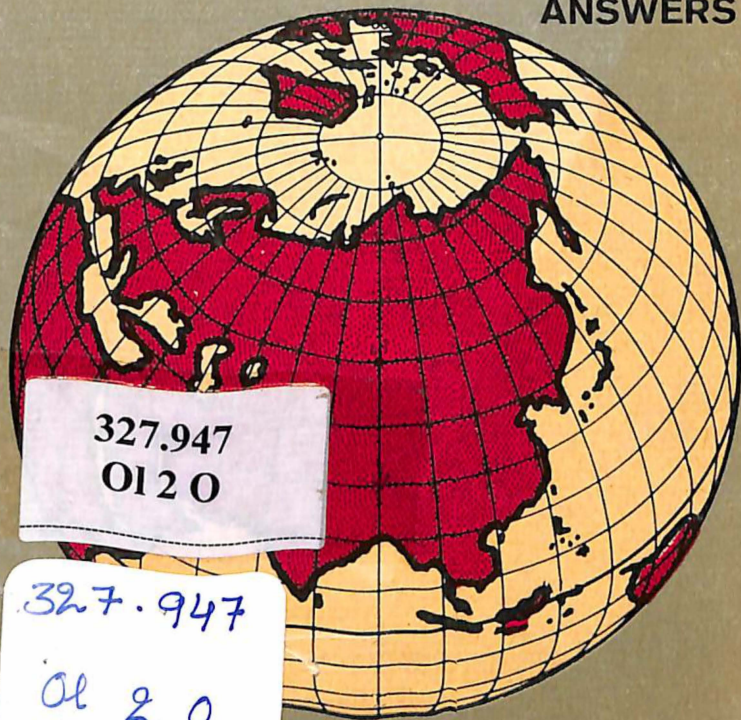


# On the Soviet- Chinese Border

The Soviet Viewpoint

Vladimir OLGIN

QUESTIONS  
AND  
ANSWERS



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AND  
ANSWERS

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Владимир Ольгин

О СОВЕТСКО-КИТАЙСКОЙ ГРАНИЦЕ  
ВОПРОСЫ И ОТВЕТЫ

на английском языке

Цена 25 коп.

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There is an old Eastern saying: "Before building your house find out who will be your neighbour." In today's world, however, nations cannot choose their neighbours since the situation in this case is predetermined by historical development. This makes it all the more important that one should know what frontier policy is conducted by one's neighbour.

China has a long frontier and shares borders with many countries. The Chinese leaders' policy toward China's neighbouring countries not only determines their bilateral relations but also affects the international climate in Asia as a whole.

What is the policy of the present Peking leadership with regard to the territories and frontiers of China's neighbouring states? Is there such a thing as "the frontier issue left by history" between the PRC and the USSR as alleged by the Chinese leaders?

This booklet is an attempt to answer these and other related questions. A correct approach to these questions is essential to all who are sincerely for peace and security in Asia and for a strengthening of confidence and cooperation in international relations.

*Question:* How do things stand on the PRC's borders?

*Answer:* Territorial claims against neighbouring states are an important part of the foreign policy conducted by the People's Republic of China. It would seem that the PRC should enjoy relations of peace with its neighbours which are either socialist countries or young sovereign states. But Peking declares China's frontiers with nearly all its neighbours "historically unjust", "undefined" or "unsettled". In official documents the Chinese leaders say, for obvious political reasons, that they "have successfully settled the frontier question with Burma, Nepal, Pakistan, the Mongolian People's Republic, and Afghanistan"<sup>1</sup> and that China's borders "remained unsettled only with regard to the Soviet Union and India".<sup>2</sup>

The fact is, however, that new conflicts arise constantly with regard to different sections of China's frontier. As for the zone of "settled" frontiers, the Chinese side, in violation of agreements,

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<sup>1</sup> *The 9th All-China Congress of the Communist Party of China—Documents*, Peking, 1969, p. 83 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.



seeks to preserve tensions by infiltrating specially trained groups into the border areas. Such is the situation on the Sino-Burmese frontier. As for the "unsettled" areas of Chinese frontiers, repeated statements by the Indian government show that armed groups specially trained for fighting government forces in the area inhabited by the Naga tribe are regularly sent into India from the PRC. Thus tension prevails on the PRC's frontiers; it is a direct outcome of the Chinese leaders' policy toward its Asian neighbours.

*Question:* What lies behind the Chinese leaders' attempts to exacerbate frontier relations with the neighbouring countries?

*Answer:* In pressing its territorial claims Peking is mainly interested in securing those areas which, it thinks, are of long-term strategic importance, even though they may not seem to have any special economic or military significance at present. In making territorial claims against China's neighbouring countries Peking also tries to put political pressure on them and create foreign-policy problems whose solution would depend wholly on the decision of the Peking leaders. Moreover, in each case Peking pursues special aims, taking into account the international situation as a whole and China's relations with one or another country in particular. For instance, Peking's hasty frontier "settlements" with several of China's neighbouring countries in the early 60s were designed to demonstrate the PRC's peaceful intentions and thus discredit India's position in the Sino-Indian frontier conflict.

On the other hand, the Chinese leaders are using the border tensions which they themselves have created to incite nationalistic and chauvinistic feelings among the Chinese people and justify China's militarization. The border tensions supposedly bear out the Maoist theses on "China's encirclement" and

“threat” to China, and account for the country’s economic difficulties and justify mass terror and suppression of all oppositional sentiments. This is because the Chinese people, so the present Chinese leaders tell them, are living in a “besieged fortress”.

*Question:* What territories of China’s neighbouring countries have the PRC leaders laid claim to?

*Answer:* Peking’s territorial claims consist, so to say, of two parts: those that have been fully inherited from the Kuomintang politicians and ideologists who had compiled China’s “long-term” or “historical list” of claims to the territories of China’s neighbouring states; and claims to several territories mentioned in the same “list” which the PRC is eager to secure now in order to “straighten out” its frontiers.

The “list” of “China’s lost territories”, compiled by Kuomintang politicians back in the 20s and 30s<sup>1</sup>, is a subject that is still discussed in the Taiwan press. That the Peking leaders approve of the “list” is seen in the fact that in 1953 they sanctioned the publication of Liu Pei-hua’s *A Short History of Modern China*<sup>2</sup> which gave the Kuomintang version of the history of the formation of China’s frontiers and which included a map illustrating it. Among “China’s lost territories” shown on maps published in the PRC one finds Korea, the Mongolian People’s Republic, the Soviet Amur region and the Maritime Territory, Sakhalin, a part of Kazakhstan and of Soviet Central Asia, a part of Afghanistan and a part of India, Nepal, Butan, Burma, Thai-

<sup>1</sup> Hua Chi-yan, *China’s Frontiers*, Shanghai, 1932; Heng-ang Hsieh-pin, *National Defence and Diplomacy*, Shanghai, 1933; Kao Chang-chu, *Collection of Articles on China’s Frontier Problems*, Shanghai, 1948; Ho Hsin-yü, *China’s Frontiers*, Nanking, 1948 (in Chinese).

<sup>2</sup> Liu Pei-hua, *A Short History of Modern China*, Peking, 1953 (in Chinese).

land, Malaysia, Singapore, Kampuchea, Laos, Vietnam, and several island territories in the East China and South China Seas. All these, in the opinion of the Chinese leaders, make up China's "irredenta" - its "lost and unredeemed lands".

At times Peking diplomats try, in official statements, to convince world public opinion that China has no intention of "redeeming" the territories she had "lost". However, these statements run counter to Peking's actions and Mao Tse-tung's pronouncements. In 1954, during talks with a Soviet government delegation, Mao said that 1.5 million sq. km of Mongolia's territory actually belonged to China, and in 1964 he told a delegation of Japanese Socialists of the Chinese intentions to lay claim to 1.5 million sq. km of Soviet territory.<sup>1</sup> At a meeting of the Politbureau in August 1965 Mao Tse-tung set forth a programme of expansion into Southeast Asia: "We must by all means get hold of Southeast Asia. . . An area such as Southeast Asia is extremely rich and has many valuable mineral deposits; to get hold of it is worth whatever expense may be involved. Some day it will be very useful for developing China's industry. And this will make it possible to repay all losses. After we have got hold of Southeast Asia we will be able to increase our forces in the area; and then we will have enough forces to oppose the Soviet-East-European bloc; the wind from the East will overcome the wind from the West." Thus, one more claim was made to a territory with an area of 1,696 thousand sq. km and a population of nearly 85 million.

Mao Tse-tung alone had made claims to territories totalling more than 4.5 million sq. km.<sup>2</sup> More-

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, September 2, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking at an enlarged meeting of the Military Council of the CPC Central Committee and at a meeting held to discuss foreign-policy questions on September 11, 1959, Mao

over, by way of "straightening out" frontiers, in 1956 the Maoists laid claim to 70 thousand sq. km of Burmese territory, and in 1959 to 130 thousand sq. km of Indian territory; in the 60s they claimed 20 thousand sq. km of the Soviet Pamir and several islands in the frontier waters of the rivers Amur and Ussuri. With the discovery in 1968-69 of oil-bearing layers in the seabed of the Yellow Sea, the East China and South China Seas the Peking leaders immediately laid claim to several islands and parts of the shelf from the Strait of Korea to Southeast Asia. In the early 70s Peking's aspirations extended to the Senkaku Islands under Japan's control in the East China Sea. In January 1974 armed Chinese forces occupied the Paracel Islands. Following this act a series of articles were published in the Chinese press "substantiating" Peking's claims to Paracel Islands and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. Moreover, China claims sovereignty not only over the islands but over the entire South China Sea, waters and seabed, which in itself is a violation of international law.

*Question:* What are the Maoists' territorial claims against the Soviet Union?

*Answer:* According to the Peking leaders, Russia acquired by means of "unequal" treaties 1.5 million sq. km of China's territory.<sup>1</sup> They assert that Russia, "having overstepped in many parts the frontier fixed by unequal treaties, seized new vast areas of China's territory", and that Soviet maps even incorporate into Soviet territory several Chinese territo-

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Tse-tung stressed in general: "We must conquer this world, our objective is this world..." (*Chairman Mao Talks to the People. Talks and Letters: 1956-1971*. Ed. by S. Schram, New York, 1974, pp. 156-157).

