

SULZBERGER'S SINKIANG "ISSUE"

By **FREDERICK V. FIELD**

WHILE I was in San Francisco I learned that scandalous misrule by the Kuomintang in the Chinese northwestern province of Sinkiang resulted in a serious revolt against the government. Because Sinkiang borders the USSR and because it is so remotely situated that very few people know anything about it this revolt is now being blamed by some upon the Soviet Union. This, of course, has been part of the systematic anti-Soviet campaign of the American press. Cyrus L. Sulzberger in a recent series of dispatches from London to the New York *Times* raised the Sinkiang "issue," and the *Times* considered these pieces to be sufficiently important to reprint them in its four-page San Francisco Security Conference edition.

There were a number of people at the San Francisco Conference, among foreign delegations as well as in our own government, who have the facts on the Sinkiang situation. These facts amply refute the insinuations which are featured in the *Times*. I talked with these informed persons and the story of Sinkiang as set against Mr. Sulzberger's allegations runs as follows:

There is more or less agreement on the sequence of events. After a period of civil war in the early thirties there were several years of relative tranquillity and prosperity. The governor, Sheng Shih-tsai, sought and received help from the Soviet Union, with which Sinkiang has natural economic common interests. In 1942-43 Sheng Shih-tsai turned openly against the Soviet Union and began to reestablish the reactionary authority of the Kuomintang dictatorship. In order to avoid friction, the Soviet Union withdrew lock, stock and barrel. With the reintroduction of Kuomintang exploitation, civil war again broke out in the fall of 1943. The anti-Kuomintang forces seized several important centers and threatened capture of the capital, Tihua, better known as Urumchi. Kuomintang troops were rushed in on their planes, in seeking out the independenceists, crossed the Outer Mon-

golian border. The Outer Mongolian government, which enjoys a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, promptly retaliated by sending bombers over Sinkiang.

The civil war continues, with the anti-Kuomintang forces today holding important towns in the northwest and north of Sinkiang province. Meanwhile Chiang Kai-shek in the fall of 1944 recalled Governor Sheng, made him Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in the Chungking regime, and sent Wu Chung-hsin, a devoted Kuomintang politician, to take his place. Appointing a new man to pursue the same unsuccessful and reactionary policies is one of Chiang Kai-shek's most frequent acts of statesmanship.

Given this rather simple chronological framework, let us compare Mr. Sulzberger's interpretations with those of responsible authorities. For reasons which can be readily understood I am pledged not to identify either the foreign or American officials at the San Francisco Conference who gave me information on this episode. There has, however, been published a "Report on Sinkiang" by Mrs. Eleanor Lattimore in the *Institute of Pacific Relations' Far Eastern Survey* (April 11, 1945) which tallies closely with what these authorities have told me. On questions of interpretation I have checked the accuracy of her account.

Sulzberger's explanation of the cause of the conflict is indicated by the headline over his article of May 18—"SINKIANG CONFLICT A MOSCOW RIDDLE—Spreading Civil War in Asia Involves the Rising Interest of Russia in the Far East." He also wrote that the conflict "began, apparently spontaneously, a few weeks after the final liquidation of the Germans at Stalin-grad. . . ." At another point he suggests that the conflict results from "the barbaric plotting and counterplotting over the past decade." Sulzberger makes his most "profound" comment on this point when he says, "There is a feeling in some diplomatic quarters that there is more in it than meets the eye."

You will see, without my tiring you with further quotations from the pen of this astute political writer, that Mr. Sulzberger has really nothing to say about the causes of the Sinkiang civil war except to imply that the Moscow "Reds" are behind it.

AFTER acknowledging that "It is natural that some anti-Soviet Chinese should blame the Russians for their troubles rather than their own misgovernment," the *Institute of Pacific Relations* article by Mrs. Lattimore gives the following information: "Sinkiang is a Chinese India. Ninety-five percent of the population are Mohammedans, belonging to several racial groups, and only five percent are non-Mohammedan Chinese, the 'ruling race' which has governed autocratically for almost 200 years and has kept the masses of the people poor by exploiting and overtaxing them.

"The old grievances of harsh rule and heavy taxes have been aggravated by recent happenings," Mrs. Lattimore continues. The closing of Soviet trading agencies in 1943 "caused a good deal of economic chaos." Chinese government monopolies, hoarding and inflation—the well known Chungking pattern—dealt hard with these people. The *Far Eastern Survey* also points out that "A program which gave these groups [the ninety-five percent non-Chinese] adequate representation in the government and which encouraged them to preserve their own language, literature and customs could have secured their cooperation and prevented rebellion. . . . Instead of recognizing the success and practical value of such a policy, however, the Kuomintang adopted methods which inevitably appeared to subordinate local patriotism to a Chinese racial nationalism. . . ."

