that - of the fundamental solution of the nationality question in our country.

At present, we should pay attention to the following points in our work:

1. In accordance with the basic principles of democratic centralism and the system of representative conferences, we should everywhere effect the full application of the policy of regional autonomy for minorities and of the democratic-coalition governments of nationalities. The autonomous rights of autonomous areas should be appropriately defined. The forms of autonomous organs must suit the present stage of development of the respective minorities, and we must not simply transfer the system adopted in areas populated by the Chinese to areas populated by minorities.

2. We should make more efforts to extend trade and health

facilities in the minority areas.

3. We should in all areas populated by minorities spread and deepen their education in patriotism and the movement to resist U. S. aggression and aid Korea; we should rehabilitate and develop stage by stage their cultural and educational facilities, and especially establish and develop in a planned manner and on a selective basis, journalistic and publishing facilities.

4. Everywhere we should continue to carry out extensively the policy of training cadres from among minorities, strengthen their political and ideological education, and acquaint them with the policies of our government, so that they can competently deal with their day-to-day tasks and give proper leadership.

5. Appropriate reforms within a minority are a necessary stage through which it must pass, in order to develop and progress and reach the level of the more advanced nationalities. But these reforms must suit the characteristics of the present stage of development of the minority concerned. They must accord with the will of the majority of people of the minority concerned. To carry out these reforms, suitable measures must be adopted and the cadres of the minority concerned relied on.

6. We should continue to educate the Chinese, especially the Chinese cadres, to seriously respect in all ways the right to equality of minorities, the opinions of their people, and to eliminate Chinese chauvinist influences of various kinds. At the same time, the minorities themselves must constantly aim to overcome tendencies of local nationalism, secure the help of the Chinese and other more advanced minorities, study the experiences gained by these nationalities, and induce their own cadres to work for the good of their minority.