<sup>1</sup> "China does not demand the return of the territories annexed by tsarist Russia under these treaties," declares the Chinese side (Statement of the PRC government of November 7, 1969, Peking, 1969, p. 42, in Chinese).

ries that had always been and are under the jurisdiction of the Chinese government. Thus in the Pamir area tsarist Russia, in violation of the "Description of the State Frontier Between China and Russia in the Kashgar Region" of 1884, is said to have occupied over 20 thousand sq. km of Chinese territory.<sup>1</sup> Peking also includes among the territories it wishes to redeem more than 600 islands in the rivers Amur and Ussuri with a total area exceeding 1000 sq. km.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the territories which, according to the Peking leaders, must be "completely and unconditionally returned" to the PRC, the Chinese are eager "to settle the question" of the so-called "disputed areas" on the Sino-Soviet frontier, i.e. areas where, according to the Chinese side, "the boundary lines of both sides do not coincide, as was shown in the maps exchanged at Sino-Soviet frontier negotiations in 1964".<sup>3</sup>

Thus, as interpreted by the Chinese side, "the present Sino-Soviet border issue left by history" consists of three parts: 1) 1.5 million sq. km of "Chinese" territory now included in the USSR which China is ready "to cede" to the Soviet Union; 2) an area of over 20 thousand sq. km which the Soviet Union "must give back to China" (an area slightly smaller than Albania, but larger than Kuwait, equal to two Lebanons or Israel, or one half of Switzerland or the Netherlands); and 3) what Peking calls "disputed areas", i.e., areas, all or parts of which are claimed by the Chinese side.

*Question:* The Soviet-Chinese frontier is the long-

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<sup>1</sup> Statement of the PRC Government of May 24, 1969, Peking, 1969, pp. 15-16 (in Chinese).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Statement of the PRC Government of October 7, 1969, Peking, 1969, pp. 7 8, 42 (in Chinese).

est in the world. How was it established and what is its international legal basis?

*Answer:* The present Soviet-Chinese frontier was established in the course of Russia's almost 300-year-long relations first, with the Chinese state proper, and then with the Manchu Ching Empire. The first ties between the Russian state and China were established in the early 17th century when the two countries were separated by vast feudal possessions and lands populated by nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. At that time the Russians began vigorously to develop Eastern Siberia. The northern frontier of Ming China coincided in the main with the Great Wall of China. <sup>1</sup>

In 1644 China was conquered by the Manchus, this marked the advent of the Ching dynasty. The Ching Empire was a military-feudal despotic state which conducted in the 17th-19th centuries a predatory policy against China, Korea, the Russian Amur region, Mongolia, Dzungaria, Kashgaria <sup>2</sup>, Vietnam, Burma, Tibet, etc. In the 1640s Russian explorers followed by farmers made their way to the river Amur. Russian settlements and strongholds began to appear in the Amur region and on the Pacific coast. Several large settlements were founded both on the left and right banks of the Amur: Albazinsky stockade in 1651, Kosogorsky stockade in 1655, and Kumarsky stockade (on the right bank) in 1654.

By the early 1680s the lands developed by the

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations in the 17th Century. Materials and Documents*, Vol. 1, 1608-1683, Moscow, 1969, Documents Nos. 26-32 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Dzungaria or the Dzungarian khanate was an independent state of Western Mongols-Oirats until the mid-18th century. At that time several independent Moslem state formations populated chiefly by Uigurs existed in the territory of Kashgaria. After Dzungaria and Kashgaria were seized by the Ching Empire the territory became known as the Sinkiang province.

Russians in the Amur region were incorporated into the Russian state as an administrative unit, the Albazin voivodship (province) <sup>1</sup>.

When Russians came to the Amur region it was populated by independent tribes of Daur, Duchers, Evenks, Natks, and Nivkhs. Their total population was small. Until then the local tribes had been neither under the rule of the Ching Empire nor of any other state. There had been no Manchu authorities or Manchu population in the Amur region or in the Maritime area. <sup>2</sup>

Manchu-Chinese documents of those times show that the boundary of the Manchu possessions ran along a specially built line of fortifications in southern Manchuria, known as the "Willow palisade". The northern and western sections of these fortifications were some 600-800 km south of the Amur and farther west from the Ussuri. In the 1660s and 1670s the vast territory between the Amur and the "Willow palisade" was penetrated by Russian and Manchu detachments. <sup>3</sup>

In the 1680s, seeking to surround Manchuria (indeed all of China) by a zone of sparsely populated territories, the Ching monarchy tried to force the Russians out of the Amur region. Twice, in 1685 and 1687, Albazin, the administrative centre of the Russian lands along the Amur, was besieged by Manchu troops.

The military defeat at Albazin, the preparations of the Ching Empire for war against the Dzungarian khanate with the aim of seizing Mongolia, and,

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<sup>1</sup> V. A. Alexandrov, *Russia's Far Eastern Frontiers (second half of the 17th century)*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 5-45 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> G. O. Dolgikh, *The Generic and Tribal Composition of Siberian Peoples in the 17th Century*, Moscow, 1969 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> G. V. Melikhov, *Manchus in the Northeast (17th century)*, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

particularly, domestic difficulties, compelled the Ching government to enter into peace negotiations with Russia. The Russian city of Nerchinsk was designated as the meeting place of the ambassadors. Having concentrated a huge army in the area and threatening to assault the Russian embassy, the Ching envoys forced the Russians to give up their lands along the right bank of the river Argun and along both banks of the Amur in its upper and middle reaches down to where the river Bureya joins the Amur, which made up a considerable part of the Albazin voivodship.<sup>1</sup>

The agreement, known as the Treaty of Nerchinsk, was signed on August 27, 1689. Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the treaty established the boundary between the Ching Empire and the Russian state along the river Gorbitsa and "Kamenniye Gory" (Stone Mountains) which are defined rather vaguely. The areas south of the river Ud, i.e., in the lower reaches of the Amur, were left undemarcated "until another more favourable time".<sup>2</sup>

Article 2 of the Treaty of Nerchinsk delimited the frontier along the entire length of the river Argun. According to Article 3 Albazin was to be destroyed.<sup>3</sup> Under this treaty the Ching Empire secured a vast territory between the "Willow palisade" and the upper and middle reaches of the Amur.

The Manchu ambassadors promised on oath that the Ching Empire would not let any Chinese to settle the Albazin lands. By this act the Ching Empire admitted its limited sovereignty over the territories it had seized from Russia.

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations in the 17th Century*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1972 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations, 1689-1916. Official Documents*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 9-10 (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.



In a report to Emperor Kang-hsi on the Treaty of Nerchinsk the State Council of the Ching Empire said: "This caused several thousand *li* in the north-east *not previously included in China's territory to be included on our map.*"<sup>1</sup> Thus it is a historical fact that in the late 17th century the Manchus seized by force of arms a part of the Russian state to which they had no historical or legal rights.

The frontier of Russian and Manchu lands after the Ching Empire had seized Mongolia was delimited in the Treaty of Kiachta of 1728. Its Article 7 confirmed the provisions of the Treaty of Nerchinsk on lands that had remained undemarcated. It was assumed that the Russian and the Ching governments would resume talks on the demarcation of lands in the Amur region and the Maritime area at a more favourable time.

From the early 18th century the Russian government had tried to obtain through diplomatic channels the right to navigation on the Amur and a revision of the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Nerchinsk but came up against the resistance of the Ching government.

The gradual influx of Russian settlers into Siberia, its economic development and growing trade called for a settlement of the question of the Far Eastern frontier with the Ching Empire. The Opium War waged by Britain and France against the Ching Empire in 1839-1842 and their actions in the Pacific against Russia during the Crimean War created a situation in which Russian lands in the lower reaches of the Amur and the Maritime area were in danger of being seized by Western powers. The Russian government was forced to strengthen Russia's positions on her Far Eastern frontiers. In 1849 a geographical expedition led by G. Nevelskoy found

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Mancall, *Russia and China. Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971, p. 161.

that the Amur was navigable for seagoing vessels, which had been doubted, and that the strait between Sakhalin and the mainland was also navigable. The regions secured by the Manchus under the Treaty of Nerchinsk as well as the undemarcated areas in the lower reaches of the Amur and the Maritime area remained unsettled and undeveloped.<sup>1</sup>

During the second Opium War (1856-1858) the Ching government was compelled to agree to a settlement of the frontier problem with Russia.

In May 1858 N. N. Muravyev, the governor-general of Eastern Siberia, and I Shan, representing the Ching government, signed the Treaty of Aigun, under which the Amur was to serve as the Russian-Chinese frontier. The territories that had been annexed by the Manchus in the 17th century were returned to Russia. The Ussuri territory was to remain in the joint ownership of the two states until a demarcation of their frontiers was made.

The Treaty of Aigun was concluded in the interests of both sides for it was to preclude the encroachments of Western powers on the Amur area. This was stated in the preamble and in Article 1 under which only Russian and Ching vessels had the right to navigation on the rivers Amur, Singari and Ussuri.

The Treaty of Aigun contains no unequal provisions. The Maoists, however, include it among unequal treaties with regard to China, although there are no legal grounds for this.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> L. G. Beskrovny, A. L. Narochnitsky, "A History of Russia's Foreign Policy in the Far East in the 19th century", in the magazine *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History), No. 6, 1974 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> L. G. Beskrovny, S. L. Tikhvinsky, V. M. Khvostov, "A History of the Formation of the Russian-Chinese Frontier", in the magazine *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* (International Life), No. 6, 1972 (in Russian).

According to international law, "unequal" treaties with China would be treaties under which foreign powers and citizens would control trade ports, set up concessions and maintain armed forces in China, and have extraterritorial rights, i.e., special rights and privileges on Chinese territory and immunization from Chinese legislation. Under such treaties China had been divided into spheres of influence.

Two weeks after the signing of the Treaty of Aigun Ye. Putyatin, a Russian government official who had arrived in Tientsin to negotiate on questions concerning frontiers and trade and political relations with China, knowing nothing of the successful outcome of the talks in Aigun, signed the Treaty of Tientsin on the general principles governing relations between the two countries. In Article 9 of the new treaty the Ching representatives acknowledged the need to establish a precise frontier between the two countries in several areas: "The undefined sections of the frontier between China and Russia shall be studied without delay and on the spot by official representatives of both governments, and the terms they will work out concerning the boundary shall be included in the form of a supplementary article in the present treaty. When the frontier is demarcated a detailed description and maps of the adjoining areas will be made to be used by both governments in future as indisputable documents concerning the frontiers."<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Tientsin contained no other provisions on demarcation.

To settle territorial and other questions with the Ching Empire Russia sent N. P. Ignatyev as her envoy to Peking. In November 1860 Ignatyev and Kung, an official of the Ching government, signed

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations, 1689-1916. Official Documents*, Moscow, 1958, p. 33 (in Russian).

the Treaty of Peking which confirmed all the provisions of the Treaty of Aigun and also recognized Russia's rights to the Ussuri territory (Maritime area).<sup>1</sup>

In June 1861, following the staking out of the frontier, both sides signed a supplementary article to the Treaty of Peking, under which they exchanged maps bearing state seals and signed by their representatives.<sup>2</sup>

Under the Treaties of Aigun and Peking part of the Amur area that had been taken away from Russia under the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 was returned to Russia. The Treaty of Peking demarcated the frontiers of the two countries in the Far Eastern regions that were left unsettled in the Treaty of Nerchinsk, or, according to the Treaty of Aigun, would be "commonly held until future demarcation". The long process of demarcation of borders between Russia and the Ching Empire in the Far East was finally completed.

