

Central Asia Forum



Institute of Central Asian Studies
Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences

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Institute of Central Asian Studies

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Profile of Institute of Central Asian Studies

The Institute of Central Asian Studies has been the only agency in Xinjiang for international studies since its founding in 1962. It constitutes one of the leading branches of Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences and boasts the longest history of Central Asian studies in China. The Institute focuses its attention on political, economic and historical developments of Russia, Pakistan, India, Iran and Turkey as well as those of the five Central Asian republics.

Pan Zhiping, Director of the Institute and a senior research fellow, is the author of *National Self – determination or Ethnic Separation*, *The Geo – politics and Geo – culture in Central Asia*, and *Kokand Khanate and Politics in Western Regions*.

Shilan, also a senior research fellow, works as deputy director of the Institute. She is the author of *The First War in 21st Century*.

More than 10 scholarly works have been published by the Institute in recent years. Titles are as follows:

Following is introduction of these books in brief.

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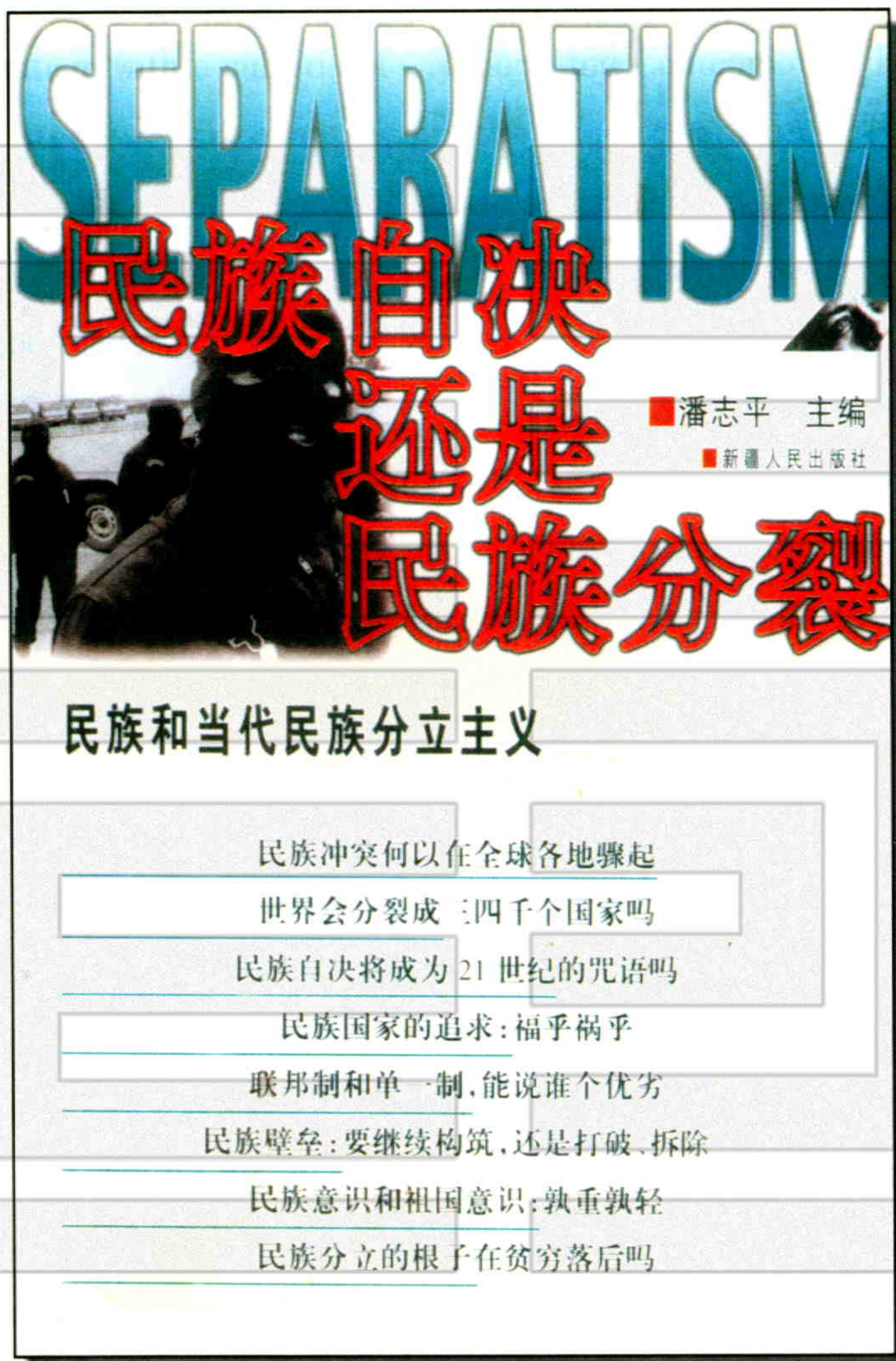
14. Kokand Khanate and Politics in Western Regions

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民族自决还是民族分裂

潘志平 主编

新疆人民出版社 1999



National Self-determination or Ethnic Separatism

—Nations and Contemporary Ethnic Separatism

Chief Editor: Pan Zhiping

Xinjiang People's Press 1999

About the title

This is a monograph dedicating to the study of contemporary national separatism with a subtitle of “Nations and Contemporary Ethnic Separatism” when we talk about it, but the same is not true of “national self-determination”, especially “ethnic separatism”, of which few people have a deep understanding. So, at the beginning some explanations should be made.

