CHAPTER-VI

CONCLUSION

Through thousands of years of continuous disintegration and amalgamation, the numerous ethnic entities in China have gradually developed into the present-day 56 nationalities. Since the 1949 Communist revolution China has been able to evolve itself into the People's Republic with characteristics of a unitary, multinational socialist state. Of the total Chinese population, 93.3 per cent are Han and the remaining are non-Han ethnic-national minorities. They are called national minorities since they are numerically less in number. Therefore, when discussing about the Chinese 'minorities' it has to be kept in mind that the term 'minority' refers, mainly, to linguistic and religious groups.

Most of these minority groups are spread over some 63.4 per cent of the country's total land area, mostly in the frontiers regions, and speak in different languages, practise different religions and hold different cultural beliefs. It is due to economic, political and strategic importance of these minority areas that the CCP has been making concerted efforts at bringing the non-Han to the mainstream.

China's policy towards her minorities was no doubt motivated by its desire to integrate these groups into the national mainstream. The question of nationalities' problem has hinged on the basis of Mao's thought, which says that nationalities problem is in essence a problem of class. If this analysis is taken as the basis, then the nationality and ethnic distinctions will disappear soon after the class difference disappears, resulting in homogeneous proletarian culture.

The policy towards the minorities was always conditioned by the dominant party group's assessment of the class situation in China. In the beginning the communist leadership felt that a transitional stage of revolution should be completed before China could move towards socialist revolution and thus finally entering a phase of real communism. And during this period of transition those with
a different background could join the united front, including minorities, against the enemy i.e., imperialism. And it was expected that the minorities would remain in the transitional phase for a longer period, for they were more backward than the other. Further it was also felt that in the transitional period the administrative skills committed upper strata, who were drawn from traditional minority's elite, could be accepted till a successor generation with proper proletarian background was trained.

The Marxist-Leninist formula for nationalities' policy has presented the Chinese communists with a broad framework the a proper interpretation of conditions in China. There was no doubt that an element of ambiguity existed with respect to the definition of nationality characteristics and the rate and completeness with which they would be expected to disappear. And the questions whether and under what conditions to support national liberation movements and the rights of self-determination and secession were also left unanswered. In fact, there is no clear-cut guidelines on which characteristics or forms of a minority group must be removed in order to achieve a truly socialist society. On the other hand, there was no precise definition worked out of which minority rights to support and if so to what extent. Added to these differences of emphasis among Marx, Lenin and Stalin were further amalgamated by a considerable disparity between socialist theory and Soviet practice and differences within Soviet practice itself over a period of time.

The only eternal characteristics of Marxist theory and practice concerning the nationalities' question are the assertion on equality of all nationalities, commitment to self-determination and a linkage of nationality characteristics with class structure. This, the last feature became more vague as Lenin and Stalin came to experience Soviet conditions in which the nationalities' characteristics were found more imbibed in workers than in the bourgeoisie.

Stalin also contended that minorities could be in 'national' in form and 'socialist' in content. The Soviet experience had exposed a lacuna of the theory linking social class and nationality characteristics and Marx's references to self-
determination and federation which developed into a new concept of national autonomy. However, when the leadership considered it necessary to suppress nationality characteristics, those who were considered to have been incorrect and, hence, were attacked as bourgeois traits. And local autonomy was bound by the decisions of the party. Further, the Soviet experience has also exposed the inherent difficulties in a policy which aims at wiping out ethnic differences by enabling them to have a free hand in governance. In retrospect, it can be said that the Chinese could design minority policy in various ways and still remained ideologically orthodox.

The Chinese communist policy towards the minorities prior to the 1949 imbided with the equality of nationalities, right to autonomy within a unified state, respect for nationality forms, right to education in one’s native language and overall improvement of living standards. This particular scheme was based on the Soviet policy towards her nationalities along with the party’s experience in minority work. But unsuitable clauses like right to secession were discarded and the Chinese communists benefited from Kuomintang’s mistakes in handling minority problems. In fact, it is difficult to ascertain whether the Chinese communists were reacting positively to the Soviet model or negatively to nationalists’ policies for both the Soviets and nationalists were antithetical on many points with respect to their policies towards national minorities. To mention few of them, the Soviet and Chinese communist parties defended the issue of autonomy, upheld the right of minorities to be educated in their own languages, which was opposed by Kuomintang regime and was backed by the support of communists in China and Soviet Union. Further, the Stalinist view on achieving union of nationalities by encouraging the development of their diverse cultures and languages was also adopted by CCP in contrast to the Kuomintang’s emphasis on the policy of assimilation.

However, it was not the CCP policy towards minority areas that brought the latter to a position of prominence in minority areas, rather it was due to the military victories in Han areas by making the minority leaders isolated and with no other
option other than negotiations which might enable them to retain at least their former powers or else to fight till the end which would result in loss of everything whatever they had. Added to this, the CCP was having only a small segment of minority group membership and, therefore, afraid of imperialist encroachment in the border areas. It was inclined to negotiate with many minority group leaders and erstwhile Kuomintang administrators in minority areas. And those who tried to resist this state of affairs or those who were unacceptable to the party were removed by force. But, by and large, efforts were made to persuade the traditional elite to cooperate. It would seem probable that many who did choose to cooperate did not believe that the party’s pledge to them would be honoured, but felt that behaving as if the promises would be kept was the best of the alternatives. It remained for the CCP to execute its policy statements in a manner that would win the loyalties of its constituency and to reconcile theory and practice.

Until mid-1950s, Beijing’s efforts in minority areas were characterised as moderation and flexibility. Sincere efforts were made to benefit from the experiences of the Soviet Union and the Kuomintang. Further, efforts were made to construct roads, telegraphs, newspapers and radio stations with a view to connect the infrastructure of minority areas with that of the Hans. To remove the Han and non-Han grievances, the minorities were provided legal equality, and derogatory names of the places and proper names for minorities were replaced with more dignified titles.

The CCP’s welfare schemes and professed concern for minorities had enabled it to gain the trust of minorities as well as a basic knowledge of their areas that would provide future moves to bring about social change. Moderate efforts were ventured out to improve the economic position of minorities but in general these were attempted only when they could be achieved without coming into conflict with the goal of attaining solidarity with minorities, that is, by introducing new cultivation techniques where they were not forbidden by religious beliefs and superstitions or by making available certain essential commodities that had been in
short supply. The concomitant result was to tie-up the economy of such areas with that of Han.

