

THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND CLASS STRUGGLE

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NATIONALITIES and classes are questions which are interrelated. The question of nationalities is in essence a question of classes. As Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out, "In the final analysis, a national struggle is a question of class struggle."¹ This is a Marxist-Leninist principle. It is a principle that we must keep firmly in mind when we examine and deal with the question of nationalities, whether it is a national and colonial question on the world-wide scale or one of our own country and whether it is a question in the period of democratic revolution or one in the period of socialist revolution and construction in China.

1

Nationality is a historical concept which grew up in the period when capitalism was in the ascendancy. The origin of the national question lies in the capitalist-imperialist system, in the system of exploitation based on the private ownership of the means of production. Marx said: "The existing relations of ownership provide the condition for the exploitation of one nation by another."²

¹ Mao Tse-tung, *Statement Calling on the People of the World to Unite to Oppose Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism and Support the American Negroes in Their Struggle Against Racial Discrimination*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1964, p. 5.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Speeches on Poland", *Collected Works*, German ed., Berlin, 1959, Vol. 4, p. 416.

Aside from oppressing and exploiting the working people of their own nationality, the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes of an oppressor nationality always oppress and exploit other nationalities in their own country, while in foreign countries they scramble for markets, regions producing raw materials and places for investment, and enlarge the scope of their exploitation. They strive to establish systems of national oppression and colonialism in order to carry out ruthless national aggression and oppression and subject other nationalities to their exploitation. So long as imperialism, capitalism, the exploiting classes and the system of exploitation exist, national oppression and national exploitation will not vanish.

National oppression is definitely not, as the bourgeois nationalists and other exploiting classes assert, a struggle and opposition between all the people of one nationality and all those of another. It is oppression of the vast majority of the people of an oppressed nationality, mainly its workers, peasants and other labouring people, by the ruling class of an oppressor nationality. The oppressors are a small handful, while the oppressed form the overwhelming majority. Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

In the United States, it is only the reactionary ruling circles among the whites who oppress the Negro people. They can in no way represent the workers, farmers, revolutionary intellectuals and other enlightened persons who comprise the overwhelming majority of the white people. At present, it is the handful of imperialists headed by the United States, and their supporters, the reactionaries in different countries, who are inflicting oppression, aggression and intimidation on the overwhelming majority of the nations and peoples of

the world. We are in the majority and they are in the minority. At most, they make up less than 10 per cent of the 3,000 million population of the world.¹

In oppressing other nationalities or carrying out aggression upon them, the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes always do it in the name of their whole nation and proclaim that they are doing it for the benefit of all their people. This is a shameless fraud. Their aggression upon and oppression of other nationalities are not only widely at variance with the interests of the proletariat and other working people of their own nationality but are a complete violation of those interests and stand in basic contradiction with them. Engels already stated: "A nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations."² Referring to the hostile attitude of the English worker towards the Irish worker, Karl Marx, in a letter to Meyer and Vogt, said: "he . . . turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself*."³ Lenin said: "The oppression of 'subject peoples' is a double-edged weapon. It cuts both ways — against the 'subject peoples' and against the Russian people."⁴ For this reason, the proletariat and the working people of various nationalities must see through this deception of the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes, and stand against national aggression and oppression of

¹ Mao Tse-tung, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Speeches on Poland", *Collected Works*, German ed., Berlin, 1959, Vol. 4. p. 417.

³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895*, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 289.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "National Equality", *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, Vol. 20, p. 238.

every kind, and support the struggle of oppressed nationalities for liberation.