The demarcation carried out in the Amur and Maritime areas in the mid-19th century should be studied in connection with the stages and character of penetration of Russians and Manchus into the Amur basin in the second half of the 17th century and the circumstances under which the Treaty of Nerchinsk was signed. This gives one a true picture of how the frontier was delimited in this area and refutes the claim that Russia had "seized" territories of the Ching Empire. The truth is that under the treaty of 1689 the Ching Empire annexed a considerable part of Russian territory in the Amur region, and under the treaties of 1858 and 1860 it was compelled to return to Russia a part of the seized

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations*. . . , pp. 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

lands and abandon its claims to the Maritime area which never had been in its possession.

The Treaty of Peking was also the first Russian-Chinese agreement which traced that part of the future frontier between Russia and the Ching Empire which was situated in Central Asia.

The Manchu invaders penetrated Central Asia, first of all, parts of Sinkiang (Dzungaria and Eastern Turkestan) in the mid-18th century. This was followed by savage repressions against the local peoples. Having defeated the Dzungarian khanate, the Ching troops massacred almost all the Oirats there—more than a million people.<sup>1</sup>

The contiguity of Russian and Ching lands in Central Asia in the mid-19th century made it necessary to demarcate a frontier in these areas. Taking into consideration the actual position of Russia and China in Central Asia, Article 2 of the Treaty of Peking (1860) defined the future demarcation line in Central Asia as stretching from the Shabin Tabaka pass, the final western point of the border line mapped out under the Treaty of Kiachta, “following the direction of mountains, big rivers and the line of the existing Chinese pickets” and extending southwest to Lake Zaisan and farther on to the Tengri-Shan ridge (Tien-Shan) and “along these mountains to the lands of the Kokand khanate”.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B. P. Gurevich, “Invasion by the Ching Empire of Central Asia in the Second Half of the 18th Century and Russia’s Policy” in the magazine *Istoria SSSR* (History of the USSR), No. 2, 1973 (in Russian); B. P. Gurevich, “Great-Han Chauvinism and Some Questions of the History of the Peoples of Central Asia in the 18th and 19th centuries”, *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), No. 9, 1974 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations, 1689-1916. Official Documents*, Moscow, 1958, p. 35 (in Russian).

The negotiations on demarcating the western part of the frontier provided for by the Treaty of Peking began in late 1861 and ended in September 1864 with the signing in Chuguchak of a protocol establishing the state frontier from the Altai to the Tien-Shan ridge. The demarcation line took into account the geographical features of the country and the location of the permanent Manchu frontier posts<sup>1</sup>.

The Dungan-Uigur uprising (1864-1878) which broke out that year in Sinkiang prevented the Chuguchak protocol from going into effect. The uprising was vivid evidence of the crisis of the Ching Empire's national and colonial policy in Dzungaria and Eastern Turkestan, populated chiefly by Turkic peoples of Moslem faith. It shook to the very foundations the rule of the Ching Empire in Sinkiang, where there appeared several independent feudal possessions. The Ching government approached the Russians asking them to help put down the uprising, but the Russian government at first declined to send troops there.

Following the attempts of Yakub-bek, the pro-British ruler of Eastern Turkestan, to subjugate the Taranchi khanate in the Ili territory, in 1871 Russian troops, meeting with no resistance on the part of the local Uigurs, occupied the Ili territory with its administrative centre in the city of Kuldja.

Manchu-Chinese troops quelled the Dungan-Uigur uprising, massacring the local population: over 100 thousand people were killed. Many fled to Russia, thereby creating new complications in her relations with the Ching Empire.

Under the Treaty of St. Petersburg of February 12, 1881 on the return of the Ili territory the local population was allowed "to keep to their present place of residence" or "move to Russian territory

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations*. . . , pp. 46-49.

and become Russian subjects".<sup>1</sup> A small western part of the Ili territory went over to Russia "for settling those residents of the territory who would become Russian subjects and in consequence of this would have to abandon the lands they had owned there".<sup>2</sup> Fearing reprisals by Manchu-Chinese punitive troops the overwhelming majority of Uigurs, Dungans and Kazakhs (approximately 70,000) left the Ili territory with the Russian army. In Russia the refugees were settled in the area that went over to Russia and in the inner districts of Semirechye (Dzhety-Su).

The provisions of the St. Petersburg Treaty of 1881, which envisaged subsequent demarcation between the Ferghana region and Eastern Turkestan, had a direct bearing on the question of the Eastern Pamir.

Under the New Margelan Protocol signed in 1884 the frontier stretched from the final frontier mark on the Tsunlin Range set up according to the Chuguchak Protocol and, along the Sarykol Range, reached only the Uz-Bel pass.

In the southern part of the Sarykol Range the frontier was defined by notes exchanged in April 1894 between the Russian and Ching governments. It ran along the Sarykol Range south of the Uz-Bel pass to the junction of Russian, Afghan and Chinese territories.<sup>3</sup>

Territorial demarcation in the Central Asian regions based on the provisions of the St. Petersburg Treaty of 1881 was completed. This was done in more complicated political, geographic and ethnical conditions than demarcation in the Far East. In

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations, 1689-1916. Official Documents*, Moscow, 1958, p. 55 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, St. Petersburg, 1914, Book I, Appendix, pp. 58-59* (in Russian).

Central Asia the Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tajiks and Uzbeks were reunited with Russia together with their ancient lands. Partial corrections were made to the frontier by consent of both parties in order to prevent the cleaving of the traditional grazing grounds of the local Kazakhs and to facilitate the settling of people from the Ili territory.

In this way the territorial demarcation between Russia and the Ching Empire was completed in the 19th century.

The Hsinhai revolution of 1911-1912 put an end to the Manchu rule in China. The Ching Empire ceased to exist.

In 1913 the government of the Chinese Republic declared that it would strictly observe all treaties and agreements concluded by the former Ching government with foreign powers.<sup>1</sup>

*Question:* What was the Soviet government's stand on the question of the Soviet-Chinese frontier immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution?

*Answer:* The Chinese leaders' present position is as follows: "All agreements on the Chinese-Soviet frontier as it exists today are unequal and were foisted upon China by imperialist tsarist Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, at a time when the peoples of China and Russia were deprived of all rights. After the Great October Socialist Revolution the Soviet government headed by Lenin called for the annulment of these unequal treaties. However, the historical conditions of that time prevented Lenin's proletarian policy from being translated into life."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations, 1689-1916. Official Documents*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 99-100 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC of October 8, 1969, p. 30 (in Chinese).



This assertion is totally unfounded. The Soviet government has never raised the question of revising or replacing treaty provisions on the frontier with China.

The state frontier of old Russia with China, defined in several treaties beginning with the late 17th century, has remained unchanged since the October Revolution.

At the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets Lenin spoke about the agreements concluded by the tsarist government: "There are various clauses, comrades—the predatory governments, you know, not only made agreements between themselves on plunder, but among them they also included economic agreements and various other clauses on good-neighbourly relations... We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these."<sup>1</sup>

An appeal issued by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR to the Chinese people and the governments of Southern and Northern China on July 25, 1919, which was based on the principles outlined by Lenin, named those agreements which the Soviet government had declared annulled and those the annulment of which it was ready to discuss with the Chinese government.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet government declared that it had annulled all secret agreements concluded by the tsarist (and later the Provisional) government with Japan, China and the former allies of Russia. But Russia's frontier treaties were not secret agreements.

The Soviet government intended to negotiate the annulment of the Russian-Chinese Treaty of 1896, the

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 26, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1917-1957. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1959, p. 43 (in Russian).

Peking Protocol of 1901 and all of Russia's agreements with Japan concluded between 1907 and 1916. The appeal said in part: "The Soviet government has relinquished the territories seized by the tsarist government in China, including Manchuria and other regions. Let the people inhabiting these regions decide for themselves within the bounds of which state they wish to live." <sup>1</sup>

Thus the Soviet government did not consider the provisions on the frontier defined in Russian-Chinese agreements, among them the Treaties of Aigun, Peking and St. Petersburg, and the Chuguchak Protocol, either annulled or subject to annulment. Article 3 of the Soviet-Chinese Agreement of May 31, 1924 "On the General Principles for Settling Questions between the USSR and the Republic of China", which deals with the annulment of the tsarist government's treaties "affecting China's sovereign rights and interests", contains reference to the above-mentioned appeal of 1919. <sup>2</sup>

A note of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of July 13, 1929 to China's chargé d'affaires in Moscow said: "Back in 1919 the USSR government on its own initiative addressed a declaration to the Chinese people stating its readiness to annul all unequal treaties concluded between China and the tsarist government. The USSR government carried out these decisions by concluding the Agreement of 1924." <sup>3</sup>

Thus, the Agreement of 1924 envisaged negotiations on the annulment of those very acts that were enumerated in the appeal of 1919. In Article 7 of this agreement the governments of the USSR and China stated their readiness "to recheck (redemar-

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1917-1957. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1959, p. 43 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

cate) their national frontiers and maintain the existing frontiers until this verification is carried out".<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing derogatory in the article in regard of the frontier treaties, nor does it describe them as "unequal." That is why the Shenyang Agreement of September 20, 1924 reached with Chang Tso-lin, the Manchurian governor, mentioned only "redemarcation of the frontier."<sup>2</sup>

In the 1940s the CPC leadership, noting the Soviet Union's strict internationalist approach to matters relating to China, pointed above all to the noble act of the Soviet government which annulled the unequal treaties concluded by tsarist Russia with China. *Chiehfang jihpao* (the central organ of the CPC Central Committee) said on November 8, 1943: "The government of Soviet Russia has at its own initiative finally broken the chain of unequal treaties which tsarist Russia foisted upon the Chinese nation. The Soviet proletariat, guided by the great spirit of internationalism... did away with the oppression foisted upon our people by the government of tsarist Russia... Particularly important is the fact that the Soviet government not only abolished the privileges of tsarist Russia in China but actively helped the Chinese nation to fight for the elimination of foreign privileges in China... This noble friendship was welcomed by the Chinese nation and was accepted with great respect."<sup>3</sup> This article was published at the time when the Chinese press gave wide coverage to the centenary of the Chinese people's struggle for the annulment of unequal treaties.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97. The concept of "redemarcation" ("verification") stems from a recognition of the frontier agreements in force and implies a more precise demarcation of the frontier in keeping with the existing legal basis.

<sup>3</sup> *Chiehfang jihpao*, November 8, 1943.

*Question:* With the formation of the PRC a qualitatively new stage began in Soviet-Chinese relations. What was the approach of the two countries to the Soviet-Chinese frontier in the early 1950s?

*Answer:* The formation of the People's Republic of China created all the prerequisites for the development of friendly Soviet-Chinese relations. Upon arriving in Moscow on December 16, 1949, Mao Tse-tung said in a speech that after the Great October Socialist Revolution the Soviet Union, guided by Marxist-Leninist foreign-policy principles, "was the first to annul the unequal treaties with regard to China that were in force in tsarist Russia".<sup>1</sup> This showed that relations between People's China and the Soviet Union would be built on a new basis and be free of the burden of tsarist agreements which had become meaningless after the October Revolution.

