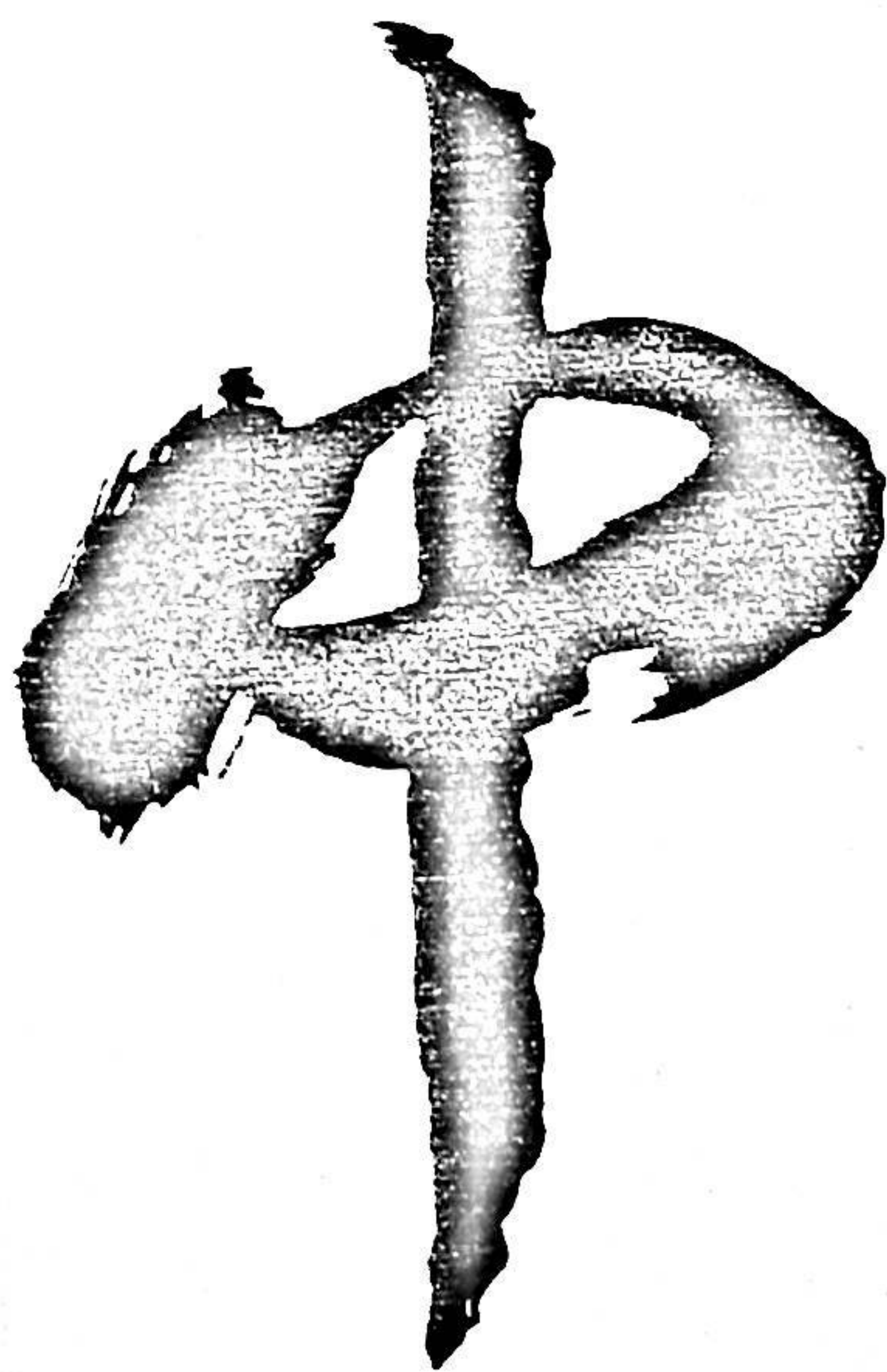


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# XINJIANG AND THE PRODUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION CORPS: A HAN ORGANISATION IN A NON-HAN REGION

Donald H. McMillen

An important symbol and vehicle of Communist Party of China (CPC) efforts to control and integrate the strategic and traditionally non-Han borderlands of the People's Republic of China (PRC) since liberation in 1949 has been an organisation called the Production and Construction Corps (PCC). By the early 1970s, this hybrid military-civilian organisation could be found in most provinces and regions of China. As a collectivised organisation, the PCC came to reflect a fascinating blend of revolutionary Maoist ideals, such as self-reliance, self-sufficiency and human struggle and self-sacrifice under arduous conditions, and more moderate, pragmatic notions, such as technological expertise and scientific management and development. The first PCC was officially established in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in 1954. To analyse recent organisational changes in the Xinjiang PCC in the context of the post-Mao Zedong policy line under the 'four modernisations', it is necessary first to consider the setting and historical conditions of this far western region of China.

## Xinjiang: The Place and the People

Xinjiang is the largest political unit of the PRC, constituting one-sixth (or 1.6 million sq.km.) of the nation's total area. It is located along China's distant western frontier, and is bounded by the Soviet Union for some 3,000 km. in the west, the Mongolian People's Republic in the north-west, and Pakistan, Kashmir and Tibet in the south.<sup>1</sup> To the east are the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu. While the region is virtually surrounded by high mountains, a series of strategic passes and low-lying gaps have traditionally afforded relatively easy access into Xinjiang from the west. In the east, however, the only convenient route between the region and China proper was through the Gansu Corridor, which in recent times has become vulnerable to military interdiction from Soviet-dominated Mongolia. The rail distance between Urumqi, the regional capital, and Beijing is 3,800 km.



Xinjiang consists of three major subregions, the arid Dzungarian Basin in the north, the high Tianshan Mountains in the centre, and the large Tarim Basin (including the harsh Takla Makan Desert) in the south. The numerous oases in the region traditionally have been centres of trade and agriculture, supporting some 90 percent of the population. Major oases such as Hami, Korla, Kazgar, Urumqi, Hotan and Aksu were important points along the famous 'Silk Roads' that linked China via both the Tarim and Dzungarian Basins to Europe and the alignment of Xinjiang's current east-west transportation network roughly follows these traditional routes. The vast steppelands and mountain meadows of the region have supported nomadic pastoralists, such as the Kazakhs and Tajiks. Everywhere in Xinjiang, the vicissitudes of the climate, ranging from drought to flooding and from frost and hailstorms to dry, searing sandstorms, have always plagued agriculture and animal husbandry, as have insect pests, animal and crop diseases, and poor soil conditions.

Xinjiang has important natural resources, including petroleum at Kolamay, Dushanzi, Wusu and Aksu; coal near Urumqi and Hami; and radioactive elements in both the southern and northern mountains. Iron, tungsten, molybdenum, copper, lead, zinc, silver, gold, jade, timber and furs are also found in quantity. Systematic exploitation of these potential riches by China began on a large scale only after 1949. The main factors that had previously hampered the Chinese in these efforts included: the vast distance and inadequate transportation facilities between Xinjiang and core China; the greater accessibility from Russia, which in the modern period had allowed the Russians to actively intervene both politically and economically in regional affairs, assume a virtual monopoly over trade and obtain exclusive right to exploit many natural riches; China's lack of capital, equipment and technical expertise; and virtually uninterrupted rebellion within Xinjiang and civil war in China proper.

At the time of liberation, over 90 percent of the population of Xinjiang was ethnically non-Han. Some three-fourth's of the people were Muslim, and the vast majority spoke Turkic languages and used the Arabic script. The twelve non-Han ethnic groups include Uygurs, Kazakhs, Hui, Mongols and Daur, Khalkhas, Manchus and Xibos, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Russians and Tatars. It is significant that many of them are ethnically akin to the peoples of Soviet Central Asia. In 1949 the total population of the region was about 4.2 million. After the establishment of CPC power, the authorities undertook a massive programme of Han resettlement which rapidly increased the Han component of the population. By late 1979, about half the reported 11 million people in Xinjiang were Han.<sup>2</sup>

In 1949 Xinjiang was a province whose past had left many important legacies, some of which would impede the integration *de novo* of this vast, inhospitable frontier region with the new communist regime in Beijing.



The long tradition of ethnic and religious animosity among the various native groups, and between them and the non-Muslim Han people from China proper, had led to mistrust, resentment and turmoil in the region. As a result, Xinjiang had remained largely an autonomous appendage of the Chinese state in modern times with considerable outside influence and penetration, especially from Russia. After the mid-nineteenth century, Russia was often able to take advantage of local ethnic unrest without much fear of intervention from the impotent Qing authorities. By terms of the treaties it signed with the Manchus, and later with local Chinese warlords, whose power often rested upon her military backing (such as Sheng Shicai from 1933 to 1943), Russia gained vast tracts of territory in Chinese Turkestan, numerous diplomatic privileges, wide-ranging economic and trade concessions, and the right to exclusively develop and exploit the province's key natural resources. For over a century this Russian influence grew, until the province became almost wholly oriented toward Russia, especially the strategically located and resource-rich Yili area which in the late 1940s was the centre of a Soviet-backed separatist regime called the 'Eastern Turkestan Republic' headed by anti-Han minority nationals.

Although the Chinese central authorities retained nominal sovereignty over the province despite internal and external problems, in reality Xinjiang was frequently ruled by local Han individuals but not by China prior to 1949. No Chinese central regime, including Manchu and Nationalist, ever controlled the province to the exclusion of outside influence for any long period, nor had any regime ever been able to tap the region's wealth independent of foreign interests or for the benefit of the emerging Chinese nation-state. While the central authorities briefly conquered Xinjiang by military means, attempted to maintain control there through military colonisation, and tried to Sinicise it by limited Han immigration, their influence remained superficial. Local affairs primarily were left in the hands of native leaders who, so long as Chinese power and influence were strong, accepted Han overlordship. Whenever Chinese power and influence declined, however, there was a tendency for local groups to throw off central control. The basically opportunist and exploitative nature of Chinese (and Soviet) policies in Xinjiang, when coupled with internal turmoil there and elsewhere in China, was not conducive to extensive reforms. Nor had the Chinese communists ever developed much of a presence or programme in Xinjiang.

Thus, on the eve of CPC liberation, Xinjiang was an underdeveloped, divided, Muslim and ethnically and attitudinally non-Han 'province of China. Under these conditions the CPC was to 'peacefully liberate' the province and set about the enormous task of establishing a socialist 'new order'.



## Army Production and Construction Activities in Xinjiang after Liberation

The evolution of Xinjiang after 1949 is largely the story of the First Army Group, First Field Army, People's Liberation Army (PLA 1st FA). The commander of these troops was Wang Zhen and the political commissar was Wang Enmao. From 1940 to 1944, these men had led Brigade 359 of the 120th Division of the Eighth Route Army into the Nanniwan region of Shaanxi southwest of Yan'an to undertake land reclamation and agricultural production. Participants in these endeavours later became heroic symbols in CPC literature as the living models of battle-hardened veterans willing to undertake mundane and arduous work in remote and difficult areas. This 'spirit of Nanniwan' came to epitomise the Maoist ideals of self-sacrifice and self-reliance.<sup>3</sup>

On 25 September 1949, Tao Zhiyue, the Nationalist Garrison Commander in Xinjiang, cabled a 'peaceful surrender' to the PLA units poised for entry into the province from Gansu.<sup>4</sup> On 12 October, Wang Zhen's PLA troops entered the province and occupied Hami, and a week later they arrived in Urumqi. Subordinate units went on to establish positions in Dzungaria at Shihezi, Yining, Usu and Altay. Other PLA units under Wang Enmao turned southwest into the Tarim Basin and moved on to Yanqi, Korla, Aksu and Hotan. By 1950, one unit had even reached the Aksai Chin in far western Tibet. In these places the PLA established local garrison camps, many of which would later be centres for production and constructive divisions.<sup>5</sup>

On 18 December 1949, Peng Dehuai proclaimed the formal establishment of the Xinjiang Military District (XJMD). He also announced that the majority of the Guomindang troops under Tao Zhiyue were to be reorganised, re-educated and incorporated in the PLA as the 22nd Army Corps, as were the forces of the Yili National Army under Seypidin (Saifudin), now designated the 5th Army Corps. By September 1950, all troops in the province had been nominally integrated into the PLA and placed under the authority of the CPC elements who were the core leadership of the PLA 1st FA group. The headquarters of the XJMD in Urumqi was staffed almost exclusively by officers from this group, with Wang Zhen as the ranking officer and Wang Enmao his chief subordinate. In late 1952, the latter assumed the top military and CPC posts in the region upon the transfer of Wang Zhen. Both Tao Zhiyue and Seypidin became titular vice-commanders.