Given the complexity of the issue, CCP could not have followed a single consistent policy. As a result, a variety of policies were followed in various minority areas which differed according to the party's assessment of the conditions in a given area. This, in turn, resulted in different policies being pursued towards two groups in the same nationality. Further, selective health, educational and cultural programmes were launched. To ensure minority representation, a system of political units was devised on experimental basis, which was later revised and codified. The political work chiefly concentrated on instilling in minority people a consciousness of being Chinese and also on helping them to feel a sense of participation in the heterogeneous state.

The question of identity required symbols that minorities could accept. The portrayal of Mao as the leader of all nationalities came in handy. Active minorities and cadres were trained and more promising were recruited into the party. Further, party organs were established in those areas where they were not in existence, and those already in existence, prior to the establishment of communist government, were expanded. CCP and the government portrayed themselves as patrons of all minority cultures. Despite the unmistakable burden of Han majority no effort was spared to popularise the idea that each nationality had not only something to learn from others but, at the same time, had something to contribute.

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

The Great Leap Forward reforms, regarded by many minorities as assimilative in substance, aroused intense reaction among them. Followed by the Great Leap was the scarcity in economic sector which resulted in competition for limited resources thus increasing displeasure among ethnic groups. However, the efforts to remove differences among minorities resulted in heightening minorities'
awareness of these differences and seemed to induce a strong desire to retain them. In this respect, the Great Leap actually slowed down the process of integration.

The impact of the Leap on integration was not wholly negative. Some of the minority customs were effectively destroyed and were never resuscitated. One important change was to replace minorities' languages with Chinese as medium of instruction as well as communication. Though some minorities might have been unwilling to study Chinese the net result was to provide communication between them and the great majority of their compatriots. The changes that were brought in the field of animal husbandry and agricultural techniques were apparently not very successful in increasing the productivity, but there is no doubt that they had encouraged the spirit of innovation and willingness to break the fetters of tradition.

In the post-Great Leap Forward phase, it became more possible to evolve a policy towards minorities rather than a broader goal with very different manifestations in policy for different areas. The communes came in the place of a variety of economic arrangements followed by minorities. And many goals of the Great Leap Forward with regard to minorities could not be implemented and other Great Leap policies had to be discarded. But it is to be noted that the minority areas never returned to their pre-Leap situation. Further these benefits were at best modest in terms of the size when compared to the economic hardships and widespread resentment to the party and government which the Great Leap had engendered among minorities. If the Leap was a failure in Han areas, it was a fiasco in minority areas. A vocal segment of the party leaders came to favour modifications in the policies.

The Socialist Education Campaign too underwent the same stages and duration. It was implemented in the Han areas but with less number of minority participation. Even if the extreme allegations -- that the campaign had been undermined in Han areas -- are taken into consideration the campaign appears to have been still moderate in minority areas.
It may be due to the disruptions caused by the rapid changes during the Great Leap Forward, they tried to avoid major reversals in policy or criticism of cadres fearing that it would result in reopening nationalities' schisms and would disrupt production. It was also obvious that the administrators sought an increase in production and maintenance of order in their respective areas desiring to keep their own positions of power and personal organisations intact.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

An assessment of GPCR in China is debatable on the grounds whether it merely was a struggle for power within the CCP or a genuine reorganisation of culture and education, which enabled all the remaining bourgeois influences to be eliminated and, thus, helped consolidate the proletarian character of the society. It is true that, in the first place, both the factors played their role. But, at the same time, it is also true that the second factor receded into the background as the time rolled by.

On the other hand, the Soviet communists felt that the purpose of 'Cultural Revolution' in China was to weaken the CCP and replace it by a Maoist party of an anti-communist nature, to replace the legitimate organs of the people's democracy with the military dictatorship of one leader, to install the reactionary Red Guards in the place of Communist Youth League, to ruin education, culture, intelligentsia and finally to wipe out the cultural heritage of the past. Consequently, Chen Shao-yu, in his work, *China: 'Cultural Revolution' or Counter Revolutionary Coup?*, says that the GPCR was neither a proletarian nor a 'Cultural Revolution.' Thus, it is difficult to compare the Chinese and Soviet visions of 'Cultural Revolution'. Nevertheless, there are certain points worthy of comparison.

Firstly, like the advocates of Proletkul't, Mao's followers wanted to undermine bourgeois culture and its influence by creating a proletarian culture and they were critical of the traditional cultural heritage of China. Secondly, in one instance at least, both the parties in Chinese GPCR referred to the statements made
by Lenin in connection with the Soviet 'Cultural Revolution.' And, in January 1966, when Wu Han had to defend himself against the charges of having applied bourgeois moral concepts of the past to the present, he cited Lenin's criticism in October 1920 of the Proletkul't, in which Lenin said, "The proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, land owner and bureaucratic society." His opponents retaliated by pointing to Lenin's theory of two cultures, which clearly stated what traditions were worth preserving. This complete episode illustrates Maoists' tendency to make use of quotations which permitted a more radical interpretation. The same method too was employed by Bogdanov's supporters.

Thirdly, Mao used the 'Cultural Revolution' to demonstrate that his opponents were collaborating with the class enemy, and it was through 'Cultural Revolution', with the help of the army and the Red Guards, that he wanted to get rid of them and to spread his ideas to every nook and cranny of the land. In the case of Soviet Union, Bogdanov pursued a similar objective in disseminating his organisational doctrine by means of Proletkul't studios and in criticising Lenin's party for co-operating with the peasants and bourgeois intellectuals. Thus, even in Russia, a struggle for power might have been waged indirectly through 'Cultural Revolution,' although it took place behind the scenes and was complete before it could reach such a proportion as in China.

Therefore, a possible justification for the Chinese 'Cultural Revolution' should be sought among Lenin's left wing critics rather than in Lenin himself. It is acceptable that it was for the same reason that the left wing protest movements in the West hardly paid any attention to the Soviet 'Cultural Revolution' as implemented by Lenin. On the other hand, they have been quick to adopt the political vocabulary of the 'Chinese Cultural Revolution.' The New Left turned to the 'Cultural Revolution' due to the impossibility of changing the production relations in their own countries. Mao has provided even with the practical guidelines in the following the thesis which has been confirmed by the success of GPCR: "to overthrow a political power it is always necessary first of all to create
public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere" (CCP’s Central Committee Decision on Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution). Thus, the seeds were sown for a differentiation of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution which allowed an initial attack to be made on the super-structure i.e., on culture, in order to advance from there, step by step, to the base, the production sector. In this sense, for the first time the concept of ‘Cultural Revolution’ acquires a certain degree of significance for non-socialist countries.