In keeping with the Agreement of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance signed by the two countries on February 14, 1950, the USSR and the PRC built their relations on the basis of "mutual respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity".<sup>2</sup> The principle of observing territorial integrity was also affirmed by the Chinese government in the Soviet-Chinese Declaration of 1954 and the joint statement of 1957.<sup>3</sup>

The Statement of the USSR government of March 29, 1969 said in part: "At the request of the Chinese side, in the early 50s the Soviet Union presented the PRC with complete sets of topographical maps showing the frontiers. At that time the Chinese authorities made no comments with regard to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1917-1957. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1959, p. 216 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 330, 334.

line of demarcation which was observed in practice." <sup>1</sup>

The agreement on navigation along the frontier rivers and Lake Khanka, concluded by the USSR and the PRC in 1951, was based on a precise observance of Soviet-Chinese frontier treaties. Guided by feelings of friendship and cooperation between socialist countries competent Soviet agencies gave favourable consideration to and complied with the requests of Chinese citizens to be given access to several islands on the rivers Amur and Ussuri for economic purposes and Chinese fishermen to be permitted to fish in the Soviet part of the frontier rivers. The frontier agencies of both sides settled any questions that came up in a businesslike manner, and no misunderstandings had arisen that required the intervention of the central authorities.

For the purpose of further strengthening good-neighbourly relations with the PRC the Soviet Union proposed that an agreement be concluded between the two countries on the border regulations and on mutual assistance in settling frontier questions. The Chinese, however, declined to discuss this proposal.

*Question:* For many years the Soviet-Chinese frontier was a frontier of true friendship between the two peoples. When and why did frontier relations between the PRC and the USSR deteriorate?

*Answer:* Good-neighbourly cooperation between the USSR and the PRC, which embodied the principles of socialist internationalism, broke down as a result of changes that had taken place in the domestic and foreign policies of the Chinese leadership in the early 60s. The situation on the Soviet-Chinese frontier also began to worsen at that time.

From the summer of 1962 violations of the Soviet frontier on the part of China became more and more

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, March 30, 1969.

frequent and serious. The number of such violations was especially high in areas along the rivers Argun, Amur and Ussuri. In 1963 there were more than 4,000 trespasses on Soviet islands and the waters of frontier rivers by Chinese citizens.<sup>1</sup>

In violation of the frontier regulations Chinese citizens attempted to occupy and use several Soviet islands and several Soviet areas along the frontier and the Soviet part of the frontier rivers.

Time and again the Soviet government called the Chinese government's attention to the frontier violations and proposed a friendly settlement of the matter. The PRC government invariably defended the illegal actions of the Chinese citizens and servicemen.

*Jenmin jihpao* in its issue of March 8, 1963 carried an article which raised the question of "unequal" treaties signed by Manchu emperors with Western powers. The Treaty of Aigun (1858), the Treaty of Tientsin (1858), the Treaty of Peking (1860) and the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881), which defined nearly all the sections of the present Soviet-Chinese frontier, were named among them. The newspaper said that under these and other treaties "lands had been seized" in the eastern, western, northern and southern parts of China. In this way the Chinese leaders raised the questions of the "unjust character" of the Soviet-Chinese frontier<sup>2</sup> thereby going back on their own earlier declarations that unequal treaties concluded between tsarist Russia and China had been annulled by the Soviet government immediately after the October Revolution.

To prevent the growth of frontier frictions the

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<sup>1</sup> O. B. Borisov, B. T. Koloskov, *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1945-1970*, Moscow, 1971, p. 302 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Jenmin jihpao*, March 8, 1963.

Soviet government in its note to the Chinese government of May 17, 1963 declared that it was ready to hold consultations to verify the line of demarcation in several parts of the frontier. But the Chinese leadership continued to create tension on the frontier. Then realizing that the border violations did not bring the expected results and that it would be unwise further to reject the Soviet proposal the Chinese side agreed in November 1963 to the holding of consultations.<sup>1</sup>

Consultations between the government delegations of the USSR and the PRC to verify the frontier were held from February 25 to August 22, 1964 in Peking. The Soviet side advanced proposals that would make it possible to define precisely different sections of the frontier in a short time. In setting forth these proposals the Soviet delegation assumed that success of the consultations would help preserve friendly relations between the Soviet and Chinese peoples, between the USSR and the PRC.<sup>2</sup>

However, the stand taken by the Chinese representatives at the consultations showed that the Chinese side had no intention of reaching an agreement. The Chinese leadership used the consultations as a means of creating a "territorial problem" which would aggravate relations between the PRC and the USSR for many years to come. And to wreck the very idea of settling Chinese-Soviet frontier relations, on July 10, 1964, i.e. when the Soviet-Chinese consultations were under way, Mao Tse-tung said to a group of Japanese parliamentarians visiting China at the time: "Approximately 100 years ago the area east of Lake Baikal became the territory of Russia and since then Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Kam-

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<sup>1</sup> O. B. Borisov, B. T. Koloskov, *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1945-1970*, Moscow, 1971, p. 304 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

chatka, among other points, have been part of Soviet territory. We have not yet made claims with regard to these areas.”<sup>1</sup>

No accord was reached at the consultations in Peking, but the two sides agreed to continue the talks in October 1964 in Moscow. Although the Soviet side had repeatedly reminded the PRC government of this agreement the latter declined to bring the consultations to a conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

After the consultations in Peking the Chinese side continued to violate the Soviet frontier. The number of violations had increased noticeably since late 1965. Soviet protests were simply ignored or rejected by the Chinese authorities. Nor would the Chinese side agree to a bilateral investigation of the border incidents. This made it virtually impossible to settle frontier conflicts in a businesslike manner by representatives of frontier authorities. Increasingly the Chinese side tended to turn all concrete questions into a question of “unequal” treaties, and used them as pretexts for making anti-Soviet attacks.

The “cultural revolution” sharply intensified China’s anti-Sovietism which was declared the main political course of the PRC at the 11th Plenum of the CPC Central Committee (August 1966). Border provocations grew in number and became even more unbridled.

Seeking to increase border tension, in 1967 the Chinese side wrecked and in 1968 refused to attend a scheduled meeting of the Soviet-Chinese commission on navigation along the frontier sections of the Amur and the Ussuri.

In the autumn of 1966, when the hungweiping crusades were at their height, there were increasing

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, September 2, 1964.

<sup>2</sup> O. B. Borisov, B. T. Koloskov, *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1945-1970*, Moscow, 1971, p. 305 (in Russian).



calls from the Peking leaders to keep the border areas "in fighting trim". In February 1967 Peking issued a directive calling upon the army to display still greater "vigilance" on the Chinese-Soviet frontier. In September 1967 the CPC Central Committee in one of its directives urged the army to be in "a state of constant alarm". In June 1968 the army again received orders to be ready to conduct military operations along the frontier. In March 1969 Peking gave orders to open fire on the Soviet-Chinese frontier.

In its statements of March 29 and June 13, 1969, the Soviet government firmly rejected the Chinese leaders' territorial claims, stressing their groundlessness from the point of view of history and international law.<sup>1</sup> The Soviet Union does not lay claim to a single metre of China's territory and does not threaten any of its neighbouring countries. As is known, war propaganda is a crime in the Soviet Union and is punishable by law.

With a view to normalizing the situation on the Soviet-Chinese frontier and improving interstate relations between the USSR and the PRC the Soviet government put forth in its statements concrete proposals on resuming the consultations that were held in 1964 in Peking.

Finally, during the visit of Alexei Kosygin, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, to Peking on September 11, 1969, agreement in principle was reached to reopen frontier negotiations. They began on October 20, 1969 in Peking.

*Question:* The Peking government has held frontier negotiations with several neighbouring countries. What was the approach of the Chinese to these talks?

*Answer:* The Chinese conducted the negotiations

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, March 30, 1969; June 14, 1969.

not with the aim of arriving at a just and peaceful settlement of disputed issues, but in order to achieve selfish ends. When the situation was not crucial (as in the early 60s, when the PRC held negotiations with several of its neighbouring countries for the purpose of saving its prestige, first of all in the eyes of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which were seriously alarmed by China's position in the Chinese-Indian border conflict) the Chinese did everything to protract the talks. Such an approach to negotiations was confirmed by Chou En-lai in his talk with a group of Scandinavian journalists on November 10, 1972. The Chinese Premier said: "China has patience and need not show haste in negotiations on frontier questions with the Soviet Union."<sup>1</sup>

This position is part of Peking's policy; the existence of an unsettled frontier "issue" supposedly paralyzes its negotiating partner's foreign political activity in other spheres and thus creates for him additional difficulties. To the same end Peking advances conditions which it knows would be unacceptable to its partner, and transfers the discussion of the frontier issue from the sphere of international law to that of general discussion and ideological confrontation. Chinese diplomacy resorts to these tactics in order to evade a concrete businesslike discussion of the problems and protract negotiations when its partner's position is undeniably constructive or when the subject of discussion is not too complex and a settlement can be reached given goodwill on both sides.

Among the means employed by Chinese diplomacy in all frontier and territorial negotiations are the theory of "disputed areas" and "historical" argumentation.

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<sup>1</sup> *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 11, 1972.

*Question:* What do the Chinese mean by "disputed areas"? What can be said about this "theory" from the standpoint of international law?

*Answer:* The Chinese almost invariably use the term "disputed areas" in referring to neighbouring territories which, according to them, belong to China.

According to the Chinese, the "disputed" character of these territories stems from the fact that they are in effect Chinese territory that had been seized from China for one or another reason against her will. The Chinese insist that the "disputed areas" were or even are under the jurisdiction of the Chinese state.

In other words, all the territories claimed by the PRC and shown on their maps automatically become "disputed areas". Thus the "theory" of disputed areas is nothing but a modification of the ancient formula of territorial claims: "Give me what is yours because I consider it mine."

It is well known that state frontiers are defined in official documents and treaties and shown on maps. Is it possible that two sides may arrive at a different interpretation of a treaty or cartographic materials at a certain stage of their relationship and thus find themselves in territorial disputes? From the political or legal point of view the answer is no. For it is precisely the purpose of international legal acts, both bilateral and multilateral, to establish a *common understanding* (unless special reservations are made on the question), including the demarcation of a frontier, between the parties concerned. Any subsequent difference in interpretation means that one of the sides has departed from this *common understanding*. However, such a departure does not deprive the treaties of their legal force and political meaning. Thus no territory that has become an object of claims by a state can be even partially

withdrawn from the sphere of its state sovereignty and unilaterally declared a "disputed area".

When one state declares any part of the territory of another state to be "disputed territory" and wants this to be officially documented, it is actually seeking to restrict that state's authority over the said territory, thus infringing upon the latter's sovereignty and violating the basic norms of international law, in particular, the principle of territorial integrity and inviolability—the natural basis for the emergence and existence of nations.

Thus the claim by the Chinese, published in official documents, that the Senkaku islands were disputed areas was rejected by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its statement of March 3, 1972, in which it noted that the islands in question, far from being "disputed areas", were part of Japan's sovereign territory.<sup>1</sup>

Laying claims to several Soviet territories and calling them "disputed areas", Peking has come out with the demand that Soviet frontier guards be withdrawn from the "disputed areas", thus virtually blocking Soviet-Chinese frontier talks.