Marx considered that the development of the national liberation movement is a decisive blow to the ruling classes of the capitalist countries and is necessary to the proletariat for their own emancipation. In his letter to Meyer and Vogt, Marx said that to the workers of England the national emancipation of Ireland "is no question of abstract justice or human sympathy but the first condition of *their own emancipation*".¹ Lenin developed the standpoint of Marx and Engels. He considered it necessary to distinguish the nationality which is oppressed from that which oppresses and put forward the slogan "Workers of All Countries and Oppressed Nations, Unite!" He said:

The revolutionary movement in the advanced countries would indeed be a mere deception if complete and close unity did not exist between the workers fighting against capital in Europe and America and the hundreds and hundreds of millions of "colonial" slaves who are oppressed by that capital.²

Under the historical conditions of the present age, Comrade Mao Tse-tung has further developed the Marxist-Leninist principle regarding the relation between the national liberation movement and the proletarian revolution. He sets great store on the significance of and the role played by the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In his statement of August 8,

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Marx to Meyer and Vogt", *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895*, International Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 290.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1946, Vol. 10, p. 160.

1963, supporting the American Negroes in their fight against racial discrimination, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said emphatically:

The evil system of colonialism and imperialism grew up along with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the thorough emancipation of the black people.¹

In his talk with guests from Iraq, Iran and Cyprus on May 9, 1960, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said that the just struggles of the peoples of the various countries in the world have received and will continue to receive firm support from the 650 million people of China. He pointed out that the days of imperialism are numbered. The imperialists have committed all manner of evils and all the oppressed peoples of the whole world will never forgive them. He pointed out that to defeat the reactionary rule of imperialism, it is necessary to form a broad united front and unite with all forces, excluding the enemy, that can be united with and continue to wage arduous struggles.²

Among the people of the oppressed nationalities, those who actually suffer national oppression are mainly the oppressed and exploited classes, the workers and the broad masses of labouring people, most of whom are peasants. When their class interests are encroached upon by the imperialists through national oppression, the national bourgeoisie and even certain patriotic kings, princes and aristocrats of an oppressed nationality may sometimes fight against national oppression together with the broad masses of working people of their own nationality. In

¹ Mao Tse-tung, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

² *Chairman Mao Tse-tung's Important Talks with Guests from Asia, Africa and Latin America*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, p. 5.

this struggle the proletariat should unite with them, while at the same time they must understand that the attitude of these people towards imperialist national oppression is, in the final analysis, based on their own class interests. As to the reactionaries of the oppressed nationalities who are in league with the imperialists, they will never oppose national oppression; on the contrary, they will unite with the ruling classes of the oppressor nationalities, become their lackeys, and collaborate with them in the oppression and exploitation of the working people of their own nationalities.

From this we can see that national oppression is in reality class oppression, and that the struggle against national oppression is in reality a struggle against class oppression, and often simultaneously a struggle against the reactionaries and traitors of one's own nationality.

It is precisely for this reason that Marxist-Leninists do not consider the national question as an isolated one. They consider the solution of the national question as a problem of revolution, a part of the general question of revolution. At different stages of the revolution the political party of the proletariat has different tasks concerning the national question. During the period of imperialism the national question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In order to achieve national equality and total emancipation, the people of the oppressed nationalities must resolutely carry out national democratic revolution, put an end to the national oppression of the imperialists and overthrow the rule of their lackeys; they must then carry through the socialist revolution and destroy all the exploiting classes and systems. Marx and Engels said in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.¹

2

The national question in China is a part of the general question of the Chinese revolution, and the task of the Chinese Communist Party in this field is a part of the general task of the Chinese revolution. The tackling of such a partial question in China must be subordinated to the interests of the Chinese revolution as a whole. It is only in the course of development of the revolution that the national question can be solved in our country.

Before liberation, China was a colonial, semi-colonial, and semi-feudal country, and all its nationalities alike suffered national oppression by foreign imperialists. The minority nationalities of China suffered also the national oppression of Han chauvinism. In his political report made at the Seventh Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1945, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

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

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, p. 55.

to the minority nationalities, oppressing and exploiting them in every possible way.¹

The national oppression carried out by the foreign imperialists was in essence oppression carried out by the foreign monopoly bourgeoisie, while the national oppression of Han chauvinism within the country was in essence oppression carried out by the feudal and bureaucrat-capitalist classes of the Hans who oppressed the broad masses of Han working people as well. Within the minority nationalities there were also feudal and slave-owner classes who, collaborating with imperialists and the feudal and bureaucrat-capitalist classes among the Hans, oppressed and exploited the broad masses of working people. This, in short, was the substance and class nature of the national question in China during the period of democratic revolution. Imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism are the three great enemies of the people of all nationalities of China. Of these three, imperialism is their principal and most ferocious foe. Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

The contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation and the contradiction between feudalism and the great masses of the people are the basic contradictions in modern Chinese society. . . . But the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation is the principal one.²

During the period of democratic revolution in China the grave task of fighting against imperialism made it neces-

¹ Mao Tse-tung, "On Coalition Government", *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, Vol. III, p. 305.