The theoretical assumptions underlying the GPCR have their ideological antecedents in orthodox communist theory and Mao was only actualising them in reality. In fact, earlier Marx and Lenin had hinted at the same. There is a logical continuity in the events that led to the launching of ‘Cultural Revolution’. It was an impelling necessity brought about by the preceding events. Thus, GPCR was the culmination of a theoretical imperative as well as a historical necessity in the development of communism in China.

Mao’s emphasis on ‘people’ is different from the Leninist concept of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ for Mao’s ascent to power had brought along with it the problem of a coalition government with non-communist parties and non-proletarian classes. It may also be noted that, unlike the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 which was a proletarian revolution, the Chinese communist revolution in 1949 was that of a peasant revolution. It could not have been otherwise because China then was primarily an agrarian society and industrial workers were too small a minority to have waged a revolution. This single factor was to shape most of the events in China and some of the important statements of Mao.

In 1955 Mao decided to test the solidarity of the masses behind him by launching the ‘Great Socialist Upsurge’. Having been encouraged by its success, he issued two liberal policy statements namely ‘Mutual Supervision and Peaceful Co-Existence with Democratic Parties’, and ‘Let Hundred Flowers Bloom and Let Hundred Schools of Thought Contend’. But, these two policies were shelved when
a large section of the intelligentsia began to attack the very fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist principles.

Later, unmoved by the criticism, Mao ventured to achieve communism overnight which resulted in the launching of the ‘Great Leap Forward’- in the economic sphere- and the ‘Rural Communes’-in the social sphere, which were given up due to their failure. According to a typical Maoist assessment, it was the superstructure that was not yet ripe for socialism. Later, Mao declared that though the base was socialist, the super-structures was capitalist and, hence, the necessity for class struggle to remove these contradictions in a socialist society.

Now, to comprehend the background of ‘Cultural Revolution’, it is imperative to understand the position of Mao in the early 1960s. There must have been an element of truth in Mao’s complaint that in the post-Eighth Party Congress he was treated as a dead ancestor. It was in this Congress the basic premises of Mao’s thought were dropped from the party’s constitution and Liu Shao-ch’i was made the Chairman of the Republic. It was under Liu’s leadership that a period of liberalisation was inaugurated. In the economic sphere this led to granting of material incentives, private plots leading towards the so-called capitalist road. On the other hand, at the level of super-structure, it led to severe criticism of the policies of Great Leap Forward and an attack on Mao and support for Peng Te-huai.

During this period, in the sphere of literature, arts and history were not used to serve the present state of affairs. Instead, they were used to attack it and this was a clear indication of ‘revisionism.’ Thus, for Mao, it was not merely his personal crusade, but a socio-political class struggle which can be eliminated only through ‘Cultural Revolution.’

With respect to the theoretical issues between Mao and Liu Shao-ch’i, the former held that the base to be in contradiction with the super-structure but the latter was not of the same view. Further, Mao’s emphasis was more on democracy
at the 'grass roots', or the 'mass line' approach. But, Liu relied on 'work team methods.' However, Mao was applying and executing what Marx and Lenin theorised; hence, the richness of Mao's theory had the empirical support of practice. Thus, the 'Cultural Revolution' was a product of revolutionary praxis, a product of Marxism-Leninism as applied by Mao to the then realities of Chinese communism.

In the propagandist writings on the execution of GPCR, four of Mao's works were given prominence as containing the decisive instructions. They are: *On New Democracy*, the *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, the pamphlet *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*; and the speech at the *National Conference of the Chinese Communist Party Propaganda Work*. The so-called 'Cultural Revolution' is dealt with comprehensively in the earliest of these writings. Hence, it could be interpreted as something preconceived in theory. In that case, more attention has to be paid to the theory of 'Cultural Revolution' and less to its implementation. But the fact remains that the circumstances of the 'Cultural Revolution' have created an impression that it was no more than a 'power struggle.' Nevertheless, one should not forget that this kind of power struggle is common in a one-party system of the communist type. This also throws up the question as to whether this struggle might not have been conducted under a different banner.

Now, following up this line of reasoning, the 'Cultural Revolution' can also be analysed as a specific expression of a struggle for power. In this case, the primary object of study would not be theories, but the actions of the individual groups as well as their perceived motives, the clashes of forces and the emergence of victors and vanquished. The very title 'Cultural Revolution' definitely does not cover every aspect of the overt conflict. Lin Piao and the army, played a major role in the preparations for the 'Cultural Revolution' by training cadres -- both the minority and majority ethnic groups -- and in securing its power basis. This took place after the culmination of the military leaders who, as a result of their experiences in the Korean War, had recommended that the army should be modernised and better equipped. This entailed a certain degree of deviation from
Mao's doctrine of Guerrilla Warfare. Besides, the Sino-Soviet dispute also had its effect on 'Cultural Revolution.'

It may be noted that, till the mid-sixties, three large scale campaigns supported by Mao, though not actually planned by him, were launched to establish a socialist social system in China. The primary aim of all the three campaigns was to integrate the urban population into the system in the same manner as the rural population. This was aimed so because during the entire preceding period of war and civil war the peasants had been persuaded to cooperate with the communist troops through the redistribution of land, and had thus been won over to the revolutionary cause. Millions of town-dwellers were never fully exposed to the persistent influence of the communist forces under conditions of conflict.

Since socialisation of industry was not enough to produce a socialist mentality in the urban population, Mao first ventured to induce the urban intellectuals to come to terms with Marxism and to accept its categories by means of a movement entitled, "Let a hundred flowers bloom. Let a hundred schools of thought contend." However, this movement was a disaster for the Chinese intellectuals' critical attitude towards the system had evidently been underestimated. Turning the attention to the other two interrelated campaigns -- the Great Leap Forward and the movement to establish Peoples Communes -- ended in economic failure. And, these campaigns finally led to a state of socio-political confusion. Thus, it was no surprise that these three campaigns stirred up opposition to Mao Tse-tung.

With the advent of a well planned 'Cultural Revolution', very skilfully staged and well controlled in its implementation apart from a number of admittedly critical incidents, Mao appeared to have succeeded. He not only quelled the opposition forces but also paved the way for the integration of the urban population into the system. This can be considered as his fourth venture to integrate the urban population into the system.
In view of the theoretical foundations which Mao laid down for ‘Cultural Revolution’ in 1940, it can hardly be supposed that the hardships which reared an ugly head could have been overcome by any other strategy. Mao and his followers might have certainly learned their lesson from the errors of the preceding campaigns. The possibility considered by western observers that the ‘Cultural Revolution’ might bring China to the brink of civil war was out of question for the Chinese leadership, from the beginning, heedfully planned and implemented it and had clearly defined the aims.