The XJMD was divided into two large subdistricts north and south of the Tianshan, both of which were further subdivided into local garrison commands at the special district level. Non-Han troops of the former Yili National Army were usually slowly regrouped into mixed units with the Han PLA troops. During the early 1950s some company level units continued to be composed primarily of soldiers from the national



minorities. Some 5th Army Corps troops were eventually demobilised for civilian work. Moreover, by 1954 nearly 200 minority cadres from the 5th Army Corps had been transferred to participate in work elsewhere within the various organs of the XJMD.<sup>6</sup> This implied that the XJMD authorities were redistributing the leading personnel of the Yili National Army throughout Xinjiang and placing them under Chinese superiors, while at the same time moving Han PLA officers and troops into the Yili base area to replace them.

The reorganised PLA forces in Xinjiang numbered between 175,000 and 225,000 in 1950. Less than 10 percent were minority nationals. Probably no more than one fourth of the total number were kept on active duty as frontline border defence or garrison troops responsible for public security and the suppression of active counter-revolutionary elements. In late 1954, when the XJMD became the Xinjiang Military Region (XJMR), it was made a 'direct control region' under the central military organs in Beijing. As a frontier and predominantly non-Han populated region, Xinjiang was considered to be of great strategic importance, and the central authorities undoubtedly felt that they should retain a more direct line of command over the troops stationed there, especially during times of crisis. During more normative periods, however, an indirect line of command tended to predominate whereby the XJMR authorities in Urumqi played a more active role in the command structure and in the formulation and implementation of policies passed down from Beijing.

By a decree of 20 January, a reported 110,000 of the 193,000 men in the 22nd Army Corps and a part of the troops under Wang Zhen, including Brigade 359 as the hardcore, responded to Mao Zedong's 5 December 1949 directive of 'turning the army into a working force'.<sup>7</sup> The latter group remained lightly armed, and its leading cadres were generally placed in positions of authority over the former.

These various demobilised troops, which became known as the 'Xinjiang Wilderness Reclamation Army' (*Xinjiang tunken jun*), constituted the prototype for and were the forerunners of the Xinjiang PCC. They took up positions on the fringes of the wastelands near the major oases north and south of the Tianshan, in the steppelands of western Dzungaria, and along the main transportation routes linking Urumqi with interior China. There, in compliance with the slogan of 'transforming nature and reforming man', they began land reclamation, water conservancy, agricultural and animal husbandry production, sideline production, and capital construction. By locating these troops *near* the population centres, they could improve the regime's strategic posture by protecting key transportation routes, guarding against internal or external threats and exploiting nearby natural resources without appearing to be 'imposing' upon the local inhabitants.



Some of the demobilised troops were assigned to engineering construction units and posted in areas where basic industries, housing, transportation and communications facilities, mines and other enterprises were to be established or expanded. The demobilised troops were told their efforts in socialist construction, national defence, and reform through productive labour would be long term. In later years, these army production and construction personnel were to be instrumental in the development of Xinjiang's backward economy, and were to constitute a model of collectivised labour to be emulated by the masses. They were, then, to play an important role as a driving force behind modernisation in Xinjiang. In this regard, it was stated at that time that

. . . the economic heritage left behind by old (semi-feudal and semi-colonial) China is pitifully small. We have just begun, and we lack experience. We must study, learn from the Soviet Union, . . . and free ourselves from arrogance and hastiness.<sup>8</sup>

The lightly armed PLA contingent of these units also provided backup support for the frontline border defence, public security and garrison forces of the regular PLA in Xinjiang.<sup>9</sup> They assumed a share of the local police and public security functions<sup>10</sup> and served as an arm of the CPC in the rural and pastoral areas where Party strength was weak. After 1950, the PLA hardcore units of these troops became increasingly active in the various political and socio-economic reform movements launched by the Party in Xinjiang. By March 1954, for example, it was reported that between 7,000 and 10,000 cadres of the provincial army production and construction units had been sent to the basic levels to participate in rent reduction and anti-local landlord campaigns.<sup>11</sup> In October that year, another 2,500 cadres of good political standing and with production experience were transferred to 549 agricultural producers' co-operatives in twenty-five *xian* along the proposed route of the Xinjiang-Lanzhou Railway to give long term assistance, ranging from production techniques to business management. Their objective was to demonstrate the superiority of collectivisation and attract the local masses to follow the socialist road.<sup>12</sup> When the province's first collective farm was set up in early 1952, it involved an army donation of land and assistance to a mixed group of Han, Uyghur, Kazakh and Russian families, some of whom were said to have been moved for the purpose from poor sections of Urumqi.<sup>13</sup> From late 1952, with technical advice from Soviet specialists, large state farms were inaugurated in the province.<sup>14</sup>

### The Emergence of the Xinjiang PCC

Beginning in August 1954, the army units which had been demobilised and assigned to labour in Xinjiang were merged into a single organisation



designated the Xinjiang PCC (*Xinjiang shengchan jianshe bingtuan*). The organisation was placed under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture in Beijing and its subordinate organs in Xinjiang in matters of farm and livestock production, and under the XJMD in military affairs. In practice, however, it was to remain subordinated to the Party authority, namely the provincial CPC committee and its organs within the units of the PCC.

The inaugural meeting of the Xinjiang PCC leadership was held on 5 December 1954, during the First Representatives Meeting of the XJMD CPC Committee. At this gathering, some 800 persons outlined the PCC's future tasks and officially confirmed Tao Zhiyue as its titular commander. Wang Enmao assumed the position as first political commissar of the PCC, as well as first secretary of its Party committee, while Zhang Zhonghan, another PLA 1st FA veteran, was named ranking deputy political commissar and second secretary of its Party committee. Thus, the *de facto* authority within the Xinjiang PCC rested in the hands of Wang and his veteran Han colleagues from the PLA 1st FA.

In May 1956, the newly established Ministry of State Farms and Land Reclamation took over responsibility for the Xinjiang PCC from the Ministry of Agriculture. Wang Zhen naturally was chosen to be minister of this cabinet-level organ. As head of the ministry, he was probably called upon more than any other minister to inspect the outlying regions of the PRC, including Xinjiang, where reclamation work was being conducted. Until early 1958, Wang concurrently headed the PLA Railway Corps as well, whose functions and responsibilities were often complementary to those of the new ministry. Significantly, then, the members of the PLA 1st FA group dominated both the central ministry and the Xinjiang PCC, thus creating central-provincial ties which were to be of great importance.

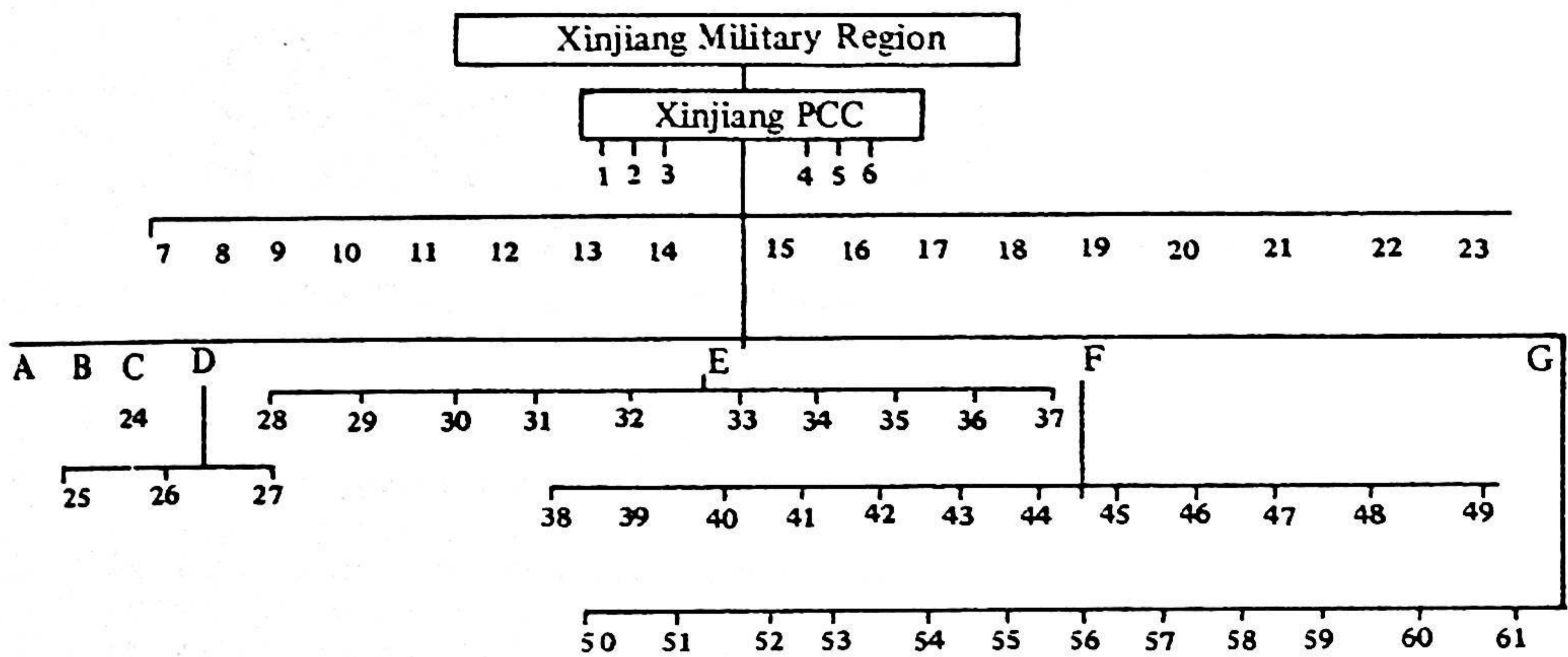
The headquarters of the Xinjiang PCC at Urumqi comprised military staff units as well as departments of agriculture, animal husbandry, water conservancy, industry and commerce, finance and trade, supply and marketing, and transportation control. As Table 1 shows, there were also research institutes for the agricultural, forestry and pastoral industries, as well as courts, hospitals, schools and factories under the authority of the PCC headquarters.

The second-level organs of the Xinjiang PCC included agricultural production and reclamation divisions (*nongjian shi*) and civil engineering divisions (*gongjian shi*). Each of the divisions, which were actually administrative echelons, maintained a military organisational structure, being divided into regiments (*tuan*), battalions (*ying*) and companies (*lian*), and the triangular system was generally adopted at the company level and below. The divisions were responsible for geographical areas of varying size, and thus the number of subunits and personnel under each division



differed accordingly. By the early 1970s there were ten agricultural divisions and three civil engineering divisions in the Xinjiang PCC, and the existence of 'independent regiments' indicated that the number of divisions was subject to expansion. At that time there were some 120 ministries, departments, sections and subsections down to the regimental level in the PCC.