² Mao Tse-tung, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party", *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, Vol. II, p. 313.

sary for all the nationalities in our country to unite and consolidate in the closest manner. History has shown that only by uniting with the Hans in the struggle against their three enemies, especially against imperialist aggression and oppression, can the minority nationalities achieve national equality and liberation.

During the period of democratic revolution, in accordance with the theory of Marxism-Leninism and proceeding from the historical conditions of the Chinese revolution and the relationship among the nationalities obtaining at the time, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung laid down the fundamental principle for solving the national question in China. The principle is: to practise national equality, lead and unite all the nationalities to carry out the revolutionary struggle against the three great enemies, build after the victory of the revolution a united country, i.e. the People's Republic of China, abolish the system of national oppression, institute regional national autonomy and realize the common development and prosperity of all nationalities in the motherland — a great family based on national equality, solidarity, friendship and co-operation. Centring round this principle the Party formulated a series of policies with regard to the nationalities, and has led the people of the various minority nationalities to unite with the Han people to carry out a heroic revolutionary struggle for many years.

With the victory of the Chinese people's revolution, the rule by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism represented by the reactionary Kuomintang ruling clique was overthrown. A people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and founded on the alliance of workers and peasants was established, and the task of the

Chinese people of unifying their motherland and gaining independence and emancipation from foreign domination was successfully accomplished, the system of national oppression within the country completely abolished, and equality between all the nationalities and unity and regional autonomy realized.

The fundamental policy of our Party in solving the national question is to exercise regional national autonomy by the minority nationalities within the big family of the unified motherland. This policy has worked successfully. Regional national autonomy is a part of the system of the people's democratic dictatorship. It has ensured the unification of the motherland and the unity of the nationalities, protected the rights of equality and autonomy for the people of the minority nationalities, and united the working people and all those who can be united among the various nationalities in the autonomous regions. Apart from this, regional national autonomy is a system by which the working people of the minority nationalities carry out democratic reforms, protect the fruits of victory of the democratic revolution, and help forward socialist revolution and construction; it is a weapon of the working people of the minority nationalities for waging class struggle and struggle against the enemy.

With the founding of the People's Republic of China, the national question, however, was not completely solved, for the rule of the feudal class and even slave-owners still existed among many minority nationalities. Remaining in power and continuing their exploitation, they tried in every way to use the historical legacy of national misunderstandings to sow dissension among the nationalities; they even launched insurrections, tried to break the unity

of the motherland and sabotage the people's revolution of the various nationalities, so as to attain their criminal aim of preserving and extending the selfish class interests of a few. Under their oppressive rule, the working people of the minority nationalities suffered ruthless exploitation and led an exceedingly miserable life. Under such conditions the oppressed and exploited people of the minority nationalities were unable to fully enjoy, if at all, the right of national equality given them by the state. Furthermore, it was not possible to transform the backward productive forces of these nationalities. In short, these people were not completely emancipated — not emancipated as a class. Without class emancipation, the broad masses of the working people of the minority nationalities could not gain complete national liberation.

In solving the national question in China, two fundamental points must be clearly understood:

1. There are classes within every nationality. What people, or to be more specific, what class, then, is the essential part of a nationality? When we say national interests, to whose interests do we refer? When we say national liberation, whose liberation do we mean? When we say national equality and progress, to whom do these terms apply? In the answers to these questions lies the difference between the proletarian view of nationality and the view of the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes.

The bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes always put their own class interests above those of the people of the whole nationality. They want to monopolize the term "nationality" and proclaim themselves the representatives of the nationality and custodians of the national interests. According to them, their own exploiting classes are the

essential part of the nationality and their class interests are the national interests. For them, so long as their demands with regard to their selfish class interests are satisfied, national equality and national liberation are achieved and the national question is solved. Marxist-Leninists, on the contrary, consider that the essential part of a nationality can only be the oppressed and exploited working people who are the vast majority of its population. In the case of China's minority nationalities, the essential part of a nationality consists of the peasants, herdsmen, serfs and slaves, most of whom are poor, miserable and greatly oppressed. Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

Our government represents not only the workers and peasants but the whole nation. This has been implicit in our slogan of a workers' and peasants' democratic republic, because the workers and peasants constitute 80 to 90 per cent of the population.¹

In the final analysis, national interests are the interests of the proletarians and other working people, who are the overwhelming majority of the population. Apart from the class interests of the proletariat there can be no real national interests. National liberation must be the liberation of the vast majority of the nation, i.e. the working people. The same principle applies to national equality and development. The national question is essentially one of the emancipation of the broad masses of oppressed and exploited working people of all nationalities. If the working people, the overwhelming majority of the people of all nationalities, do not enjoy equality and emancipation,

¹ Mao Tse-tung, "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism", *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, Vol. I, p. 168.

then those nationalities are not equal or free, and the national question cannot be said to be solved.

2. Who is to be relied on for the solution of the national question? According to the exploiting classes of the minority nationalities, national equality and national emancipation could be achieved and the national question solved simply by relying on the few persons in the exploiting class, i.e. the upper strata of the nationalities, who will adopt and carry through certain reform measures, or by hanging on to a certain imperialist country, or living on the bounty of the reactionary ruling class in the country. They are fundamentally opposed to the masses and revolution; they, of course, will not choose the path of revolution by relying on the masses. To Marxist-Leninists, however, the national question can only be solved through revolutionary struggles carried out by the broad masses of the people of the exploited classes of oppressed nationalities. To solve this question completely, the political party of the proletariat must mobilize and give leadership to the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited working people of the minority nationalities and win over and unite with all those who can be united to wage the revolutionary struggle and resolutely carry the revolution through to the very end. All doctrines of reform and reliance on favours are basically wrong and must be strongly opposed. This is another difference between the proletarian and bourgeois views of nationalities.

The question of revolution is the basic question for any nationality. The national question can never be solved apart from revolution and class struggle. It is in order to solve the national question that the political party of the proletariat leads the people of the minority nationalities to

carry out the revolution. The more thoroughly the revolution is carried out the more completely will the question be solved. Those who hold the view that the national question can be settled without carrying out class struggle and revolution within the minority nationalities are in reality unwilling to settle it and are opposed to its settlement. This is nothing but an expression of the bourgeois view of nationalities.

From the above analysis we can clearly see that the origin of the national question in China after liberation, whether in regard to the relations between the nationalities or in regard to each of the minority nationalities, lies in the fact that there is class oppression and class exploitation within the minority nationalities. Thus to solve this question completely it is necessary to fully mobilize the working people of the minority nationalities to carry out the revolution. They should not only carry out and complete the democratic revolution but also carry out and complete the socialist revolution. In short, the working people must step by step abolish all systems of exploitation and oppression, all the exploiting and oppressing classes, and the system of private ownership which is the cause of exploitation.

Under the leadership of the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the people of the minority nationalities in China have consistently carried out the Party's line and policies with regard to the national question. First of all they carried out democratic reforms and by their own efforts overthrew the rule of the feudal lords and slave-owning class. Then, socialist transformation was put into effect in most of the regions inhabited by the minority nationalities. The broad masses of peasants and herdsmen enthu-

siastically joined the people's communes, and embarked upon the path of collectivization. Meanwhile, the minority nationality areas, like all other places in the country, have begun a vigorous programme of socialist construction. Consequently, the social economy of these areas has undergone a fundamental change and the people have been inspired with a new spirit. In recent years, under the guidance of the Party's general line of socialist construction, the minority nationalities have overcome all kinds of difficulties besetting the path of socialist construction, and their economy has changed completely for the better. In the minority nationality areas throughout the country — from the city to the countryside, from the villages to the pastoral areas, and from the hinterland to the frontiers — prosperity is in evidence. The social economy is increasingly strengthened and the life of the people gets better every year, and the population steadily increases. The minority people, rallying closely around the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, are becoming more united every year and are steadily marching along the path of socialism. The unity of our motherland is becoming more and more consolidated with each passing year.