In China, Marxism has no foundation of traditional values on which it could build. These traditional values emphasised collectivity in the same way as in Europe; this was one of the problems that confronted the Chinese leadership in their attempt to integrate the urban population into the system. In Europe the standard language of classical Marxism and socialism, terms such as community, helpfulness, fraternity, solidarity and unity, in their value content, permeated with concepts rooted in Christianity, like, charity, compassion, sympathy, loyalty, justice etc. Whereas in China Marxism has no such religious historical background on which it could build.

Moreover, despite having experienced a semi-colonial existence, the Chinese failed to foster collective values, especially amongst the urban population. At that time, the upper class and the bourgeoisie adapted themselves to the changing interests of the foreign powers and concepts like self-interest, opportunity and competition gained importance. The urban population was suddenly confronted with the Marxist concept of collectivism without intellectual preparation. In fact, it even lacked the practical experience of prolonged war-conditions when the importance of collectivism is experienced in action. The civil war was carried out largely in the rural areas in the form of guerrilla warfare. Accordingly, communism gained an initial foothold in these areas.

In course of its attempt to integrate the urban population into the communist system, the CCP had not only failed in all three campaigns but the
leading cadres were even impressed and inculcated with the corrupt individualistic ideas of the town-dwellers. Mao regarded the failure of the people’s communes project as the failure of the party’s activities. After these setbacks there were two possible means of achieving any progress: the urban population should be brought to think in terms of collectivism by means of ‘Cultural Revolution’ and the army should take charge of its implementation for it was the only body firmly rooted in Marxism. Both these means were in fact employed. But, from the beginning, Mao decided not to use force as a means of re-education. Hence, direct action on the part of army was not considered.

Therefore, a form of indirect action became indispensable. It was presented in the form of Red Guards. The Red Guards, who existed in the 1930s, were the breeding pool for the future Red Army recruits established for the purpose of pre-military training. They were subjected to undergo cadre training for the implementation of the ‘Cultural Revolution.’ The Red Guards, who were trained by the party cadres of the army, were put into action in 1966 to cause disturbances which, according to Mao’s theory, were necessary to purge and reorganise the party and to induce the urban masses to identify themselves with his style of leadership by the indirect means of conflict with the Red Guards.

In the course of ‘Cultural Revolution’ workers and soldiers joined hands to check the Red Guards when the latter resorted to violence. It was in this way that the workers came to identify themselves with the army with the help of the pre-military organisation, trained by the army head, Lin Piao, and succeeded where the party had failed. The Red Guards served their purpose by making this process of identification possible and acted as a driving force behind the victory of Mao and Lin Piao over the party opposition and were finally removed from the political scene. The Red Guards were the only means to an end and served according to the strategy of Mao and Lin Piao to reach the position of unrest. This was, in fact, obvious from the reorganisation within the party after the completion of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ at the Ninth Party Congress of the CCP in April 1969.
The army, the real force behind the 'Cultural Revolution' with its objective of mass movement and re-education, also took over most important positions of leadership in the party. The vital role of the leading military cadres entered the political process under Lin Piao's leadership. In both the Central Committee and the Politburo the army held absolute majority was a clear vindication of this point. As the organs responsible for mass movement and re-education, the leading cadres of the army had replaced the corrupt party functionaries. Coming to the Red Guards, not even a single representative of the Red Guards became a member of the new Central Committee. It was only among the 109 non-voting candidates of the Central Committee that there were a few who were known to have been active in Red Guards. This clearly indicates that the Red Guards were used merely as pawns to initiate the process of re-education. In other words, they were used as agents of unrest which, might be bad in itself, but no doubt worked as a catalyst.

Thus, the complete process of 'Cultural Revolution' is open to a logically consistent interpretation if it were to be considered as an endeavour to thoroughly indoctrinate the urban masses. The party functionaries have already failed several times in this task. But, instead of the party functionaries calling their leader to account for misconceived directives, Mao called them to account for unsuccessful efforts. Thus, Mao once again demonstrated the superiority of his strategic and tactical skills over his rivals.

THE ROLE OF PLA

With a view to transforming the existing society, Marx and Engels felt the necessity to organise the proletarian army of the working class. Further, they also believed that unless the oppressed class were militarily organised and fought against the oppressive system and its army, the exploited masses would not succeed in safeguarding their interests. It is exactly this kind of military model that Lenin had evolved during the course of communist take over by wiping out the Czarist regime in Russia. This presented a nucleus around which the Chinese communists planned to establish their own proletarian armed forces, namely the Peoples Liberation Army and Peoples' Militia. They were focused, organised and equipped according
to the conditions then prevailing. But one should not forget that the PLA and Peoples’ Militia were overwhelmingly composed to ethnic Han Chinese due to their numerical superiority. The peasants and workers (both Han and non-Han) of Chinese Central Asia, who had been exploited for long by the ruling classes, were the main components of these forces. Ever since the revolution began in the 1930s, the PLA and Peoples’ Militia had had an important role to play along with the non-Han ethnic minorities of Ch’inghai, Kansu provinces, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions of Chinese Central Asia. The peasants and workers, who were the main components of PLA, had actively participated in the mainstream politics of Chinese Central Asia.

The PLA, which was founded in 1927, played a dominant role in military and non-military affairs of the five regions. The army was primarily built with a view to making it an ideological instrument in the hands of the party and to carryout policies of the CCP. It was also felt that the army must be indoctrinated ideologically so that its members could understand accurately the very nature of the Chinese revolutionary war and marched towards its goals. From the very beginning, the army was told to destroy the existing social order in the five regions and to establish a retrograde social order. Young men and women, belonging to the same strata of society in the five regions, were enrolled in the army to fight the oppressive system alongside the armed forces and emancipate the masses in the five regions. Later, after the Gudian conference it was decided that the army should be prepared militarily according to the needs of the proletarian set-up to carryout the protracted armed struggle against the enemy. In order to defeat the nationalist forces and also to organise the guerrilla forces, the local Red Guards and Peoples’ Militia in Chinese Central Asian regions were given a free hand.