TABLE 1 – Organisation of the Xinjiang PCC. (to c. 1975)



- |    |                                     |    |                                  |
|----|-------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 1  | Commander                           | 30 | 3rd Division                     |
| 2  | Deputy Commander                    | 31 | 4th Division                     |
| 3  | Chief of Staff                      | 32 | 5th Division                     |
| 4  | Deputy Chief of Staff               | 33 | 6th Division                     |
| 5  | Political Commissar                 | 34 | 7th Division                     |
| 6  | Deputy Political Commissar          | 35 | 8th Division                     |
| 7  | Party Committee Office              | 36 | 9th Division                     |
| 8  | Labor Wage Dept.                    | 37 | 10th Division                    |
| 9  | Cultural Work Troupe                | F  | Schools                          |
| 10 | Supplies Dept.                      | 38 | Hami Agricultural School         |
| 11 | Machinery Dept.                     | 39 | Xinyuan Agricultural School      |
| 12 | Transport Dept.                     | 40 | Urumqi Agricultural School       |
| 13 | Troop Carrier Aircraft Dept.        | 41 | Wulaosi Junior School            |
| 14 | Capital Constuction Dept.           | 42 | Hami Fifth Agricultural School   |
| 15 | Control Dept.                       | 43 | Shihezi Hydro-Electrical School  |
| 16 | Budget & Finance Dept.              | 44 | Manass Hydro-Electrical School   |
| 17 | Trade Dept.                         | 45 | Shihezi Political Cadre School   |
| 18 | Health Dept.                        | 46 | Urumqi Art Theatre               |
| 19 | Personnel Dept.                     | 47 | Shihezi Agriculture College      |
| 20 | Air Transport Dept.                 | 48 | Shixia Junior School             |
| 21 | Engineer Dept.                      | 49 | Beitun Tenth Agricultural School |
| 22 | Rear Services Dept.                 | G  | Plants                           |
| 23 | Political Dept.                     | 50 | Main Tractor Plant               |
| A  | Other Technical Rear Services Units | 51 | Tianshan Foodstuff Plant         |
| B  | Independent Regiment(s)             | 52 | Army Martyrs' Family Shoe Plant  |
| C  | Hospitals                           | 53 | Xishan Ceramic Plant             |
| 24 | Divisions' Hospitals                | 54 | August 1st Iron & Steel Plant    |
| D  | Engineer Construction Divisions     | 55 | Urumqi Leather Tanning Plant     |
| 25 | 1st Engineer Construction Division  | 56 | East Wind Boiler Plant           |
| 26 | 2nd Engineer Contruction Division   | 57 | Tianshan Iron & Steel Plant      |
| 27 | 3rd Engineer Construction Division  | 58 | August 1st Cotton Textile Mill   |
| E  | Agricultural Divisions              | 59 | August 1st Weaving & Dying Plant |
| 28 | 1st Division                        | 60 | August 1st Woollen Textile Mill  |
| 29 | 2nd Division                        | 61 | Synthetic Ammonia Plant          |



The military staff departments at various levels within the PCC were usually reduced to a minimum, while those for political work tended to remain at normal size. The intermediate cadres of the PCC were primarily veteran PLA officers who had served under Wang Zhen, but also included 'reformed' Guomindang officers. The officers of the PCC units were given the status of reserve officers, but received their pay under the status of demobilised servicemen.<sup>15</sup> Demobilised soldiers were usually assigned to occupations for which they were trained or had some previous experience, when it was feasible.<sup>16</sup>

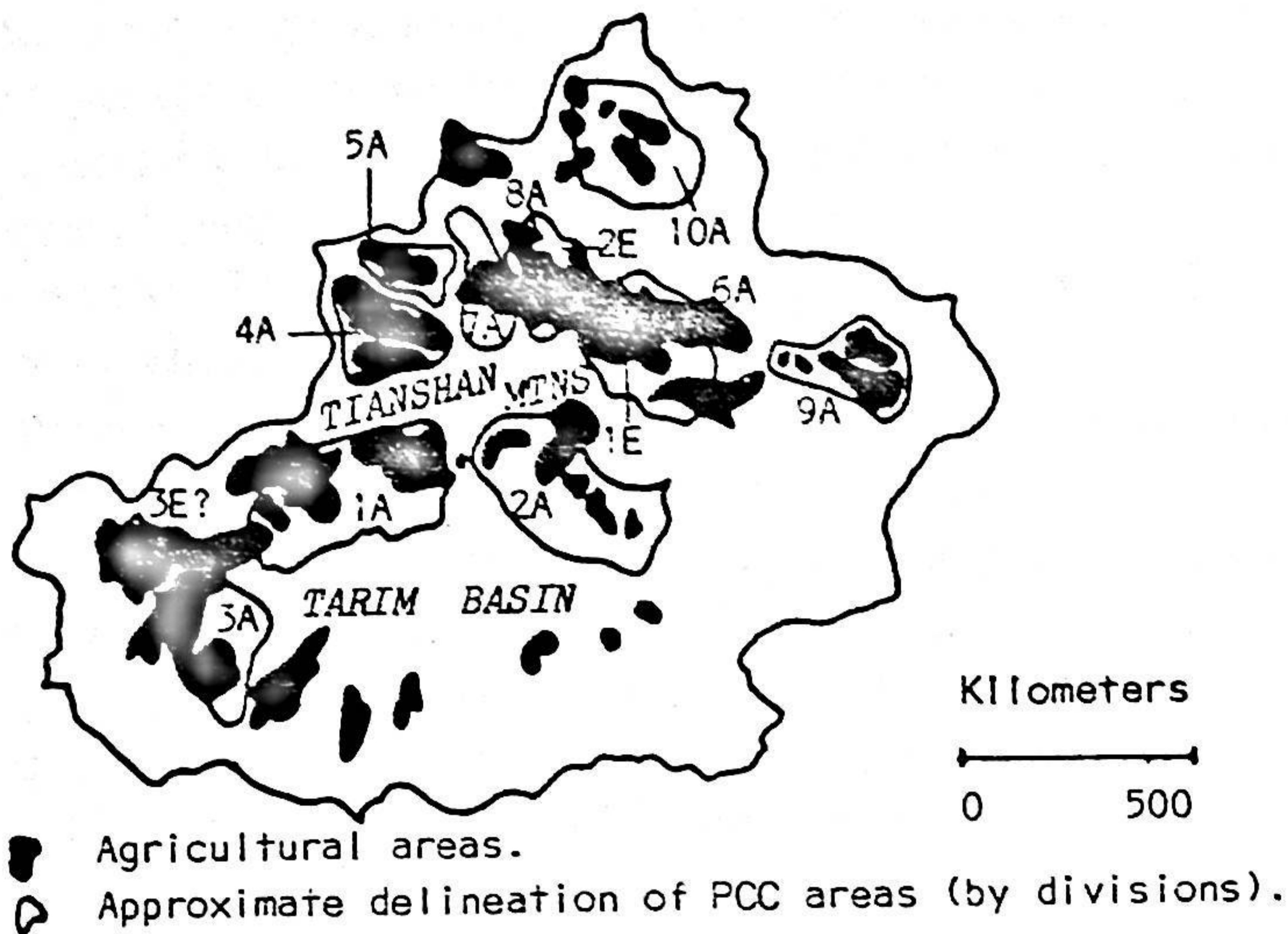
The agricultural divisions of the PCC were assigned to different reclamation areas, with headquarters at Yining, Tacheng (and Bole), Altay, Usu (Kuytun), Shihezi, Urumqi, Yanqi, Hami, Aksu and Kazgar. Each agricultural division established state farms and livestock ranches (see Figure 1). They continued to render aid to the peasants and herdsman of the various nationalities in economic development and co-operativisation by providing political and organisational guidance and technical assistance. This was facilitated by the fact that some state farms and ranches of the PCC were technically and scientifically more advanced than their civilian counterparts. With the assistance of Soviet advisors in the early 1950s, the PCC developed more efficient and modern agricultural and animal husbandry techniques, better varieties of food grain and cotton seeds, more reliable methods of preventing crop and animal diseases and insect pests, a higher degree of control over soil alkalinity, a greater use of water resources through irrigation and water conservancy projects, and a larger degree of agricultural mechanisation. Peasants and herdsmen were often given practical training on the farms and ranches of the PCC, and members were periodically sent out from the PCC farms and ranches to provide instruction and guidance or to undertake investigations. The PCC frequently turned over reclaimed land, seeds, tools, and other materials to the surrounding co-operatives or communes. Units of the three civil engineering divisions of the PCC were stationed in areas designated for major construction projects. To achieve self-sufficiency, these units also established their own farms and factories.

Much of the PCC's growth was achieved by central investments (including large subsidies) and the ploughing back of profits by the units. Throughout the 1950s, Beijing poured large capital investments into Xinjiang, many of which were channelled through the PCC. In fact, the provincial regime was almost wholly dependent on central economic subsidies.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the Beijing authorities provided skilled Han labour and material aid.

To the end of 1954, the PCC engineering divisions had established and turned over to local management more than a dozen large backbone factories, and had built 92 processing plants.<sup>18</sup> Moscow was said to have



Figure 1  
Location of Xinjiang PCC Units Compared to Agricultural Areas



- 1A Agricultural 1st Division (at Aksu)
- 2A Agricultural 2nd Division (at Yanqi)
- 3A Agricultural 3rd Division (at Kazgar)
- 4A Agricultural 4th Division (at Yining)
- 5A Agricultural 5th Division (at Boie)
- 6A Agricultural 6th Division (at Urumqi)
- 7A Agricultural 7th Division (at Kuytun)
- 8A Agricultural 8th Division (at Shihezi)
- 9A Agricultural 9th Division (at Hami, first reference in late 1969)
- 10A Agricultural 10th Division (at Altay)

- 1E 1st Engineer Construction Division (at Urumqi)
- 2E 2nd Engineer Construction Division (at Shihezi)
- 3E 3rd Engineer Construction Division (probably at Kazgar)

Note: The Xinjiang PCC has under its jurisdiction a number of independent regiments, such as the 106th, 129th and 151st, indicating that its organization is subject to expansion.

given these units 'generous assistance' in the building of Xinjiang's nascent industries, some of which were producing for exclusive export to the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> They had also begun the construction of 'new towns' at Alaer and Shihezi, and were engaged in the creation of a new industrial district in Urumqi. Units of the PCC played a leading role in the repair and construction of highways, weather stations, and communication networks, and helped build the Xinjiang-Lanzhou Railway.

By the early 1960s, the Xinjiang PCC was said to be cultivating one third of the region's farmland, or nearly 11 million *mou* (733,333 hectares)<sup>20</sup>, and over 60 percent of its work was mechanised. Its major crops included foodgrains, in which it was said to be self-sufficient, and economic crops such as cotton (over half of the regional total), sugar beet, hemp and silk. It was also raising over 2 million head of livestock, nearly 10 percent of the regional total. The PCC was often lauded for its efforts in conducting scientific research in agriculture.<sup>21</sup>



In late 1965, there were a reported 243 state farms in Xinjiang.<sup>22</sup> Of these, the PCC was operating 149 agricultural farms and about twenty livestock ranches. The remainder were local state farms run by the civilian authorities. The localities witnessing the greatest expansion of state farms, primarily after 1958, were the Manas River area around Shihezi, the Yili River Valley and the surrounding pastoral areas, the area along the railroad from Urumqi to Hami, the northern Tarim Basin in the vicinity of Aksu, and the areas near the Kazgar and Hotan oases.