During this whole transitional period our Party has to accomplish a great historical task with regard to the national question, that is, to consolidate the unity of the motherland; to strengthen the people's democratic dictatorship, national defence, the worker-peasant alliance, and the unity of the nationalities; to safeguard national equality and put into effect the system of regional autonomy; to guide the minority nationalities in completing their democratic revolution and carrying out their socialist rev-

olution and construction; to help the minority nationalities to develop into modern nationalities; to carry through the socialist revolution to the end and solve completely China's national question, thus enabling all the nationalities together to pass over to the stage of communism. At present the socialist revolution and socialist construction in the minority nationality areas have just begun. In order to thoroughly carry out the democratic revolution (including reform of the feudal system embodied in their religions) and the socialist revolution and construction in the minority nationality areas, our Party has to perform a long and arduous task by uniting with the broad masses of the working people of the minority nationalities and with all those who can be united. At present our main work is to develop, both extensively and intensively, the movement of socialist education in the minority nationality areas and carry through this great mass revolutionary movement of profound historical significance to the end. The Party's class line in the countryside should be strictly and consistently adhered to. We should organize the class ranks of poor and lower-middle peasants and unhesitatingly rely on them to carry out all kinds of work. Furthermore, we should more boldly arouse the impoverished peasants, herdsmen, serfs and slaves, who are the most oppressed and exploited people. We should seriously train revolutionary cadres from among the poor working people of the minority nationalities and build up and develop the ranks of the proletariat, including working-class intellectuals. We should resolutely and consistently adhere to the Party's general line of socialist construction, run the people's communes and producers' co-operatives efficiently and well, consolidate the so-

cialist economic system, and develop the socialist economy and culture. We should give the cadres and broad masses of the working people of the minority nationalities a proletarian class education and an education in patriotism, in the future of socialism and communism, and in internationalism. We should organize them to study Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought so as to steadily raise the level of their political understanding and consciousness and to make them revolutionaries. We should strengthen and make closer the relation between the central government and the people of the minority nationalities. We should promote equality, solidarity, friendship and mutual help in the common work, struggle and life of the peoples of the various nationalities of the motherland, and oppose Han chauvinism and local nationalism. The policy of a united front including the patriotic upper strata of the minority nationalities should be carried out and there should be freedom of religious belief. There should be political unity but separation of politics and religion. A resolute struggle must be waged against the subversive activities of the imperialists, reactionaries of all countries, modern revisionists and counter-revolutionaries among the minority nationalities within the country.

Our Party's work among the upper strata of the minority nationalities is to win them over to the anti-imperialist, patriotic united front for the purpose of uniting all forces that can be united, to fight against our main enemies, the chief of these being the imperialists. It also aims at rallying, educating and transforming them so as to enable them to fight against imperialism, to be patriotic, and to take the path of socialism under the leadership of the Party in accordance with the six "politi-

cal criteria".¹ It should be noted that the establishment by the Party of a united front with the upper strata of the minority nationalities serves the revolutionary cause of the workers, peasants and other labouring people as well as the socialist revolution and socialist construction. Work along this line therefore should be so arranged as to promote the revolutionary cause of the broad masses of the working people of the minority nationalities more effectively than before.

