CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AND PEOPLE'S MILITIA IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The People's Republic of China's armed forces comprise the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), the Chinese People's Armed Police Force (PAPF) and the People's Militia (PM). The main body of China's armed forces is Chinese People's Liberation Army. According to the 1982 statistics, the PLA was about 4.238 million strong, of which over 108,000 were women.\(^1\) The objective of bringing structural reforms in its administrative structure and reorganising the troops to reduce the PLA by one million has started taking shape and is yet to be completed. After the reform, the PLA will be approximately three million in size, which means one soldier for about every three hundred people of China's 1.03 billion population. The Chinese People's Police Forces, numbering over 500,000, are responsible for the country's domestic security. The People's Militia, who do not withdraw from production, are the auxiliary and rescue force of the PLA, with registered members totalling about 100 million. However the PLA is composed overwhelmingly of ethnic Han Chinese. But ever since the revolution began in the 1930's the PLA has had an important role to play with non-Han ethnic minorities, both because the PLA has been generally used for political mobilising functions and because China's minorities in Chinese Central Asia are located in strategically critical frontier regions.

The innovation of the political work system at the embryonic stage in the Chinese PLA could be traced back to the period of the very foundation of the Whampa Military Academy, which was established in 1924 under the auspices of the Communist International.\(^2\) The main objective of the Comintern was to train the

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nationalist soldiers to ensure the political loyalty of the nationalist army and strengthen the system of military command as the backbone of the officer’s corps.³

This Russian-sponsored military academy had as its very purpose the training of the leading communist revolutionaries, who could be prepared to fight imperialism. The Russian military advisers succeeded in building a military model with an objective to establish an institutional setup for accomplishing its ideological commitments and to carry out creative and extensive political education and propaganda among soldiers and make them to be politically conscious and be of iron discipline. In the initial stages the chief stress of the Soviet leadership in establishing the Whampoa Academy was obvious from the deliberations of the Fifteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. The aim was to set down a comprehensive theoretical network upon which the army could be built to fight imperialism.⁴ Its purpose was also to select and train communist revolutionaries in collaboration with the nationalist forces as a part of the Comintern programme.

THE ROLE OF PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY TILL 1949

The PLA, since the Nanchang days in 1927 to the communist take over in 1949, has played a significant role in the Chinese governmental system. Throughout this twenty two years of struggle, the party and the army have fought together. In fact, the Chinese army was indispensable to the victory of the communist party and to the creation of a socialist China. At one point of time Mao has said, “Every thing in Yenan has been created by having guns.”⁵ The army, besides bringing the communists to power, has also been an extension of the party.

Right since the early days, the emphasis in China has been on an army which is politically conscious, thoroughly indoctrinated and motivated so that it can earn and retain the respect and support of the people. To give shape to such an army, finally, in December 1929, a conference was convened in Kutien in West Fukien, which laid down the foundation for a high type of ideological leadership in the Red Army, which was already in existence. It was in this conference that Mao presented a lengthy resolution "On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party." The resolution emphasised to build Red Army on a Marxist-Leninist basis, and Mao's views have had an influence on the character of the army. Thus, Mao regarded PLA as an instrument to accomplish political tasks and was against the army as a mere professional fighting force.

The First National Congress of the Representation of Chinese workers, peasants, and soldiers Soviet in December 1931, adopted the document dealing with the "Final Decision Concerning Red Army Problem." This document is of fundamental importance in the development of the party's armed forces. The document brought out the characteristics of a Red Army saying that "...the imperialist armies and warlord armies are isolated from the masses... But the Red Army is the army of the masses of workers and peasants .... It is trained and acts in obedience to the international mission and spirit of the toiling masses, and in the history of China it is the one organised with consciously revolutionary warriors ...."

By bringing out the characteristics of the Red Army there was no discrimination shown towards the minorities of Chinese Central Asia comprises of Ch’inghai, Kansu provinces and Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions. During the Long March and the War of Resistance Against Japan, a small number of the minorities were recruited by the Chinese communists to serve in the military. Their number increased during the Chinese Civil War. It was said that both

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Hui and Mongol cavalry units played a prominent role in some campaigns. Further, it was indicated that 50,000 Koreans from China volunteered to fight in the Korean War. Since then, national minority soldiers, of the five regions that were mentioned above, generally followed the overall party line towards national minorities.

Thus, Mao’s interpretation of Marxist-Leninist ideology, as it applied to military ethics and style, has influenced the character and orientation of the PLA in China in particular and in Chinese Central Asia in general. This interpretation of views on the army playing a domestic role, primarily has two basic principles. First, to apply the principle of ‘mass line’ in all enterprises and second, it has to help in building up a socialist China. The ‘mass line,’ “is a mystical belief in the capabilities of the mobilised and indoctrinated masses.” For the Chinese the “mass line” is a principle which is not only applicable to military doctrine but to all other activities as well. This belief has led the Chinese leadership to uphold certain basic military policy premises; “The superiority of men over weapons”, ‘protracted war’, and most importantly, ‘politics should take command.’

The PLA, besides being a fighting force, is also an important component of the society and plays a vital role in it, above all, under the control of the party. This is keeping in line with Mao’s dictum “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun, our principle is that the party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the party.” In fact, the Chinese have evolved an elaborate system of political control in the army which is designed to ensure the complete subservience and loyalty of the military arm to the dictates of the party high command.


10 Ibid., p. 224.

This political control of the army by party high command had been the feature throughout the development of the Chinese army since the Ching-Kangshan days of 1928. The military-minority interaction since 1940s has occurred at two levels, and each related to the other. In the first instance, the Han-commanded military has had a significant role in political, economic and social affairs of the minority regions of Chinese Central Asia. Second, minorities in these five regions have been recruited into PLA service and played their role in the affairs of the PLA. When recruited, the minorities are expected to meet the same physical qualifications as Han recruits. However, they are not expected to meet the same educational qualifications. Several official reports on minority recruitment indicate that minorities receive training from their Han comrades in reading and writing, political affairs and other subjects. Further, minority soldiers generally are stationed in the areas in which they are recruited. Those who leave the army often become cadres at various levels in the production units, those who remain to become officers or military cadres usually are assigned to militia work, rather than to regular PLA field commands. Hence the changes and developments in army have a direct bearing on the minority PLA men of the five regions of Chinese Central Asia.

It is noticed that the Chinese communists, after the civil war, relied on the military to provide administration, until the training of cadres and the expansion of CCP organs allowed the restoration of civil authority.12 Almost all the national minorities of China were organised into administrative units known as ‘autonomous regions,’ counties, etc. In fact, these units were governed much as ordinary provinces and counties, but the word autonomous was included as a symbolic gesture to the minorities. Thus, the CCP organised the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, Ninghsia-Hui Autonomous Region, Tibet Autonomous Region, Kwangsi-Chuang Autonomous

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Region at the provincial level, and other autonomous units at lower levels for other minorities. Even though civil authority in these five regions paralleled that of the non-minority regions, the military continued to be stationed in them for the purpose of national defence and for public security. 13

Against this backdrop, theoretically, the control of army by the party aims at preserving what Chu Teh called the 'five harmonies'—between army units, between officers and men, between army and government, between army and party, and between army and civilians. 14 In fact, the purpose of political control is the complete subordination to the party; of the entire army making it ever responsive to the party's call to action, whether it be building the railways, foreign intervention, or hog raising. 15 Structurally, this system of control consists of a hierarchy of party committees, which parallel army units command, and a hierarchy of political departments, which are integral parts of the army command at all levels.

In the Chinese army the system of leadership is based on the principle of individual responsibility of the leaders under the collective leadership of the party committees. The high command sends its directives to the lower levels through this party committees. The party committees extend right from the military affairs committee down to the party branches at the company level. The party committees are the highest authorities as far as planning and policy making within their own jurisdiction is concerned, subject only to higher party organisations.

13 For Details see "Draft Basic Summarisation of Experiences in the Promotion of Autonomy in Minority Nationality Organs," Current Background, (Hong Kong), June 15, 1953, no.264, pp. 3-4.


15 Ralph L. Powell, Politico-Military Relationship in Communist China (US Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, External Research Staff, Washington ,1963), pp. 1-10.
The military commander and political commissar execute the decisions of the party committee. The military commander and political commissar are responsible for military and political affairs respectively. It is important to note that down to the regimental level the political officers are called political commissars; at battalion level they are called political instructors and at company level they are called political directors. For simplicity, all political officers have been referred to as commissars.16

The communist party's policies are implemented by political departments. The general political department caters to the entire army and is responsible to the Politiburo, but is administratively attached to the Ministry of National Defence. It has eight divisions viz. organisation, cultural affairs, propaganda, youth work, army postal service, and general affairs. The political department carries out the work of indoctrinating the troops, especially at the company level, through lectures, meetings, plays, broadcast, slogans, etc. The company political officer is responsible for political education who is in contact with the men at all times.

In practice, the system of joint leadership and control by the military commander and political commissar, under the direction of party committee, might at times run into serious difficulties. But, such difficulties are avoided by the fact that all ranking officers of a particular unit are, at the same time, members of the party committee of the same level, of which the commissar is the secretary. The very career of the commanders may depend on the good will of the commissar in his capacity as party committee secretary. Hence, deference to the latter is natural. Nevertheless, there are three reasons for the harmonious relationship between the army and party leadership. First, both the military commanders and political commissars are veteran party members with same experience and background in both political and military work. Second, the close inter-relation of political and military tasks in the milieu of insurrection gave little basis for conflict. Third, in

16 Joffe, n. 11, p. 170.
many cases, the commander and the commissar are one and the same person. In fact, the actual operation of the control system is even more pervasive than the structural apparatus.

In Chinese ideological thinking, the army and party are an organic unity, both being complementary to each other. The army is the chief component of state power. Mao regarded PLA as much more than a fighting force. For him it has economic, cultural and educational components. Thus, a revolutionary army is also an army of labour; it performs economic functions and participates in production activities. It is also a cultural army and performs propaganda tasks, imbibes the masses with proletarian ideology and revolutionary enthusiasm.

The PLA's intended role in political, economic, cultural and educational tasks is with a very definite purpose. First, it promotes democracy within the army as well as in the army's relationship with the masses. Internal democracy within the army is epitomised in the slogan "unity between officers and men." External democracy is "unity between the army and people." Mao felt that armed struggle cannot succeed without mass mobilisation and unity with the masses. He regarded the people as the richest source of power to wage war. Thus when the army carries out its non-military tasks in society, it promotes democracy and improves its relationship with the masses.

Besides, the army, by helping in construction and production units, can help in China's socialist revolution. Moreover, when the army produces its own supplies, its living conditions are improved and its burden on the people is lightened and it even enables to expand the army. Due to the non-military functions of the army it is good for the ideological and political conditioning of the troops; it even heightens their appreciation of manual labour and, thereby, raises their proletarian consciousness. Politics has been regarded as the soul and the supreme command.

17 *Ibid.* n. 11, p. 68.
Political work is regarded as the life line of the liberation army as well as the fundamental guarantee of all kinds of work.¹⁸

Thus, the PLA, ever since the days of Yenan (1935), has been much more than a combat force. The principle of the army being much more than a fighting force remained a guiding principle for the military even after the communist take over in 1949. In the same year Mao said, "The army is not only a fighting force it is mainly a working force. All army cadres should learn to take over and administer cities. The army should be good at running schools, news papers, managing industries ... In short all urban problems with which in the past our army cadres and fighters were unfamiliar should from now on be shouldered by them.... The time has come for us to set ourselves the task of turning the army into a working force."¹⁹

**THE ROLE OF PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY : 1949-1966**

The Chinese communists overthrew the nationalist regime with the help of the PLA. Subsequently, the army was mobilised in the countryside to handle the problems with which the newly established communist regime was confronted. In fact, these problems have posed a serious threat to its very survival. At a time when the soldiers had to pay attention to the handling of internal law and order, solving problems of subversion and sabotage and tackling dissidents in the Chinese Central Asian Regions, the sudden out-break of Korean War, outside the Chinese periphery, has posed external threat along with the already existing domestic constrains. With respect to domestic constrains, the Chinese communist's drive to develop good relations with the national minorities in Chinese Central Asian Regions, made them despatch missions to Southwest and Northwest. These missions also served both


fact finding and propagandista functions. All these missions could visit various localities in Chinese Central Asia with the help of the PLA. According to a common programme passed by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CCPC) on September 29, 1949, relating to the minorities, Article Fourteen of the programme had called for the establishment of military control in all the liberated areas. The local people's governments were to be formed composed of persons appointed by the front-line military political organs.