After the civil war the communists relied on the military to run the administration until the training of cadres and the expansion of CCP organs permitted the restoration of civil authority. Most of the national minorities in Central Asia, along with the other regions, were organised into administrative units known as ‘Autonomous’ regions ‘Counties,’ etc. In fact, these units were governed
much as ordinary provinces, counties, etc. Even though civil authority in the five regions of Central Asia paralleled that of the non-minority regions, the military continued to be stationed there, both for purposes of national defence and public security.

The army built its organisational structure under the ideological leadership of the CCP and later improved its military training which was of a tremendous help to it in carrying out its ideological responsibilities in the five regions. On its part the army maintained its integrity and loyalty to the civilian leaders in these regions, for it was essential to maintain cordiality in the relations between the army and the party. Viewed against this backdrop, it is not surprising that there was maximum harmony between the army and the people in the five regions as well.

After 1949, the communist leaders entrusted the army with a wide ranging nation-building tasks, which were primarily civilian in nature, in the five regions. Even during the Korean War, the army which included the national minorities, though their strength cannot be ascertained, was in complete control. During the Great Leap Forward the army did support the Beijing government’s efforts in socialisation programmes including in Central Asia. But partly due to tardy implementation, coupled with natural calamities, the Leap resulted in a complete failure. The Great Leap Forward was characterised by a struggle against local nationalism on the part of minorities in Central Asia. There was hardly any report in connection with minority recruitment. The resultant decline of production during the Leap in Central Asia as well as in the mainland had its inevitable repercussions on the PLA. Later, the party leadership’s measures resulted in replacing Peng Te-huai with Lin Piao as the new Defence Minister.

When the opening salvos of the Cultural Revolution were fired army men were entrusted with a different role altogether. The army was asked to support the Revolutionary Rebels and the Red Guards in their efforts to seize power from the reactionaries in the five regions. Additionally, they were expected to destroy the
growing tendencies of bureaucratism and the prevailing non-responsiveness towards civilian affairs in the same regions.

While forming the revolutionary committees, the role of the army had been vital in all the three autonomous regions and two provinces of Central Asia. The revolutionary committees were practically created by as well as out of the PLA garrison forces and the commanders of those areas reluctantly agreed to take part in the formation of the committees after imposing disciplinary measures on Maoist organisations. Further, the revolutionary committees were formed in Tibet and Ch'inghai only after new commanders had been appointed. The participation of the army was crucial in the second and third phases of establishing the revolutionary committees. Han army men dominated the standing committees.

After the army’s intervention in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and its leaders’ subsequent assumption of control in the five regions, it did not initially seek power through coup as was the case in many developing countries. Rather, till August 1967, the army got increasingly involved in political affairs largely against its will and in many respects power came to it by default. If analysed in the same vein, the PLA did not intervene in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ against the wishes of the political leadership but was rather brought into the political arena by this leadership itself. Further, it did not intervene as a result of disaffection with the desire to safeguard its sectarian interests against the encroachment by the civilians either. It moved into the political arena to aid Mao’s group in the intra-party conflict. Finally the army did not grab power in a coup but rather power gravitated in its favour in the course of a protracted process which was neither planned nor predicted by the army’s high command.

As already stated, the Cultural Revolution opened the flood gates for the army to make an initial dent into and make their presence felt in the five regions of Central Asia. The Ninth Congress held in 1969 has demonstrated the army’s dominant position in important positions of power at the Centre and as well as in the five regions. Further, the army consolidated its stranglehold on national affairs
by virtue of its hold over most of the top echelons in the civilian establishments at the Centre and in the provinces which included the five regions of Central Asia.

The above developments had upset the power structure built prior to the Cultural Revolution, disturbed the healthy relations between the party and army, which, by virtue of its growing importance, lowered the importance of the party. Later, when the army was called to restore law and order, it had become an easy task for the army officers to strengthen their hold over all important positions in the administration of all the five regions. There is no doubt, the nature and character of the role played by army during the Cultural Revolution was entirely different from the role it played during the pre-liberation and post-liberation periods.

Due to the army's involvement, the relations between soldiers and party members in general were not so strained as they were after the GPCR. Further, the healthy co-ordination between the Centre and the five Central Asian regions had weakened, resulting in non-implementation or partial implementation of Central Committee directives by the regional authorities. Besides, there were other irritants like open confrontation between the commissars and professional commanders of the regions regarding policy matters.

When the army men were asked to rebuild the civilian power structure in all regions they got an opportunity to enhance their power in the five regions. As a result, power centred in the hands of military personnel and resentment grew in the ranks of the party-men, which ultimately culminated in the form of factional rivalry and differences between the civilian and the military authorities on the one hand, and between the military officers themselves on the other.

In the post-Lin Piao era, the army was once again entrusted with various tasks when the anti-Lin Piao and anti-Confucius campaigns were launched in the five regions; major stress was laid on cleansing the super-structure. In these campaigns the army and the militia cadres were asked to criticise vehemently the erroneous military legacy of Lin Piao. This was aimed at doing away with the old
super-structure and replacing it with a new one. The army was to solve problems relating to political affairs, professional work and production.

Thus, by giving due prominence to the proletarian politics and by carrying out the political responsibilities, the army was to consolidate proletarian dictatorship and proletarian state power. It was to build a powerful and modern socialist state by studying and applying Mao’s theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Coming to the ‘two line’ power struggle, the army was to handle military problems from a political viewpoint. They were to handle all the military problems with Marxist view and oppose a purely military point of view which divorces the army from political affairs.

Further, they were to support proletarian politics and fight, ideologically, any form of opportunism. By enlisting the support of the progressive forces and isolating the reactionary ones, the army was to consolidate power in the hands of the proletariat.

The army was used as an instrument in the five regions by the factions within the policy makers who were politically divided amongst themselves to acquire more power. When the radical faction was on the ascendancy the PLA, in the five regions too, it became highly radicalised and whenever the moderates were on the ascendancy the PLA also became moderate. In retrospect, the PLA was used as a stabilising factor in the Chinese political system. In times of ideological differences among the top leadership or if any disintegrating tendencies cropped up in the Chinese political system, the PLA acted as a cushion against all such stresses and strains.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN CHINESE CENTRAL ASIA

According to the official version, during the decade long turmoil created by Cultural Revolution, Ch‘inghai, Kansu, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet did not suffer anything more than the rest of China. In fact, it was a disaster for all Han and
non-Han nationalities alike. The religious among the Hans were forbidden from indulging in their religious activities and were subjected to severe dress restrictions just as the national minorities were. The majority Han were forced to wear the Chinese drab tunic suits of gray, blue and grass green and Han women were browbeaten if they happened to wear skirts. Thus, the decade-long turmoil was not the offshoot of one nationality pitting itself against the other but the two counter-revolutionary cliques lead by defence minister Lin Piao and Chiang Ch‘ing directed their repressive acts against the people of all the nationalities. This frenzied period left deep imprints on the minds of national minorities in Central Asia. Additionally, Beijing government never admitted that the Red Guards committed heinous crimes in the regions. It was proved far more difficult for China to deny it and to try to conceal it from the outside world since the death of Mao Tse-tung.