3

Will there still be the national question in our country after democratic reform has been completed in the minority nationality areas and after decisive victory has been achieved in socialist transformation in most places? And is the national question in essence still a class question? Our answer is yes. It was pointed out at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Party that there will be class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie and struggle between the two paths of socialism and capitalism during

¹ "In the political life of our country," says Comrade Mao Tse-tung in his book *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, "words and actions can be judged right if they: (1) Help to unite the people of our various nationalities, and do not divide them; (2) Are beneficial, not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction; (3) Help to consolidate, not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship; (4) Help to consolidate, not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism; (5) Tend to strengthen, not to cast off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party; (6) Are beneficial, not harmful, to international socialist solidarity and the solidarity of the peace-loving peoples of the world. Of these six criteria, the most important are the socialist path and the leadership of the Party."

the entire period of transition from capitalism to communism. This is a universal law, to which there are no exceptions in any nationality. Furthermore, class struggle and the struggle between the two paths of socialism and capitalism among the minority nationalities are bound to find expression in the national question. This is determined by the objective law of class struggle. The imperialists, reactionaries of all countries, modern revisionists, the Chiang Kai-shek gang, and the counter-revolutionaries among the nationalities do not take their defeat lying down. They scheme day and night to foster antagonism between the various nationalities. They vainly attempt to break the unity of our country and the solidarity of our nationalities and undermine our socialist cause so as to revive the feudal system and even the slave system in the minority nationality areas. Nor are the overthrown reactionary exploiting classes of the minority nationalities content to withdraw from the arena of history. They use every means to sow dissension among the nationalities, carry out all kinds of sabotage, and plot for a comeback. Taking the stand of the former exploiting classes, the upper strata in the religions of the minority nationalities who have not been thoroughly remoulded, attempt to stir up national antagonism so as to protect or restore their class privileges. In some of the minority nationalities there exists the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie and bourgeois influence are at the root of nationalism. In every nationality the peasantry includes a section of well-to-do middle peasants who incline spontaneously towards capitalism and are most liable to accept the bourgeois ideas of nationalism. It is for these reasons that there are still problems of one kind or another with regard to the

minority nationalities and the relations between the nationalities. It is clear that, in China at present, the national question is in essence a class question and its root is to be sought in classes, class contradictions, class struggle and the struggle between the two paths of socialism and capitalism.

Han chauvinism and local nationalism are both bourgeois ideas. They are fundamentally irreconcilable with socialism and the proletarian view of nationality. They are contradictions, class contradictions, within the ranks of the people and must be overcome. In recent years, in many minority nationality areas, local nationalists have become very active. Working hand in glove with the imperialists, foreign reactionaries, modern revisionists, and the counter-revolutionaries within the country, they have used all means to stir up antagonism between the nationalities and vainly attempted to break the unity of the motherland and restore the system of oppression and exploitation. Their main attack has been directed against the unity of the motherland, solidarity among the nationalities, Party leadership, and the socialist cause, their slogan being "Against the Han, for independence, and no reform!" Thus the contradiction between the local nationalists and the people of the various nationalities has become a contradiction between ourselves and the enemy. Since liberation, facts have shown that all those who, under the pretext of nationality, oppose the motherland, the Communist Party, the people and socialism, are the common enemy of the people of all the nationalities.

Reactionaries of all the nationalities often pose as protectors of national interests whereas in reality they are betrayers of such interests. They are concerned about

the selfish interests of a small number of exploiters and not about the interests of the working people who amount to over 90 per cent of the population. And for the sake of these interests they are only too ready to betray their own nationality, turn against their motherland, and throw in their lot with the imperialists and foreign reactionaries. Under the camouflage of protecting national interests they deceive the working people of their own nationality, while they actually prepare to brutally and ruthlessly oppress and exploit the masses of the working people. Before liberation, under the dark rule of these reactionaries within many minority nationalities, the social productive forces were seriously impaired, the people suffered every kind of oppression and exploitation, their life was extremely miserable, population was constantly decreasing, and the nationalities were degenerating and in danger of extinction. In this connection, the life of the Tibetan working people on the eve of liberation is an outstanding example. At present, the "protection of national interests" spoken of by the reactionaries of the minority nationalities means precisely the protection of those "interests" which have reduced their nationalities to poverty, degeneration and even extinction. The people of all the nationalities must therefore resolutely smash the sabotage of these reactionaries.