Liu Shao-ch'i argued that, given these powers, the military committee would be able to crush reactionaries by force, while simultaneously protecting and inspiring the people in the five regions and helping them to set up conferences of people's representatives and "organs of peoples power of all degrees which would gradually receive full powers." Later, when the general programme for the Implementation of Nationality Regional Autonomy of the Chinese People's Republic came into effect on August 9, 1952, the small work teams, composed of PLA men, acted as the sole representatives of the new government of China in minority areas of Chinese Central Asia. They went from one hamlet to the other with the aim of winning the trust of the masses without the use of force. These work teams used to enquire about the problems of the area and suggest solutions. Under the general theme of the 'do good things movement,' the teams' slogan was work together, eat together, live together with the minorities of Chinese Central Asia. During the day the PLA work teams helped the people in hauling water and cutting firewood. In the evenings the teams would occasionally organise entertainment, generally simple morality plays that linked what had been found out about the area's past history with the idea of class exploitation. Additionally, when party branches in the minority areas in Chinese Central Asia were established the head of the PLA team was appointed as the First Secretary.

20 Donald Klein Files, Who's Who in Communist China (Hongkong, 1966), p. 509; and also see Joint Publication Research Service, (Hong Kong), (here after JPRS), no. 2699, pp. 1-25.


Further, while dispensing free seeds, tools, labour and entertainment, team members were to learn the local language in the five regions and propagate party doctrine and party nationality policy. Some minorities in Chinese Central Asia, who were found receptive to the propaganda and who gave evidence of leadership qualities, were sent to a PLA-run cadre school in the area. This propaganda laid the ground work for a series of mass meetings which culminated in democratic reforms where agreements on reforms were reached by peaceful discussion at the meeting of the entire community, conducted by the leader of the work team to elect People's councils. The local headman used to hold first position in the People's Council. The head of the PLA work team, always a Han, used to enjoy real power in the council.23

Besides, it was amply clear by the end of 1949 that the communists were left with the conquest of Taiwan and Tibet for a final conquest of China. The communists, by capturing Sinkiang, opened their gateway to Tibet. Though the Chinese made their official pronouncements to the possession of Tibet they failed to execute the same due to various factors. Prominent among them was the communist pre-occupation with the retreated nationalist troops. It was also due to inclement weather and the mountainous terrain of Tibet, coupled with inadequacy of transportation facilities, and shortage of food supplies and warm clothing.24 The Korean War had diverted the attention of the Chinese communists, and the CCP did not want to have a military confrontation with an external power, particularly when its rule had not yet been consolidated domestically. There were no guerrilla basis to link up with and few could advise the party on how best to proceed. And last but not the least, there was not even a single communist party member in (the present) Tibet Autonomous Region.

23 Ibid., p. 108.

24 Ibid., p. 87.
To top it all, the Tibetans have formally declared independence and revived their army. Tibet started enlisting support for its independence, which made the Chinese communists to bring the former under its control. During spring, troops were moved up to Kantzu, in Ch'inghai province, which is close to the Tibet border, when a provisional government had already been established. In October 1950, army units from both the Northwest and Southwest Military Regions, amounting to some 40,000 men, under the command of Chang Kuo-Hua,25 crossed the Chin-sha river and marched on to Chamdo.26 Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, high ranking noble and minister, was appointed to lead the Tibetan forces against the PLA. It was only after a nine-day fighting that the PLA could claim victory, which included twenty engagements. The battle of 'Chamdo' was the first and last engagement of any size fought by the PLA in its invasion of Tibet.27

The Tibetan forces were outnumbered by the PLA, the former forces totalling around 8000-8,500 possessed an adequate number of rifles but only about 50 artillery pieces, 250 mortars, and 200 machine guns. Its main objective was only to stop illegal travellers and act as a police force and was quite ill-equipped to fight a war. Ngapo Ngawang Jigme was captured in spite of his stiff resistance a midst Lhasa’s refusal to let him surrender.28 With the defeat of Dalai Lama's army and the capture of his commanders, Dalai Lama fled to Yatung. The PLA forces’ capture of Chamdo exposed China's irresistible military strength which could be brought to bear upon the Tibetan government, unless the latter conceded Beijing's claim of sovereignty, rather than as the prelude to full-scale military operations.29 Further advance by the PLA was suspended while negotiations took place during April-May

25 John Gittings, n.3, p. 37, and also see Survey of China Mainland Press(Hong Kong), (here after SCMP), 1962, no. 2854. (25 October).
26 Dreyer, n.22, p. 87.
27 Gittings, n. 3, p. 37.
29 Gittings, n. 3, p. 37.
1951 in Beijing and finally on 23 May an agreement was reached for the 'peaceful liberation of Tibet.' Later, by July 1951, Chang Kuo-hua's troops advanced and reached Lhasa by 26 October and by 11 December his troops joined the troops of the First Field Army, led by Fan Ming, which had entered from Ch'inghai province in the north and crossed the Tangla mountains. Finally, a total of 20,000 PLA forces were installed in Lhasa. By February 1952, the Military Region of Tibet was established and Chang Kuo-hua was made its commander.

The purpose of the occupation of Tibet was to liberate Tibetans from imperialist oppression and to consolidate national defence on the western frontiers. The Beijing Agreement provided for the reorganisation of the Tibetan army and its integration with the PLA. It also envisaged the establishment of a Military and Administrative Committee and a military region headquarters in Tibet, which would be paid by the Central People's Government. The integration of Tibetan army with the PLA was completed by February 1952, with the establishment of the military region. In the case of regions like Sinkiang and Kansu in China proper, the Tibetans were given nominal positions of authority in the military region, but the actual power rested in the hands of the commander, Chang Kuo-hua, First political commissar T'an Kuan-san and second political commissar Fan Ming.


31 Change Kuo-hua, December 1951, SCMP, no. 2854, 12 December 1951.

32 Gittings, n. 3, p. 38.

33 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 89.

34 For details see New China News Agency (hereafter NCNA), 19 February 1952, trans in Ling Nai-min, n.30, pp. 461, and also see George Ginsburg and Michael Mathos, 'Tibet's Administration in the Transition Period, 1951-54,' Pacific Affairs (Vancouver), June 1959.
The reorganisation of Tibetan army followed the communist policy of establishing a huge garrison and military headquarters in Lhasa. Additionally, a detachment from the Northwest province of Sinkiang was deployed in Tibet after the signing of the Beijing Agreement. It crossed into western Tibet during the winter of 1951. These troops, which reached Ngari province on the Tibet-India border, were about 2,500 and 10,000 in number. Control of the frontier along the border was tightened. A Chinese Garrison of 750 men was installed in Gartok. The development of east-west Lhasa Gartok road into a modern highway closely followed the routes which the three invading army detachments had employed. They ran from Sinkiang via Chamdo to Lhasa; from Ch’inghai to Lhasa; and the west Tibet highway.

Thus, the occupation of Tibet was completed and has put an end to the delicate, centuries-old relationship between Beijing and Lhasa. Finally, it can be inferred that the Chinese occupation of Tibet has in no way affected the developments in Tibet.

The Korean War had a definite impact on the PLA, and its thinking. It brought a realisation on the Chinese military leadership that any army, irrespective of its past revolutionary character, can fare well against a well-equipped army even without superior fire power and advanced military organisation. Till the liberation, the army’s organisational structure was based on the principle of supremacy of man over weapons. But the human and material losses incurred in the Korean War

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35 For details see Chang Kuo-hua, cited in, n.31, p.10.
36 For details see The Times (London), 4 September 1951.
made many commanders to plead urgently for immediate introduction of 'professionalism' and 'modernisation' in the PLA.\textsuperscript{40}

Rectifying their past mistakes and conceding to the persuasion of commanders and fighters, measures were taken to introduce 'professional officers crops.'\textsuperscript{41} The national conscription system,\textsuperscript{42} under national service law scheme, was also brought into force. In order to avoid confusion among officers and soldiers, distinctions like rank system, which had been abolished earlier, were quickly restored in the Peoples Army.\textsuperscript{43} In fact, the organisational character of the army is based on a "mystical belief in the capabilities of the mobilised and indoctrinated masses"\textsuperscript{44} and practised 'mass line' which began to shake off under entirely new situations. The whole military model which was broadly categorised essentially as a decentralised semi-professional one,\textsuperscript{45} depending on the concept of superiority of men over the weapons,\textsuperscript{46} was subjected to bitter criticism by those who upheld the view of professionalism in the army.

The very objective to modernise the army was amply clear from the common programme which was adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, held in September 1949. It was planned to build the new army based on a compact 'unified system,' 'unified organisation,' and 'unified

\textsuperscript{40} He Long "Basic Difference between the Proletarian and Bourgeoisie Military Line" \textit{Peking Review}, no. 48, 24 November 1967, pp. 11-16.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 201.

\textsuperscript{43} Gittings, n. 3, p. 154.

\textsuperscript{44} Powell, n. 8, p. 10.


\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 32.
discipline." The modernisation of armed forces moved at a snail’s pace, though. The outbreak of the Korean War disrupted the entire apparatus upon which the modernisation drive was planned. In fact, it threatened the proletarian model and political work system. The conscription system in the People’s Army considerably damaged the civil-military relations. To put it in a nut-shell, the Korean War posed serious doubts in the minds of the top brass of the Chinese military leadership on the necessity of professionalism and advanced-armed military systems. But the on going confrontation on China’s eastern frontiers left no option but to knock the doors of its communist neighbour Soviet Russia for military and material support. The timely Soviet military aid and assistance was readily accepted, which finally enhanced the quality of the Chinese armed forces.

Later, the Chinese leadership, to meet external threats, introduced in their army Russian advisers, teachers, military manuals and writings, but reluctantly. It became unavoidable because the Chinese wanted to retain the old proletarian character of their army. In fact, they were reluctant to completely abandon their army's traditional values merely for the sake of modernisation. Contrarily, then Defence Minister Peng Te-huai pleaded for modernising and professionalising the People’s Army along the Soviet model. Later, in February 1955, through a decree, regularisation was made. Simultaneously, the foundation was laid for the ‘professional crops’ in the army.

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47 “Common Programme of the CCPC,” NCNA, 29 September, 1949, cited from Whitson, n. 45, p. 27.

48 George, n. 41, p. 201.

49 Ibid., p. 199.

50 Ibid., p. 198.


The regulations on the services of officers restored professionalism, rank system, insignia, uniform distinctions and also different pay scales in the People’s Army. To boost the morale of the soldiers engaged in war, military honours and titles were awarded, for their gallant deeds and sacrifices. The old values of ‘egalitarianism,’ voluntarism and democratic centralism, and the features of the revolutionary era yielded ground to modernisation and professionalisation. The principles of comradeship, patient persuasion and healthy practice of physical participation in the national socio-economic life began to fade away.

Besides, the introduction of conscription system in the army necessitated strict regularisation, which eventually shook the existing mutual co-operation between the commissars and commanders and solidarity between the civilians and the soldiers. The introduction of professionalism enabled the military personnel to demand for absolving their civilian responsibilities. Mao, visualising the danger of the army losing its proletarian character, sharply reacted and warned that the introduction of professional officers corps would definitely give a setback to the “mass line” doctrine and pleaded the retention of the same.

Besides, it was argued that the introduction of professional officer corps would also develop a trend of reclusion among the army men and they may even express their reluctance to participate in a future class struggle. Once isolated from masses, the army, might ignore the democratic traditions and hamper the interests of the people, and finally act like a reactionary army. Appealing to the nation on Army Day celebrations, August 1, 1957, Marshal Chu De said that modernisation schemes should be framed within the glorious traditions of the PLA and the rich experience which was gained during the course of prolonged revolutionary armed


55 Gittings, n. 3, p. 154.
struggle.\textsuperscript{56} He further appealed that the modernisation of the army must not result in ignoring the rich practice of revolutionary heroism and the high fighting will power of the brave soldiers.\textsuperscript{57} He demanded intensive political training to officers and soldiers and raising their political consciousness.

At the work front, despite Russian technical assistance, the Chinese army was directed to do it alone.\textsuperscript{58} But after the Korean crisis the leadership upheld the traditional line and also adopted balanced approach to modernisation, keeping in view the revolutionary heritage. It was stressed that unless the Chinese socio-economic makeup was transformed, the idea of modernising the PLA would be futile. Furthermore, unless the educational and cultural standards of the masses did not improve, the idea of modernisation of the army can not be put into practice. From 1956 onwards, for two years, the central high command tried to restore revolutionary heroism in the armed forces. It directed the rank and file of the soldiers to participate in national reconstruction. The CCP, through its various socio-economic directives, ordered the army to move into the agricultural and industrial sector for rehabilitation, production and construction work.\textsuperscript{59}

The CCP's Eighth National Congress in 1956 gave material boost to national productivity. With the launching of campaigns for agricultural collectivisation and cooperativisation, large contingents of army units were despatched to the vast rural areas of Chinese Central Asia to contribute physical labour. To implement this programme the Production and Construction Corps of the PLA, constituted in 1954, was divided into three sections, to manage

\textsuperscript{56} James E. Garvey, \textit{Marxist-Leninist Political Quality Of the China: Military and Social Doctrine} (New York, 1966), pp. 105-144.