The withdrawal of troops from a specified territory is one of the measures employed in settling territorial disputes, and this is what Peking diplomacy intends to capitalize on. However, the question is when such a measure should be taken and what territories are involved.

Marxism-Leninism provides a clear answer to this question. Lenin said: "To renounce annexations means to let each nation determine freely whether it wants to live separately or together with others. Of course, *for this purpose, armies must be withdrawn.*"<sup>2</sup> It is well known that on the Soviet side

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<sup>1</sup> *The Mainichi Daily News*, March 4, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 24, p. 264 (emphasis added).

of the frontier the question of self-determination for all peoples from the Nivkhs of the Amur area to the Tajiks of the Pamir was settled more than half a century ago.

There are no unsettled national or territorial problems in the Soviet Union and therefore there is no region in the USSR that can be an object of dispute. The different approach to territorial questions which the Peking leaders are trying to foist upon China's neighbouring countries is but a poorly concealed form of groundless territorial claims. In his speech on November 26, 1974 in Ulan Bator Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said: "Peking, in fact, puts forward, as a preliminary condition, nothing less than the demand for withdrawal of the Soviet frontier guards from a number of areas of our territory, which the Chinese leaders have now decided to lay claim to, calling them 'disputed areas'. And Peking declared outright that it will only agree to negotiations on frontier questions after its demands concerning these 'disputed areas' are satisfied." Leonid Brezhnev noted that Peking's position was absolutely unacceptable and was rejected by the Soviet side.<sup>1</sup>

The Maoist "theory" of disputed areas runs counter to the principle of peaceful settlement of frontier questions on an equal basis. On the one hand, the Chinese government declares its readiness to settle frontier-territorial questions through negotiations based on the principles of consultations on the basis of equality and mutual understanding, while on the other hand, it makes one-sided attempts to put into practice the concept of "disputed areas". Such an approach is unacceptable. It amounts to making arbitrary claims which are clearly unacceptable by the other side, and this leads to obvious inequality at the very start of the negotiations.

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, November 27, 1974.

Actually, the Chinese side does not say that both states have equal rights to the "disputed area", but insists on its exclusive rights to the area and declares that it intends to extend its sovereignty to the "disputed area" to the detriment of the sovereignty of the other side. In such a case the idea of the "equal character" of negotiations becomes a cover used by one state for imposing its will on another state.

By proclaiming unilaterally that large territories in China's neighbouring states are "disputed areas" Peking violates the fundamental principles of international law. This is a fact, no matter what historical or other arguments Peking uses to conceal its aims.

*Question:* What role does historical argumentation play in Peking's attempt to substantiate its position on frontier-territorial questions and how frequently is it used?

*Answer:* According to international law today, historical and ethnographic factors play a definite role in settling territorial disputes. In most cases they have to do with the historical destinies of the people inhabiting the territory in question and the claimant's desire to prove his right to it as its discoverer or the longest possessor. But the Chinese leadership, in laying claims to China's neighbouring territories, resorts to the fabricated thesis of the "historical unfairness" of China's frontiers.

The PRC leaders are eager to use historical arguments not because they are valid. By turning to what took place centuries ago they pursue several aims. An analysis of their practical politics shows that they intend:

1. To revive nationalistic Great-Han sentiments among the Chinese people;
2. To broaden to the maximum the field of discussion of frontier problems with China's neigh-

bouring countries, with emphasis on those spheres where objective factors (absence of documents or difficulty of obtaining them, and traditional falsification of documentary sources in China) provide ample opportunity for misinterpreting historical materials;

3. To transfer frontier questions from the sphere of inter-state relations governed by international law to the sphere of ideological disputes, using "historical" arguments to discredit the international-legal basis of frontiers and labelling frontier treaties "unequal";

4. To use the traditional imperial approach to the problem, allusions to history being the usual weapon employed by Chinese diplomacy in dealing with matters of this kind;

5. To add to the list of China's achievements the aggressive campaigns of alien feudals (Mongolian and Manchu feudals, for instance), for Peking's territorial ambitions extend to the empires which those feudals had once built up in China and her neighbouring countries.

Of late China has been putting out in mass editions "historical studies" in support of her territorial claims to neighbouring countries. For instance, the Chinese government has been referring to "historical" facts in its frontier disputes with Burma and India and in its claims to several islands. Imperial chronicles, compiled centuries ago and falsified by subsequent dynasties are used to prove China's "historical" right to considerable areas along the Chinese-Indian frontier; Peking asserts that Chinese administrative bodies had been set up there in the past and that the local population had paid taxes to China in the form of tribute.<sup>1</sup> To justify

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<sup>1</sup> *Concerning the Question of Chinese-Indian Border*, Peking, 1962, pp. 10-12 (in Chinese).

their claims to Senkaku Islands the Chinese authorities advanced as their chief argument the thesis that during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) these uninhabited islands were included "in the country's naval defence system".<sup>1</sup> Reference to medieval history was made in the statement of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the Paracel Islands.<sup>2</sup>

The Maoists use various means in their attempt to make up for the unconvincing character of their "historical" arguments. They publish in large editions booklets and albums, wage newspaper campaigns, and show films and hold exhibitions both inside China and abroad for the purpose of interpreting historical materials in a way that promotes Peking's territorial ambitions. In propagandizing its version of the demarcation of China's frontier Peking attaches particular importance to historical journals. The republication of such journals after their banning during the "cultural revolution" was in many respects accounted for by the Peking leaders' endeavours to give a scientific semblance to the border scheme outlined in the statements of the PRC government and the documents of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1960-1969 period. The archaeological magazines *Wenwu* (*Material Culture*) and *Kaoku* (*Archaeology*), which began to come out in 1972, immediately subordinated archaeology to the aims of justifying China's "rights" to neighbouring territories. Most of such materials appear in the magazine *Lishih yanchiu* (*Study of History*), republished since December 1974. The magazine *Tili chihshih* (*Geographical Knowledge*), university publications such as *Peiching tahsiue hsiuepao* (*Peking University Herald*),

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<sup>1</sup> *Jenmin jihpao*, December 31, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, January 12, 1974.



the newspapers *Jenmin jihpao* and *Kwangming jihpao*, among other propaganda publications of the PRC, regularly publish "historical" materials in support of Peking's territorial claims to China's neighbouring countries.

*Question:* What methods are used by Chinese authors in building up their "historical" materials?

*Answer:* In interpreting the history of the formation of China's territory and its present frontiers Chinese authors resort to gross falsification and anti-scientific, anti-Marxist methods. First and foremost they try to go back as far as possible in history as regards the formation of China's present frontiers. They delve even into the history of Han China, i.e., the first centuries A. D. But regardless of the facts quoted by Chinese authors these historical periods, including all of the Middle Ages, have no direct bearing on the formation of the territories of the present national and multinational states.

According to the Marxist-Leninist theory on the nation and the state, *the formation of nations, of national and multinational modern states* and their frontiers took place on the threshold of and during the new historical period and was connected with the development of the capitalist system. Hence the groundlessness of all the references made by Maoist ideologists to the events that took place in Han, Tang and Ming China.

The fallacy of such reasoning had been pointed out by Lenin who said: "...when an author who was once a serious author and wishes to be regarded as such now too takes the fact of the Mongolian yoke and presents it as an example that explains certain events in twentieth-century Europe, can this be considered merely juggling, or would it not be more correct to consider it political chicanery? The Mongolian yoke is a fact of history, and one doubtlessly connected with the national question, just as

in twentieth-century Europe we observe a number of facts likewise doubtlessly connected with the question. But you will find few people—of the type the French describe as ‘national clowns’ – who would venture, while claiming to be serious, to use this fact of the Mongolian yoke as an illustration of events in twentieth-century Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus Peking’s thesis based on “historical” materials according to which the Chinese state is much more ancient than, for instance, the Russian state, and that it had from time immemorial possessed the territories to which Peking now lays claim, is obviously invalid. It belongs to another sphere of history. All relevant facts refute the Maoist “ideas” on this matter. To back up these “ideas” Maoist ideologists resort to the history of Han, Sui, Tang and Ching China, periods that are separated from one another by hundreds of years and are in no way connected<sup>2</sup>; that is, as Lenin put it “. . . instead of historical phenomena being presented in objective interconnection and interdependence and treated as a whole, we are presented a ‘subjective’ concoction to justify what might prove to be a dirty business. This does happen. . . and more often than one might think.”<sup>3</sup>

*Apology for the Chinese emperors’ aggressive campaigns* and for the cult of strength of the Chinese empire in its heyday is a characteristic feature of the writings of Maoist historians. The authors of articles carried by *Lishih yanchiu* and other magazines proceed from the idea that as an ancient and

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, pp. 114, 119-120; No. 4, 1975, pp. 105-107; No. 4, 1976, p. 106; No. 1, 1977, pp. 117-129; *Wenwu*, No. 8, 1975, pp. 7-12; Shih Ta, *A Short History of Tsarist Russia’s Aggression Against China*, Peking, 1976, pp. 7-23 (in Chinese).

<sup>3</sup> Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 272-273.

undisputed centre of Far Eastern civilization China (calling herself the Celestial Empire and Middle Kingdom) had not only the right but also the duty "to watch over" its close neighbours and "govern" them. Moreover, they consider it natural that Han or Tang China, since it had had the opportunity to do so, had every right not only "to watch over" its neighbours and "govern" them but if necessary "to pacify" them by sending military punitive expeditions.<sup>1</sup>

Wars and the domination of strong nations over weaker ones were a common phenomenon of the past ages. Today, however, historians should give a correct assessment of such phenomena. When they consider it profitable Chinese authors resort to the use of various labels, the label "imperialism" being their favourite. But when the question concerns the annexations made by ancient and medieval China up to the 18th-19th centuries, there is not a trace of objectivity to be found in the works of Chinese historians. They all assert that China has always had the right and has been almost obliged "to show concern" for her neighbours and when possible to annex their territories.

Since Peking's territorial claims go beyond *the borders of former Chinese national empires, Peking "interpreters" of history present as China's historical heritage the territories of states set up by the Khitans, Jurchen, Mongols and Manchus.* These constructs are based on the document of the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs of October 8, 1969 which said in part: "More than two thousand years ago China became a single multinational feudal state. And China had always existed in the world as a multinational state regardless of the way feudal dy-

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<sup>1</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, p. 120.

nasties superseded one another and what nationality ruled the country." <sup>1</sup>

Thus, all the territories annexed by China's invaders that have long since been forgotten, whether it was the territory of northern China incorporated by the Khitans into the Liao Empire (10th-12th centuries), or the Chinese territory seized by the Chin Empire of the Jurchen (1115-1264), or the territory seized when China lost her national statehood and was annexed to the Mongolian Yuan Empire or the Ching Empire of the Manchus, are now credited to China, while acts of aggression against China are described as internecine feudal strife which took place within a "single and indivisible" Chinese state.