In *Selected Works of Zhou Enlai* (p. 261, Volume 2), ethnic separatism as elaborated as following. It's better for the ethnic groups in China to unify than to disunify. We should stress ethnic cooperation and mutual assistance; ethnic separatism and “going it alone” (Dan Gan) should be opposed. Our country is a big family of ethnic groups and we practice regional ethnic autonomy beneficial to promoting universal ethnic autonomy and fostering ethnic cooperation and mutual assistance. We do not take ethnic separation into consideration, let alone “ethnic go - it - alone” (Dan Gan).

Here “ethnic separatism” stands side by side with ethnic division and ethnic “go - it - alone” (Dan Gan) which go against ethnic cooperation and mutual assistance. It can be defined only in general as to ethnic separatism that this ism argues that every ethnic group should have its own nation - state, meaning each ethnic group in multi - ethnic countries has the right to separate and form independent nation - state.

When ethnic separatism evolved into ism, conundrum comes, one of which like: in today's world, there are more than 4000 ethnic groups and they all have the right to claim their nation - state according to ethnic separatism. Can we stand up to see 4000 nation - states springing

up from the world? The second conundrum is that the Soviet Union has already divided into 15 nations and Yugoslavia into five. But the Russian Federation, the remainder of the Soviet Union, is still composed of more than 100 ethnic groups, of which the Chechen Republic is struggling for independence. In former Yugoslavia the world had witnessed ethnic cleansing, but Bosnia – Herzegovina, one of the republics of the former Yugoslavia, is still in the process of dividing. Herzegovina has already been independent of Serbia not long ago. Can the pure nation – state be formed in this way? The third conundrum is that what’s “nation (Minzu)” if it is to separate? Is it worthy to question? Some may ask. But the conundrum is not that simple as it first looks.

“Nation” constitutes a common term. We surely knew the Stalin’s definition of nation consists of four major elements, but what Stalin has defined excluded nationality, ethnos, people and narodnasti. All these terms can be translated into Minzu (nation) in China. Some emphasizes shared organization, some underline same territory, some focus on common economic life, some think highly of religion, some lay stress on a shared culture and language, and some attach great important to same psychological characteristics, etc. Serious explanations aside, there are cynical definitions of Minzu “nation”, as the following passage shows:

The so – called nation involves the group who maintains a common misunderstanding about their ancestors and hold same prejudice against their neighbors.

It seems extraordinary for the above phenomenon: people couldn’t be more familiar with Minzu (nation), but never a definition of Minzu “nation” became universally acknowledged. The conundrum, however, continues. If you read Capitalism and the 21st Century by Mr. Huang Renyu, you will find this interesting book’s opening passage as follow:

Although a widely – used term formally and informally, capitalism

is absolutely different to be defined. Authors of books and articles hold on to their own views, and even we probably have different meanings from the beginning to the end in mind when we quoted capitalism and so alertness should be kept to avoid misunderstandings by others.

Actually it is ordinary for us that a term has not acquired a universally – recognized definition, but reality forced us to think about various question concerning the term. Given the difficulty to define Capitalism, Huang Renyu speaks emotionally.

The term “Capitalism” gave rise to so many questions largely due to its involvement of greater areas of the world in a ongoing process, to its close relations to modern life. And major wars and large – scale upheaval in modern history, directly or indirectly, linked to capitalism. It both boasts the power of happiness and new life, and contains the causes of hopelessness and disaster. Thus we cannot ignore it rationally and emotionally.

In writing this book, we share the same feeling with Mr. Huang Renyu.

In correct international political affairs ethnic separatism has become an acute problem which made us to contemplate hardly. Here I see the necessity to quote Fei Xiaotong’s (a renowned ethnologist) recent “contemplation” :

I think that western ethnic theories have not only taken common territory as ethnic characteristic but also closely linked nation and territory together through political theories. It is due to this conception that the promotion of combination of nation and territory comes to the fore. With the combination of nation and territory comes the nation – state which further necessitates the reasons why national disputes and conflicts have not been put out nowadays in the west?