\textsuperscript{58} Gittings, n. 3, p. 117.

agriculture, industry and mine works respectively. It should be noted that this attempt to involve PLA in large scale production work in 1950 was abandoned due to the Korean crisis. But the PLA continued to expand its productive operations in Sinkiang. These were mostly composed of units from General T’ao Chih-yuch’s Nationalist Army, and from the Sinkiang Nationalities Army or Ili rebels who were re-organised into PLA’s of First Field Army on their surrender. The army launched a Five Year Plan in 1950 and its cadres personally supervised land reform and later led the movements for mutual aid teams and co-operatives.

Most of the state farms in Sinkiang were started by the army and by 1958 their acreage amounted to 30 percent of the total arable land in the province. As already stated, the production corps were divided into three sections, the first section on agriculture gave impressive statistics for its achievements in crops (cotton and grain) afforestation and irrigation and soil conservation. The industrial section built a large number of factories which were later turned over to the state. The Third section, mining, was responsible for the extraction of strategic minerals like petroleum, coal and uranium, for which Sinkiang is known for its reserves. Sinkiang is also known for its large territory, which is at least one thirds of China’s territory, large tracts of uncultivated land and for the source of hydro-electric power in the upper Yellow river.

General Ping Te-huai had once reported on Sinkiang to the Chinese people’s government council that “it is one of the industrial and defence basis for the construction of the new China.”  


61 For details see Hsin-Chiang Jih-Pao (Urumchi), Sinkiang Daily, “The Magnificent Service rendered by PLA in Sinkiang Cannot be Obliterated by Local Nationalists, SCMP, 10 January, 1958, no. 1750,
Highlighting the role of the PLA and its impact, the *Peoples Daily*, in its editorial of January 1957, said: "With the progress of national construction the army will concentrate its forces to strengthen modern military construction and raise the level of military science and technology. It is also necessary to concentrate on the garrisoning and training. This would inevitably hamper the army to have more direct contact with the masses because on account of this some army units would not show the same concern for the interests of the people as they did in the past, would not maintain the same close connections with the local party and government organs as in the past and would do little or no mass work."\(^{62}\)

Since 1956, to restore the traditional role of army, the CCP made the soldiers shoulder numerous socio-economic responsibilities. It was reiterated that army men while doing military duties will not deviate from their proletarian responsibilities which were meant to fulfill their social and economic duties. It was asserted that by the army’s engagement in the civilian sector they would enhance the combat potential. The army’s role in the Great Leap Forward Campaign deserves appraisal. But, during the same campaign, it was said that minor incidents occurred in minority areas in Chinese Central Asia. For instance, in Tibet the unruly soldiers desecrated the temples, the Han personnel burned the animal bones, which was against the belief of Lamaists, and installed radio facilities on the consecrated peaks. All these added to the Tibetan’s grievances.\(^{63}\) Furthermore, the inter-marriage of the Han PLA men with Tibetan women might have effected the Tibetan male-female ratio.\(^{64}\)

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62 Hand Book On Peoples China (Beijing, 1957), pp. 204-205.

63 See the Speech of Shirob Jalsp, "Pay Attention at Minorities Special Characteristics," to the third session of National Peoples Congress, 27 June, 1956 in Current Background, no. 409, p. 18.

64 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 166.
Later, coming to the revolt of Tibet, it was said to have occurred when the PLA men employed an irregular procedure in inviting Dalai Lama to attend a theatrical performance. Rumours spread that he was to be kidnapped and sweeping reforms would be inaugurated. But the rebellion aimed at forestalling this alleged Chinese plot. However, the PLA quelled the rebellion without any major reverses. But this resulted in the establishment of Military Control Commission in most of the major cities, except in Shigatse which was the seat of Panchan Lama’s government. The 1951 treaty was abrogated and the local government of Tibet was dissolved. Finally, the preparatory committee for Tibet started exercising its functions.

On the other hand, the set back in the commune programme and the subsequent fall in production in the following year resulted in a mixed reaction within the Chinese society and army men. Besides, the army’s involvement in the civilian sector during the time of imperialist threats was to the displeasure of the Chinese society in general. The imminent threat from the US and domestic criticism brought about a rethinking on the drastic re-orientation in the existing military policies. This resulted in military personnel willing to shift away from their civilian responsibilities in order to concentrate more on military affairs to fulfil their more important combat responsibilities. The army personnel argued that modern military science and techniques were developing very rapidly and if they did not catch up they might be left behind, which meant being beaten.

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66 Ibid., Chapter 10.
67 NCNA. Peking. 28 March 1959, cited from *Current Background*, no.533. p.10.
Reacting to the US nuclear threat the army's daily editorial of Aug. 17, 1958 read: "Our most formidable enemy is the aggressive and imperialist United States, whose armed forces are highly modernised... Any viewpoint which tends to neglect or overlook modernisation is completely misleading and mistaken."70 To save the nation from probable nuclear warfare, the army daily stressed the need "to continue improving modern military techniques and to learn to co-ordinate the various branches of combatant army under the modern conditions of atom bombs, chemical warfare and guided missiles and in other complicated situations so that the army may be ready at all times to face any emergency."71 This major tussle in the military policy has effected the civil-military relations and commune programmes. Disappointed by its failures, persons like Peng Te-huai openly criticised the People's Commune programme.72

Apart from the above, the Chinese were expecting the Soviet Union to supply heavy armoured arms and aircraft.73 But the terms and conditions put forward by the latter had puzzled the former. Finally, as a gesture of friendship, a five year scientific co-operation protocol was concluded between both the countries in 1957; following this the Chinese leaders cultivated faith and mutual understanding with the Soviet Union as a supplier of military hardware and a potential nuclear guarantor.74 Later, Russia, in 1958, put forward certain conditions, which were designed much to the dislike of the Chinese, to bring China directly under Russian Military control.75 Though the Chinese were suspicious of


71 Gittings, n. 3, p. 233.


73 Gittings, n. 3, p. 228.

74 Ibid., p. 229.

75 Ibid., p. 230.
Russian designs, they continued to maintain friendly relations with Moscow till 1959, with a hope to acquiring nuclear aid. But the reluctant attitude of the Russians made China to adopt an independent national defence policy.

The above developments made the Russians to withdraw their advisers, technicians and technical equipment. Dissatisfaction with the Russian move, and its soft attitude towards the imperialistic Western block, resulted in China further distancing itself from the former and forced it to adopt a policy of self-reliance. Moreover, to project China's revolutionary image in the international arena, Mao had declared in October 1959 that imperialists and all reactionaries were only 'paper tigers.' He added that "in any war, men not materials are the determining factor." This statement was possibly made by Mao to counter the adverse thinking which might have crept into the minds of the Chinese people due to nuclear threat.

To boost the morale of the commanders and fighters, 'Everyone a Soldier Campaign,' was launched. Along with this, the concept of 'weapons decide everything,' which prevailed among the army men, was bitterly criticised. Marshal Peng Te-huai, who glorified material importance, was bitterly criticised. Finally, at the Central Committee Plenum, at Lushan, in August 1959, when Peng Te-huai and his associates exaggerated the pitfalls of communisation scheme and criticised Mao's military line, serious measures were taken against him and was purged. A new defence minister, Lin Piao, was appointed the same year which gave a new image to the PLA. In a way, Lin Piao's appointment was made, due, in view of his

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76 NCNA, cited in Gittings, n. 36, p. 235.

77 Cheichfang Chunbao, 23 November 1965, cited from Gittings, n. 36, pp. 242-43.


past military record, and due to his leaning towards Mao’s military line, as also to
resolve numerous civil-military differences which were causing undue trouble to
Mao Tse-tung. Added to this it was also the intention to reverse Peng Te-huai’s
military policy. Also, displeasure with Mao was surfacing in the top echelons of the
CCP, where Liu Shao-ch’i had already emerged as a tough rival and presumably
posed a potential threat to his position. ⁸⁰ In fact, Mao was looking for a follower
who could be relied upon at that critical hour.

Immediately after his appointment as the new Defence Minister, Lin Piao
ventured to rebuild and restore Mao’s image in China in particular and in Chinese
Central Asian Regions in general. But the political temperature in China was not
without political campaigns due to Peng Te-huai legacy in the army. To rebuild the
revolutionary traditions of the army the Chinese official media focused its attention,
in the main, to criticise Peng Te-huai. He was charged for leaning towards ‘right
opportunism,’ of exaggerating the economic debate, and for spreading slackness
despondency, dissatisfaction and despair in the Chinese masses by giving a gloomy
picture of the economic failures, while totally belittling its worthy achievements. ⁸¹
Peng Te-huai was condemned for tarnishing the leading position of the CCP and its
general politics and programmes. His military line’s one-sided plan for military
modernisation and professionalism was labelled reactionary, representing the
military line of the warlord class. ⁸² He was also blamed for colluding with Soviet
revisionism and creating disharmony in civil military-relationship.

The tenure of Lin Piao commenced with the responsibility of restoring the
traditional image of the army, he tried to eradicate Peng Te-huai’s influence on it
and rejuvenate the military organisation. A series of campaigns were carried out

⁸⁰ Ellis Joffe, “The Chinese Army in the Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Intervention” Current
Scene (Hong Kong), vol. 8, 7 December, 1970, p. 2.

⁸¹ David A, Charles, “The Dismissal of Marshal Peng De huai,” in Roderick MacFarquhar ed. China
Under Mao (Boston, 1966) and also see Whitson, n. 45, pp. 21-22.

⁸² Whitson, n. 45, pp. 21-22.
immediately. Lin Piao tried to rectify the doctrinal errors and restore the traditional chain of political command.\(^83\) The system of joint leadership of the party commissars and the army commanders was restored. The army was now brought under the control of the CCP. To improve the political and ideological standards of the army an Enlarged Session of the Party's Military Affairs Committee was convened in 1960, the central theme of which was to "fight the ideological battle."\(^84\) It emphasised 'ideological revolutionisation.' Finally, to fight and win a battle, emphasis was laid on human factor.

Military organisation and political consciousness were rated as 'soul' and 'supreme.' It was argued that the political consciousness in the armed forces was the life-line as well as the fundamental guarantor of all kinds of work.\(^85\) In a way, the Enlarged Session of the Party's Military Affairs Committee was a venture to rebuild the past traditional characteristics. Giving effect to the resolution passed in the Military Affairs Committee, efforts were concentrated on improving the armed forces' political and ideological work. The regulations governing the PLA Management and Educational work at company level, in 1961, ventured to restore the traditional commissar-and-commander-joint-leadership in military affairs.\(^86\) In the same year four sets of Regulations on political work in the company level units of the PLA, were released, which basically strengthened the supervision of the party committees.\(^87\)

Several measures, intended to restore the PLA's fighting capability and traditional revolutionary character were taken reiterating the importance of

\(^{83}\) "Cheihfang Chunbao, 18 December 1967. SCMP, no. 4096.

\(^{84}\) "Political Work of the Chinese PLA." NCNA, October 8, 1960, SCMP, no. 2358.

\(^{85}\) "Marshal Lin Piao on Political Work in the Chinese PLA." Renmin Ribao, Cheihfang Chunbao, Joint Editorial, October 8 1960, SCMP, no. 2358.

\(^{86}\) NCNA, 21 November 1961, SCMP, no. 2630.

\(^{87}\) NCNA 5 July 1961, SCMP, no. 2540.
manpower against material superiority. It was argued that “though the role of weapons and technical equipment has been increased in modern warfare, yet the factor which decides the issue of a war is...man power and not...material strength, and this issue depends in the final analysis[,] on man’s courage, consciousness and spirit of sacrifice and one who is tougher on the several dozen square meters of ground.”

Regarding the PLA, Mao said, “Neither the enemy nor the weapon is to be feared, no matter how strong the former and how powerful the latter may be, what is really to be feared is political degeneration. It is impossible to fight battles ably, if the ideological battle is not fought well.” Criticising the prevalent concept of ‘modern warfare is a war of technique of steel and machinery.’ To improve the fighting capacity of the army men, ideological orientation and military training were considered to be most essential. It was asserted that through the political work regulations the CCP restored its political control on the army. It was also asserted that the joint-leadership of commissars and commanders of party committees and political departments were once again restored in the army. An all-PLA conference on political work, convened by the General Political Department in 1963, upheld that in all aspects close attention should be paid to the ‘Four Firsts,’ namely the human factor, political factor, ideological work factor and dynamic thinking.

While executing the political work the soldiers were expected to transform their world outlook by taking note of Mao’s thought and studying their application


91 “Terms of PLA Political Work”, Cheihfang Chunbao, January 22, 1964, Current Background, no. 732, cited in Gittings, n. 3, pp. 245-46.
in life,\textsuperscript{92} to have a thorough knowledge of Mao’s writings and military manuals. They were asked to improve themselves and to foster a broader outlook and take an active part in the three revolutionary movements of class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experiments.\textsuperscript{93} In the countryside campaign, in the five regions the men were told to "Learn from the experience of the PLA in political and ideological work."\textsuperscript{94} The tendency of borrowing from Soviet experience\textsuperscript{95} was bitterly criticised, for it was feared that it might hamper the army’s traditional values.