Nationalism is a bourgeois ideology. Now the overthrown feudal lords and owners of serfs and slaves use it as a weapon for waging struggles against us. The imperialists, reactionaries of all countries, and modern revisionists always fear and hate the solidarity of our nationalities and the unity of our country. So long as imperialism exists it will not cease to instigate acts of provocation and sabotage against the solidarity and unity

of the nationalities of our country. The criminal activities of the small number of local nationalists in trying to split the motherland are carried out under the direct guidance and as a result of the intrigues of the imperialists, reactionaries of all countries, and modern revisionists, or in co-ordination with their needs, acting as their fifth column in performing acts of subversion and sabotage. It is essential for us to have a real understanding of the reactionary character of the local nationalists.

In certain frontier regions of the minority nationalities there has emerged a new special situation. There the modern revisionists are frantically fomenting disunity in the relations among our nationalities. They carry out subversive activities on a large scale, inciting and coercing huge numbers of people of the frontier minority nationalities to flee the country. This crime committed by the modern revisionists, which is a violation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, has greatly angered the people of our various nationalities, and they are determined to fight against it and smash it completely.

4

After liberation, the nationalities of our country have achieved unprecedented unity and solidarity. Vestiges of misunderstanding between the nationalities, however, have not been entirely eliminated. Furthermore, the various nationalities, as a matter of fact, are unequal in their economic and cultural development and each nationality has its own characteristics.

In dealing with the national question we must pay constant attention to these factors, analyse them and deal with them as important tasks concerning the national question.

Our Party has always paid great attention to the possible effects of these vestiges of misunderstanding between the nationalities. It has never regarded misunderstanding between the nationalities as something which cannot be changed. It holds that the roots of such misunderstanding are to be found in imperialist aggression against our country, in the policy carried out by the imperialists with the aim of breaking the unity of oppressed countries and the solidarity among their nationalities, in the policy of national oppression carried out by the exploiting classes of oppressor nationalities, and in the fact that the ruling class of the oppressed nationalities are constantly practising deception and sowing discord among the broad masses of the working people of their nationality. With the abolition of national oppression, because of the work done and efforts made by our Party, the misunderstanding between the minority nationalities and the Han nationality will without doubt gradually disappear; for, under the leadership of the Party and, especially, under the system of socialism, the broad masses of poor peasants and lower-middle peasants, who are the vast majority of the people of the minority nationalities, have great enthusiasm for the revolution. They are opponents of exploiting systems and exploiting classes of all kinds and are the most active supporters of the socialist path and collective economy. They strongly support the practice of national equality and stand for the unity of the motherland and the solidarity of the nationalities. Their interests coincide with those of the

working people of the Han nationality. The identity of class interests is the strongest basis for solidarity. This is borne out by facts. During the past ten years and more, under the leadership of the Party, the working people of the various nationalities have shown concern for each other's welfare. The broad masses of the Han people have given fraternal help to the minority people in the political, economic and cultural spheres and vice versa. After long association in revolutionary struggle, the working people of the various nationalities, working and living together, are forming and developing an entirely new type of fraternal relation among the nationalities which is marked by equality, solidarity, friendship and mutual help. This shows that when exploitation and oppression by the exploiting classes is ended, there is no basis for the continuation of the vestiges of misunderstanding between the working people of the various nationalities who have common class interests.

Naturally, remnants of age-old misunderstanding between the various nationalities still have some influence among certain people. And the fact that the imperialists, modern revisionists, reactionaries both within and without the country, and the exploiting classes of the minority nationalities are playing upon this feeling to foment disunity and sow dissension, makes it very necessary for us to pay serious attention to this question. Lenin said:

How is this distrust to be combated? How is it to be overcome and mutual confidence established?

The best way to achieve this is by working together to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power in the fight against the landlords and

capitalists of all countries and against their attempts to restore their domination.¹

To eliminate these differences once for all and to strengthen the close unity between the nationalities, we must do the following things among the nationalities: intensify class education, continue to wage class struggle, develop the struggle against the enemy, smash completely all counter-revolutionary acts of sabotage, and carry out the socialist revolution in a thorough manner.