With the onset of the GPCR the five regions witnessed the Red Guards engaging in a systematic destruction of their civilization in which the minority youth too participated, though to a lesser extent. But these minority-Red Guards’ participation along with the Han Red Guards can be attributed to the very element of the unruly nature of teenage human psychology. On the other hand, forced execution of Maoism, non-compliance of which lead to tanzing must also have compelled the minorities to participate in the Cultural Revolution. In retrospect, the minorities in Central Asia were subjected to humiliation, insults, oppression, and forced assimilation, destruction of the ecological equilibrium and suinous exploitation as well as economic plunder. If this was the case, then there is no wonder that the relations between the Han and minorities in Central Asia remained problematic in many places.

At the national level the United Front Work Department (UFWD) and the Nationalities Affairs Commission -- officials responsible for minorities’ work were purged along with the minority officials. Besides, a shift in power relationships in Beijing coupled with uncertainty over the specific ideological direction that was sought to be taken might have hindered the execution of routine matters relating to minorities.
Now, coming to Central Asia regions, the first party secretary of Tibet, Chang Kuo-hua of TAR, was transferred to Szechwan and suitably positioned. In all the revolutionary committees that were established army men were at the helm of affairs. In the case of Inner Mongolia the army leaders had replaced civilians in the top administrative posts. Besides, the new leaders had no precise ideological or institutional affiliation. With respect to the field armies the new leaders of Sinkiang and Tibet were members of Lin Piao’s Fourth Field Army. They replaced first party secretaries who had been affiliated to the Second Field Army in Tibet and First Field Army in Sinkiang. Nevertheless, Chang’s transfer to Szechwan cannot be considered as a demotion and T’eng Hai-Ch’ing, the new leader of Inner Mongolia, was a member of the Third Field Army.

Because the Central Asian Regions, with the exception of Ch’inghai, being border areas and, hence, strategically important, Beijing authorities were forced to maintain adequate defence. This factor has also contributed to question the very survivability of leaders in Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, Tibet and Kansu. The radicals in these four regions accused power holders of manipulating ethnic differences to reinforce their positions by putting forward an argument that instability in these areas played into the hands of imperialists beyond the borders of China.

Despite its alleged links to Liu Shao-ch’i, to waving the red flag in order to oppose the red flag, and to base self-interest, this argument seems to have been bought in Beijing. It may also have been instrumental in the political survival of Chang Kuo-hua and his successor, Jen Jung, in Tibet and Wang En-mao also seems to have benefited by the very necessity to maintain border defence. However, his success was short-lived. In case of Ulanfu, he failed to survive in Sinkiang. It is perhaps noteworthy that Saifudin, a prominent minority party member to survive, who had no connection with united front work and linkages with the united front, entailed cooperation with upper strata personage and a tolerant attitude towards at least some of the minority customs and traditions. These accusations carried much weight in the attacks against Ulanfu and Wang En-mao and they were also made the first party secretaries of Yunnan and Szechwan respectively. Nevertheless, Chang
Kuo-hua survived, despite his tenure in Tibet having necessitated a high degree of
toleration of minority traditions along with the cooperation with the upper strata.

Added to the above, one should not fail to take into consideration Beijing’s
desire to retain some minority group representation in highly visible positions. For
instance, Saifudin, the only popular Uyghur Communist in Sinkiang, had in addition
been particularly vigorous in his denunciations of both Uyghur nationalism and
Soviet revisionism. Further, Saifudin’s continuation of these activities during an ebb
in Sino-Soviet relations must have appeared advisable. Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, one
of the few able collaborators the CCP had been able to produce in Tibet where
there had been no prominent native CCP member, had symbolic value. Thus,
survivability in minority areas during GPCR was predicated by a number of factors,
while none of it was overly significant in itself. The ability to maintain proper
defense in the four regions of Chinese Central Asia and communication lines where
others failed to maintain was quite important. Non-involvement with the economic
retreat from the Great Leap Forward and being the only well-known member of a
minority group in that particular group’s three autonomous areas also might have
helped these leaders to retain their positions of power and prestige.

Affiliation with Lin Piao might probably have become a positive factor in
some cases. Success lay in being able, or not, to project these advantages at
precisely the right moment, i.e., during the shifting power relationships in both
Beijing and one’s own areas. In any case, a lot depended upon one’s ability to
persuade the powers that be, while the role of chance cannot altogether be ruled
out. Moreover, the radical attacks during the GPCR in the five regions were not
without any validity. They felt that the previous minority policy that caused
nationality-differences was overdrawn; under the Chinese Peoples Republic it had
been a mere continuation of a historic mesh of tensions that were heightened by the
party’s uncompromising methods of dealing with minorities. However, one cannot
deny that the united front apparatus’ contribution to the perpetuation of
nationalities as separate entities and in this sense the radical charges were true to
the word, for the united front stood in the way of nationalities’ unity. The
accusation that some of the leaders in power in the united front surrendered to the minorities' upper strata and formed cliques with them for their personal benefit has an element of authenticity.

It is true that by establishing the apparatus of minorities' work, the party created an organisation with a vested interest in the perpetuation of minority separateness with a view to perpetuating its own power. The necessity for a certain amount of cooperation with the minority upper strata was built into the concept of united front and it is likely that this cooperation became the basis for a certain amount of what could be constructed as factionalism. The party officials and the traditional upper strata, co-opted into government positions, shared administrative responsibility and this kind of similar interest would naturally lead towards establishing some degree of rapport in certain cases.

Further, the radicals' charge, that policy making for the minority areas in the five regions was controlled by a group of entrenched power holders, was usurped. In fact, there is no doubt that there was substantial continuity in the party and government personnel engaged in minorities' work. The Nationalities Committee of the National Peoples Congress showed that 43 out of the 84 members elected in 1965 were also members in 1955. But many of these members of the original body were senior local patriarchs whose absence from the 1965 committee was a result of natural death and not due to purges. Thus, continuity became quite evident.