Revolutionary ethos and egalitarian model within the armed forces were restored through making political work regulations in order to remove the hierarchical order of the professional armies—the system of ranks, awards and insignia, etc.\textsuperscript{96} The rationale for doing so was to eliminate certain factors contributing to breed consciousness and ideas to gain fame and wealth.\textsuperscript{97} The rank and file of the armed personnel were directed to place themselves in the position of ordinary soldiers and ordinary workers, and mould ideologically and expedite the establishing the idea of whole hearted service to the people.

Besides, various distinctions in the army like the mode of address, uniforms and insignia were abolished. However, symbols like similar kind of uniforms with an identical red-star-cap and a red-collar-badge were changed for the officers and soldiers.\textsuperscript{98} To restore the egalitarian character and to narrow the gap between the


\textsuperscript{94} John Gittings, "Learn from the PLA Campaign," *The China Quarterly*, no. 18, March-June, 1964, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{95} George n. 41, p. 206.

\textsuperscript{96} He Long, n. 40, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{97} Whitson, n. 45, p. 33.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., pp. 35-36.
soldiers and officers, as also not to allow bureaucratisation of the army, the rank
and file of the soldiers were referred as comrades. To distinguish the officers at
various levels, terms such as ‘company commander’ ‘platoon leader,’ etc,
symbolising ranks, were used. 99

THE ROLE OF PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY IN THE CULTURAL
REVOLUTION: 1966-69

The People’s Liberation Army (PLA), no doubt, played a crucial role during
the times of domestic crisis in China in general and in Chinese Central Asia
(Ch’inghai, Kansu provinces, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet Autonomous
Regions) in particular. The same was quite conspicuous during the Cultural
Revolution. Ever since Lin Piao took over the command of the PLA, as a minister
of national defence in September 1959, he made every effort to make the PLA an
entirely reliable instrument of party rule over the Chinese mainland.

The discontent which had crept in during 1958-1964 damaged the authority
of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and prestige of Mao Tse-tung. But it was
Lin Piao who succeeded in restoring the same. 100 Due to his efforts the army could
restore control in the industrial and communication sectors in the five regions of
Chinese Central Asia. Upholding army’s importance, it was upheld that the
fundamental aspects of political work in PLA were totally applicable to the
industrial and communication department. 101 With a view to politicising the youth
who were infants to the revolutionary experience, they were urged to learn from the
PLA. 102 The army’s indoctrination campaigns during the preceding five years of

99 Ibid., p. 51.
100 Whitson, n. 45, p. 35-36.
101 Ralph L. Powell “Role of the Military in China’s Transport and Communication System” Current
Scene, 7 February 1972, pp. 5-12.
‘Cultural Revolution’ finally shaped the PLA as an armed league for the implementation of the revolutionary political mission in the forthcoming Cultural Revolution, in general.\(^\text{103}\)

Initially, on 10 November 1965, Shanghai Party Committee member Yao Wenyuan launched an attack\(^\text{104}\) on a historian, Wu Han, who was also the vice-mayor of Peking. Wu Han wrote a drama entitled, "\textit{Hai Jui is dismissed from office}," about an imperial civil servant in Ming dynasty (finally removed from office), who stood up for the interests of the people and restored land to the peasants.\(^\text{105}\) This is clearly analogous to the replacement of former Minister of Defence and opponent of Mao, Peng Te-huai, by Lin Piao. Mao launched ‘Cultural Revolution’ with an attack on Wu Han which initiated the “fire at the anti-party and anti-socialist black front.”\(^\text{106}\) The campaign to study the works of Mao intensified in proportion, and revolutionary mass organisation and revolutionary rebels were established in Chinese Central Asia, to launch attacks “against the men in authority who were criticised for having followed the capitalist-road in the party.”\(^\text{107}\) Mao's ideological differences with Liu Shao-ch'i and the threat of capitalist restoration made the former turn to the PLA to rectify non-responsiveness of the CCP and the civilian bureaucracy. The ‘Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’ (GPCR) did not receive the desired results during its initial phase, contrarily it faced resistance from the opposition group led by Liu Shao-ch'i.


\(^{104}\) For details on the attacks on Wu Han and his play see “The Press Campaign Against Wu Han”, \textit{Current Background}, no. 783, 21 March 1966.


\(^{106}\) Jian Tie, n. 103, p. 17.

Reacting to the resistance of the opposition group, on August 8, 1966, the Central Committee of the CCP stated that this resistance came chiefly from those in authority, who have got into the party in easier way and were now taking the capitalist road. It also added that “such resistance comes from those old forces in society which are very die-hard. At present this resistance is still fairly strong and stubborn, however such resistance will crumble fast once the masses are fully conscious.”108 In his May 7 directives, Mao, laid down a “blue print for building communism,” which enshrined the theoretical ground work for class struggle and emphasised that “every one needs remoulding in the course of building a socialist society.”109 Hence he stressed that the most fundamental requirements in the reform of government organs were to link them with the masses,110 which also applied to the masses of Chinese Central Asia.

The party centre wanted to correct the non-responsiveness of the highly organised civilian bureaucracy in the five regions. It wanted to rectify “[t]hose in the leadership and in the rank and file, who made the revolution possible and remained uncorrupted by the temptations of actual privilege. It is up to them to lead the struggle and to enlist maximum support from the ranks of the unprivileged and uncorrupt. If they do not understand its necessity and fail in this task, then they have to face the danger of reading their country to the capitalist road.”111

The purpose of ‘Cultural Revolution’ was to prepare a new generation of party cadres from among those who lacked revolutionary experience and firm

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ideology, who could be prone to capitalist influences. Thus, to preserve the proletarian character of the party and to save the Chinese society from decay, the main emphasis was laid on the nucleus of the leadership of party and the state at all levels consisting of real proletarian revolutionaries. Campaigns like ‘Learn from the PLA’, ‘Cultivate Successors,’ and ‘Socialist Education’ were launched throughout China including in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia, with a view to nullifying the capitalist influence on the civilian bodies. The mass organisations in the five regions, in general, were directed to “dare supervise the cadres, dare attack the enemy and dare oppose all bad people and bad things.”

The Central Directive to streamline the civilian apparatus and support the GPCR met with resistance and non-responsiveness from the top party leaders. This made the Central leadership to brand the former as divorced from the masses who merely achieved temporary success. Disappointed, Mao turned to the PLA, his traditional power base, to encompass the potential of the Communist Youth League and the educational institutions in the five regions. A fresh campaign was launched in Chinese Central Asian regions, along with the other regions of China, to select youth who could demonstrate ideological conformity and a favourable class stand point to the call of ‘Cultural Revolution.’ The army men and other mass organisations were readily mobilised in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia to intervene in this political tussle, to thwart increasing influence of civilian bureaucracy and also the non-responsiveness of the top party men. The masses in

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113 Ibid.
114 Nu Yaobang, “Raise the Proletarian Consciousness of the Young People to a New Height,” Renmin Ribao, 28 April 1963, SCMP, no. 2985.
115 For details see NCNA, 25 May 1965, Foreign Broadcasting Information Service (hereafter FBIS), no. 110, 25 May 1965, pp. CCCI-CCCI.
these regions, along with those in the main land, were prepared like a military-political instrument that could be used to implement the ‘mass line’ strategy of China’s socio-political transformation.\textsuperscript{118}

The youth in the five regions were inspired to move into action to check the growing tendencies of elitism and professionalism in the politics of civil bodies\textsuperscript{119} and to completely reform the spirit of the existing society.\textsuperscript{120} This was justified by arguing that the destruction of the ‘old order’ was essential to create a new order. It articulated that the capitalist and revisionist elements were inside and outside the party, the government and the army, resting and exploiting their past laurels. These elements were following the bourgeoisie reactionary lines. The toiling masses in the five regions were encouraged to take arms against these forces which were responsible for their political and economic exploitation and to fight relentlessly, the very faulty and corrupting economic system, which was eroding the revolutionary will of the masses.\textsuperscript{121}

The army did not interfere in the mass campaign, for the former thought that it was an intra-party conflict. The same contention continued in the views of the army till the ‘Wu Han’ incident of July 1967.\textsuperscript{122} When the slogan “drag out a handful of capitalist roaders of the army”\textsuperscript{123} was raised, the Red Guard made a


\textsuperscript{118} Current Scene, vol. 4, no. 13, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{119} John W. Lewis, “Revolutionary Struggle and the Second Generation in Communist China,” The China Quarterly, no. 21, January-March 1965, p. 146; and also see Joffe n. 11, pp. 48-60.

\textsuperscript{120} Mao Tse-tung, “The Orientation of the Youth Movement” Selected Works, (Beijing,1968), vol.II, p. 246.


\textsuperscript{122} For details of the Wuhan Incident see Union Research Service, vol. 48, no. 10, 1967, pp. 139-49. and no. 23, pp. 320-334, and also see SCMP, no. 3999, 2 August 1967.

\textsuperscript{123} Whitson, n. 45, p. 374.
direct attack. The Red Guards, in the course of their action, indulged in sabotage, ransom, looting arms, creating lawlessness and made a physical assault on army men in the Chinese Central Asian Regions. The army was called to restore order. The 'Wu Han' incident gave a lethal blow to the Red Guard activities; there was utter confusion in the regions. The masses did not understand the prime motive of mass campaign and freely indulged in unruly activities.

In order to win over the confidence of the army and to rectify the mistakes committed by the Red Guards in the five regions and in the main land in August 1967 "An Enlarged Military Affairs Committee Meeting" was convened and stressed the need to protect the Peoples Army and called upon the Red Guards to halt their assault on the army.\textsuperscript{124} Later, in September 1967, by means of another Central directive, it empowered the armed forces to employ force while dealing with local quarrels and Red Guards. To remove the confusion created as a result of Red Guard activities a new slogan was raised to "protect the army and cherish the people and the same was published."\textsuperscript{125}

Thus one of the important developments in the armed forces after the Wu Han incident was the establishment of Military Affairs Committee; with the result the army was assigned sufficient authority and leadership for the future course of action in Chinese Central Asia, in general, and China proper, in particular. As already stated, in the initial stages of 'Cultural Revolution' the army paid a lukewarm attitude towards mass upsurge and viewed the Red Guard activities as intra-party conflicts. They hence maintained complete non-involvement in the 'Cultural Revolution.' Further, in a number of military regions and military districts in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia, the response of army leaders was ambiguous. Needless to say, as many of them were sympathetic to their immediate civilian officers for some reason or the other, they were not in a position to support

\textsuperscript{124} SCMP, no. 4036, September 1967.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
either. But in some cases they aligned with the provincial political authority in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia.

In retrospect, most of the army men opinioned that their primary task was to maintain law and order in all the five regions. Hence, they neither supported the Red Guard and Revolutionary Rebels nor denounced their activities. But this neutrality did not last long, for the mass campaign geared up and led to unanticipated events. The army at the local levels in the five regions failed to keep intact the political and organisational ties with their immediate authority. Finally, it became a difficult task for them to maintain an attitude of neutrality towards the Cultural Revolution.  

Taking note of the armed forces’ apathy towards Red Guards and rebel forces’ unlawful activities, the central directive of the CCP has remarked, that the so called non-involvement of the army was totally false, for the army was involved long ago. The army should actively support the revolutionary leftists, it was felt. But, by this time, though the army did not involve in the political struggle, the crisis reached a stage were it ceased to maintain any more neutrality.

Mao, upholding the army’s helpless neutrality and reluctance, argued at the Military Affairs Committee Plenum, on 21 January 1967, in which he said, “Originally the army was not to intervene in the ‘Cultural Revolution’.... but now the class struggle has sharpened and the army must support the leftist ... However, it was also remarked that most of the old cadres still do understand the Cultural Revolution.” The Red Guards and the Revolutionary Rebels have intensified their activities in the five region of Chinese Central Asia. Additionally, the developments in the ‘January Revolution,’ took a new turn. Now, the army men were asked to respond positively by intervening in political activities as the principal actors and to

126 Whitson, n. 45, p. 55.

127 SCMP, no. 566, p. 3.
play a decisive role in the game of 'power seizure' which took a new turn by January 1967. At last, now, the PLA accelerated its activities and intervened openly in the Cultural Revolution in the main land and in Chinese Central Asia as well.