To this should be added the wider political scene which was outlined to me in San Francisco. It links the Sinkiang civil war with the larger problems of the United Nations. In the early months of 1944 negotiations were being carried on between the Soviet Union and Japan which resulted in the extension of their



Jonah Goldstein and the Whale.

fisheries agreement. The Chungking reactionaries hoped this would create a bitter anti-Soviet reaction in the United States and Britain. They sought to make matters worse by trying to persuade the world that the USSR was heavily involved in the Sinkiang trouble. While Chungking seems to have succeeded in convincing Sulzberger, its plans failed of their major objective. In the spring of 1944 neither American nor British opinion was in the mood to fall for such propaganda.

It should also be recalled that in the winter and spring of 1944 the danger of general civil war in China was at its height. Chungking was making active preparations to attack the Yen'an guerrilla fortress. The Kuomintang apparently figured that raising the "Red" scare in Sinkiang, farther to the Northwest, would provide additional evidence as to the nobility of their cause in attacking the patriotic leaders of Chinese democracy.

THE link between the Sinkiang issue and the larger problems of the anti-Japanese coalition is supported by another piece of information which seems to be confirmed in all accounts of the

Sinkiang fighting. It appears that from the spring of 1944 until the end of last year there was a lull in the Sinkiang conflict. This lull coincided: (a) with the failure of America and Britain to react, as Chungking hoped, against the USSR when it renewed its fisheries agreement with Japan, and (b) a sudden stiffening of United States pressure upon Chungking to reconcile its differences with the Communists. It was during this period, highlighted by a partial breaking of the northern blockade, by the visit of foreign journalists to Yen'an and by the arrival of an American military mission in the Communist capital, that Gen. Joseph Stilwell and Ambassador Gauss were implementing President Roosevelt's policy of aiding all those Chinese groups willing and able to fight the Japanese. The resurgence of civil war at the end of 1944 coincided with the betrayal of the Roosevelt policies by the new ambassador Maj. Gen. Patrick Hurley, and the renewal of provocative tactics by the Kuomintang dictatorship.

A typical Sulzberger distortion involves the large-scale arrests by Gov. Sheng Shih-tsai. According to the New York Times writer, "Chinese sources estimated that during about a decade

in power at Sinkiang General Sheng arrested more than 100,000 men, women and children, of whom only 40,000 survived." The implication here is that these arrests took place during the period when the Soviet Union was cooperating with the Sinkiang administration. The truth, I have discovered, is that the wholesale arrests were made *after* 1944, after the governor's about-face, after the withdrawal of Soviet agencies, and after the appearance in Tihua of the Kuomintang dictatorship.

Mrs. Lattimore puts it this way: "With Sheng Shih-tsai's shift to the Kuomintang there were wholesale arrests, variously estimated at from 35,000 to 125,000, and the arrival of a new group of Chinese, whose purpose was to Sinicize the province quickly, antagonized large numbers of people who had benefited by Sheng's earlier policy of cultural autonomy."

Quite a different story from Sulzberger's, isn't it?

Mr. Sulzberger's extensive studies of the Sinkiang affair led him to raise horrendous questions in his June 2 dispatch to the *Times*. He paints the frightening picture of a Soviet *Drang nach Osten*, an eastward push. He volunteers the information that "many British and Americans whose investments are at commercial stake in that area are large worry over the belief that the Soviet Union has 'basic foreign interests' in Asia."

The technique employed by Sulzberger in this matter is the well known one used by all professional smearers. First, there is the oft-repeated insinuation that the Soviet Union is behind the Sinkiang trouble. Not one shred of evidence is cited, but every phrase is carefully turned to lead the reader to such a conclusion. Secondly, this bias having been planted, a generalization is suddenly introduced implying that this alleged diabolical Moscow plot in Sinkiang typifies Soviet Asiatic policy as a whole. What the policy is, where when it applies, how or where it is carried out we are not told. It's all done with mirrors.

SINKIANG is part of China. Its troubles reflect the larger issues which today prevent Chinese unity and obstruct the progress of the war against Japan. Those who, like Sulzberger, seek to distort that situation and exploit it for their own disruptive, anti-Soviet purposes assume a grave responsibility. They are toying with the most serious of all problems, the defeat of Japan and the future of world security.

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UNION BUSTERS' BRAIN TRUST

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

Washington.

CHAIRMAN Harry A. Millis of the National Labor Relations Board was approached to join the committee which helped draft the anti-labor Ball-Burton-Hatch Bill, I am reliably informed. When Millis heard the personnel of the committee, he asked where the labor people were. He was told there were none because none were wanted. He refused to have any part of it.