This thesis is as false as it is old. In advancing it Peking obviously counts on the readers' total ignorance of the basic facts about the history of China and her neighbours, and of the problems of feudal and bourgeois Chinese historiography. It is well known that nationalistic, feudal Chinese historiography tried to include in Chinese imperial chronicles and attribute to China all of the neighbouring countries' and peoples' historical gains, primarily of those that had been at one time under China's rule or had ruled China. On the other hand, the historiography of alien feudals who had established their rule in China sought to prove their "legal" right to the Chinese throne. Chinese authors, aware of the weakness of their arguments with regard to China's "right" to show "concern" for her neighbours, have readily adopted the feudal thesis that all tribes and peoples which had for even a short period been under China's rule, or had been the object of her policy of "pacification", and "administration", or had themselves seized the Middle

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<sup>1</sup> This document was published in Peking in booklet form in early 1974.

Kingdom, were Chinese peoples which formed part of the Chinese Empire. According to traditional Confucian views, which distinguished peoples not according to race, language and culture but by the extent of their acquaintance with Chinese civilization and their adoption of all things Chinese, China's neighbouring countries which were under the influence of the Middle Kingdom were regarded as "candidates" for admission to the Chinese nation. The present-day followers of Confucian historians are even more categorical, going as far as to claim that Dzungarians, for instance, are "a branch of one of the peoples of our country", namely, the Mongols.<sup>1</sup>

Such treatment of the question gives rise to far-reaching implications. First, even if one agrees for the moment that a part of the Mongols had been a "Chinese people", should this imply that all the branches of the Mongolian people were therefore the subjects of the Middle Kingdom? Secondly, even if one takes account of the fact that Dzungarian rulers had at times, for tactical and political reasons, acknowledged their dependence to a certain extent on the Manchu emperor who held the Peking throne, does this imply that under no conditions had they the right to independence? Does this mean that the extermination of the Dzungarians by China in 1758 should be accepted by historians today as a kind of just punishment for the rebellion of unruly "subjects"?<sup>2</sup> Does this mean that the lands of the massacred Dzungarians belong unconditionally to China and to China alone?

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<sup>1</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 2, 1976, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> This is the position taken by Ching Ssu in his article "The Suppression by the Ching Government of the Rebellion of the Dzungarian Tribes and the Struggle Against the Aggression of Tsarist Russia", *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 2, 1976, pp. 110-120.

By advancing the idea of a "multinational" feudal Chinese state that had existed uninterruptedly for more than two thousand years, the Peking "theorists" deprive Mongols, Uigurs, Manchus and many other peoples of their right to their own history and their contribution to world culture and history. Here the historians of the PRC are no different from the rulers of Kuomintang China, who under the slogan of "a single nation-state" conducted a policy aimed at assimilating non-Han peoples.

No less false is the thesis that China has the right to lands ruled by the Liao and Chin dynasties. Chinese authors have repeatedly underscored that the Liao dynasty had brought the Shihwei and Moho people under its rule. "In the 12th century, the Chin dynasty" had set up in Heilungchiang and Ussuri basins "the Puyu, Hulikai, and Hsuping districts".<sup>1</sup> "During the Liao and Chin dynasties the lower reaches of the Amur were directly subordinated to China,"<sup>2</sup> wrote Chung Min-yan. However, Liao and Chin were not Chinese dynasties or states! They were the states of the Khitan and Jurchen peoples<sup>3</sup> which had not only been at war with Sung China (10th-12th centuries) but had compelled the latter to acknowledge her subordination to them and pay them annual tribute amounting to hundreds of thousands of silver bars and rolls of silk!

According to Peking authors all these peoples were "Chinese" and all their lands part of "China". Since the Kidan and Jurchen peoples, living near China's northern frontier, had time and again incorporated into their states (Liao and Chin) several

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<sup>1</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, p. 142; See also *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 2, 1975, p. 100; No. 4, 1976, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> M. V. Vorobyev, *The Jurchen and the Chin State*, Moscow, 1975 (in Russian).

areas in northern China and had to some extent assimilated Chinese culture (they had in fact adopted much from the Chinese, particularly in the economic, social, political and administrative, religious and ethical spheres), the Liao and Chin dynasties are said to be Chinese dynasties.

Works by contemporary Chinese authors show how an unscrupulous search for "historical arguments" in support of territorial claims turns a seemingly nationalistic Great-Han thesis into an anti-national and anti-patriotic one. For by trying to prove China's rights to territories that had at one time or another been annexed by the Liao, Chin, Yuan and Ching dynasties, Peking thereby admits the legality of the conquest of China by alien dynasties.

This makes all the more significant the words spoken by Sun Yat-sen, the great son of the Chinese people and a true champion of its national regeneration, in the grim years of Manchu rule in China. In reference to the first of his three well-known principles, namely, the principle of nationalism, Sun Yat-sen said: "Although more than 260 years have gone by since the Manchus invaded China, any Han, even a child, upon meeting a Manchu can identify him and will never take him for a Han. This is the essence of nationalism." Pointing out that the Ching Empire was "not ours, not a Chinese state", that the Chinese, like all other enslaved people, had become a "people without a homeland", Sun Yat-sen called on his countrymen to turn their thoughts to the time when the Chinese state had perished. "You will see," he said, "that our forefathers refused to give in to the Manchus. Close your eyes and imagine the savage battles where blood flowed in torrents and bodies covered the fields and you will understand that our forefathers had a clear conscience. That is why the whole question is particularly painful for us, their descendants. When

one turns to the time after our state had fallen, when the Manchu government humiliated the Han people in every way, one sees that we, Hans, only pretended to submit to the invaders, but that in our heart we did not reconcile ourselves with our oppressors and rebelled against them again and again." <sup>1</sup>

Thus, the assertions in articles published in Chinese journals that the Manchus were "a Chinese people" which had established its rule over China, and that "the Manchus were in fact not foreigners but a national minority of China" are nothing but falsification of Chinese history. It is noteworthy that the struggle of resistance waged in southern China by patriotic anti-Ching forces is now described by Chinese authors, in full conformity with Manchu imperial documents of that time, as a "rebellion in southern China". This would be "particularly painful" for Sun Yat-sen and the millions of Chinese patriots who gave their lives in the struggle against foreign invaders because "their descendants" now glorified the Manchu emperors that had enslaved the Chinese people.

*Question:* What were China's frontiers in those early times to which Peking now refers?

*Answer:* Extending the historical boundaries of the Chinese state at the expense of its neighbouring countries and peoples, today's Chinese historians assert that "even though China's frontier has been subjected to partial changes in the course of history its state boundaries have never been confined to areas populated by a single nationality, either Han or any other fraternal nationality. Until the impe-

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Yat-sen, *Sel. Works*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 121-122 (in Russian).



rialist powers invaded China in the mid-19th century China had a clearly defined frontier." <sup>1</sup>

This runs counter to the actual history of the formation of China's frontier. In fact the only border line that had been established in the history of China was the Great Wall. And although in ancient and medieval documents one comes across instances where the empire's boundaries were legally fixed, in most cases the purpose of frontiers was served by indefinite zones, a belt of sparsely populated lands or buffer state formations.

If one rejects the principle of recognizing a state's frontier as it was formed in the modern historical period, which is in keeping with present-day international law, and adopts the "historical" approach advocated by Peking, the result would be total confusion. And it is no accident that in his report on the Chinese-Burmese frontier delivered at the 4th Session of the National People's Congress of the 1st Convocation on July 9, 1957, Chou En-lai had to acknowledge that "during the rule of feudal dynasties China's frontiers, like those of many other countries of the feudal period, were not clearly defined. The attitude of the feudal dynasties in China to nationalities populating the outlying areas was also different in character and the extent of proximity. This makes it *almost impossible to determine China's exact boundaries at the time of the feudal empire.*" <sup>2</sup>

The works of today's Chinese authors show that this sober approach to the history of China's frontiers has been replaced by its exact opposite.

*Question:* Of late Peking authors have begun to cite a rather large number of historical sources in

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<sup>1</sup> Shih Ta, *A Short History of Tsarist Russia's Aggression Against China*, Peking, 1976, p. 2 (in Chinese).

<sup>2</sup> The newspaper *Druzhba* (Friendship), Peking, July 12, 1957 (in Russian).

their articles. Does this mean that they are taking a more objective approach to historical materials?

*Answer:* The first thing one notices upon reading articles published in *Lishih yanchiu* and other Chinese journals is *the extremely biased chronological selection of sources*. The overemphasis of some facts and the omission of others, the treatment of historical material out of chronological and logical context testify to a deliberate attempt to distort history.

As has already been shown, it is wrong from the standpoint of methodology, when dealing with problems of China's frontier, to go back to China's ancient and medieval history and the sources of those times. So, in one sense we have no need to study or analyze articles on the subject published in Chinese periodicals. But since they are published, let us assess them for what they are worth.

The way old Chinese sources are used by authors whose articles are published in *Lishih yanchiu* and other journals means that one must adopt a critical attitude with regard to the sources and their interpretation. Let us take a few examples from an article by Shih Yu-hsin,<sup>1</sup> which is of an official character and serves as a directive for other authors.

In the third part of his article Shih Yu-hsin devotes a single paragraph to the activity of Han China in "the Western area". And on the basis of the material presented in this one paragraph, which contains two references to Han Shu (History of the Han dynasty) the author concludes that the vast territory of Turkestan, as far as the Pamir and Lake Balkhash, was "under the rule" of a Chinese vicegerent somewhere around 60 B. C. "Under the rule of the vicegerent of the 'Western area' were the Wusun and Tawan regions south of Lake Balkhash, and the Wulci region in the Pamir... In Chihku in the

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<sup>1</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, pp. 113-128.

Wusun region (now the southeastern coast of Lake Issyk-Kul in the Soviet Union—*Ed.*) the Han dynasty had established military settlements.”<sup>1</sup> In the footnote to these quotations the author refers the reader to Chapters 69 and 96 (parts 1 and 2) of *Chien Han Shu*.