It is to be noted that during this period most of the minority regions in Chinese Central Asia were headed by PLA officers. The minority regions in Ch’inghai, Kansu provinces, and in Inner Mongolia, and Sinkiang, Tibet Autonomous Regions experienced an increase in the size of army garrisons. The army now became intimately associated with administration right down to the basic level. For instance, in Inner Mongolia, the army staffed the supply and marketing stores which delivered tea to remote herdsmen. Besides, there was an unprecedented degree of army involvement in decision making. The PLA men, by venturing into the game of ‘power seizure,’ openly supported the revolutionary rebels in the five regions. The Military detachments were despatched to the five regions of Chinese Central Asia to provide, food, logistic support and transport facilities to the Red Guards.128 It is worthy of note that, in general, not less than three lakh soldiers have participated in the first phase of Cultural Revolution. The game of power seizure left the revolutionaries and the Red Guards with innumerable problems from provincial level party and government functionaries during the course of various engagements in the five regions. Though they scored some success in Shanghai to their credit their efforts in other regions were a complete failure. However, problems pertaining to strikes, robberies, traffic interruption and halting of production in the five regions were tackled by the Beijing government.

Realising the magnitude of disorder and chaotic situation the PLA was called upon to help the authorities in the five regions. The Military Control Commission was given full charge of maintaining law and order. After the collapse

128 “The January 21 Directives Ordering the PLA to Suppress Counter Revolutionary and Counter Revolutionary Organisations which Opposed the Proletarian Revolutionary Left.” Current Background, 6 May 1968, p. 49.
of civilian government in Chinese Central Asian Regions, the PLA men were directed to take over the respective governments in the five regions and run the civilian affairs. Further, to restore the production work in regions which had been affected by the reactionary activities, the PLA men were entrusted with the responsibility to administer and supervise the production work. Consequently, armed contingents were mobilised for the above purpose and dispatched to participate in various construction works in both the agricultural and industrial sectors in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia.

The Production and Construction Corps which originated in Sinkiang in the early 1950s were now expanded to other border regions. The Corps were organised by the military, but staffed by hundreds of thousands of Chinese, many of who migrated from urban areas with a view to colonising comparatively desolate areas. For instance, in Sinkiang, the Corps numbered about 500,000. Various Corps projects have enabled as many as 4 million Han Chinese to migrate to Sinkiang. Thus, the Production and Construction Corps was a central factor in the general policy of the Central government to integrate minority regions by diluting the proportion of minority peoples in those regions. 129

In order to train the young revolutionary fighters army instructors were sent to various educational institution, in the minority areas of the five regions. This was aimed at imparting military and ideological training to the young people so that young revolutionaries could turn out to be "more politically mature, to be more experienced to carry on struggle and have a greater organisational skill" 130 Further, the army men were assigned the task of supervising and rectifying the students and young revolutionaries who were in need of disciplinary action. 131 The army, though succeeded in supporting the revolutionaries and establishing the revolutionary committees in four provinces of Heilungkiang, Kweichow, Shansi and Shantang, in

129 Heaton Jr., n.12, p. 184.
130 SCMP, no. 566, 1967, p. 3.
131 NCNA, 2 March 1967, quoted from Joffe, n. 80, p. 5.
the first phase, failed to do the same at a similar pace in some other provisional organs of power.

In the given situation there were reports of acute tension amongst the armed forces along with the regional armed forces of Chinese Central Asia the PLA men were experiencing enormous difficulties in carrying out the game of power seizure. As already noted, the army was entrusted with the twin tasks of supporting the revolutionary masses and maintaining law and order. In many cases the army personnel did not involve themselves in the political activities. In some cases they preferred to confine themselves exclusively the task of maintain law and order.

In Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet administrative areas, the regional commanders neither supported Maoist drive to seize power nor acted against it. But in Ch’inghai and Kansu the regional commanders declined to support Maoist drive to seize power. It is needless to say that the vice commander of the Ch’inghai military district, General Chao Young-fu, used his troops against Maoist-units in February.

On the other hand, the revolutionaries, irritated with the army activities, gave a call to pay for their non-responsiveness in their own coin. In some cases they demanded to pull out a handful of power grabbers in the army. In the meanwhile, to restore harmony between various mass organisations and the army, a new directive was adopted according to which the revolutionary committees were to be shaped on the basis of a triple alliance comprising the ‘Red Guards,’ ‘veteran officials’ and ‘army representatives.’

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THE FORMATION OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES IN THE FIVE CHINESE CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONS

When the 'Cultural Revolution' was in a high tide the first revolutionary committee was formed in the Manchurian province of Heilungkiang on 31 January, 1967. With the result, a new regional power structure appeared, indicating drastic changes. In the beginning these revolutionary committees were expected to act as "temporary supreme organs of power," in which capacity they combined the local and regional leadership of party, administration, economy and mass organisations. Prior to the formation of Heilungkiang committee, the Maoist organisations, in a number of provinces, have involved in violent activities and the same was brought under control by popular resistance which was instigated by local and regional party leadership.

Mao, moved by this resistance, ordered the military to intervene in the power struggle between the Maoists and the anti-Maoists. Though the initial PLA response was not convincing, this was the beginning of a the rise in military influence on the political process in China. On the other hand, the Maoist organisations were trying to evolve new types of committee government in a few administrative areas and established the Shanghai Commune in Shanghai Municipality, in February 1967. It was organised according to the patterns which were followed by the Paris Commune of 1871. Preliminary regulations for this commune provided for the election of leading executives by popular assemblies and for their recall by their respective constituents. This commune system has emerged as a new type of regional and local government. However, it was practised only in Shanghai and Northern Chinese province of Shansi.

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Later, the *Shanghai Commune* withered away and was replaced by the revolutionary committee under the directives of the Beijing authority. On 10 March 1967 the *Hung-Ch'i (Red Flag)* outlined a blueprint for the organisation of revolutionary committees indicating that these organisations had been approved as the basic formula for local and regional take over by Maoist military coalitions: the committee should be based on a "Revolutionary Triple Alliance," consisting of "revolutionary mass organisations" that is the Maoist group, the "local PLA garrisons" and "revolutionary cadres" the pro-Maoist state and party officials.\textsuperscript{135} Later, when the Shansi provincial revolutionary committee was formed on 22 March, the intended general pattern for the revolutionary committees became more visible.

Thus, the establishment of revolutionary committees opposing the commune concept constitutes a factor of moderation which was brought about by the influence of the military. Further, without the PLA, the establishment of revolutionary committees in the provinces of China would not have been possible. It was between 31 January 1967 to 5 September 1968 that the revolutionary committees were established in all of the 29 administrative units of communist China (21 provinces, five autonomous regions and three municipalities). The process of formation of these institutions was organised in three phases.

During the first phase the revolutionary committees were established in municipalities of Shanghai and Peking, and in the provinces of Heilungkiang, Shantung, Kweichow and Shansi. After a brief interval of four months in the second phase they were established in remote western province of Ch'inghai on 12 August,\textsuperscript{136} two and a half months later it was formed in the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia, on 1 November,\textsuperscript{137} and Tientsin Municipality in December 1967.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{135} *Hung-ch'i* (Peking), (Red Flag), no. 5, 1967, quoted from *Domes* n. 133, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{136} *NCNA*, 13 August 1967, quoted from *Domes*, n. 157, p. 114, and also see *China News Summary* (Hong Kong), no 239, 26 September 1968, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{137} *China News Summary* no. 239, p. 14.
From 1968 January the formation of revolutionary committees proceeded on a much quicker pace; there were three in January 1968 (Kiangsi, 5 January; Kansu, 24 January; Honan, 24 January) three in February (Hopeh, 3 February; Hubei, 5 February; Kwangtung, 21 February), three in March (Kirin, 9 March; Kiangsu, 23 March; Chekiang, 24 March), three in April (Hunan, 8 April; Ninghsia, 10 April; Anhwei, 18 April) and three in May (Shensi, 1 May; Liaoning, 10 May; Szechwan, 31 May). After a further interval, three new committees came into being in August (Yunnan, 13 August; Fukien, 19 August; Kwangsi, 26 August). On 5 September with the simultaneous establishment of revolutionary committees in the autonomous region of Tibet and Sinkiang, a new type of power finally came into existence in all the administrative units at the provincial level. By and large, it can be said that the process of revolutionary committee formation ground to a halt in summer 1967. It suggests that there is a difference in the organisation of the six 'old committees' formed during the first four months of that year and the 23 committees organised after August 1967.

Now, coming to the first phase (January to July 1967) of establishing revolutionary committees, it pertained to provinces of Heilungkiang, Shantung, Shansi, Kweichow and Shanghai and Beijing municipalities. Dealing with these places is beyond the scope of the present chapter, for the focus is on Chinese Central Asia i.e; Ch'inghai, Kansu provinces and Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions. Revolutionary committees in Ch'inghai, Inner Mongolia and Kansu were formed in the second phase and the same were formed in Tibet and Sinkiang in the third phase.

138 China News Summary, no 239, p.2.
THE SECOND PHASE OF ESTABLISHING REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES AUGUST 1967- MARCH 1968

The second wave in the process of establishing revolutionary committees commenced in August 1967 and concluded in March 1968, with important changes in the central military leadership. During this period PLA participation in the formation of the new power organs presents the following scenario.

FORMATION OF CH’INGHAI PROVINCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

The political temperature in Ch’inghai was rather confused during the early months of 1967. The deputy-Commander of the Ch’inghai Military District, Chao Yung-tu used the gloomy political situation in February to seize power in the provincial capital of Sining, after serious riots, during which about 200 people were wounded. Chao Yung-tu, after assuming the provincial leadership, sent a distorted cable to Beijing but the Beijing authorities realised that the former was using his troops against Maoist units in February and working against their leadership. They, therefore, issued an order to reinstate General Liu Hsieu Chu’uan, the former Military District Commander. Liu Hsieu-Ch’uan’s case was unsettled despite the central authorities’ directive. Liu, on 12 August, 1967, won back his control after three months. Chao Yung-tu was finally overthrown and a revolutionary committee was formed with Liu as Chairman. Military participation in this process was obviously decisive and in the standing committee four out of nine members were military men.

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139 Domes. n. 133, p. 122.
141 Asahi Shimbun and Yomiuri, 27 April 1967, cited from Domes, n.133, p. 122.
142 NCNA, 13 August 1967, quoted from Domes, n.133, p. 122.
BACKGROUND OF CH’INGHAI PROVINCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| CHAIRMAN |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Liu Hsien-ch’uan | Commander of Ch’inghai Provincial Military District (CMD). |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chang Chiang-lin</td>
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<tr>
<th>VICE CHAIRMAN</th>
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<tr>
<td>Liu Ming-ch’ien</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ma Chi-wen</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing Committee members of joint committee of “August 18,” Rebels in Ch’inghai Cultural and Health systems. Responsible member, joint committee of “August 18” Rebels of Ch’inghai Industry and communication front</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wang Chung-shan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing member of Red Guards congress of Ch’inghai “August 18” rebels.</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hsueh Hung-fu</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Secretary of CCP’s Ch’inghai Provincial Committee</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ta Lo</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Tibetan, Vice President of the Stock breeding and Veterinary College of the Ch’inghai University</td>
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<th>Ting Hung-Kuo</th>
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<td>Background obscure</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hsu Chao-li</td>
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</table>

FORMATION OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE IN INNER MONGOLIAN AUTONOMOUS REGION

Since the year 1949, Ulanfu, the most prominent and influential political figure in Inner Mongolia, had concurrently occupied the position of Chairman of the Regional Government, First Secretary of the regional party committee, commander of the region’s Military Area and Mongolia First Political Commissar. Towards the end of 1966 Ulanfu came under the attack from the

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143 *China News Summary*, 26 September, no.239, April-December 1968, pp. 13-14.

144 Dreyer, n.22, p. 211.

145 Ibid., and also see Domes, n. 133, p. 122.
Maoists as a staunch supporter of Liu Shao-ch'i. In January 1967 a Beijing wall newspaper accused Ulanfu of backing anti-Maoists, in a speech calling for "Mongolia for the Mongols." The paper also mentioned about the pitched battle in the offices of the *Inner Mongolia Daily* between the Maoists and anti-Maoists, the latter supported by PLA troops armed with rockets, artillery and machine guns. Finally, on April 13, the party Central Committee in Beijing handed down a "decision on the handling of the Inner Mongolia Question." It also criticised the military for its suppression of the leftists. Now, to get things under control, a Deputy commander of the Beijing Military Area General T'eng Hai-Ch'ing, was sent to Inner Mongolia and he was finally successful.

Later, at a mass meeting in Huhehot, in late May, T'eng Hai-Ch'ing announced the formation of a preparatory Team for a Revolutionary Committee under his leadership. But the situation required further control of T'eng in the region. On 29 August, it was reported that PLA unit No. 4628 had been sent to Inner Mongolia to support the left. This unit finally succeeded in the overcoming the opposition and creating a coalition of the various factions within Maoists group. When an acceptable level of stability was achieved, on 1 November, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Regions Revolutionary Committee was formally inaugurated with T'eng Hai-Ch'ing as the Chairman.

Simultaneously, Central control over Inner Mongolia was tightened by abolishing its military area, which became a military district within the Beijing

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146 Quoted from Dreyer, n.22, p. 211.


148 For details of the text see *Current Background*, No. 852, pp. 118-119.

149 *Jen-min Jih-Pao*, 1 July 1967, quoted from Domes, n. 133, p. 122.