The actual inequality between the various nationalities in economic and cultural development is an important part of the national question during the period of socialist revolution and construction of our country. It is necessary for the Party and the state to lead and help the minority nationalities carry out socialist construction and develop the socialist economy and culture, so that they can reach the level of the advanced nationalities. In this respect, the Party and the state have displayed the greatest concern and adopted all kinds of effective measures during the past ten years and more. As a result, during this short period of time, fundamental changes have taken place in the social economy of the minority nationality areas. Industrial, agricultural and livestock production has increased from two to several fold as compared to the days before liberation. Highways have been built everywhere and railways now reach many distant points. A large number of schools and hospitals have sprung up. The population of all the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letter to the Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine in Connection with the Victories over Denikin", *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 311.

minority nationalities has increased and large numbers of revolutionary cadres and intellectuals are developing and maturing. The disparity in economic and cultural development between the minority nationality areas and the Han areas has been markedly reduced.

We must understand that the actual inequality between the various nationalities in economic and cultural development is a problem left to us by the class society. It is the result of age-long national oppression and of age-long class exploitation and oppression within the nationalities and therefore cannot be completely evened out in a short period of time. After the ending of national oppression, it is necessary to take a further step to lead the working people of the minority nationalities to abolish the feudal and slave systems, do away with the system of private ownership, turn the forces of production to full account, and speedily develop their social economy and culture. Only in this way can the inequality between the various nationalities in economic and cultural development be finally overcome and the broad masses of working people of the minority nationalities fully avail themselves of the help rendered by advanced nationalities, making it of real use to the economic and cultural development of their own nationalities. With this development in the economy and culture of the minority nationalities in the course of socialist revolution and construction, the actual inequality between the nationalities will gradually disappear. This means that doing away with inequality between the nationalities is not simply a problem of economic and cultural development; it is fundamentally a problem of revolution.

Each nationality has its own characteristics and specific historical conditions and social development, which account for the differences between the various nationalities. The continuous intensification and development of the socialist revolution and construction brings with it ever increasing economic and cultural exchange between the different nationalities. Living, working and carrying on struggle together, the labouring people of the various nationalities are constantly raising the level of their class consciousness and political thinking. As the common cause of socialism of all the nationalities of the motherland develops, agreement between them will become greater and greater while differences between them will become less and less. This is an immutable law of social development and an indication of progress. However, during the entire long period of socialist society, national characteristics and differences will continue to exist. It is only after the realization of communism and elimination of classes, with the gradual fading away and merging together of nationalities that these characteristics and differences will fade away.

In dealing with the national question we must pay full attention to national characteristics and differences, for this will help us the better to solve the problems of democratic revolution, socialist revolution and socialist construction in the minority nationalities, and serve to promote their prosperity and development. National characteristics and differences may give rise to certain problems between the nationalities, but these should be solved through work or through education if necessary. None of these problems involves a contradiction between the nationalities. Contradictions between the nationalities are reflections of class contradictions and contra-

dictions between ourselves and the enemy. It is wrong to confuse national characteristics and differences with them. It is also radically wrong to exaggerate national characteristics, create national differences and talk about "national peculiarities".

In conclusion, during the period of socialism neither the actual inequality between the nationalities nor national characteristics and differences are the fundamental cause of the national question. The basic cause of the question is that classes, class contradictions and class struggle, and the struggle between the two paths of socialism and capitalism still exist in the various nationalities. That there are all kinds of fallacious and erroneous viewpoints with regard to the fundamental cause of the national question in the period of socialism is mainly due to ignorance of the Marxist-Leninist principle that this question is in essence one of classes, and of the fact that classes, class contradictions and class struggle are bound to exist for a long time during the period of socialist revolution and construction. As a result, people who hold such views, depart from the Marxist-Leninist class standpoint and method of class analysis in studying the national question. Under such conditions, it is necessary for us to make a serious study of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's teachings concerning classes, class contradictions and class struggle, to go deeply into the relation between the question of nationalities and that of classes, so that we may clearly understand the class nature of the national question.