On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the PCC was again hailed for its contributions to Xinjiang's industrial development. It was called a

*... technological force of tens of thousands of workers who are contributing significantly towards broadening the field of building engineering . . . , and the servicing and manufacturing of building machinery.*<sup>23</sup> (emphasis added)

The PCC was praised for contributing substantially to the building of more than 550 large modern factories and the increasingly efficient economic infrastructure in the region. It was said to be running hundreds of small to medium sized industrial enterprises. Wang Enmao pointed out it was necessary to support the further development of the PCC since it had become such an important part of the region's economy.<sup>24</sup>

### The Xinjiang PCC and Han Resettlement

The role of the PCC, whose membership remained almost wholly Han, was reminiscent of that played by the military colonists sent to the region in the eighteenth century by the Manchu emperors. Colonisation became an important function of these units in later years when large numbers of Han personnel, including demobilised PLA men, skilled workers, peasants, and 'social' or educated urban youths, joined their ranks. The PCC provided an organisation to which such settlers could be assigned for production and construction work, and it facilitated a dramatic increase in the Han component in the region's population.<sup>25</sup> In the early 1950s, many who joined the army production and construction units were skilled or semi-skilled personnel, and some were assigned for fixed terms or specific projects. After the Korean conflict cooled in 1952, increasing numbers of soldiers were demobilised and sent to the region. In the autumn of 1954, the PCC numbered more than 200,000 members.

In that year, cadres from the Xinjiang PCC were sent to various provinces and cities in the Han areas of China to recruit workers and youths to participate in building up the frontier in Xinjiang. Eventually, the PCC established and maintained liaison offices in many such localities. In Xinjiang, the PCC opened reception stations for Han settlers to provide



them with further physical and ideological training prior to their assignment to PCC enterprises. Throughout resettlement, they were nearly always kept in their original groups. Each settler was normally required to sign a written pledge to serve the Party and the people of China in the frontier region, initially for a period of three or four years, but in the early 1960s the regional media were claiming that the settlers were being assigned there permanently. Throughout the history of Han resettlement in Xinjiang, there was always an element of compulsion, if not coercion, although sometimes it was done voluntarily for ideological or patriotic reasons.

By May 1957, PCC membership had risen to more than 300,000 largely due to the influx of Han from the eastern provinces and cities. In that month, a trade union was established within the PCC, which was incorporated into the national agricultural production and water conservancy trade union. Over 90 percent of the PCC's workers were enrolled in the new trade union by end of 1957. The creation of this organisation within the PCC was justified by the fact that

. . . crops of new problems relative to labour organisation, administration of the various enterprises, wages and welfare, and education have come up. . . [which] urgently demanded the establishment of a trade union within the PCC to guide socialist emulations, welfare and ideological work.<sup>26</sup>

It is not surprising that a rapidly growing organisation, predominantly composed of Han members of varied origins, political backgrounds, ages and occupations, complicated by its presence in a non-Han region, should experience some problems internally and externally. In August 1955, for example, the PCC's Public Security Department uncovered a 'counter-revolutionary espionage organisation' linked to the so-called 'China Democratic Party' in Shandong.<sup>27</sup> Its leaders were said to be ex-Guomindang functionaries who had 'calumniated the Party's leadership, incited backward elements against the government, stolen weapons, and committed arson' after joining the PCC in the early 1950s. Similar charges were made in May and August 1957 against 'rightists' in the PCC who had committed serious crimes of 'sectarianism, robbery, larceny and corruption.'<sup>28</sup>

Later that year, it was announced that 16,700 cadres in the PCC, 62 percent of the total, were to be transferred from higher level organs to take part in productive labour at the basic levels.<sup>29</sup> The *xiafang* of such large numbers of PCC cadres indicates serious problems had emerged within the ranks and that efforts were made to discipline some of the former Guomindang soldiers (and perhaps veteran PLA men and resettled Hans as well), possibly because they had not been sufficiently reformed ideologically. The Party may have been motivated by internal and external



developments to single out certain elements for criticism or punishment. Under the rubric of 'anti-rightist struggles', persons deemed to be untrustworthy, perhaps even those who were felt to have been overly influenced by Soviet advisors fell into this category. Also, the leadership may have deemed it necessary to publicly 'slay a few token sacrificial lambs' in response to earlier charges by minority nationality cadres that some Han PCC cadres did not respect them, that some PCC departments had no minority cadres at all, that the customs and habits of the indigenous peoples were not respected by the PCC, and that the Han people were 'nothing but colonialists'.<sup>30</sup>

During the periods 1958-59 and 1963-65, which respectively coincided with the Great Leap Forward and the public revelation of tensions along the Sino-Soviet border and unrest among the non-Han peoples of Xinjiang, tens of thousands of young Han settlers poured into the region. Initially, these long distance rusticates came from Jiangsu, Hubei, Hunan and Anhui provinces,<sup>31</sup> but later settlers from Shanghai and its environs came to dominate the movement. Over three fourths of all settlers went to various units and enterprises of the PCC. In fact, the PCC Work Group in Shanghai promoted the region, co-ordinated recruitment activities, and provided clothes, shoes and tickets for the long journey. Drama troupes from the PCC were also sent from Xinjiang to the municipality, as were 'selected' Shanghai rusticates who had been sent to the region earlier. Efforts were made to convince the parents of Shanghai youths that Xinjiang was not a 'strange and wild territory' and that their offspring would do well to serve the revolution there.

This Shanghai-Xinjiang 'connection' (and similar, but smaller, programmes with other cities like Tianjin and Wuhan) operated for over a decade, until 1967. By early 1965, some 70,000 Shanghai youths were said to be serving in the Xinjiang PCC.<sup>32</sup> According to a later report, over 100,000 educated youths had joined the PCC from Shanghai, Tianjin and Wuhan during 1963-66.<sup>33</sup> Sixty thousand had been assigned to PCC enterprises in the Tarim Basin, and of these, 2 percent had become Party members and 20 percent had entered the Communist Youth League.

The party felt Han immigration to Xinjiang would aid in integrating the region and its non-Han inhabitants into China politically and would also help bring about the conditions necessary for rapid, large-scale economic development and modernisation under Beijing's direction. The need for increased manpower and skilled labour was heightened dramatically in the early 1960s, especially following the withdrawal of Soviet aid and advisors.

The resettlement of Han in Xinjiang also provided an outlet for areas in intramural China where overpopulation, military demobilisation and unemployment were major problems. The Party authorities undoubtedly



recognised that Xinjiang was one of the few places in China where vast tracts of land were available for reclamation. The bulk of the new settlers were educated urban youths who could not be absorbed into the existing labour force of intramural China. Sending such youths to Xinjiang was no doubt also ideologically motivated. The Maoist group within the central Party leadership was probably anxious to ensure that such youths not become elitist, nor grow accustomed to comforts, nor regard 'steeling' in revolutionary struggle as unnecessary. They may have also increasingly used the rustication movement as a device for infiltrating sympathetic young followers into a basically 'conservative' organisation, a process which became particularly notable during the Cultural Revolution. Most of the rusticates were assigned to manual labour on the PCC farms, ranches and enterprises where they were almost invariably placed under the command of veteran officers.

By 1966, the membership of the Xinjiang PCC had risen to 500,000 – 600,000.<sup>34</sup> The organisation remained overwhelmingly Han, but the veteran component had decreased significantly compared to that of the under-30 generation. PCC membership therefore, was mainly composed of recently arrived urban youths.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast, the much smaller veteran group with longer experience in production and construction work in Xinjiang continued to hold nearly all positions of authority within the PCC. This group included both ex-PLA fighters who had served under Wang Zhen and Wang Enmao and former Nationalist officers from Tao Zhiyue's units who had undergone reform.

The leadership of the PCC remained virtually unchanged to 1966, with Tao as commander and Wang Enmao as political commissar. The PLA 1st FA group held over 80 percent of the 'leading positions' at and above divisional level. In 1965, there were indications that 'outsiders' were beginning to 'infiltrate' the PCC leadership. For example, Ding Sheng, from Lin Biao's PLA 4th FA group, was identified as the ranking vice-commander and first deputy political commissar of the PCC, listed ahead of Zhang Zhonghan in the latter position.

### The Cultural Revolution and the Xinjiang PCC

Early in 1966, it was reported that over 90 percent of the youths in the Xinjiang PCC, described as 'young revolutionary successors from all parts of China', were studying and applying Chairman Mao's writings flexibly on a regular and persistent basis.<sup>36</sup> The fact remained, however, that they were receiving this revolutionary political tempering from the veterans of the PCC. It might be expected that the veterans were indoctrinating these youths through study and manual labour according to their own personal experiences and views of local conditions. It was said, for instance, that many of the youths had arrived in the region with great



enthusiasm and high political consciousness, but when they came in touch with reality some had ideological problems, were discontent with their duties, and sceptical about their future in Xinjiang.<sup>37</sup> With the large scale influx of educated Han youths, the generation gap within the PCC widened. Recognising that youths are generally susceptible to radical notions and can be easily mobilised around causes, the regional authorities probably saw the portents of unrest among the young rusticates. The youths had, moreover, brought with them many values and habits which differed greatly from those of the indigenous minorities and the veteran Han cadres who had long served in Xinjiang. Misunderstandings and disagreements over policies and conditions within the PCC might well be fostered between these youths and their regional superiors. The majority of the youths were certainly not pleased with being tempered through practical struggle (labour) in the most difficult circumstances and conditions.<sup>38</sup>

Prior to the Cultural Revolution, the regional leadership under Wang Enmao had generally shown a strong preference for gradual, moderate development policies. While remaining firmly committed to the region's ultimate integration with China, Wang realised that policy style and implementation in Xinjiang was complicated by regional conditions and needs. Moreover, it was evident that what he (and even Beijing) had often *wanted* to do in a region so vulnerable to Soviet influence, was different from what circumstances *compelled*. His view of radical policies that were not attentive to local conditions or problems had not been enthusiastic. This is not to say that Wang considered ideological consciousness unimportant, nor that his Party rule in the region was not firm. However, over the years he did show a growing inclination to support only those radical policies that he felt contributed to national security, internal stability and unity, and economic prosperity.

Most significantly, Wang's policy stance in 1966 was at odds with that of Mao, who was setting the wheels in motion for the Cultural Revolution. Thus, because of his policy stance and his well entrenched power base in Xinjiang, Wang and his colleagues (and the various institutions that had evolved under their guidance, including the PCC) constituted natural targets for the emerging leftist tide generated by the Maoist centre. In Mao's eyes Wang had come to personify the evils of regionalism and revisionism. When the Cultural Revolution unfolded, Wang attempted to isolate Xinjiang from the worst excesses of the campaign for as long as possible. In essence, his stance was that socialist legality rather than proletarian violence should govern the movement in the strategic border region. Until late 1966, the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang was played out almost wholly by local Han actors under Wang's close supervision and control. When leftist Red Guards from Beijing brought the movement with all of its extremism into Xinjiang, however,



Wang responded with repression. Wang's actions were also undoubtedly based upon a desire to save his own position in Xinjiang.

Radical influence amongst the educated youth in the PCC had increased dramatically and on 25 December 1966, a violent clash took place at Shihezi between emerging Red Guards and PCC veterans who had formed a conservative, pro-Wang organisation called 'The Xinjiang Military Region Production and Construction Corps August First Field Army Swearing to Defend the Thought of Mao Zedong to the Death.'<sup>39</sup> Although tensions cooled, a month later another incident occurred at Shihezi while Wang Enmao was in Beijing. A tentative reconstruction of the 'Shehezi Incident', based upon various Red Guard and informant accounts, suggests it began on the evening of 25 January 1967 when radicals of the August First Agricultural Institute attempted to seize power in a textile factory and arrested several veteran PCC officers.<sup>40</sup> The next morning, the conservative PCC 'August First Field Army' sent in ten truckloads of armed troops. The radicals were then shot and grenaded, and 'scores of persons were killed and more than 500 were reported missng.'<sup>41</sup> Many of the radical young rebels at Shihezi were rounded up and sent to detention camps.<sup>42</sup> The conservatives then set up a blockade around Shihezi and cut off telephone communications.