151 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 212.
Military Area. Among the 19 members on the Standing Committee, seven were military men, seven revolutionary cadres and five representatives of Maoist organisations.\footnote{Domcs, n. 133, p. 123.} In retrospect, the army maintained its prominence.\footnote{Dreyer, n. 22, p. 212.} On the other hand, except Wang Tsai-t’ien, all the Mongols associated with Ulanfu were purged, including K’uei Pi, Chi Ya-t’ai and Wang To. The revolutionary committee contained no Mongols among the top leaders and there were apparently only two Mongols on the committee as a whole, Wang Tsai-t’ien and Paojihletai.\footnote{Ibid., p. 213.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BACKGROUND OF INNER MONGOLIA AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS</strong> \footnote{China News Summary, n. 143, pp. 14-15.}</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAIRMAN</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teng Hai-ch’ing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VICE CHAIRMEN</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wu T’ao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kao chin-ming</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ch’uan Hsing-yuan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Li Shu-teh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hao Kuang-teh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chao Chen-Poi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kao Shu-hua</td>
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<td>Wang Chin-Pao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yang Wan-hsiang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chou Wen-hsiao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lei Tai-fu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuo Yi-Ch’ing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shih K’o</td>
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<td>Jen Chia-Chi</td>
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FORMATION OF KANSU PROVINCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE

During the early months of 1967 the PLA units stationed in Kansu did not show any positive response to the Maoist’s-call for supporting the left. On the contrary, according to Beijing wall posters, on 26 April 1967, when the revolutionary rebel organisations took control of the premises of provincial newspaper, in April, the army units headed by the Deputy commander of the Lanchow Military Area, General Yang Chia-Jui, expelled them by force.\(^{156}\) To re-establish the coordination of local military policies with that of the Centre, the commander of the military area, General Chang Ta-Chih, and the area’s First Political Commissar, Hsien Heng-Han, met Chang and Hsien in Beijing.

The above talks enabled the local military leaders to gain a free hand in dealing with the competing groups of revolutionary rebels in Kansu. Finally, on 10 May, the military leadership combined the four rebel groups to form the “Third Headquarters of the Kansu Red Rebels.” And, on 6 August, 1967, it was said that Hsien has secured three more decisions about the situation in Kansu from the Centre, which stated that all organisations should co-operate with the provincial military leadership, the PLA should only support the “Third Head Quarter,” which they themselves had established and a preparatory team should be formed with the PLA garrison as its centre.\(^{157}\) Finally, due to the delay by the Centre for its approval, the revolutionary committee could be formed only on 4 January, 1968. The revolutionary committee was chaired by Hsien Heng-han and there was only

\(^{156}\) *Asahi Shimbun*, 27 April 1967, quoted from Domes, n. 133, p. 125.

\(^{157}\) Domes, n. 133, p. 125.
one revolutionary cadre, one representative from the mass organisations on the standing committee, and out of 11 members nine were military men. 158

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<tr>
<th><strong>BACKGROUND OF KANSU PROVINCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAIRMAN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>VICE CHAIRMAN</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS</strong></td>
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**THE THIRD PHASE OF ESTABLISHING REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES: APRIL-SEPTEMBER 1968**

The revolutionary committees in Sinkiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions were formed during the third and last phase, between April and September 1968. Throughout the winter of 1967-68, despite army efforts to forge coalition of competing mass organisations and to establish revolutionary committees, army unity remained questionable. This became obvious when the Central authorities announced at a rally in Beijing on 27 March 1968, the purge of the Acting Chief of General Staff, Yang Ch'eng-wu, Yu Li-chin, First Political Commissar of the Airforce and Tu Ch'ung-Pi, the Beijing Garrison Commander, 160 which was accomplished on 24 March. Yang was accused of having attempted to create factionalism in the PLA by appointing his trusted lieutenants to command positions

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159 China News Summary, n. 143, p. 17.

160 NCNA. 27 March 1968, cited from Domes, n. 133, p. 132.
within the area commands, and of preparing to overthrow five of the major military area commanders.

This top level shake up draws us towards three broad conclusions. First, the accusations against Yang may be valid, and once Lin Piao became aware of the ‘factions’ activities of his trusted aide he broke with him and personally led this purge. Second, Lin Piao, in order to placate and gain the support of the powerful and influential military area commanders, may have fired Yang and appointed one of their own members in his place. In this account, Yang may have been the victim of a deal between the Central authorities and the regional leaders. Third, the area commanders may have forced Lin Piao to drop Yang, who was venturing to erode their positions of power, so that his own or Lin Piao’s indiscipline resulted in his victimisation by the area commanders. Be that as it may, the fact that one of the senior area commanders, Huang Yung-sheng, was appointed as Yang’s successor, while at the same time he retained his command post in canton, which strongly suggests that the second or the third of the above conclusions may be more valid than the first. 161

The above tentative conclusion is reinforced by the fact that, in his attack on Yang, Lin Piao paid heedful attention to the indignities suffered by the area commanders. In this context, out of the ‘ten crimes’ of which Yang was accused one is worthy of note. He had allegedly instructed Wang Li and other leaders of the extreme left wing to attack reliable military leaders of Mao, such as Hsu Shih-yu, Huang Yung-sheng, Han Hsien-Ch’u Ch’en, Hsi-lien and others, 162 with the help of the military area commanders. The drive for revolutionary committee formation in the remaining administrative units continued after the purge of Yang Ch’eng-wu. For the purpose of analysis, the revolutionary committees of Sinkiang and Tibet are

161 Domcs. n. 133, p. 132.

162 Chu-Ying tung-fang hung (Pearl River East is Red), (Peking), in Chinese Communist Affairs: Facts and Feature (Taipei), vol.1, no. 17, p. 18.
separated here from those formed since August 1967, with a view to finding out whether there was any recognisable change in military participation between the two periods.

FORMATION OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE IN SINKIANG AUTONOMOUS REGION

Since 1949, General Wang En-mao was the commander of the PLA, stationed in Sinkiang. In 1955 he assumed the positions of First Secretary of the regional party committee and First political commissar in his own military area. Wang's continuation of office till summer 1968 despite violent attacks from Maoist organisations, is amply clear from the fact that his position in Sinkiang was definitely strong. Wang, for a long time declined to participate in the formation of the revolutionary committee, and, limited the activities of the revolutionary rebels might have also supported Wang's posture.

Further it is also possible that Wang's subordinate commanders also supported him so that Beijing would be forced to replace him by a supposedly more loyal general, which finally became congenial in August 1968. General Lung Shu-Chin, the then commander of the Hunan Military District, was directed to Urumchi to replace Wang Lung and was responsible for bringing collaboration between Sinkiang Military and mass organisation for the formation of revolutionary committee, which was nevertheless, a compromise between Lung and the local forces. And finally, to complete the formation of revolutionary committees in China's 29 administrative units, on September 5 a revolutionary committee of Sinkiang was formed.

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163 Domes, n. 133, p. 141.

164 China News Summary, n. 143, p. 2.
Lung Shu-Chin, who had Lin Piao’s support, was appointed as the chairman, and was a member of Lin Piao’s Fourth Field Army. Lung also assumed the position as the commander of Sinkiang Military District. Wang, who had been associated with the First Field Army, was demoted to vice-chairmanship of the revolutionary committee. Saifudin, the former regional administrative leader, was appointed as vice-Chairman. On the standing committee, there were eight military men, of whom seven belonged to the old regional military leadership, five were revolutionary cadres and four were representatives of mass organisations. In the present context, it is worthy of note that among 17 members of this standing committee, there were only two who originated from the national minorities which still accounted for more than 80 percent of the region's population.  

| BACKGROUND OF SINKIANG UIGHUR AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **CHAIRMAN**                   |                                                                                                 |
| Lung Shu-chin                  | Former Commander of Hunan Provincial Military Revolutionary District and First Vice Chairman of Hunan revolutionary Committee |
| **VICE CHAIRMAN**              |                                                                                                 |
| Kuo P’eng                      | Deputy Commander of Sinkiang Military Region (SMR)                                                |
| Saifudin                       | Deputy Commander of SMR and Chairman of Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional People's Council.  |
| Wang En-mao                    | Former First Secretary of CCP's Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Regional Committee.                   |

165 *Current Scene*, vol. 7, no. 5, 19 March 1969, p. 11.
166 Whitson, n.38, p.297.
167 Domes, n. 133, p. 141; and also see Dreyer. n.22, p.217
168 Whitson, n.38, p. 118.
169 *NCNA*, Urumchi, 6 September 1968. *SCMP*, no. 4256, pp. 17-20, and also see Domes n.133, p. 141, and also see Dreyer n. 22, p. 217.
170 Domes, n. 133, p. 141.
commander and political commissar of SMR: member of the secretariat of CCP's Northwest Bureau

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P’ei chou-vu</td>
<td>Deputy Political Commissar of SMR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li ch’uan-ch’un</td>
<td>Responsible person (possibly the Commanders) of PLA unit 7335 (an Air force Unit) Stationed in Sinkiang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Li-Yeh</td>
<td>Background Obscure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hu Liang - ts’ai</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tzu Ya</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Chu-lun</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
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FORMATION OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE IN TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGION

Towards the beginning of 1967, the former commander of the Tibet Military area, General Chang Kuo-hua, despite the demonstrations by revolutionary rebels in Lhasa, succeeded in maintaining public order. But with the onset of more Radical Rebel Headquarters attacks on Chang, towards the end of January, the Rebel Headquarters announced that it had seized power in the region. It was at this crucial juncture, when the Central authorities had charged Chang with solving the problems in Szechwan, violent factional conflicts flared up in the region. The major factional leaders were Chou jen-shang, Acting First secretary of the regional party committee since May 1967 and the Deputy political commissar of the military area, Jen Jung.

Now it was the erstwhile subordinates of Chang who succeeded in suppressing the Rebel Headquarters during the ‘February adverse current.’ The military, receiving orders from Jen Jung, who had been deputy commissar of the Tibet Military Region under Chang, stepped hard on “anarchist thinking,” and

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172 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 219. and also see SCMP, no.219, p.223.

173 SCMP, no. 219, p. 23.

174 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 219.
proved to be more successful. But the newly appointed military commander of the region tried to keep the PLA forces detached from factional strife in the region. Chou Jen-shang, who was dismissed from the post of party secretary committed suicide in late 1967 but the supporters of his faction remained active. Finally, General Tseng, after eight months, forged a grand alliance among the competing factions only after the CCP's Central Committee issued directives. Jen Jung made appeals and warnings to the factional groups at the behest of Chou En-lai, Chen Po-ta, and K'ang Sheng.

Finally, on 5 September, 1968, a revolutionary committee for Tibet Autonomous Region was inaugurated, apparently by a fiat from Beijing and, as in Sinkiang, the whole revolutionary committee was installed the same day, without even the formality of a preparatory committee. Tseng, who was of the Fourth Field Army, and a close associate of Lin Piao, and a more acceptable candidate to the radicals than Jen Jung was named Chairman of the committee. Jen Jung was made the first vice-Chairman among the 13 vice-Chairmans of the revolutionary committee. Among 27 members the standing committee, 12 represented different factions of mass organisations, while 10 were military men, and five were revolutionary cadres. It is interesting to note that though 90 percent

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175 Domes, n. 133, p. 141.
176 CCP's Central Committee Directives of September 1967, in Summary of China Mainland Magazine (hereafter SCMM), Hong Kong, no. 622, p. 2.
177 For details of "Important Instructions of Premier Chou En-Lai, Chen Po-ta, Kang Sheng and other On The Question Of Tibet" 6 June 1968, SCMM, no. 622, p. 2.
178 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 219.
179 Whitson, n. 38, p. 197.
180 Whitson, n. 38, p. 197.
181 See the "Cable to Chiang Ching and Others from the United Headquarters of the Tibetan Proletarian Revolutionary Union," Chinese Communist Affairs, Facts and Figures (Taipei) vol. 1, no. 1. 1 November 1967, pp. 22-23.
of the population are Tibetan in the region, there were only four Tibetans in the new ruling group of the region. They were the perennial Ngapo Ngwang Jigme and Thubten Nima, Tsering Lamu and Pa Sang. 183

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<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND OF TIBET AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS184</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAIRMAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tseng Yung-ya</td>
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<tr>
<td>VICE CHAIRMEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jen Jung</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pa sang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheng Ming-Yi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Commander of TMR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liao Pu-yun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Tung-sheng</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miao Pi-yi</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-Pei A-wang-chin-mei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tao Chang-sung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Shao-ming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu-teng-ni-ma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chu Ching-shang</td>
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<td>Ma Jui-hua</td>
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<td>Tsu-jen-la-mu</td>
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Now, it is evident that the role of the military in the process of establishing revolutionary committees has been very vital in all the three autonomous regions and two provinces. However, there is a certain degree of PLA’s involvement in the five regions which we have already discussed. They were practically created by the PLA garrison forces or other military units. Further, it seems appropriate to introduce further differentiation of the analysis of military participation in the process of revolutionary committee-formation. There are, first, the areas in which

183 NCNA (Lhasa), 6 September , 1968, SCMP, no. 4256, pp. 13-16 and also see China News Summary, n. 143, pp. 43-44.

184 China News Summary, n. 167, p. 43.

185 China News Summary, n. 182, p. 3.
the commanders after reluctantly imposing disciplinary measures on Maoist organisations, agreed to take part in the formation of the committees. Second, the areas in which the revolutionary committees were formed only after new commanders had been appointed.