Fei’s remarks pierce to the truth, showing that something has gone

wrong with the basics of western national theories. We believe nation has been a historical product that traced its origin to tribes, and ties of consanguinity and its member's living areas, more or less, exert certain influence on nation. It was only in West Europe that the emerging bourgeoisie with powerful economical muscle broke up the feudal order and gave rise to a upheaval from which rose the unified modern bourgeoisie nations, such as British, Holland and France. Though the beheading of their kings England and France had transformed from a feudal "dynasty - state" to a "nation - state". The combination of nation and state, however, only constitutes the West Europe, Asia and other areas of world contains various ethnic groups. In theory, state and nation fall under different social and historical areas. The nature of state lies in political power. In contrast with state, nation has been a community of people based on common economic life which produces a language, culture and psychology identification. Political problems may be national - oriented and national problems and state. Both scenarios constitute a shock to social stability. In reality, a country may be composed of several or more nations often living in at least two countries. Strictly - speaking, West Europe, the nation - state maker, boasts no "nation - state". Engels rightly observed that "all of European governments have put more than one nationalities under their rule and what's more, no countries borderlines represent that natural boundaries of nationalities, meaning borderlines and language scopes cover unidentical areas." But unfortunately, "nation - state" has been imbedded in the structures of West Europe's national theories that accorded each nationality the right to form its own nation - state. Equipped with the ideology of "nation - state", extra - nationalists of capitalist class rationalized state - sponsored forceful assimilation, ethnic cleansing and ethnic genocide; infatuated with the establishment of its own nation - state, minor ethnic

groups in unified countries conduct ethnic separation under the banner of “national self – determination”. Finally, it is nevertheless important to be on guard against some through advocating “national self – determination” and national separation.

The key lies in the reading of “national self – determination”. Those having read something about Lenin must have known that he had pondered much over his different views expressed in different periods concerning self – determination. Why has been that? My explanations as follows: 1. Lenin’s various analyses concerning “national self – determination” absolutely aimed at czarist Russian colonialism. With the new situation emerging in the wake of October Revolution Lenin’s view points on self – determination had been changed.

Lenin has repeatedly underlined the differences between the “self – determination” demanded by colonies and that cried out for by nationalism – oriented national separation. Briefly, Lenin has put emphasis upon anti – colonization rather than nationalism. The argument shows its extreme theoretical significance. It may seem that there has been three worldwide nationalist movements during the twentieth century happened respectively in the wake of World War II and around the end of Cold War. The two former movements have demonstrated a historical progress in which the nationalistic movements in semi – colonized and colonized Asia, Africa and Latin America has made the Western colonialism come to an end. However, what has happened to the Soviet Union and nearly ten years after the end of colonial system had been a disunifying progress for many multi – ethnic countries. Both domestic and foreign elements has contributed to these countries disintegration. Take the Soviet Union as an example, there are lot complicated causes resulting in the demise of the super power, of which standing out the strategy of “peaceful transformation” conducted by Western countries. Once deteriorated

into “national separation” and national division, “national self determination”, an opened Pandora, spread from the Soviet Union, East Europe to the whole world, fueling ethnic conflicts in many areas and threatening to splinter and dismember some countries. Based on the situation one senior from expert from London predicts: “ethnic conflicts world have been the dominating political problem in the twenty – first century.

As one of the typical tenets of the twentieth century, national self – determination will become the curse of the twenty – first century.” His may be a pessimistic one and the situation may not be that, but its challenge to the fate of human being and the progress of history make us to ponder over. Finally we come up with our conclusion:

The worldwide national separatism stimulated by the western principle of nationalities and encouraged by enclosed, parochial and excluded national feelings, has constituted a reaction to contemporary politics. First and foremost, criticizing and renouncing the apparently ethnic equality and state to get rid of the fogs over national theories should be the first priority of human being.

Due to the limit of ability over thinking may be unsuccessful, but it will be helpful to make discussion or arguments after your reading this monograph regardless whatever views you hold.

К. Л. Сыроежкин [Казахстан] :

(Мифы и реальность этнического сепаратизма в Китае и безопасность Центральной Азии. Алматы. 2003 ,с. 188 – 189)

По – видимом, интенсификация проблем этнического сепаратизма и усиления этнического элемента в политики, наблюдаемая в последнее время почти повсеместно, подтолкнула

китайских авторов к пересмотру прежних теоретических подходов к проблемам этнологии. …… Весьма характерна в этом отношении работа, посвященная собственно проблемам этнического сепаратизма. В ней авторы подчеркивают: “Фактически, нация является уровневым понятием. Например китайская нация не находится на одном уровне с такими понятиями, как ‘ханьцы’, ‘дунгане’ и т. д.”. По мнению авторов, этносы различаются по их уровню развития, и не каждый этнос можно рассматривать в качестве нации. Более того, пожалуй, впервые в китайской литературе имеют место ссылки на тождественность понятий “нация” и “государство”, причем в контексте упоминания таких “этносоциальных общностей”, как “китайская нация”, “английская нация”, “американская нация”. Этот подход весьма актуален, поскольку лишает этнический сепаратизм самой своей основы, как бы выводя этнос за рамки политики.

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