

Report from the Urumchi Municipal Committee regarding Problems Uncovered during an Ethnic Policy Inspection at the August 1 Steel Factory

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First off, the phenomenon of minority cadres feeling uneasy in the workplace is relatively widespread. In the entire factory, there are twelve Uighur and Kazak cadres, and most of them do not feel at ease. Three minority translators feel entirely uncomfortable. When we inquired into the cause of this, we found that it is partly due to these cadres not feeling sufficiently skilled at their job (so that some are simply unwilling to do translation work). But the chief cause is that we have not done a sufficient job in nurturing minority cadres or in helping them to perform their tasks. They generally feel that they have title but no authority, are unable to perform in a managerial capacity, and thus cannot accomplish any work. For instance, Wu-X-X-X, a Kazak deputy director of production, said: "Every day I go to the office, but there is nothing for me to say and nothing for me to do. So I just sit there at my leisure all day long and do nothing. In my department everyone calls me 'Deputy Director,' and this sounds great. In reality, however, I have absolutely nothing to do with the work that goes on around here. Sometimes I do not even know that the Director has been away on a business trip until he returns, to say nothing of taking over in his absence." Then there was the case of Ha-X-X-X, an employee in the Personnel Department, who was recently promoted to a vice-manager in the rolling steel division. Initially he was extremely happy, but after he arrived at his new post he saw he had nothing to do. When someone else asked him, "Are you busy?," he replied in anger: "I'm busy as hell! I'm so busy I can't get all my work done!" Because of this, he then filled out some slips asking to take a leave of absence, and demanded a return to the Personnel Department. There are others who adopt a wait-and-see approach, saying that if things continue the way they are, then they too will request a leave of absence and stop working.

Second, minority workers are very insistent on receiving political and technical training, and they hold many opinions on these matters. Very few minorities are members of the Party. In our steel smelting unit, we have twenty minority workers, but only two are Party members (including one Hui transferred from the business department). One minority worker reflected: "I submitted my application to join the Party over two years ago, yet not once has someone come to speak to me!" The political education of minority workers has not yet been undertaken, and efforts at cultural education are decidedly lacking. In the library, publications in minority languages are very few. Big character posters are rarely written in Uighur. For a period of time, our minority workers stopped attending cultural education classes, instead going to the dormitory of a worker who used to be a mullah, where they listened to him recite the scriptures. There is also a pressing demand to receive technical training. Some people say: "I don't care about any of the other stuff. I'm only afraid that no one is willing to teach me any useful skills." In addition to this, some individual Han workers look down upon the minority workers, saying things like: "The pilots of planes and drivers of vehicles and tanks are all Han. You guys aren't fit for that sort of work." There was even an individual manager on the factory floor who said: "You have to work with machines and pulleys here. Even if I teach you, you won't be able to learn." Such statements give rise to much dissatisfaction

among minority workers. There are even numerous examples of outright disrespect for minority customs and practices.

Third, some of the Hui [i.e., Sino-Muslim] workers are also quite opinionated, and they too grumble frequently. Some claim that their managers do not respect them, and say: “We’ve become ‘second rate’,” “Can’t look after even two of them,” “Being wedged between Han and Uighur is an insult,” and “The Uighurs are minorities, we are not minorities.” Hui cadres are few, and even fewer are members of the Party. They are highly dissatisfied with the canteen and dormitory situation. They are forced to eat from the same kitchen as the Uighurs, which means flatbread, sticky hand rice, etc., all of which are unfamiliar to their palette. They don’t dare express their displeasure, out of fear that the Uighurs will beat them up. There isn’t a single Hui manager or chef in the kitchen. We used to have three Hui chefs, but they were all “pushed” out. Our Hui employees live together in the same space as the Han, which is not a good arrangement. From October of last year through March of this year, one Hui worker in the steel smelting division, saying he “couldn’t take it anymore,” got into three separate fights with Han worker Zhou X-X. In October of last year, the Han worker Ma X-X deceived a certain man surnamed Wang into eating a pork-filled dumpling, then went to the factory floor so he could “brag” to others. In retaliation, the Hui workers intended to beat him up, and the two sides traded threatening words for four days. Then he finally went to a mosque to engage in self-reflection, and the matter was concluded. In September of last year, a female Han janitor on the factory floor went to beat up a female Hui janitor (Yang X-X), but someone pulled her back, and no punishments were meted out afterwards. At the present moment, many of the Hui workers are watching quietly from the sidelines, and it is understood that if management does not solve these problems, they will quit at the end of the year.

Fourth, some of the minority employees have exhibited a lack of confidence in the ethnic policy inspection process. Some of them attend the meetings and say “okay” to everything, without airing any of their own views. Some don’t say a single word during the meetings, but then afterwards are heard to say: “Talk doesn’t solve anything.” Some believe that “the ethnic policy inspection is just a passing wind,” and nothing will come of it. Some say: “During the ethnic policy inspection, Uighur posters and Uighur films are available. Once the inspection is over that’ll be the end of them.” On this particular occasion, that is exactly what happened. By the following Sunday, not only were there no Uighur films (a difficult goal to meet consistently), but none of the announcement boards or broadcast notifications were in Uighur (this is something we can do). The subtitles and dubbing for all films are also in Chinese. As a result, the minority employees have a lot to say about this state of affairs, even to the point of raising objections with their work team leader, Osman (a Uighur).

We believe that the chief cause of the problems listed above is that the Party’s ethnic policies are not being studied sufficiently, and most people only have a superficial understanding of them. Another reason is that most people only concede that our ethnic policies are important in principle, but then fail to undertake any tangible actions to implement them on the ground.