In this respect, a review of developments in various provinces demonstrates the following picture. Tibet falls in the first category, while Ch’inghai, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang fall in the second category. Thus, one can conclude that PLA participation was crucial in the second and third phases of establishing revolutionary committees. Further, the purge of Yang Ch’eng-wu and his associates, in late March 1968, did not bring about any major change. However this does not apply to the amount of military representation on the committees at the time of their formation. For, during the second and third phase of establishing revolutionary committees, the military men dominated the standing committees.186

An analysis of the above contents, with respect to the role of army in the formation of revolutionary committees, leads us to three basic conclusions. First, when Mao and Lin Piao, in their joint order of 23 January, 1967, urged the army to support the leftist forces, the military’s response was ambiguous. Most of the regional military leaders refused to render support to Maoist factions. In order to bring about a change in the army’s attitude, the Central authorities were forced to press for moderation. Second, in most of the administrative units the approval of the army for establishing revolutionary committee could only be achieved by agreeing to the disciplinary measures against the extreme left and by conceding the leading role of the army in the newly formed power organs. Third, since August 1967, the participation of army in establishing revolutionary committees has became predominant. This fact makes us to conclude that, for all practical purposes, the most important result of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ has been a military take over in

all but a few Chinese provinces. The army, though succeeded in establishing the revolutionary committees in the areas in Chinese Central Asian regions, failed to do the same with immediate effect in other areas in mainland China.

As already stated, there was a lot of ambiguity among the people and civil military-circles regarding the continuation of ‘Cultural Revolution.’ Now, it entered a new stage, whereby a call was given for shaking up the bureaucracy in all the five regions. At such a time, life in China was becoming privatised, especially among the career conscious youth, to the neglect of social responsibilities, and an admiration for the material achievements. Further, “the supposedly freer ways of the affluent capitalist societies had grown an abyss, had opened up between the styles of life and the modes of thought of the leading stratum on the one hand and the still poor and toiling masses on the other.”

If the given political scenario in China is analysed the continuation of ‘Cultural Revolution’ is justifiable to a large extent, for “Mao and his colleagues were realistic enough to know that it would be long before China could hope to wipe out substantial inequalities. The chief targets of attack in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ were the privileged ones, who were misusing their power to promote special and private interests... “The method of dealing with them was not terror (selectively) wielded by a secret police....but the mobilisation of certain number of under privileged and particularly the young men, who have not yet been exposed to the temptations of privilege and power.”

Hence, “if the privileged stratum could be contained and controlled and the young men won for the revolution .... then the country could be kept away from taking the capitalist road for at least one or a few more generations, while economic

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187 SCMP, no. 4063, 22 September 1967.
188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
development brings closer the day when general abundance will make possible the real elimination of inequality and any special privilege.\textsuperscript{190} The official directive on the army and the party affairs on May 7, 1967, reiterated that “we still have to wage prolonged and protracted struggle against the bourgeois and the petty bourgeois ideology. It really is wrong not to understand this plain fact and to give up the ideological struggle.”\textsuperscript{191} “All erroneous ideas, all poisonous weeds and all ghosts and monsters, must be subjected to criticism. In no circumstances they should be allowed to spread unchecked.”\textsuperscript{192} Thus, the ‘May 7’ directive has upheld the prolonged and protracted struggle against the bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology.

The Beijing leadership’s displeasure with the cultural front in the five regions was directed against the ‘four olds’ which were badly infecting the Chinese socialist society. The leadership wanted to replace these ‘four olds’ with ‘four new’ ones. The old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits constituted the four olds of the traditional exploiting classes. The army’s and Red Guards’ involvement in the Chinese Central Asian Regions during the ‘Cultural Revolution,’ was justified on the grounds that it was meant to repudiate and liquidate its influence on the socialist society. However, the army and Red Guards, by participating in the ‘Cultural Revolution,’ were to glorify the new proletarian ideology, culture, customs and habits to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in the five regions.

To accomplish the above efforts and to restore mutual understanding between the mass organisations and the armed forces, the Central directive stressed to lay trust in and rely on the masses, the army, and and rely on the integrity of the

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 15-16.


cadres. Additionally, the official media was alerted to call upon mass organisations to support the army and cherish the people. At the same time the army was ordered to change its antagonistic behaviour towards the crisis-ridden state of affairs in the 'Cultural Revolution.'

The Beijing leadership, in its 'May 7' directive, launched a two week rectification campaign to ease tensions between the army and the revolutionary left. The main theme envisaged in this directive was the rectification of the preceding errors through criticism. Soldiers were asked to win over the confidence of the proletarian revolutionaries in the five regions and in China proper, who had previously wronged. Besides, it was also aimed at building the army as a great school for the whole Chinese society to popularise the revolutionary thoughts of Mao. By 1968 the army succeeded in all its entrusted tasks and established a firm hold on all the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. It also succeeded in wiping out the strong institutionalised-party apparatus at the Centre and in all the five regions. In a way this facilitated the strengthening of the civil-military authority at the hands of the army.

In fact, even after the army's intervention in the 'Cultural Revolution,' and its leaders' subsequent assumption of control in the all five regions, the army did not initially seek political power through a coup, as the military had done in many developing countries. Rather, till August 1967, the army got more and more involved in the political affairs, largely against its will, and in many respects power came to it by default. If analysed in the same vein, "... the PLA did not intervene in the Cultural Revolution against the wishes of the political leadership, but was

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193 People's Liberation Army and Cultural Revolution Renmin Ribao, (Peoples Daily) Beijing, 2 January 1967. SCMP. no. 3862.


rather brought into the political arena by this leadership itself."\textsuperscript{196} Added to this, "it did not intervene as a result of disaffection with the civilian regime or with the desire to safeguard its sectional interests against encroachment by the civilians either."\textsuperscript{197}

The PLA "first moved into the political arena, not in order to pressurise, displace or supplant the political leadership as represented by Mao's group, but rather to aid it in an intra-party conflict. Finally, the army did not grab power in a coup, but rather power gravitated to it in the course of a protracted process which was neither planned nor predicted by the army's high command. The army men with the tenacity and will-power of a true revolutionary replaced material resources with the ethics of human spirit, technology with activism, merit with virtue and organisation with ideology.\textsuperscript{198}

Besides the army's significant role, the Beijing leadership proudly acclaimed the achievements of the army and followed them by applying a new 'mass line' and mobilised hundreds of millions of people to cleanse the revisionist and bureaucratically entrenched superstructure.\textsuperscript{199} The army's involvement in the 'Cultural Revolution' enabled it to emerge as the most powerful force in the Chinese political life. The mass upsurge and the 'seizure of power' campaigns enhanced both the power and prestige of the army. It is noted that in the 23 revolutionary committees, out of the 46 chairmen and vice chairmen, 36 or 81 percent were high ranking regional or provincial army officers. As of September 1968, 95 or a little more than 43 percent of the 220 chairmen and vice-Chairmen of


\textsuperscript{197} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{199} \textit{The Role of People's Liberation Army Fifth Working Session} (Beijing, 1969), vol.1, p.157.
China’s entire 29 provincial level revolutionary committees were military men, with 20 of them holding the post of Chairman.\textsuperscript{200}

From the ‘seizure of power movement’ one significant outcome was, during 1949-52, the PLA personnel had run China’s provinces through military and administrative committees. The circumstances in the post-1967 period did not favourably compare with those of the earlier period. By 1954, with the consolidation of communist control over the mainland and the establishment of civilian administrative institutions, the military administrators of provinces handed over their political responsibilities over to the civilian party or government officials and returned to the barracks.

However, since 1967, the military administrators in Chinese Central Asia, like in other provinces, had shown no sign of willingness to transfer political authority to the civilians, even though the turmoil of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ had come to an end and there was a fair degree of order throughout the country. After the ‘Cultural Revolution’ the newly built power structure was cut and dried in contrast to the earlier take over of power. The official documentary evidence clearly indicated that the composition of the new provincial party committees which were constituted between December 1970 and August 1971, showed that military representation was quite large.

The above fact is clear from statistics. Out of 158 individuals holding the ranks of first secretary, second secretary and assistant secretary, in the summer of 1971, 95 or 60 percent were military officers; 53 or 33.5 percent were civilian party or government cadres; and 10 or 6.4 per cent were mass representatives. And, of the 29 first secretaries, 21 were military men of whom 11 were concurrently military commanders; nine were professional political commissars, and one

\textsuperscript{200} Parris Chang, n.195, p.70.
commander of the public security forces, and the remainder were civilian party officials.201

Be that as it may, in the final analysis, it can be said that Mao used the PLA as an instrument and a guide for action, according to his ideological belief and revolutionary dynamism, to save the Chinese society from developing the tendencies of bureaucratism, factionalism and hierarchical order. Mao succeeded by taking the help of the armed forces, as a last resort, in replacing the centralised party bureaucracy with decentralised and diffused mass organisation.202

THE ROLE OF PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY IN THE POST CULTURAL REVOLUTION: 1970-76

THE ROLE OF PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY 1970-73

As it is amply clear from the preceding analysis, the army's role in GPCR has improved its stature in all the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. But one should not forget that its involvement in every walk of life during the 'Cultural Revolution' has hampered the power structure built during the previous decade. The army stepped into civilian affairs because the government machinery was badly paralysed, but, this in turn, has effected the leading positions of the civilian organisations and the party. The army officials now started undermining the supremacy of the party. This resulted in a rupture in the civil-military relationship.

Added to the above, the Red Guards' activities paralysed the party machinery and bureaucratic set up. The military officials in the echelons of power, by infusing themselves into civilian affairs, seized the opportunity to emerge as the mainstay of the dictatorship of the proletariat.203 In order to comply with the

201 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
203 "Army Building." Renmin Ribao, 3 August 1976, SCMP, no. 6157.
Central directives of the party, the army intervened to restore law and order in the disturbed areas. This, in fact, has furthered their influence to consolidate their position. As far as the provincial revolutionary committee was concerned, for the sake of administrative arrangement, the CCP’s Military Affairs Committee directed the army to participate in the ‘three support’ and ‘two military’ campaigns. But the Beijing government did not realise that this venture would further enable the army to gain ground and achieve a grip over the day-to-day domestic affairs in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. After going through the preceding events, now it is to insult the reader by saying that the army had practically gained control over the complete nation.

The provinces now started experiencing the army's overarching presence in their areas of revolutionary committees in the Chinese Central Asian Regions. The army contingents were sent to the five regions irrespective of the presence of revolutionary committees. The state of affairs was in utter chaos due to the absence of proper law and order. Once again, complying with the Central Committee of the Party directives, the army started paying more attention to the national policy of seizing the revolution and promoting production. The army was also directed to put an end to any possible ‘armed struggle’ and ‘internal strife’ and to restore the disrupted systems of communication and means of transport. This responsibility gave additional power to the army.

The provincial civilian machinery was badly disturbed in the five regions. And, due to lack of proper co-ordination between the Central organs and the provincial and regional bodies, the party machinery was not on sound footing. Added to this, various prominent military and political alliances with their factional interests, that germinated during the preceding half decade, were pre-occupied in defending their own group interests. In fact, they viewed themselves as a separate


205 For details Ibid.
entity, like independent islands, ignoring national interests. In pursuit of their group interests there took place open splits and clashes among various groups resulting in total chaos. Riddled with selfishness and lack of farsightedness they cared only for their own group interest. In most of the provinces the administrative machinery was slack and unstable. In general, the state of affairs was in chaos.\textsuperscript{206}

In the above given state of affairs, most of the normal state apparatus in all the five regions, including the main land was effected.\textsuperscript{207} Later, it was realised that the army’s selfish viewpoints made it to ignore the Central directives and it executed the ‘three supports,’ and ‘two military’ programmes to suit its group interests. This has disturbed the administrative machinery and chaotic conditions prevailed in all walks of life. Locally stationed army contingents did not agree with the party’s central committee directives. They obeyed them outwardly but violated most of them without the knowledge of the party. The army’s displeasure was coupled with the problem of executing Central directives towards ensuring support for the left policy.