A careful study of the two chapters, or rather of materials relating to the points mentioned in the article, namely Wusun with the town of Chihku, Tawan and Wulei, shows that only facts concerning the Wusun people are presented correctly in the article. It is said in *Han Shu* that somewhere around 60 B. C. the Wusuns were subordinated to a Chinese vicegerent who was in charge of a military camp in Chihku, the district centre.<sup>2</sup>

The situation with regard to Tawan was quite different from the way it is presented in Shih Yuhsin's article. Nothing is said in either Chapter 69 or Chapter 96 about Tawan being ruled by a Chinese vicegerent. Chapter 69 does not even mention Tawan, while Chapter 96 (Part 1) has a small section about Tawan which gives the following account. When the Chinese emperor learned of the “celestial steeds” from Ferghana he sent his envoy there to obtain horses. The Tawans refused to give horses to the Chinese and killed the envoy taking away from him the gifts he had brought (1000 liang of gold and the gold figurine of a horse). Emperor Wu-ti then sent an armed expedition to Tawan which resisted the Chinese troops for four years and was finally defeated. The ruler of Tawan was killed and the Chinese army brought back 3,000 steeds. This took place at the turn of the 2nd century B. C. The year after the Chinese army left Tawan its ruler,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ponapen erhshih ssushih*, Peking, 1958, Vol. 2, Chapter 96, part 2, pp. 2374-2378; Chapter 69, p. 2060.

who had been appointed by the Chinese, was killed, and though the new Tawan ruler agreed to supply the Chinese court with a pair of steeds each year, nothing more is said in Chapter 96 of Tawan's dependence on China, let alone its subordination to a Chinese vicegerent around 60 B. C., as claimed by Shih Yu-hsin.<sup>1</sup>

The same can be said with regard to Wulei. In Chapter 69 nothing is said of Wulei, and Chapter 96 contains the following lines on the subject: "The ruler of the Wulei domain resides in Lu, 9,950 li from Chanan<sup>2</sup>; the province has 1,000 families, 7,000 people, and 3,000 troops. The seat of the vicegerent is 2,465 li to the northeast, and Puli is 540 li to the south. In the south it borders on Wuto, in the north on Chiuanto and in the west on Tayuchih. The clothes worn by the people resemble those of the Wusun and their customs those of the Tzuho."<sup>3</sup> And this is all; there is not a single word about any relations between Wulei and China. It is possible that through his officials the Chinese vicegerent was acquainted with this domain which, though far from his seat, was still accessible (less than 1200 km). But *Han Shu* says nothing either of the vicegerent's rule over Wulei (which was in fact situated somewhere in the Pamir area) or even of China's nominal sovereignty over the domain (there was no mention of any gifts by its ruler to the vicegerent).

Shih Yu-hsin's article contains only one paragraph<sup>4</sup> dealing with the administration of Tang China in the "Western area", but here the author is even less successful with references and quotations. Chapter 40 of *Hsin Tang Shu* vaguely mentions the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ponapen erhshih ssushih*, Vol. 2, pp. 2372-2373.

<sup>2</sup> One li=576 metres.

<sup>3</sup> *Ponapen erhshih ssushih*, Peking, 1958, Vol. 2, p. 2368.

<sup>4</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, p. 119.

Anhsi and Peiting general governorships<sup>1</sup> but says absolutely nothing of the Wufei-chou districts supposedly established in the Pamir region. These districts are mentioned, but only briefly, in Chapter 43, Part 2<sup>2</sup>; nothing is said of their location, or of their proximity to the Pamir. In Chapter 40 nothing whatever is said about the Suie settlement in Chu or the "Tsunling frontier post", though the author refers to this chapter as his source. The very words – suie and tsung-ling – are not mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

It is quite possible that in some other chapters of *Hsin Tang Shu* (on in *Chiu Tang Shu*) one may come across references to Suie and the "Tsunling frontier post". But this still does not prove anything, for "Tsunling" was associated by the Chinese, since the times of Pan Chao, with the foothills of the Pamirs, i.e. an area closer to China than the Sarykol Range which now serves as the Soviet-Chinese frontier. But does this excuse the author? Does not the absence of information and quotations in the chapters, so carelessly referred to in his article, speak for itself?

Source materials must be correctly interpreted. And what do we mean by "a correct interpretation"? There is room for argument here, but one thing is clear: to arrive at an objective, scientific interpretation it is necessary to take into account all the relevant facts, which should not be merely summed up but seen in their proper perspective so that they form a harmonious logical system. Lenin said: "We must seek to build a reliable foundation of precise and indisputable facts that can be con-

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<sup>1</sup> The paragraph is given at the end of the chapter in *Ponapen erhshih ssushih*, Vol. 13, p. 281 (15695).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> These sources are also misused in Wei Chiang's article "Suie — an Important Strategic Point on the Western Frontiers of China in the Tang Period", No. 8, 1975, pp. 7-12.

fronted to any of the 'general' or 'example-based' arguments now so grossly misused in certain countries." <sup>1</sup>

Today Chinese "interpreters" of the ancient and medieval history of China and her neighbouring countries *pick out from historical sources only those materials that suit their purposes* and interpret them in a way which is *totally unacceptable* since other relevant materials are deliberately ignored or passed over in silence by these authors.

For instance, to establish their version of the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), according to which the Ching Empire made "concessions" to Russia, one Peking author asserts that the Ching army that accompanied the embassy had no artillery and the "negotiations in Nerchinsk were virtually held under Russian guns". <sup>2</sup>

As soon as one turns to the sources, however, one sees that the author, who uses the pseudonym Chung E, lacks common honesty and juggles with facts. According to the well-known *Biography of Lang-tan*, for instance, the Ching General Lang-tan and his retinue, en route to the negotiations, arrived in the summer of 1689 in Aigun where "they took 100 vessels and having loaded them with lungpao guns and military equipment, among other things, set out on the 24th (June 1-*Ed.*)". <sup>3</sup>

This is what the Portuguese Jesuit Thomas Pereira, a member of the Ching embassy, who took part in the negotiations, wrote in his diary: "On the 17th (of August) the Muscovite ambassador sent messengers to tell our ambassadors that some of our boats which were near the place where he had

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 2, 1975, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Russian-Chinese Relations in the 17th Century*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1972, p. 695 (in Russian).

to cross must withdraw. On that day, therefore, these boats, on which there were some mounted guns, had to be pulled away either because the Muscovite did not wish to hear their salvoes or, which is more probable, because he did not want to recognize their power as he walked by the guns." <sup>1</sup>

More facts may be cited showing the policy of violence and blackmail conducted by the Ching diplomats. But what has been quoted gives sufficiently clear picture of how the Peking authors give a false interpretation of facts.

With regard to Ming China the Chinese authors whose works have appeared in *Lishih yanchiu* also resort to arbitrary treatment of sources, ignoring some facts, and overemphasizing others. It is not by chance that a whole article <sup>2</sup> has been devoted to the subject of the Tyrsk stelae <sup>3</sup>. Dwelling in detail on this monument and its history, the PRC historians are eager to use it as evidence that in the 15th and 16th centuries the Amur region had been part of China.

The Chinese author Chung Min-yan describes in detail the actions of the traveller and diplomat Ishiha and other Chinese officers, gives the number of soldiers escorting them, and says that they made their journey many times. In short, he spares no efforts to give impression that the Chinese were constantly present in this area during the Ming dynasty. The stelae found here commemorating the travel of Ishiha and others are presented as "irrefutable" proof of China's "rights" to these territories. By dwelling on Ishiha's actions the Peking

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 711.

<sup>2</sup> *Lishih yanchiu*, No. 1, 1974, pp. 142-154.

<sup>3</sup> Tyrsk stelae—an archaeological monument located until the 19th century on the Tyrsk cliff overlooking the Amur. It consists of a stone slab (stele) and the ruins of a small temple.

authors try to conceal the undeniable fact that the frontier of the Ming Empire lay chiefly along the Great Wall, extending beyond it only in the southern part of the Liaotung peninsula where an additional frontier wall was built to protect Chinese lands from the raids of the Jurchen. The northern frontier lay in close proximity to the city of Kaiyuan.

Moreover, materials on Ishiha's expeditions are presented as a sensational scientific discovery. The Chinese authors also assert that Soviet historians "make a secret" of all materials relating to the Tyrsk stelae.<sup>1</sup>

What is the truth about Ishiha's expeditions? School textbooks and scientific papers on the history of China, published in the PRC during the first ten years of its existence, make no mention of this event.<sup>2</sup> The point is that this was an insignificant episode which contributes little to geographical knowledge about China; nor does it indicate the Ming Empire's political influence in the area concerned. For China, the early 15th century was an age of geographical discoveries. It is connected first and foremost with the name of Cheng Ho, the well-known traveller and discoverer of lands hitherto

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<sup>1</sup> This assertion is designed to deceive those who have no opportunity to check the facts. In the study of the Tyrsk stelae the greatest contribution was made by the Russian sinologist Academician V. P. Vasilyev and Soviet sinologists. Among the latest works on the subject are: *History of Siberia*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1968, pp. 40-407 (prepared by Ye. I. Kichanov and E. V. Shavkunov); G. M. Melikhov, *Policy of the Ming Empire with Regard to the Jurchen* in "China and Her Neighbours in Ancient and Medieval Times", Moscow, 1970, pp. 266-273; V. Ye. Larichev, *Journey to the Land of Eastern Foreigners*, Novosibirsk, 1973, pp. 8-15 (all in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> See for instance: *Chungo lishih* (History of China), 3rd issue, 3rd ed., 1955, p. 28; *Sketches of Chinese History*, Ed. by Shang Yueh, Moscow, 1955, pp. 418-421 (in Russian).



unknown to the Chinese. In 1405-1433 (virtually the same years that Ishiha made his journeys) Cheng Ho made a voyage, accompanied by his helper Wang Ching-hung, to several countries occupying the territory of present-day Vietnam, Thailand, the Malay peninsula and Indonesia. The voyage involved 60 big vessels and 27,800 soldiers and officers. They reached India, Persia, Arabia and even the eastern coast of Africa. With most of these countries China established (or reestablished) diplomatic and trade relations. At several places the travellers built memorial and religious structures.<sup>1</sup>

Ishiha's expedition to the Amur, far beyond the borders of Ming China in Liaotung, was of the same character but much smaller in scope. But do expeditions of this kind entitle China to make territorial claims to Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Arabia or Africa, or to the Amur area, even if there have remained traces of Cheng Ho's or some other Chinese explorer's visit to these parts?

Certainly not. These expeditions have a purely historical interest. To deduce on such basis a country's "historical" right to an alien territory, as *Lishih yanchiu* does, is to adhere to the "theory": "If any of our soldiers ever set foot here, this is our territory."

The Peking authors juggle with facts and interpret historical materials in an arbitrary way not only for the purpose of distorting the meaning of Ishiha's expeditions and of the monuments he left behind. Let us consider the administrative system (the establishing of guards – so and wei) which is often dealt with in the pages of *Lishih yanchiu*.

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<sup>1</sup> A. A. Bokshchanin, "A Short History of China's Contacts with the Countries of the South Seas (from ancient times to the 16th century)" in *China and Her Neighbours*, Moscow, 1970, p. 173 (in Russian).

Chinese sources<sup>1</sup> show that the stationing of so and wei in a territory did not turn it into an administrative unit of the Ming Empire as alleged in the article on the Tyrsk monuments.

The authors who wrote for *Lishih yanchiu* refuse to admit that Ishiha had travelled *beyond China's borders* and that *the area he penetrated had always remained outside Ming China*. They try to confuse the reader by presenting a map on "The location of the Yuning temple in Nurkan during the Ming age" which, naturally, shows no state frontier.

There are countless examples showing how the authors writing for the journals *Lishih yanchiu*, *Wenwu* and *Kaoku* use Chinese sources to suit their purposes. On the whole one can say that the attempts of Maoist "interpreters" of history to build their "theories" on the basis of Chinese chronicles and historical documents are designed to draw the discussion on China's "historical" rights to neighbouring territories into that sphere of ancient and medieval history where only the Chinese side has the relevant written records.