Similar incidents were reported at Kolamay under the PCC 4th Agricultural Division, at Mosowan under the PCC 8th Agricultural Division, and at Dushanzi. The conservatives of the PCC also attacked radical strongholds in Urumqi, and street fighting broke out. The conservatives managed briefly to commandeer a dozen tanks against the radicals in Urumqi. To avenge their comrades in Xinjiang, radicals in Beijing raided the Ministry of State Farms and Land Reclamation and placed some sixty officials under arrest, including the Minister, Wang Zhen.<sup>43</sup>

The 'Shihezi Incident' had been significant in pointing out the seriousness of the situation in the frontier region, especially within the PCC. A sense of emergency was revealed by the central authorities on 28 January, when the Military Affairs Commission issued a directive calling for the Cultural Revolution to be carried out 'stage-by-stage and group-by-group' in those military regions which constituted the 'first line of defence against imperialism and modern revisionism', including Xinjiang.<sup>44</sup> The directive ordered the Cultural Revolution to be postponed for the time being because the 'imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries were itching for stronger action' against China. These military regions were told to stabilise themselves in order to safeguard national defence. On 11 February, Beijing went even further by issuing a 'Twelve-Point Regulation' which placed the XJMR in direct control of the Cultural Revolution in the PCC.<sup>45</sup> The regulation stated that the PCC was not an ordinary force for land reclamation but a production force equipped with arms, and as such it was imperative that military control be exercised over it while the 'new stage of class struggle' was being unfolded.



Although the Mao-Lin group officially ordered the cessation of all Cultural Revolution activities in Xinjiang, this did not mean that the radical or conservative factions would obey. In fact, violence continued despite Beijing's directives. There were later indications that the Mao-Lin faction privately sanctioned continued radical attacks on Wang. So, for nearly two years, Xinjiang lapsed into a state of virtual chaos.

While it was claimed that Wang retained the loyalty of all but one (unknown) division of the PCC and most of the regional PLA troops,<sup>46</sup> his power base was nonetheless slowly eroded. He was demoted in late 1968 to vice-chairman on the new regional Revolutionary Committee under Long Shujin and, in early 1969, removed from the region altogether. Many of his regional colleagues were also struck down by the radicals, including Zhang Zhonghan and Tao Zhiyue, who was replaced as PCC commander by Zhang Jiecheng, a veteran of Lin Biao's PLA 4th FA faction. According to one report, 84 percent of the PCC's divisional level cadres and 60 percent of its regimental level cadres were condemned by the radicals as being 'renegades, enemy agents, phony Party members, class aliens, and capitalist-roaders'<sup>47</sup>, dismissed from their posts, and replaced with radical sympathisers. Many veteran cadres who had 'worked conscientiously for the Party for several decades were beaten to death or crippled'. To escape, a number of veteran cadres in the PCC apparently joined the ranks of the radicals (or, as *Xinjiang Daily* later commented, they 'hired themselves out to the Gang of Four').<sup>48</sup>

During the height of the Cultural Revolution turmoil in Xinjiang, many of the rusticated youths in the PCC returned to their homes in Shanghai and other large Chinese cities. Some of them may have been abetted in their escape by veteran regional Party authorities and PCC leaders who did not want potential Red Guards in their midst.<sup>49</sup> Some returned Shanghai youths later claimed that they had been unjustly banished from Xinjiang by the regional establishment, while others asserted that they had gone to the municipality voluntarily to 'exchange revolutionary experiences' there or just go home.<sup>50</sup> Whatever their reasons for leaving Xinjiang, once the youths returned illegally to their homes they lacked residence permits, ration coupons, and other documents required by the authorities. They became an additional burden at home, and were increasingly viewed as unwelcome guests. Since they could only survive by stealing, black-marketeering, and engaging in other shady activities, they contributed further to the instability in such places as Shanghai. As a result, the authorities, who were besieged with problems of their own, began calling upon the returned youths to fight their way back to Xinjiang. The Shanghai-Xinjiang 'connection' of the pre-1966 years, however, had been severed.



### The Xinjiang PCC in the 1970s

The 1970s in Xinjiang, as elsewhere in China, were characterised by the continuation of the 'two-line struggle' between moderates, who wanted at least a partial return to the more gradualistic policies of the pre-1965 period, and the leftists, who desired to continue the radical reforms initiated during the Cultural Revolution. This struggle became largely centred within the PCC, which remained very unsettled due to factional contention.<sup>51</sup> This caused a general downturn in the regional economy, including that of the various PCC enterprises.

Under the regional leadership of Long Shujin, some radical policy initiatives were attempted, with little success. As the author has pointed out elsewhere,<sup>52</sup> the drive to eliminate material incentives (including work points and bonuses) and all private ownership apparently led to serious problems, including production downturns, theft, speculation and black marketeering.<sup>53</sup> After 1971, a trend toward policy moderation and retrenchment emerged. In fact, by the time Xinjiang celebrated its twentieth anniversary as an autonomous region in October 1975, many of the more 'developmental' policies previously advocated by Wang Enmao had been brought back. However, there were signs of radical displeasure and opposition to these currents within the region, particularly within the PCC.<sup>54</sup>

Following the establishment of the Second Xinjiang CPC Committee in May 1971<sup>55</sup> and the 'Lin Biao Affair' later that year, efforts were made to diminish the involvement and authority of the military in the civilian political sphere. Concurrently, a movement was undertaken to rehabilitate cadres who had been placed under struggle by radical Red Guards at the height of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>56</sup> For example, although Zhang Jiecheng remained commander of the PCC, Tao Zhiyue reappeared as a vice-commander sometime in late 1972. In the emerging regional leadership, conscious efforts were made to separate the top civilian and military posts by assigning different individuals to them. For instance, in 1973 Seypidin was appointed 1st secretary of the Xinjiang Party Committee, chairman of the region's Revolutionary Committee, and political commissar of the XJMR. Yang Yong was transferred from Shenyang to become commander of the XJMR and the second-ranking Party and Revolutionary Committee leader. The new collective leadership that evolved was not dominated by any one all-powerful individual or single factional group. It constituted a carefully balanced composite of civilian and military elements, veteran and young cadres (including representatives of the 'revolutionary masses'), 'insiders' and 'outsiders', and, nominally at least, non-Han as well as Han nationals. A system of checks and balances was built into this leadership group, and the regional elite was generally made more responsive to central authority and control.



Following the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976 and the subsequent campaign against the radical 'Gang of Four', Seypidin was removed from his regional positions due to Xinjiang's poor economic performance and alleged ties with the 'Gang's' followers, and replaced by Wang Feng as the top Party person in the region.<sup>57</sup> Two vice-chairmen of the regional Revolutionary Committee, Yang Liye and Wu Chulun, both representatives of the 'revolutionary masses' who had emerged during the Cultural Revolution, were also denounced and purged. A succession of new XJMR<sup>58</sup> commanders followed Yang Yong's transferral to Beijing in July 1977, including Liu Zhen, Wu Kehua and, currently, Xiao Quanfu.

The development of the anti-'Gang' (anti-leftist) campaign in Xinjiang during 1978 had, according to Wang Feng, 'encountered great resistance' amidst 'acute struggle'.<sup>59</sup> *Xinjiang Daily* identified the basic problems plaguing the region when it called upon everyone to unite, look ahead and work for the 'four modernisations'.<sup>60</sup> It admitted that the internal damage done to the Party in Xinjiang by the 'Gang' was serious and had not been completely healed. Although it claimed that much had been done to set things right, including redressing many cases of 'frameups, false charges and wrong sentences' against veteran cadres, it warned against becoming 'entangled in past events'. The authorities were obviously trying to prevent a recurrence of the widespread factional violence that spilled over into the sensitive realm of Han-minority relations during the more chaotic phases of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, much publicity was given to the importance of intensifying re-education on nationality policy. It was to stress combating Han chauvinism, the 'key' for readjusting relations among the various nationalities.<sup>61</sup>

The anti-'Gang' campaign proceeded very slowly, even after an important regional Party work conference had been held on the matter in early August 1978. At this meeting, an 'acute inner Party struggle' reportedly had been unfolded to criticise certain 'right deviationist ideas' that were obstructing the movement.<sup>62</sup> During the next few months, attacks on 'bourgeois factionalism' among some leading cadres in various prefectures and units were stepped up with the sending of Party work teams, and breakthroughs were noted in solving many 'long-standing problems'. In Tacheng, resistance by radicals had only been overcome by putting it under military control.<sup>63</sup>

A major breakthrough claimed by the authorities was in the PCC. After meeting for more than a month, a conference for cadres at the three upper levels of the PCC, held under the direct leadership of the regional CPC Committee, ended in mid-January 1979.<sup>64</sup> The gathering must have been a long and very bitter 'trial' of the remaining accused leftists in the organisation. In the end, punitive measures were adopted to dismiss and replace the 'handful of persons who had committed serious crimes and



refused to repent'. Among their supposed crimes was their defiance of Party and military discipline by agitating among the PCC units to participate in struggles by force; their erroneous attacks on Deng Xiaoping, He Long, Wang Zhen, Wang Enmao and many 'revolutionaries of the older generation'; and their 'brazen mobilisation of the armed forces departments of the various divisions so as to seize the power of the divisional Party committees and put them under their supervision'.<sup>65</sup> Owing to their interference and sabotage, the PCC was said to have suffered great losses in revolution and production.<sup>66</sup> At the same meeting, a dozen or so cases of unjust, false and erroneous verdicts made earlier by the radicals against leading PCC members were reversed.

Throughout the 1970s, the regional authorities also began resettling former Red Guards and other youths from the urban centres to the countryside. By the end of 1972, some 200,000 educated youths had been 'sent down'.<sup>67</sup> A later report revealed that a total of 450,000 such young people, from Shanghai, Wuhan and other large cities as well as from towns within the region, had settled in or returned to the countryside.<sup>68</sup> The regional authorities were presumably more concerned with sending youths back to their rural units than with the re-establishment of a full-scale rustication programme between Xinjiang and other Han areas. That the latter was still operable, however, was indicated by Urumqi Radio on 20 February 1972 which said that over 3,000 college students from various parts of China were 'accepting re-education with an open mind' on PCC farms.<sup>69</sup>

The campaign to resettle these youths did not always proceed smoothly. Some youths had to be compelled to go back to the rural areas.<sup>70</sup> While the authorities managed to remove a potentially destabilising element from the regional cities, they may have only succeeded in transplanting it. In late 1979, *Guangming ribao* revealed that 'for the past several years' some border areas inhabited by the national minorities had reported that intellectuals from the interior who had gone there to work were 'flowing back' to intramural China in very large numbers.<sup>71</sup> It had apparently reached the point where it was becoming difficult to hold courses or conduct research in some universities. Working conditions were said to be poor, equipment outdated, books and research materials lacking, and material remuneration 'not completely rational'. As usual, the 'Gang' was blamed for these problems in the PCC.<sup>72</sup>

In response, the regional authorities launched a campaign to learn from Yang Yongqing, an educated youth from Shanghai and a deputy secretary of the Xinjiang Youth League who had volunteered (apparently convincing her demobilised soldier-husband to join her) to return from Urumqi to the 'forefront of agricultural production' at the No.145 Regimental Farm in Shihezi.<sup>73</sup> The regional Education Bureau and the office in charge of the



settlement of educated youths in the countryside also published frequent requests to units urging them to help all young people who wanted to enter university by providing adequate time for them to review lessons and prepare for entrance examinations.<sup>74</sup>

In line with the general build-up of Party authority *vis-a-vis* the military following the 'Lin Biao Affair', Party influence and control over the PCC was increased during the early 1970s. Between November 1974 and June 1975 the Xinjiang PCC, which had been functioning under the XJMR since 1967, was reorganised and placed wholly under the command of the region's civilian leadership.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the name 'Production and Construction Corps' was abolished, and no longer were the state farms and ranches under the PCC described as units of a certain PCC division.<sup>76</sup>

In the reorganisation, all divisional-level units and above were abolished and initially placed primarily under the regional Revolutionary Committee's 'Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Committee' and its local sub-units, headed by a member of the Xinjiang CPC Standing Committee, Li Jiayu.<sup>77</sup> By early 1978 a 'Xinjiang General Bureau of State Farms and Land Reclamation' functioning under the regional People's Government (and Party) had taken over as the co-ordinating body for the redesignated PCC agricultural units, the 'Xinjiang Regional Farmland Capital Construction Command'.<sup>78</sup> By late 1979, fourteen branch reclamation bureaux were functioning under its authority in the special districts and autonomous prefectures in Xinjiang.<sup>79</sup> The only leader publicly identified with the new command was a deputy head, Tomur Dawamat, a Uygur, also a secretary of the regional Party committee and chairman of the Xinjiang People's Congress Standing Committee. The commander of the former PCC, Zhang Jiecheng, and his predecessor, Tao Zhiyue, were both still active in regional politics, however.