Here are the members of the strictly nonpartisan committee," as Sen. Harold R. Burton (R, Ohio), described it:

Donald R. Richberg, co-author of the Railway Labor Act. Richberg was counsel to Gen. Hugh Johnson, head of NRA, and later became chairman of the board of NRA. He was responsible for the theory of minority representation, i.e., that unions could represent only their own members, and consistently fought the use of Section 7-A of the NIRA for collective bargaining. He is a wealthy Washington and LaSalle street (Chicago) corporation lawyer, an extremely clever and reactionary foe of labor. He and Sen. Joseph Ball (R, Minn.) are responsible for the main job of drafting the proposed federal Industrial Relations Act.

Arthur Whiteside, president of Dun and Bradstreet and of the Wool Institute.

Samuel Fels, paternalistic head of Fels and Co. (Fels-Naptha soap.)

George W. Alger, New York corporation counsel, representing Sheffield Farms, one of the dairy monopolies, and author of amendments to labor and child labor laws.

George Sjoselius, assistant attorney-general of Minnesota, who administers the Minnesota state labor relations act. This act, sponsored by former Gov. Harold Stassen, is a model of anti-labor strike-preventing state laws. Ball, who has backed Stassen for years, is said to be very proud of it.

Harold G. Evans, president, American Casualty Co., Reading, Pa.

Charles B. Rugg, Boston corporation lawyer, and Kirk Smith, corporation lawyer of Providence, R. I.

The bill itself makes the most demagogic of appeals—that it will protect employes against unfair labor practices and employers against the same—or against coercion from any source. The

Wagner Act, which recognizes the unequal relationship involved in the very fact of being an employe, is designed only to protect employes in their rights. The employers have adequate protection in their superior economic position and in other laws. The new bill tears the guts out of the Wagner Act.

It has various trick angles, moreover. It excludes from the jurisdiction of the Wagner Act all employes of a firm with a payroll of twenty or less. It narrows down the term "interstate commerce" to mean firms which produce directly for interstate commerce and "in substantial quantity." Thus hundreds of retail establishments, department stores and such, which have been held to be under the Wagner Act, would be excluded even if they obtain merchandise or materials from other states. Actually a substantial portion of the American industrial population would lose the protection they now have.

The bill would bar a closed shop contract unless at least seventy-five percent of the employes are members of the union and sixty percent ratify the agreement by secret ballot. This will make it most difficult to obtain a closed shop, and the childish theory underlying this—that workers actually don't want a closed shop—will be used demagogically to erect a facade of support from "unbiased" groups behind which anti-union employers can hide.

Another dangerous provision of the bill would allow the laws of states to prevail whether or not a particular dispute comes under the scope of the act. Although the anti-closed shop measure fostered by the Christian American Association and allied fascist-front groups—supported of course by Sen. W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel—was blocked in the Texas legislature recently, and enabling legislation for a similar Arkansas law was killed early in the year, many anti-labor state laws remain.

A SESSION of the Committee on Un-American Activities, with Rep. John Rankin (D., Miss.) presiding, in the absence of the chairman, was held last week. A fabulous quality hung about the hearing, but at least it was public. You saw the old Dies technique in operation. You saw the thin stuff on which the old impresario of the committee, former Rep. Martin Dies

of Texas, would have based a public blast minus a public hearing, often minus anything save an "investigation."

There was Rankin, his thin, white face lined with hate and venom, making the pretense of being "judicial," saying he didn't want opinions from the witness. No, he wanted the facts on this subversive business. And, he said, as the witness and the lawyer for the committee floundered at one point: "I understand the Communist Party, which broke up like a joint snake last year, is going back together again." Did the witness understand that the Communist Party, "which originally dedicated itself to the overthrow of this government," was going back to its line? This was the first time I ever heard Rankin admit that the Communists at any time had not intended to overthrow the government. Well, if you are a reporter and a Communist, you can discover all kinds of things by going to a Rankin hearing—including the "fact" that you are now trying to overthrow the government.

But one member of the committee present, Representative J. W. Robinson (D., Utah), a small man with a brown, smiling face, whom the reporter sitting next to me described as "the only sane, normal man here on the committee"—and the only Democrat present at the time I was there—was cheerful, but stubborn, in wanting to find out what, if anything, the hearing was all about.

On the stand was a pale, wide-eyed young man with sleek black hair, one George McDavitt, a committee investigator. He was supposed to give the lowdown on a minor OPA employe in New York. (The hearing had got under way for two days the previous week, just before the OPA bill went to a vote. This is an old Dies committee trick. Before the price control act was passed Dies came out with a smear on Leon Henderson, who was to administer the act.) The minor OPA employe, a radio script writer by the name of Tex Weiner, allegedly had shown his dangerous, subversive traits by the scripts he wrote, broadcast with the sponsorship of Standard Brands, Inc., which innocent citizens to date had thought was a pretty solid American outfit, devoted to the profit system and devoid of any dangerous deviations to the left.

Robinson kept asking just what it