

Document 1.7: Excerpts related to minority peoples from “The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference,” September 29, 1949

Adopted by the First Plenary Session in Beijing, the Common Program was a provisional constitution until the People’s Republic of China approved its first one in 1954.

PREAMBLE

The Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, representing the will of the people of the whole country, proclaims the establishment of the People’s Republic of China and is organizing the people’s own central government....

Article 2. The Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China must undertake to wage the people’s war of liberation to the very end, to liberate all the territory of China, and to achieve the unification of China....

Article 9. All nationalities in the People’s Republic of China shall have equal rights and duties....

Article 50. All nationalities within the boundaries of the People’s Republic of China are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves, and shall oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People’s Republic of China will become a big fraternal and co-operative family composed of all its nationalities. Greater Nationalism and chauvinism shall be opposed. Acts involving discrimination, oppression and splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited.

Article 51. Regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated and various kinds of autonomy organizations of the different nationalities shall be set up according to the size of the respective populations and regions. In places where different nationalities live together and in the autonomous areas of the national minorities, the different nationalities shall each have an appropriate number of representatives in the local organs of political power.

Article 53. All national minorities shall have freedom to develop their dialects and languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. The People's Government shall assist the masses of the people of all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work.

Source: *The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1949.

Available online at the *Modern History Sourcebook* by Paul Halsall (Fordham University) <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1949-ccp-program.html> , or under "Post-war Asia" and then "China" at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html>