In 1978-79, there were 190-200 state farms and ranches run by the Bureau in Xinjiang.<sup>80</sup> Over 70 of these were located in the Tarim Basin, and another 20 were clustered around Shihezi.<sup>81</sup> When the 'independent regiments' and those under the three former engineering construction divisions are deducted from the estimated total of 252 regiments in the Xinjiang PCC in 1976,<sup>82</sup> an approximate ratio of 1:1 can be established for the former PCC agricultural and pastoral regiments and the new regimental farms and ranches. This means that there is one farm per regiment, although they range in size from 4,000 to 16,700 personnel (with 4-7 battalions) each.<sup>83</sup>

The regiments and units under the three engineering construction divisions were generally assigned to or merged into the Capital Construction Engineering Corps under the regional Capital Construction and Engineering Bureau. These units, however, did combine on occasion with military units,



such as the PLA Capital Construction Engineering Corps and the PLA Railway Corps, to undertake larger projects. This is illustrated by the existence of a 'Xinjiang Railway Engineering Command', which was composed of PLA Railway Corps units and 'reclamation fighters'.<sup>84</sup>

Another reason for the changes in the PCC was the publicly admitted failure of the state farms in China to run efficiently and at a profit from 1966 to 1976. It was reported that in the ten years from 1966, the previously sound management system was seriously disrupted and production fell drastically with a total loss for the period of 3,500 million *yuan*.<sup>85</sup> Measures to reverse this slump had been launched in the nation's 2,048 state farms after 1976. They included strengthening the state farms' leadership, adopting scientific management, extending the right of self-management and improving business accounting methods, developing a more diversified economy and allowing bonuses in addition to basic wages. In Xinjiang, all regimental farms were told to make profits in enterprises and economic undertakings to ensure rapid and continuous development.

Following his visit to state farms in Xinjiang in 1978, Hua Guofeng suggested that China's farms be run in the same way as enterprises, integrating farming, industry and commerce (production, processing and marketing) on a trial basis.<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, 87 agro-industrial complexes were launched under the Ministry of State Farms and Land Reclamation in 27 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.<sup>87</sup> The complexes were allowed to market their products directly or process them for sale on condition that they deliver and sell quotas to the government purchasing departments. Previously, state farms could only produce what they were told and had no right to market their products directly.<sup>88</sup>

In October 1978, the No 143 Regimental Farm in Shihezi Prefecture began transforming itself into one of these complexes. It set up 11 processing plants and 31 shops and service centres, selling or exchanging hundreds of agricultural and industrial products, vegetables, fruit and other daily necessities. By the end of the year, total sales had reportedly yielded a profit of 180,000 *yuan*.<sup>89</sup> But, despite 'gratifying progress' in running the state farms, in early 1979 *Xinjiang Daily* reported that many farms still had management problems and failed to pay attention to work efficiency, production costs and accounting.<sup>90</sup> Although the number of regimental farms incurring losses had dropped by 43 percent, the number of profitable farms had increased only from 8 to 22. In response, the regional General Bureau of State Farms and Land Reclamation issued the following five new management measures:

- (1) Respect or expand the farms' and companies' powers of decision on farm management to give them more power in choosing crops, formulating sowing plans, working out measures to increase production,



- making additional investments and buying more production equipment.
- (2) Let the majority of state farms implement an independent financial contract system in which each farm has sole responsibility for its own profits or losses.
  - (3) Positively practise a system of fixed standards, contracts and rewards in which each farm should set standards for each of its production companies and sign contracts with them.
  - (4) Establish or improve rules and regulations centred on the system of responsibility at each post, such as management of plans, production, technology, equipment, materials and financial affairs.
  - (5) Strengthen the system of fixed production quotas and improve co-ordination among the workers to raise labour productivity. . .<sup>91</sup>

Apparently the regional economy, including that of the state farms, did not readily respond to these measures, and by early 1980 there were reports of serious economic problems in southern Xinjiang.<sup>92</sup> These may have been one cause of an incident in April between minority nationals and units of the South Xinjiang Military District who were called to Aksu to 'settle a local disturbance'.<sup>93</sup> Several hundred soldiers and civilians were said to have been killed or wounded in the fray. This prompted a tour of tense, 'poverty-ridden' southern Xinjiang by a delegation headed by Wang Feng and Ismail Amat, 1st secretary and secretary of the regional CPC committee, in the second half of April.<sup>94</sup> Although conditions there were blamed partly on natural disasters, Wang cited 'the pernicious ultra-left influence of "bigness, public ownership, egalitarianism and poverty" ' as being the basic cause. His subsequent observations, which are noteworthy for their candid nature, were that

the peasants or herdsmen, especially the cadres among them, have been used to equating such concepts as 'big, public, equal and poor' to socialism. Thus, taking the farm brigade as the accounting unit was always [seen to be] more socialist than taking the smaller farm team as the accounting unit. Private plots, individual families owning cattle, or poultry or a few trees around their houses were, or at some places are probably still, frowned upon. Egalitarianism was considered the only socialist mode of distribution and a poor peasant was always more revolutionary and socialist than the other guy who earned a few *yuan* more than he.

Not having got rid of such concepts, some cadres still think it safe not to be too enthusiastic about the new policy. Having been criticised before, they are afraid that they could be criticised again for practising capitalism or revisionism when the new policy is superseded by the old line. Worse, there are also cadres who have found that the egalitarian distribution actually benefited their not so hard-working dependants and relatives.



People as a whole prefer the new policy and have benefited by it. But there are also those who are afraid that it may not last. Others are afraid that cadres who are devoted to the new policy may be transferred. Yet others have seen with their own eyes how directives publicising the new policy were distorted in the process of their transmission down the administrative ladder.<sup>95</sup>

Wang concluded that the people should 'be given reins' in their quest for a better life, and that the mentality of some cadres who were proud of their teams being poor should be changed.

Wang's remarks implied that radical influence (as well as general cadre anxiety towards policy change) in Xinjiang was responsible for resistance to the wholesale introduction of policies deemed by some as overly 'liberal and remunerative'. Even more significant was the apparent breakdown of relations between the local non-Han population and regional military units and state farm (mostly ex-PCC) personnel. Realising the dangerous implications of this, a follow-up visit to southern Xinjiang was made in October by the former leading Party and military figure in Xinjiang and now Politburo member, Wang Zhen.<sup>96</sup> The tour was apparently designed to improve damaged Han-minority relations.

This theme was echoed in Urumqi three days later when Wang Zhen and Tomur Dawamat spoke jointly of the need for stability and unity in the region's nationality relations, described as merely 'basically good'.<sup>97</sup> People were reminded that 'not so long ago, something harmful to unity among nationalities and harmful to unity between armymen and people happened and had an adverse effect . . . we should guard against any recurrence and particularly emphasise mutual respect'.

Problems among the rusticated youths in Xinjiang were also suggested by various Hong Kong press reports. The *Hong Kong Times*, for example, claimed that in November 70,000 Shanghai youths in Aksu staged a demonstration and sit-in over the lack of jobs for them in their home municipality.<sup>98</sup> The newspaper said this prompted a visit from Wang Zhen, who flew from Beijing and ordered forceful suppression. If true, such happenings, which may have been connected with the April incident in Aksu, could only add to the regime's worries over the region. Beijing could not be insensitive to the recent wave of fundamentalist Islamic resurgence and events in Iran and Afghanistan. The Chinese leadership must be very cautious in not allowing foreign or indigenous ideology to detract from its national security interests in a region as strategic and as sensitive as Xinjiang.

It must also ensure that the people's socio-economic livelihood progresses at an acceptable rate. The crucial test is balancing these demands.



One implication of the recent problems in southern Xinjiang is that, in the perception of the non-Han people, if the Han population cannot keep 'its own room tidy', how can it expect to keep 'the whole house in order'.

### Conclusion

It is undeniable that at least until the Cultural Revolution, the Xinjiang PCC had contributed significantly to the consolidation of the CPC, and Han, rule. It had helped to bring about the conditions for the region's political and socio-economic reorientation toward and ultimate *de novo* integration with the new Chinese state. The PCC had served as an effective channel for large scale central capital and labour investments in Xinjiang that had contributed to the initial transformation and subsequent modernisation of the region's backward economy. It had undoubtedly played a beneficial role in bettering the local peoples' material lives, directly or indirectly. This is not to say that all problems or needs in these areas had been solved, nor to imply that, from the perspective of the non-Han inhabitants, there was no price to be paid for these gains, in terms of human and natural resources.

The Xinjiang PCC had also played an increasingly important role in defence and security, particularly after Sino-Soviet relations soured. Besides building basic infrastructure, providing logistic support, and introducing Han manpower, the lightly armed units of the PCC had played a back-up role to the PLA troops. The PCC had often undertaken local police and public security functions and had, until the first generation of non-Han youths nurtured totally under CPC rule matured, constituted a more reliable paramilitary body than those militia-type units raised among the indigenous peoples.<sup>99</sup>

The changes in the PCC that were initiated in the 1974-75 period saw a heightening of CPC control over the organisation and an apparent diminution of the military's role and reputation. While such changes were probably received with enthusiasm by some officers more interested in military affairs, there was likely some feeling of disquiet among others about losing influence in such a crucial body. It can be assumed that in many areas of operation the defence apparatus remained closely tied to the PCC. Given the external and internal security threats to the region, it would not be surprising if the PCC would largely revert to military control during times of tension or crisis.

By the nature of its role and composition, however, it was natural that the only slightly submerged factional or generational differences within the PCC and the latent ethnic rivalries between it and the local populace could be easily activated or played upon during times of unrest, such as the Cultural Revolution. The characteristic of being a Han organisation in a non-Han frontier region, a characteristic that has, until recent times,



been shared by the CPC itself, was a factor which continually influenced the evolution of the Xinjiang PCC.