Additionally, there was continuity in the government personnel pre-occupied in minority affairs without any change. For instance, the first party secretaries of the three autonomous regions in 1966 held similar positions earlier, too. Ulanfu had held his position in Inner Mongolia since 1947 and Wang En-mao in Sinkiang since 1952. And Chang Kuo-hua, who was appointed as the First Party Secretary in 1965 in Tibet after its founding, had been in the region since its liberation.

An offshoot of this stability in the elite group engaged in minorities work was that those minorities' activists, trained by the party since liberation, dropped
into lower level positions. Out of the 23 successful minority activists none held a party office higher than the Hsien level or a government position higher than the Chou level. Five had been named as delegates to provincial or autonomous area peoples’ congresses in retrospect.

Radical attacks against individuals led to errors of judgment and were perceived as premeditated crimes. Hence, Deng Xiaoping’s desire to avoid bloodshed in Tibet by enabling its dissident prime minister to leave the country was seen as complicity in the revolt that occurred seven years later. Ulanfu was charged of being a secret nationalist who designed a plot to detach Inner Mongolia from China and unify it with the Mongolian Peoples’ Republic under his leadership. He was also accused of being the agent of China’s Krushchev in Inner Mongolia; opposing the movement to study the thought of Mao and ignoring the directives of and not submitting their decisions for the approval to the North China Party Bureau. Of course, these accusations cannot always be taken at face value in China, particularly during a period of emotional turmoil on the scale of Cultural Revolution. But these accusations reflected the persistence of a Mongol-desire for self determination as well as a deep schism within the CCP.

Further, Ulanfu, a member of the CCP since his youth, was a nationalist to the core for he did not speak Mongolian. And if he was of the opinion to join Soviet Union or Mongolian Peoples’ Republic he could have done it by taking advantage when the CCP’s power was weak in his area. Moreover, Ulanfu and his associates were also accused of “forcing Chinese cadres to learn Mongolian,” “advocating that the Chinese are oppressors of the Mongols,” and demanding that the Mongols and other minority nationalities be given genuine autonomy. But if this fact is analysed, Ulanfu’s protection of Mongolian language and culture was designed to attract conservative citizens of the Mongolian Peoples’ Republic away from their increasingly Russified government and back towards China. In fact, this fact was magnified into a plot to promote ‘national splittism’. Apart from this Ulanfu realised that preserving the Mongol nationality depended upon continued strength of the Mongols. If the Mongol problem was solved i.e., if the Mongols were assimilated,
the necessity of Ulanfu and other such leaders would have vanished and they would have most likely been replaced by Han Chinese.

Further, the element of party disruption can be viewed in the willingness of some Chinese, notably Wang I-lum, to support Ulanfu in the anti-Mao sentiment which prevailed not only in the countryside but also in the cities which were largely populated by Chinese and in the support given by army troops stationed in Inner Mongolia to the Ulanfu group, even though most of these soldiers were Chinese. Thus, the Chinese element of Ulanfu’s support cannot be called local nationalism but it demonstrates that there were those within the party who were apparently willing to support Ulanfu because of disagreement with Peking’s Cultural Revolution policies.

On the other hand, irrespective of the extent of the charges made by extreme radicals, the Cultural Revolution Group itself saw to it that the attacks were made on the old society and on entrenched power holders in Chinese Central Asia till the nationality differences threatened national unity and defense, a compromise was ordered. Further, the Cultural Revolution, with its spokesman Chou En-lai, intervened to ensure that the exchange of revolutionary experiences did not disrupt border areas and made repeated calls for the unity of nationalities. Minority representation in the revolutionary committees was minimum. In fact, it was the army which dominated both in Chinese Central Asia and in the mainland. The Han army men dominated in the committees where Han were predominant and the same pattern occurred in non-Han-predominant areas. It goes without saying that the Han were in a majority. Efforts were also made to include minority group members in revolutionary committees. The appointment of Ta Lo as a ranking Vice Chairman in Ch’inghai revolutionary committee was one of the examples.

Cultural Revolution in Kansu province, a frontier region, failed to carry much weight as it did in the other three autonomous regions of Chinese Central Asia. The movement confined only to major cities. But this was not the case with Ch’inghai province. Initially various aspects of Cultural Revolution were introduced
into rural minority areas only after the more extreme manifestations of reforms that were introduced had moderated by mid-1967. The move to extend the Cultural Revolution into outlying areas preceded the public announcement of the formation of a preparatory committee for the provincial revolutionary committee. If these were the precautions taken in Ch'inghai province, which does not have an international border and does not occupy any important position within China unlike the other four regions of Central Asia, either economically or strategically, it is likely that a similar, if not greater degree of caution was exercised in bringing the revolution to minority areas of Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia and Tibet, which are definitely vital areas to China's defense against external attacks specially by the Soviet Union.

Further, the demands of Cultural Revolution diehards for reforms in Central Asia were introduced with caution. The case of Tibet is quite illustrative -- here communes were initially introduced on an experimental basis in Lhasa and were later extended to other areas. By mid-1970 only 34 per cent of Tibetan villages had communes and within a year 60 per cent of Tibet's hsien had small communes, each having the size of a thousand people. Additionally, taxes from agriculture were collected on an individual basis and not on a collective basis. All these thus demonstrate that special characteristics of minorities continued to exist, in fact, though not in name. Similar recognition existed when the educational institutions were reopened towards the end of 1960's when specific number of places were reserved for minorities by categorising them separately for admission.

Thus, the above account demonstrates that the diehards of the 'Cultural Revolution' had their ambition to undermine all nationality differences. But, it was not accomplished; in fact, the GPCR resulted in minorities in Central Asia losing power and cohesiveness as minority groups. Further, the events after 1968 tried to exhibit this impression and signalled a policy that was slower in pace than the radicals would have wished and also less gradualistic than what the conservatives aimed at.
In 1968 the decline of Red Guards occurred resulting in an effort to move the *Hsia fang* members of disbanded youth organisations to frontier areas, particularly to Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia. This diluted the percentage of minorities in these areas. The clashes with the Soviet Union, along the Ussuri river and on the border of Sinkiang in 1969, along with intensified Soviet propaganda that was aimed at minorities in China served to enhance the desirability of settling the Han along the borders, and, thus, the *hsia fang* movement was further expanded. Besides, the Production and Construction Crops of Han settlers was established along the borders of Inner Mongolia and Tibet. Additional PLA troops were deployed along these borders and security was tightened. Alongside, three leagues from Inner Mongolia were removed and incorporated into Heliungkiang, Kirin, Liaoning and Kansu resulting in the loss of one-third of the Inner Mongolia's territory. Its military region was reduced to a military district subordinate to the Peking Military Region. This measure must have probably been intended to resist the Soviet Union in case of a war and also seems meaningful viewed in the context of the existing means of communication links.