*Question:* Of late Peking diplomacy has shown a tendency to confine Soviet-Chinese relations to the "frontier and territorial problem" and to make the solution of all questions pertaining to Soviet-Chinese relations dependent on the state of the frontier negotiations in Peking. What lies behind this approach?

*Answer:* While making Soviet-Chinese relations

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<sup>1</sup> See article by N. P. Svistunova "Organization of Frontier Service in Northern China during the Ming Age" in *China and Her Neighbours*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 177-233 (in Russian). The fact that China's frontier at that time ran along the Great Wall can be learned also from the school textbook *Chungo lishi* (A History of China), Peking, 1955, p. 19, map 4.

dependent on the "frontier question", a question which they have invented themselves, the Peking leaders at the same time do everything possible to prevent progress in these talks. For many years they have tried to convince the Chinese people and the world public that negotiations with the USSR have been hindered by the alleged concentration of Soviet troops along the frontier, by the mythical "threat from the north". Then, seeking to frustrate detente in Europe, the Chinese began to say that the Soviet Union only pretended to create a "threat" in the East while actually "preparing for a blow at the West".

Rejecting the constructive proposals advanced by the Soviet side, the Peking leaders all the while deliberately misinform the public by alleging that the position of the Soviet side prevents Chinese-Soviet frontier negotiations from yielding results.<sup>1</sup>

Peking's demands at the negotiations would be unacceptable to any sovereign state. They contradict the basic principles of modern international law on frontier and territorial problems. These demands were formulated in 1969 and bear obvious traces of the "hungweiping" diplomacy of the period of the notorious "cultural revolution".

In the Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 25th Party Congress Comrade Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, underscored the grave danger to peace posed by the policy of the Chinese leaders, who are trying to hinder detente: "We shall continue to repulse this incendiary policy, and to protect the interests of the

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<sup>1</sup> *First Session of the People's National Congress*, Peking, 1974, p. 64 (in Chinese). The same is alleged in several statements by Li Hsien-nen and other Chinese leaders in 1976-1977.

Soviet state, the socialist community and the world communist movement.”<sup>1</sup>

*Question:* The new Chinese leadership has declared its loyalty to the foreign-political course conducted in the last few years. What can be said of the frontier policy conducted by the new leadership?

*Answer:* According to the materials of the 11th CPC Congress held in August 1977, in the sphere of foreign policy the new Chinese leadership has preserved intact the Maoist foreign-political course. The Peking leaders are trying to form a broad anti-socialist and anti-Soviet front.<sup>2</sup> They are continuing their attempts to achieve rapprochement with the USA and other imperialist states and maintain contacts with the most reactionary regimes and groups in other countries. The PRC leaders are calling for a new world war and are eager to precipitate a military conflict between the USSR and the USA; they are attempting to obstruct the work for disarmament and speak against disarmament from the UN rostrum. At the same time modernization of the Chinese army has been proclaimed a major task by the new leadership. By this is meant the equipment of the Chinese armed forces with the latest nuclear missile systems.<sup>3</sup>

Working out their hegemonic schemes, the Chinese leaders reject all proposals on ensuring collective security in Asia, oppose international detente and refuse to bind themselves with pledges of mutual non-aggression.<sup>4</sup> They openly say that a new war is

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents and Resolutions of the 25th Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1976, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Jenmin jihpao*, August 22, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, August 1, 5, 6, 1977.

<sup>4</sup> In July 1970 the Soviet government proposed that China prepare a draft agreement on mutual non-aggression, including that with the use of nuclear weapons, and discuss at a top-level meeting the major problems concerning relations

inevitable; they are militarizing China on an unprecedented scale and nurturing expansionist ambitions. Historical experience shows the short-sighted character of such a policy. In this case the Peking politicians remind one of the "wise man" who upon observing that it never rained in that part of the country where he lived chopped up the roof of his house for firewood, and died of sunstroke.

By continuing such a policy and systematically rejecting international legal guarantees of peace the Chinese leaders are *seriously undermining the PRC's national security*. Peking's attempts to flirt with the imperialist powers along anti-socialist lines cannot make up for the damage done to China by its reckless policy.

On the other hand, if Peking observes the principles of mutual non-aggression and peaceful coexistence in deeds, not in words, this will strengthen the PRC's position in the world.

The subversive activities conducted on Peking's instructions on the territories of several countries are damaging to the PRC. Its foreign policy is causing uneasiness and caution in the countries of Asia and *on the whole worsens the PRC's relations with the developing countries*. A strict observance of the

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between the two states. The proposal has never been answered. On January 15, 1971 the Soviet government proposed that the USSR and China conclude a treaty without delay on the non-use of force, or threat of force, in any form in their relations, including conventional and nuclear missile weapons. The Chinese side tried to avoid the issue, in particular, by referring to the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance of 1950. But when the Soviet side asked for confirmation of the effectiveness of the relevant provisions of the Treaty, Peking refused to do so. In June 1973 the Soviet government proposed that the USSR and the PRC conclude a non-aggression treaty; the proposal was rejected.

The new Chinese leadership has not responded to any of these Soviet proposals.

principles of non-interference would help China regain its international prestige.

The growing tensions along the Sino-Soviet frontier and along China's frontiers with other countries have had an effect that was quite unexpected for Peking: its rejection, due to its territorial ambitions, of the right of each nation to determine its own internal policy, and its attempts to call in question the effectiveness of the agreements defining China's frontiers with her neighbouring countries *have considerably weakened the international-legal basis of the PRC's own frontiers*. It is obvious that if China observes in practice the principle of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty she will be able to strengthen the international-legal basis of her frontiers.

Finally, the element of hegemonism and Great-Han chauvinism in Peking's foreign policy while isolating the PRC from the democratic and progressive forces of our time, has won *it eager partners from among the most reactionary imperialist circles*. But if China should really observe the principle of equality and mutual benefit in international relations, she would have much better opportunities for developing economic, scientific and technological cooperation with the socialist community.

And though the PRC may ignore for a certain period of time each of the aforementioned advantages inherent in the policy of peaceful coexistence, it cannot ignore all of them for a long period of time without doing itself irreparable harm.

*Question:* Bourgeois scholars and journalists in the West devote much attention to China's frontier policy. What are their views on the subject?

*Answer:* In European capitalist countries and the USA the press regularly carries reports on the situation on the Chinese frontiers, but the reports are seldom objective.

Imperialist circles are trying to use the territorial questions raised by the PRC leadership to their own advantage. Thus they express support for Peking's Great-Han claims and hunt up historical, geographical and demographic materials which allegedly justify such claims. For instance, in their "scientific" forecast I. Schleisinger and I. Blustein, referring to the fact of China's rapidly growing population, which is becoming a strain on the country's resources, point to the possibility of China's expansion into Siberia.

In the late 60s the bourgeois press came out with the notorious "match-box" theory. It said that China, hemmed in between the world's biggest mountains in the west and the ocean in the east, has no choice but to "slide out", in search of "living space", after the manner of a "match-box", into Southeast Asia or northward, into the Soviet Union. Such "theories" are not based on any careful analysis of geographic or population factors in China's development.

It is true that China has a huge population, but one cannot say that she suffers from lack of territory. Tu Fu, the great Chinese poet and patriot who condemned the expansionist policy of the Tang emperors, said:

Wondering why the Emperor who  
Controls so vast a territory  
Should want to extend it...<sup>1</sup>

And finding no answer to his question, the poet says:

Frontiers on which enough blood has flowed  
To make a sea, yet our Emperor still would  
Expand his authority!...<sup>2</sup>

Present-day estimates show that China farms 110-115 million hectares of ploughland taking in an ave-

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<sup>1</sup> Tu Fu, *Selected Poems*, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1964, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

rage of 1.45 crops in a year; this means that the crop area can be considered to be equal to approximately 160 million hectares. In the 70s China's gross yields of cereals remained at 210-230 million tons.<sup>1</sup> According to Chinese economists and to Soviet specialists who had worked in the PRC, implementation of land reclamation measures envisaged in the 12-year plan for agricultural development (1956-1967) could double the size of China's arable land.

As compared with several Asian and European countries China's crop yields are extremely low. Average grain yields, for instance, are about 1.4 tons per hectare. Thus if the PRC's ploughland was to be extended to 220 million hectares and sown areas accordingly to 335 million hectares, it could harvest up to 500 million tons of grain, and if per hectare yields were to be raised to 2 tons the harvest could reach 670 million tons. According to the country's present food distribution quotas this amount of grain would be sufficient for a population above 2,000 million<sup>2</sup>. One should also take into account the general technological progress in agricultural production which would make it possible to increase crop yields and the output of several foodstuffs (meat, milk, sugar, etc.).

Thus China has no population problem of the kind that is raised by imperialist propaganda.

But even if such a problem existed, would it justify China's attempts to seize lands belonging to other countries? There is only one answer to this and that is "no"!

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<sup>1</sup> "Economy and Culture of the PRC in 1971-1975" in the magazine *Problems of the Far East*, No. 1, 1976, p. 33 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> "Topical Problems of Modern China" in the magazine *Problems of the Far East*, No. 1, 1973, p. 41 (in Russian).



And this is not all. These propaganda intrigues are fraught with danger for they are essentially aimed at provoking military clashes between China and her neighbours. The imperialist strategy is to weaken in this way the socialist countries and the sovereign states of Asia.

However, one can only wonder at the shortsightedness of certain Western politicians who are blinded by anti-communism to such an extent that they do not see that Peking's policy is fraught with grave danger to their own people.

To all appearances, certain Western quarters, instead of taking a sober view of facts, prefer to believe that they will be able to divert Peking's expansionist ambitions from themselves and direct them to other parts of the world. They are forgetting the bitter lessons of recent history when appeasement of an aggressor turned into a catastrophe for the "peacemakers" and the whole world. Can one guarantee that history will not repeat itself?

*Question:* What are the prospects of Soviet-Chinese relations?

*Answer:* The PRC leadership sometimes says that it is for the development of state relations with the Soviet Union. This was declared at the last, 11th CPC Congress.

However, no mention was made at the Congress of the numerous Soviet initiatives to normalize Soviet-Chinese relations. Nor did the Chinese leadership come out with a single proposal for the settling of disputed issues in the spirit of cooperation and good-neighbourliness.

A turn for the better in Soviet-Chinese relations would give a new impetus to the normalization of the international climate generally and the strengthening of world peace and security. Such an approach would be in the interests of the Chinese

and Soviet peoples and in the interests of world socialism.

The experience of the two countries whose history contains many glorious pages of revolutionary friendship and cooperation in the name of peace and national liberation, social progress and socialism shows that such a turn is possible.

The CPSU's principled position with regard to China and its efforts to normalize relations between the USSR and China have been affirmed at the 25th CPSU Congress. Leonid Brezhnev said at the Congress: "... We are prepared to normalize relations with China in accordance with the principles of peaceful coexistence."

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