## Notes

- 1 China also shared a 30 km. border with Afghanistan until early 1981, when the Soviet Union reportedly annexed the Wakhan corridor. *Beijing Review*, No.7 (16 February 1981), p.10.
- 2 *Beijing Review*, No.38 (21 Sept. 1979), p.6. See also *Beijing Review*, No.22 (28 May 1976), pp. 27-28 which reports that the Uygurs number 5 million and the Kazakhs 700,000. A total population figure of 12 million was given by *China Reconstructs*, XXX:1 (January 1981), p.33. The author, recognising that there is some scholarly debate on the transliteration or spelling of place names and names of ethnic groups in China, has adhered throughout this paper to the styles used in the *Beijing Review*, eg No.6 (1979), pp. 19-20.
- 3 The Nanniwan experience was continuously celebrated in the CPC media after 1949. A recent article commemorated Mao's inspection there in July 1943. See *Beijing Review*, No.2 (7 January 1977), pp. 25-29.
- 4 'The Peaceful Liberation of Xinjiang', *Renmin shouce* [People's Handbook] (Shanghai: Dagong bao, 1950), cited in *Current Background*, No.365 (25 October 1955), Appendix, p.44; and *Xinjiang ribao* (XJRB), 28 September 1949. Burhan, representing the provincial government, followed suit on the next day. At the same time, the CPC sent Deng Xiqun to Yining via Moscow to consult with the Eastern Turkestan Republic leaders. *Renmin ribao* (RMRB), 27 September 1979.
- ✓ Lynn T. White III, 'The Road to Urumchi: Approved Institutions in Search of Attainable Goals During Pre-1968 Rustication from Shanghai', *The China Quarterly*, No.79 (September 1979), 488.
- 6 XJRB, 10 March 1954.
- ✓ Zao Jing, 'An Analysis of the Situation in the XUAR', *Issues and Studies*, Taipei, V:2 (November 1968), 10-16; Zhang Yuntian, 'The Establishment and Expansion of Communist China's "Production-Construction Corps": A Study of Its Conditions and Functions', *Zhonggong yanjiu* (Studies on Chinese Communism), Taipei, IV:3 (March 1970), 12-34; and Wu Zhao, 'A Study of the Chinese Communist Build-up of the Production and Construction Corps along the Sino-Soviet Frontiers', *Issues and Studies*, Taipei, VI:2 (November 1969), 56-61.
- ✗<sup>8</sup> Zhang Bangying, 'Report at the Conference of Cadres of the Province and Municipal Levels in Xinjiang' on 1 February 1954, XJRB, 11 February 1954.
- 9 Each regiment usually had one fully armed company, although all personnel received military training. The arsenals of these troops came to include a dated mixture of captured Japanese, Guomindang and American weapons, plus Chinese copies of Soviet side arms and rifles. There were also field and anti-aircraft machine guns and artillery, land mines, mortars, anti-tank weapons, light tanks, and a few single-engine light propeller aircraft (used primarily for crop dusting, mapping, relief work, and surveillance).



- <sup>10</sup> Including the supervision and reform of political prisoners and criminals, See, e.g. H. Schwarz, 'The Chinese Communist Army in Sinkiang', *Military Review*, XLV:3 (March 1965), 73.
- <sup>11</sup> *XJRB*, 10 March 1954; Tao Zhiyue, 'PLA Units Engaged in Production and Construction in Xinjiang Struggle to Realise All Tasks of the Transitional Period', *RMRB*, 27 September 1955; and *New China News Agency* (NCNA), Urumqi, 19 October 1954. The number of army cadres and soldiers active in these campaigns was said by Wang Zhen to be 20,000. *RMRB*, 27 September 1979.
- × <sup>12</sup> Wang Jilong, 'Strive to Strengthen Further the Solidarity of All Nationalities in Building a New Xinjiang Together', *Minzu tuanjie* (MZTJ, Nationalities' Unity), No.12 (December 1961).
- <sup>13</sup> NCNA, Urumqi, 18 April and 21 March 1952.
- <sup>14</sup> Six smaller state farms were opened by army units in 1950 on a trial basis. Soviet aid and assistance was outlined in *XJRB*, 11 March 1954; NCNA, Urumqi, 21 January 1952; and *XJRB*, 6 September 1955.
- <sup>15</sup> In the mid-1960s, rates of pay were said to be about 67 *yuan*/month for lower-ranking demobilised officers (equivalent to that received by university graduates assigned to the PCC), with regimental leaders receiving around 140 *yuan*/month. Other members of the PCC were paid at civilian rates on the relevant work-type national wage scale. Newly assigned middle school graduates were paid according to a 'supply system' for their first two years, which provided all of their basic necessities plus a 3 *yuan*/month (5 *yuan*/month in their second year) 'regional differential' (border bonus). From their third year, these members were paid at the rate of 28 *yuan*/month, plus a 3-5 *yuan* bonus. Veteran farm workers and squad leaders received 35 *yuan*/month, plus a 3-5 *yuan*/month bonus, while skilled workers obtained 45 *yuan*/month, including bonus. These basic wage rates were probably increased somewhat in the late 1970s, and 'production/work bonuses' have initiated more recently. The wage rates given here are based upon information supplied to the author by former members of the PCC who were interviewed in Hong Kong in 1973, December 1977 and December 1980.
- <sup>16</sup> *XJRB*, 11 March 1954. Some sources have suggested that approximately 10-15 percent of the PCC membership may have been political prisoners and criminals undergoing labour reform. Interviews in Hong Kong, 1977 and 1980; and Wei Jingsheng, 'Unfinished Autobiography, 1979', translated by Ta-ling Lee and Miriam London and cited in 'A Dissenter's Odyssey Through Mao's China', *The New York Times Magazine*, 16 November 1980, pp. 134-43.
- <sup>17</sup> From 1949 to 1958, for example, Seypidin claimed that the central authorities had contributed 1,629,928,000 *yuan* (1952 prices) out of a total of 2,522,412,000 *yuan* invested in cultural and educational development, administrative expenses, and economic development in Xinjiang. Of these central subsidies, 1,320,273,000 *yuan* had gone to local capital construction. During the same period, the local revenues paid into the state treasury amounted to a mere 134,937,000 *yuan*, and only 20 percent of the profits of various state-owned enterprises in Xinjiang, including the PCC, were retained by the state. Seypidin, 'Report on Local Nationalism' given on 16 December 1957, *RMRB*, 26 December 1957. See also *XJRB*, 8 September 1957. These claims may have been somewhat exaggerated in response to minority criticisms of the Party's 'exploitative policies' in the region. An early article on the PCC stated that revenues on the army farms were divided as follows: 40 percent to soldiers directly engaged in production; 20 percent set aside for accumulation; 20 percent paid to the XJMD for



- 'expenses' and 20 percent for the payment of taxes. A.G. Yakovlev, 'The Role of the PLA in Economic Construction in the Outlying Districts of the Chinese People's Republic in 1950-55, citing Xinjiang as an Example', *Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Vostokovedeniya*, No.21 (1956), cited in *Central Asian Review* V:2 (1957), 147. A later source cites a December 1949 directive of the Military Affairs Commission of the Party to the effect that profits derived from production by army units should be divided with 40 percent going to the producer and 60 percent to the State. Zhang Yuntian, 'The Establishment and Expansion . . .' p. 18.
- 18 Yakovlec, *op. cit.*, 148.
- 19 XJRB, 6 September 1955.
- 20 Wang Zhen, 'Strengthening the Building of State Farms', *Hongqi* (Red Flag), April 1961, cited in *Beijing Review*, No.17, 28 April 1961. In 1966, this total was over 12 million *mu*. The PCC's total industrial and agricultural output reached 1,200,000 *yuan* in 1966, or about one-third of the region's total. *Urumqi Radio*, 13 January 1979, in *Summary of World Broadcasts*, Far East (hereafter SWB/FE), No.6020, BII, p.6.
- 21 Xiao Jiyong, 'An Analysis of Land Reclamation and the Establishment of State Farms on the Chinese Mainland', *Issues and Studies*, II:2 (November 1965), 26.
- X<sup>22</sup> Wang Enmao, 'The Great Victory of the Thought of Mao Zedong in Xinjiang', NCNA, Urumqi, 30 September 1965, in *Current Background*, No.775 (29 October 1965), 17. In all of China there were then 2,011 state farms.
- 23 RMRB, 10 October 1965.
- 24 Wang Enmao, 'Great Victory . . .', 19.
- 25 A recent article outlines three main rationales for the resettlement of Han in frontier regions, especially young educated urban 'rusticates'. One is the ethical, which highlights the moral, ideological, personality-changing or national-integrative value of giving urban dwellers the life experiences of its peasant masses. A second is the developmental, which stresses economic and social change in non-metropolitan areas. The third is demographic, which seeks to reduce urban populations by exporting 'non-workers' and cutting social overhead costs. See White, *op. cit.*, 482.
- 26 Lu Xinliang, 'Why Has the Army Production Corps Decided to Establish a Trade Union?', *Gongren ribao* (Workers' Daily), Beijing, 4 May 1957.
- 27 XJRB, 18 August 1955.
- 28 XJRB, 25 August and 12 November 1957.
- 29 RMRB, 17 December 1957.
- 30 XJRB, 26 May and 6 June 1957. See also, Saifudin, 'Report on Local Nationalism at the Enlarged Conference of the XUAR CPC Committee on 6 December 1957', RMRB, 26 December 1957.
- 31 The reported number arriving from these areas in 1959 was 110,000. Zhang Yuntian, 'The Establishment and Expansion . . .', p. 18.
- 32 *Urumqi Radio*, 4 May 1965, in *Survey of the China Mainland Press* (SCMP), Supplement No.142 (27 August 1965), p. 19.
- 33 RMRB, 10 May 1973.
- 34 Zhang Yuntian, 'The Establishment and Expansion . . .', p. 17.
- 35 By March 1966, for example, the 'veteran fighters' who had pioneered farming in Xinjiang reportedly represented only 20 percent of the various farms of the Xinjiang PCC. NCNA, Urumqi, 13 March 1966.



- <sup>36</sup> Song Richang, 'Shanghai Youths Can Do Much in Xinjiang', *Wenhui bao*, Shanghai, 17 January 1966. Political study was required for three hours each evening, except Sundays. Interviews with Shanghai rusticates to the PCC, Hong Kong, 1973, 1977 and 1980.
- <sup>37</sup> NCNA, Urumqi, 17 March 1966.
- <sup>38</sup> Interviews with Shanghai rusticates to the PCC, Hong Kong, 1973, 1977 and 1980.
- <sup>39</sup> This organisation and its supporters reportedly numbered between 10,000-20,000. See, eg, Zhao Zong 'An Account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (Part 31)', *Zuguo yuekan* (China Monthly), Hong Kong, No.77 (1 August 1970), 17-18.
- <sup>40</sup> 'The "January 26" Counterrevolutionary Sanguinary Incident at Shihezi Xinjiang', a mimeographed handbill jointly prepared by the Revolutionary Rebel Regiment of the Xinjiang Corps' August First Agricultural Institute, the Red Rebel Column of the Chu Opera Troupe of the Seventh Agricultural Division of the Corps, the Hongqi Combat Column of the Revolutionary Rebel Regiment of the Corps' Gonger Opera Troupe, and the Red Rebel Column of the Xiaoxing Opera Troupe of the Corps' First Agricultural Division on 30 January 1967, full text from a Hong Kong *Mingbao* report, translated in *SCMP*, Supplement No.188 (22 June 1967), pp.28-31.
- <sup>41</sup> Another source claimed that the toll was 120 killed and over 500 missing. *Facts and Features*, I:2 (15 November 1967), 12.
- <sup>42</sup> See, e.g., 'Smash and Fascist Concentration Camp of the 23rd Regiment, Eighth Agricultural Division, Xinjiang Construction Corps', *Tianshan fenghuo* (Tianshan Beacon Fire), published by the Eighth Agricultural Corps of the Xinjiang Red Guard Revolutionary Headquarters and the Revolutionary Workers of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, Nos.4-5 (15 January 1968), in *Current Background*, No. 855 (17 June 1968), 5-8.
- <sup>43</sup> P.H.M. Jones, 'Sensitive Sinkiang', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, LV:6 (9 February 1967), 190.
- <sup>44</sup> Translated in *CCP Documents of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-67* (Hong Kong, Union Research Institute, 1968), p. 216.
- <sup>45</sup> Translated in *ibid.*, pp.258-61.
- <sup>46</sup> *China Topics*, No.206 (16 March 1967), 2 and 'The Diary of the Cultural Revolution', *Asahi Shimbun*, Tokyo, May 1967, p.48.
- <sup>47</sup> Wang Feng, cited by *Urumqi Radio*, 13 January 1979, in *SWB/FE*, No.6020, BII, p.7.
- <sup>48</sup> *XJRB*, 18 October 1977, in *SWB/FE*, No.5649, BII, pp.1-5.
- <sup>49</sup> P.H.M. Jones, 'Autonomous Wang', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, LVIII:13 (28 December 1967), 569.
- <sup>50</sup> Interviews with Shanghai rusticates to the PCC, Hong Kong, 1973, 1977 and 1980.
- <sup>51</sup> 'CCP Central Committee Directive on Frontier Security and Unity', issued 28 August 1969, in *China Topics*, No.541 (28 January 1970), Appendix A, 1-2.
- <sup>52</sup> Donald H. McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1979), esp. Chapters 17-19.
- <sup>53</sup> See, e.g., *Urumqi Radio*, 21 January 1971, in *SWB/FE*, No.3599, BII, p. 16.
- <sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Seypidin, 'Advance Victoriously Under the Guidance of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line . . . Greeting the 20th Anniversary of the Founding of the XUAR', *Hongqi*, No.10 (1975), quoted by *Urumqi Radio*, 6 October 1975, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, People's Republic of China* (FBIS-PRC), 9 October 1975, pp.M1-9.