The reorganisation of Inner Mongolia had also resulted in the separation of the Alashan Mongols from the Mongols of the more eastern areas. That no major conflagration resulted from this reorganisation is indicative of Beijing's success in reducing Mongolian nationalism. On the other hand, coming to the autonomy, there was a streak of hope, for though they were vastly outnumbered by the Han Chinese, they were Mongols and they still had leaders who tended to be inclined towards local nationalism and presented a serious problem for the Chinese leadership. These bottlenecks became critical when it is recollected that the Mongol minority resided in the border land between China, Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia. The IMAR's political capital Huhehot is just 250 miles from Peking and this fact explains why Ulanfu and his associate and supporters failed to maintain a degree of autonomy on par with other anti-Peking leaders of more distant places such as Sinkiang and Tibet.
Another crucial factor which cannot be authenticated is that one of China’s two nuclear centers -- Paotou -- is near Huhehot on the strategic railroad linking Peking with the western regions. A fear existed that the revisionists might manipulate the Inner Mongols’ dislike for the Chinese Communists and made political capital by embarrassing the Chinese in this strategic area.

The new party Constitution of 1969 mentioned the minorities only once and noted that the party must spearhead all the nationalities in carrying out class struggle. Further, the list of the party’s Ninth Central Committee, after the promulgation of the Constitution, failed to indicate the nationality of the members though there were 5 minority members out of 170 full-members and 4 out of 109 alternate members. Fortunately, five full members represented the major nationalities of the three Autonomous Regions in Central Asia namely, Paojihletai a Mongol; Saifudin Uighur and T’ien pao a Tibetan.

The draft state Constitution of 1970 upheld the inalienable existence of the three autonomous regions, but slashed down their rights of minorities, failed to mention on retaining their customs and habits and clauses like discrimination on the basis of nationality group was dropped. Though the use of minority languages was allowed to be in vogue, the Constitution failed to mention anything to encourage the same.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union did not stop its propaganda alleging that the GPCR was a Maoist plot to exterminate the national minorities, demonstrating that minorities were left with an option either to assimilate with the Han Chinese or for physical annihilation. The non-Han names started appearing in the newly formed party committees in proportion to the numerical strength of a minority in a given region, finally giving way for minimum non-Han groups’ presence, approximating the actual proportion of national minorities in the population as a whole. On the other hand several of these unassimilated minority representatives held positions in official capacities, for example Tibet’s Ngapo Ngawang Jigme.
The newly formed party committees had freshers who represented the CCP’s views of the minority groups instead of their concerned minority groups’ interests. Probably this could be the reason why Pa Sang in Tibet, To Lo in Ch’inghai and Paojiletai in Inner Mongolia had been elevated to the then newly formed party committees. Further, the Uyghurs and Tibetans were represented less than their proportionate share of the population. Coming to the Mongols, the number of purges and deaths were more when compared to other regions of Central Asia. This could be the reason why Mongols in Inner Mongolia had less representation.

In retrospect, though the UFW Department and the Nationalities Affairs Commission were revived the radical GPCR-goals on national minorities were not a complete success. The minorities’ economies in Central Asia were brought in line with that of Han China which obviously resulted in a huge influx of non-Han, resulting in further dilution of ethnic cohesiveness. Though this change in the economies can be viewed as the general goals of Beijing government and can not be viewed in terms of radicalism of the GPCR, the CCP failed to protect minority cohesiveness. On the other hand, differences on the appropriate time and conditions between the moderates and radicals had separated these groups during the GPCR.

Now coming to the post-Cultural Revolution period, there was a significant change in the Beijing government’s attitude towards the minorities in Central Asian Regions. Minority representation existed irrespective of the change in the Beijing leadership, specially with reference to Lin Piao. In fact, it was the extremist faction which executed the total destruction of ‘four olds’ in these five regions. Besides, ever since the demise of Lin Piao, the changes in Beijing’s attitude towards minorities in these regions were no doubt abrupt without any uniformity and pluralism in the policy.

Despite giving encouragement to minority languages in the region, the leadership continued to insist on Chinese -- the language of the majority Han. The Chinese wanted to popularise their new line of thought with the minorities and also
to Sinise them linguistically. Further, the encouragement given to minority traditions appears limited or moderate. This could probably be due to the differences in the aims and objectives between the moderates and leftists, though their primary inherent motive was assimilation. Added to this, an abrupt change in the policy towards minorities in these regions since Lin Piao’s demise can be identified with differences in plans and procedure, the leftists venturing a hasty attempt, and on the other hand, the moderates turning down the same. Hence, a balanced stand accommodating both the groups’ views would be appropriate.

The Beijing government also intended to demonstrate to its communist neighbour, the Soviet Union, and disprove the latter’s charges on the CCP’s policy towards minorities in the five regions, specially Sinkiang. The CCP also aimed at building confidence among its minorities towards its policies and leadership, forced assimilation or pleasing persuasion. The objective was not to lose control and confidence of the people in its land. The nationality policy in China was the offshoot or influence of the Soviet model, but in Chinese mould.

One cannot avoid to accept the fact that the Cultural Revolution involved intense factional fighting all over the country and ruptured the Han’s ‘united front’ towards national minorities. In Central Asia the intra-Han conflicts took precedence over Han relations with the natives. The influx of Han Chinese into this areas had also slowed down due to a lack of economic development and this no doubt is a welcome gesture for the minorities. The element of radicalism in the Chinese revolution which involved a greater degree of Sinification of the minority territories and loss of leaders like Ulanfu, certainly weakened the Mongols’ influence in Beijing. Further, the revolutionary committees formed during the Cultural Revolution were apparently designed to assign a key role to the military, i.e., to the Han Chinese. The Cultural Revolution and its aftermath had resulted in worsening the position of minorities.

The Han Chinese, who had settled in minority regions, continued to pose the most serious long term threat, more ominous even than collectivization and
communisation. Industrialisation and urbanisation usually favoured Han over non-Han. More the economic development in minority areas the more that transportation was improved and more the Han Chinese moved in.