55 RMRB, 8 May 1971.

56 It is interesting to note that Wang Enmao reappeared as a political commissar in the Nanjing Military Region in late 1975. On 30 March 1977, *Changqun Radio* announced that he had been appointed the top Party and Revolutionary Committee person, as well as the PLA political commissar, in Jilin Province. Cited in *China Record*, No.1/6 (June 1977), 3.

57 Seypidin did, however, retain his central posts in Beijing. Wang had spent most of his career in the northwest as a Party specialist in minority nationality affairs and served as a Vice-Chairman of the Nationalities' Affairs Commission of the State Council prior to the Cultural Revolution. See *Beijing Review*, No.38 (21 September 1979), p.5 and *Urumqi Radio*, 29 January 1978, in *FBIS-PRC*, 30 January 1978, pp. M5-7.

58 The Xinjiang Military Region was redesignated the Urumqi Military Region in 1979, the main reason being that its area of responsibility was extended over the western part of Tibet in the Aksai Chin region. *Dongxiang*, Hong Kong, No.18 (16 March 1980), 8. Also, in January 1979 a third large military district, called the East Xinjiang Military Command (District) was formed following a Military Affairs Commission decision. It is composed of the sub-districts at Zhangqi, Turfan and Hami, as well as part of the South Xinjiang Military District. *Kyodo News Service*, Tokyo, 5 February 1979, in *Ta Kung Pao*, Hong Kong, 8 February 1979, p.4.

59 Wang Feng, quoted by *Urumqi Radio*, 4 February 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 5 February 1979, pp. M6-8.

60 XJRB editorial, 4 July 1979.

61 *Urumqi Radio*, 30 December 1979, In fact, the Party's concern about maintaining stable ethnic relations in Xinjiang was underscored by the appointment of Zhou Renshan to the post of 2nd secretary of the Xinjiang CPC Committee. Zhou had considerable experience in Qinghai and Tibet as a nationalities and united front specialist prior to the Cultural Revolution.

62 *Urumqi Radio*, 4 February 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 5 February 1979, p.M6.

63 See, e.g., *Urumqi Radio*, 5 October 1978, in *FBIS-PRC*, 13 October 1978, pp.M4-7.

64 *Urumqi Radio*, 13 January 1979, in *SWB/FE*, No.6020, BII, pp.3-5. A similar, 22-day long regional cadres conference was held the same month. See, e.g., *Urumqi Radio*, 30 January 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 1 February 1979, pp.M1-5.

65 *ibid.*

66 NCNA, Urumqi, 22 January 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 24 January 1979, pp.M1-3.

67 *Urumqi Radio*, 21 and 22 December 1972, in *SWB/FE*, No.4187, BII, p.17. See also, *Urumqi Radio*, 24 July 1979, in *SWB/FE*, No.6189, BII, pp.13-14.

68 *Beijing Review*, No.11, 12 March 1976, p.3. Another source claimed that a total of over 357,000 educated youths in Xinjiang had gone to the countryside, with 20,000 doing so in 1976. *Urumqi Radio*, 21 December 1977.

69 According to one source, a total of 3 million educated youths joined the PCC throughout China during the period 1964-76. Jiang Zhinan, 'An Analysis of the Changes in the Chinese Communist "Production and Construction Corps" System', *Zhonggong yanjiu*, X:7 (July 1976), 38.

70 Interviews with Shanghai rusticates to the PCC, Hong Kong, 1977 and 1980.

71 *Guangming ribao* editorial, 11 December 1979.



- <sup>72</sup> See, e.g., *Urumqi Radio*, 13 January 1979, in *SWB/FE*, No.6020, BII, p.4.
- <sup>73</sup> *Beijing Radio*, 14 March and 10 April 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 16 March 1979, pp.M2-3 and *TPRC*, No.517 (4 May 1979), pp.83-84; and *Beijing Review*, No.13 (30 March 1979), pp.5-6.
- <sup>74</sup> *Urumqi Radio*, 20 May 1978.
- <sup>75</sup> That is to say, under the control of the relevant administrative bodies responsible to the regional Party committee and the Party committee of the military region. See, e.g., *Zhonggong yanjiu*, IX:7 (July 1975), 37-45, cited in *China News Analysis*, No. 1052 (3 September 1976), p.2 and Jiang, *op. cit.*, 37-42.
- <sup>76</sup> A typical example was the 'No.143 Regimental Farm at Shihezi', which was mentioned as having been inspected by Hua Guofeng on 3 September 1978 during his return to Beijing from Europe. *Beijing Review*, No.31 (4 August 1980), p.21.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ta Kung Pao*, Hong Kong, 5 April 1979 and *Urumqi Radio*, 16 April 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 26 April 1979, p.T2.
- <sup>78</sup> *Urumqi Radio*, 14 April 1978. In early 1979, the Ministry of State Farms and Land Reclamation was officially re-established in Beijing.
- <sup>79</sup> *Urumqi Radio*, 21 August 1979, in *SWB/FE* (Weekly Economic Report), No. W1048, A, p.11.
- <sup>80</sup> *Beijing Radio*, 1 April 1978 and *Urumqi Radio*, 17 September 1979, in *SWB/FE* (Weekly Economic Report), No.W1051, A, p.14.
- <sup>81</sup> *NCNA*, Urumqi, 9 October 1976, in *Survey of the People's Republic of China Press*, No.6203, p.148; and *Urumqi Radio*, 2 April 1980, in *FBIS-PRC*, 8 April 1980, p.T2.
- <sup>82</sup> Jiang, *op. cit.*, 40.
- <sup>83</sup> The highest numbered regimental farm discovered by the author to date is the 168th in the Bayinguolong Mongol Autonomous Zhou. An interesting, but probably somewhat exaggerated, total membership of 2.3 million was given for the units of the former Xinjiang PCC in *China Reconstructs*, XXX:1 (January 1981), 34. A more realistic total would be around 1 million.
- <sup>84</sup> *Beijing ribao*, 4 January 1979. These units, under military supervision, were responsible for building the 476 km. section of the Southern Xinjiang Railway from Turpan to Korla in the period 1971-79. This strongly suggests that in a region as strategic as Xinjiang, the military would certainly retain an active interest in the former PCC units.
- <sup>85</sup> *Beijing Review*, No.16 (21 April 1980), p.7. Labour productivity was said to be so low that only 30 percent of the state farms' products were marketable. *RMRB* editorial, 16 March 1979.
- <sup>86</sup> *Beijing Review*, No.31 (4 August 1980), p.21. The model was to be Yugoslavia's experience with the Belgrade Agricultural Combine.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ta Kung Pao*, Hong Kong, 10 April 1980. See also *Beijing Review*, No.31 (4 August 1980), p.19.
- <sup>88</sup> *ibid.* As a result of various corrective measures, it was later claimed that the state farms in 1979 showed a profit of 300 million yuan. *Beijing Review*, No.16 (21 April 1980), p.7.



- <sup>89</sup> *Urumqi Radio*, 10 January 1979 and NCNA, Urumqi, 2 March 1979, in *SWB/FE* (Weekly Economic Report), No.W1024, A, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>90</sup> *XJRB*, 3 May 1979, cited by *Urumqi Radio*, 3 May 1979, in *FBIS-PRC*, 9 May 1979, pp. T1-2.
- <sup>91</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>92</sup> These economic problems and the measures adopted to solve them are detailed in NCNA, Urumqi, 2, 7 and 9 July and 7 August 1980 in, e.g., *SWB/FE*, No. 6467, BII, pp. 1-2 and No.6495, BII, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>93</sup> 'Ba Yi Radio' (clandestine), in Mandarin to China, 28 July 1980, in *SWB/FE*, No. 6484, A3, p.6. Other causes might have been leftist agitation against the new policy initiatives, the resentment of the minorities against having to compete for profits against the large state farms and enterprises in the area which were predominantly Han in composition, or minority/religious groups seeking to take advantage of 'democracy' by asserting their rights to speak out. In October 1980, the regional People's Government issued a circular on protecting the safety of lines of communication from both accidents and deliberate sabotage. *Urumqi Radio*, 23 October 1980, in *SWB/FE*, No.6560, BII, p.10.
- <sup>94</sup> NCNA, Urumqi, 9 July 1980.
- <sup>95</sup> *ibid.* and *Ta Kung Pao* Hong Kong, 19 June 1980, p.2.
- <sup>96</sup> *Beijing Radio*, 6 October 1980, in *SWB/FE*, No.6544, BII, pp. 4-5.
- <sup>97</sup> *Urumqi Radio*, 9 October 1980, in *SWB/FE*, No.6549, BII, pp. 1-2. See also, *Urumqi Radio*, 12 November 1980, in *SWB/FE*, No.6578, BII, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>98</sup> Cited by David Bonavia, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, CXI:11 (6 March 1981), pp. 30-31.
- <sup>99</sup> The reasons for this are discussed in McMillen, *op.cit.*, p.106.



RURAL CAMPAIGNS: CONTINUITY  
AND CHANGE IN THE CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE —  
THE EARLY POST-CULTURAL  
REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE (1969-1972)

Dennis Woodward

Introduction

In many respects, the Cultural Revolution was an urban phenomenon. Although our knowledge of the Chinese countryside during the Cultural Revolution is limited,<sup>1</sup> it does not seem to have suffered the violence and turmoil which characterised the cities. This is not to say that the Cultural Revolution did not have a major impact on the countryside. Indeed, much of the current Chinese leadership's attention is devoted specifically to overcoming policies and ideas in the rural areas which are traceable to the Cultural Revolution. Rather, it is to suggest that the Cultural Revolution came later to the countryside — at a time when the 'radical Maoist' faction within the CPC had seemingly triumphed. Yet, the expectation that there would be a radical transformation of the Chinese countryside was not to be fulfilled. Attempts to do so met with apparent resistance from the peasantry and were probably major issues of contention within the central leadership itself. In this respect, the period 1969-1972 is especially interesting since it illustrates the difficulties inherent in furthering the socialist transition in rural China and prefigures the policy divisions which were to result in the ousting of the 'Gang of Four'.

Parallels can also be drawn between the difficulties of overcoming 'left' attitudes at present, and similar problems in the latter part of the period dealt within this article. While confusion over policy implementation in the early 1970s was compounded by the lack of a functioning Party organisation at all levels capable of guaranteeing adherence to central guidelines, basic level cadres, both then and now, were wary of putting into effect policies which had previously been strongly denounced as 'taking the capitalist road'.

This article examines the course of the major rural campaigns of the 1969-1972 period, especially campaigns to further the socialist transition