The armed forces at the local level in Ch’inghai, Kansu, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet made frequent attacks on some group or the other with a view to befriending and pleasing particular factions. Added to this, to attack and weaken their rival factions the concerned army units were said to have distributed guns and ammunition to their supporters, with whom they were politically aligned. These developments led to open factional rivalries and frequent clashes. It was reported that loot, plunder and fear of death became the order of the day.\textsuperscript{208} There was no co-ordination between the army units and the people who were responsible for the revolutionary mass organisation in the five regions. These intra-party conflicts badly

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{208} Joint editorial by Renmin Ribao (Peoples Daily) and Hongqi (Red Flag), (Beijing). Cheihfang Chunbao, China Topics, Year Book 538. (Rectification -43). 18 November, 1969, p.3-5.
affected the healthy atmosphere among various army units. The Beijing government, now realising the magnitude of the problem, warned the army personnel indulging in factional feuds and disturbing the normal day-to-day functioning of the state machinery. The military affairs committee of the CCP was directed to uphold its authority throughout the length and breadth of the country.

With the efforts of army personnel, towards the end of 1969, preparations were made for the Ninth Congress of the CCP with an objective to streamline the civilian bodies throughout the length and breadth of the country. But it should be noted that the army had already established its stronghold in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia and over the Central organs of the civilian power structure. The Ninth Congress of the CCP gave more representation for the army than they actually would have got. The military group led by Lin Piao emerged as a strong political force in the civil-military bodies. This, in turn, enhanced the army's authority in the party, civilian organs and the government.

Realising the upper hand gained by the army over the party and the former's role in achieving that position of authority, Mao, on September 12, 1971, told his local comrades that "the five traditions of ... unified leadership... and the primacy of the party controlling the gun had been undermined by the primacy's enhanced position of power."209 Despite, the Ninth Congress of the CCP efforts in establishing the local party committees in Ch'inghai, Kansu, Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia and Tibet, between November 1970 and August 1971, the army's domination had no challengers.210

The army's proportional representation in the provincial party committee leadership rose when compared to that in January 1967 and September 1968.211


211 China News Analysis, no. 434, 7 September 1972, p. 10.
Leaving aside this fact, the army was established by the party with a view to making the former a faithful servant of the latter. But it was due to the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and subsequent mass upheaval that the army failed to stand up to the expectations of the party and jeopardised the latter’s position itself. Besides, after fulfilling its responsibilities on the civilian front, such as the party apparatus and government bodies at various levels, it turned out to be a very difficult task for the civilian leadership and party to convince the army to return to the barracks.

Before turning attention to the details of restoration of army-party relationship, a quick look at the emergence of the army as a dominant element in the civilian power structure may not be out of place. For this purpose, the circumstances that enabled the army to seize opportunity and enhance its position need to be understood. Military power in China was divided among the four major field armies. During 1970s the top brass, who were already holding command over their respective regions, easily succeeded in concentrating power in their own hands. This, in turn, helped them to control their respective areas and to build their power bases. These army commanders became instrumental in influencing the political developments from their bases.

The Four Field armies were under the control of Marshal Peng Te-huai, Lin Piao and their stooges. The First Field army under Marshal Peng Te-huai covered Shensi, Kansu, Ningxia, Ch’inghai and Sinkiang in North western China. The Second Field army was under the control of Marshal Lin Piao covered Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang provinces in the North eastern part of China, and Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Tibet in south-western part of China. The Third Field army was under the control of Marshal Chen Yi covered Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui provinces in eastern part of China. Finally, the Fourth Field army was led by

212 Joffe, n. 80, pp. 1-14.
Marshal Lin Piao who controlled Hebei, Hunan, Shandong, Guangxi provinces in south central parts of China. These Four Field armies created their own civil-military power bases to suit their requirements. The army heads of the thirteen military regions, the twenty odd military districts and scores of garrisons, formed the most dominant power groups in China's five autonomous regions, in which most of the national minorities reside.

It is to be noted that depending upon the strategic location and geopolitical significance, the concerned military region had its unique importance and say in national defence, security and politics. The officers in each of the field army, by virtue of their authority, were responsible to execute policy matters. But there remained an element of personal interest and external influence due to their allegiance to one particular political group or the other. At the same time it has become impossible to challenge the concerned military official when he failed to act according to the directives of the Central, Provincial or civil authorities.

The Ninth Party Congress partly deliberated the question of Mao's succession. A majority of the leaders who attended this Congress had military background. The outcome was not surprising—it manifested in the domination of the army at provincial and regional levels in Chinese Central Asia and in the mainland. Additionally, the idea of making Lin Piao as the successor of Mao generated discontent, competition and mutual distrust among the top leadership, irrespective of their case for or against the decision. Lin Piao's faction seized the opportunity to grab as much power as possible. It is to be noted that about 700 provincial army leaders were elevated to important positions of power. In a way national

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214 Ibid.


216 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 3.
governance was almost dominated by officers and men with a military background.\textsuperscript{217}

A keen analysis of the above events portrays the following aspects. By entrusting the responsibility of rehabilitation work to the army an open invitation to build its strategic position and further its strength and authority was given.\textsuperscript{218} In many cases including in the regions of Chinese Central Asia the army officers were reported to have openly flouted and defied the orders of the party leadership and even went to the extent of challenging it. Also, the army’s reluctance to withdraw from the civilian responsibilities in the five regions was not only intended to undermine the healthy civil-military relations, but was also to threaten Mao’s position.\textsuperscript{219} Besides, it was also acknowledged in various Chinese official pronouncements that the traditional practice of unified leadership in the top civil organs was completely missing and that the army men were flaunting their disregard for the party.

In order to rectify these unhealthy tendencies and to bring the army under the ideological leadership of the party, in Chinese Central Asian Regions and in China proper, Mao said that accuracy or otherwise of the ideological and political leadership and lines adopted by the party should not be divorced. To make the army a trusted instrument of the party, Mao argued, “We must insist on the system of party control over the armed forces. And, within the armed forces, the party has to set up party committees at all levels. Mao argued in favour of restoring political commissar system and political work system. He further added that if anyone in the armed forces failed to put himself under the leadership and supervision of the party, and placed himself above the party, and acted and spoke peremptorily, believing


\textsuperscript{218} Joffe, n.196, p. 465-66; and also see Whitson, n. 45, pp. 62-63.

\textsuperscript{219} Joffe, n. 196, pp. 465-67.
that he could spurn the leadership and decisions of the party committee, he was
doing something which the principles of the party will never allowed.”

The Second Lushan conference in 1971 has brought to surface the major
differences covering policy matters in military affairs. It was in this conference that
Marshal Lin Piao, Chen Boda and their supporters were said to have criticised
Mao's military line. This difference of opinion on policy matters and brewing mutual
distrust culminated in the down fall of Marshal Lin Piao, Chen Boda and some of
their supporters and paved the way for the dislocation of power structures. In order
to resolve the deadlock and bring back the healthy relationship between the army
and the party, the Beijing government made appeals to the army personnel to rectify
their past mistakes. The party leadership raised the slogan that "the nation should
learn from the army and the liberation army should learn from the people of the
whole country.” Alongside, since the party leaders and cadres in the five regions
had good experience and a better grasp of the civilian matters, the party leaders and
cadres, it was felt, were better qualified than the army officials. As the power of the
army increased drastically, the Central Committee of the CCP took measures to
curtail the former’s influence on the civilian affairs in the five regions and the mainland and entrusted the same to party cadres.

As the relationship between the army men and people was at the lowest ebb
a campaign was launched to develop a stirring atmosphere whereby the army would
cherish the people and vis-a-vis so that both would learn from each other. The
theme for friendly relations between the army and minorities in the five regions was
also stressed. The same is evidenced in a release by the New China News Agency,
which states, “The Tibetan people love the PLA and helped a army unit stationed

220 Joffe, n. 80, pp. 1-2.
222 Ibid.
there to overcome all kinds of difficulties." Hand in hand, those army men who were encouraging anarchic tendencies and negating the party principles in the five regions were severely criticised. They were asked to rectify this unhealthy tendency and follow the revolutionary-military line of Mao.

Additionally, erroneous ideas and unhealthy tendencies, which were detrimental to revolutionary unity--such as non-organisational view points, individualism, small group mentality, ultra democratic attitudes, absolute egalitarianism, also adversely effected the unity between the civil and military structure, and were bitterly criticised. The army men were asked to pay more attention to strengthen the party leadership in the five regions, rather than strengthening themselves so that the army could be built with a proletarian outlook.

The ideological and organisational aspect of the army and party came under added stress. To resolve the ideological problems which had riddled civil and military institutions, the *Peoples Daily* suggested that "the truth must be laid open and reasoning be adopted. One must not adopt a rash attitude[,] otherwise one will not only ruin the individual but also the party organisation." Along with the efforts of the party the general political department of the army too made ardent appeals to the officers and soldiers to carry out the rectification campaign. To correct the ideological mistakes and eradicate unhealthy tendencies, they were asked to overcome arrogance and conceit.

Keeping in view the past unexpected developments in the army, wherein it drifted away from the basic Marxist principles and the party's ideological lines, and

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223 "If the army and people are united as one who in the world can match them?" *NCNA* (Peking ), 30 July 1969, *SCMP*, no. 4470, p. 18.


committed mistakes, it was suggested that a rectification campaign\textsuperscript{226} had to be carried out across the board by a separate group with a view to eradicating ‘bureaucratism,’ ‘sectarianism’ and ‘subjectivism’\textsuperscript{227} in the Chinese Central Asian Regions and in China proper. It was also emphasised that whole-hearted attempts should be made to resolve the deadlock between the army officers and the common man, between the higher and lower level authorities and between the army and the civilian officials.\textsuperscript{228}

Additionally, pointing out the unhealthy tendencies left behind by the erroneous policies, it was asserted that infection by the bad style of sectarianism within the revolutionary ranks would lead to the tendency of putting the interest of the individual and the small clique above that of the whole, and consequently result in loose unity and slacked discipline, sabotaging the through implementation of the party’s correct line damaging, or even totally destroying, the party’s fighting strength.\textsuperscript{229} The soldiers in the five regions were told to keep a watch on the erroneous lines and struggle hard to correct them because the soldiers could not otherwise succeed in accomplishing the tasks of unifying the whole party, army and revolutionary ranks. To rectify the ideological mistakes the army men were directed to study the major historical military documents and manuals and adopt a careful approach in carrying out education along the party’s correct line.\textsuperscript{230}

\textbf{THE FALL OF LIN PIAO}

Marshal Lin Piao, a man who was responsible for reforming the army and restoring Mao’s political image, witnessed his official demise at Lushan conference.


\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Ibid.}
Undoubtedly, one can not deny the fact that his exit caused severe dislocation of civil and military institutions and the power structure. In fact, his exit had thrown the political equilibrium of China and organisational structure of the army into disarray. Lin Piao’s purge was followed by large scale reshuffle of the civil-military leadership at the regional, provincial and central levels. These changes in the leadership preceded the changes in policy in minority areas, with three of the five autonomous regions receiving new heads. Institutionally, the changes appeared to marginally favour the members of the Second Field Army and downgrade the positions of several members of Lin Piao’s Fourth Field Army. In Inner Mongolia, during the spring of 1971, Yu T’ai-chung, a veteran in the second field army, became First Party Secretary and Chairman of the revolutionary committee, replacing T’eng Hai-Ch’ing, whose affiliations had been with the Third Field Army.

During the same time, in Tibet, Tseng Yung-ya, who was in the Fourth Field Army, Chairman of revolutionary committee and commander of the Tibet Military Region, was demoted and transferred to the Shenyang Military Region. Later, Jen Jung, who succeeded Tseng, was also appointed Chairman of the revolutionary committee. Though Jen had some affiliations with the Fourth Field Army, he had been criticised during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ for his conservatism. Moreover, he succeeded only to Tseng’s position of civilian leadership and the post of commander of the Tibet Military District, which fell vacant due to Tseng’s transfer, was given to Ch’en Ming-yi, who was a veteran commander in the Second Field

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231 Dreyer, n. 22, p. 239.

232 Witson, n. 38, refer chart C and D. Yu T’ai-chung had been transfered from Fourth Field Army to Second Field Army in 1937.

233 Ibid., Chart ‘E.’

234 Jen Jung was not acceptable to the radicals from the beginning for he was Kuo-hua’s deputy, see “Cable to Chiang Ch’ing and Others from the United Headquarters of the Tibetan Proletarian Revolutionary Union,” Chinese Communist Affairs: Facts and Figures (Taipei), n. 181, pp. 22-23.
Army.\textsuperscript{235} This distribution of powers held by Tseng, when taken with the initially temporary status as Party First Secretary given to Jen, may well have been aimed at restricting his actions.\textsuperscript{236}

Still later, towards the end of 1971, in Sinkiang, Lung Shu-chin, who was also associated with Forth Field Army, relinquished his posts as revolutionary committee Chairman and First Party Secretary in favour of Saifudin, thus placing, for the first time, a civilian and that to Uighur in charge of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous region. The command of the Sinkiang Military Region was given to Yang Yung, who too belonged to the Second Field Army.\textsuperscript{237} In Ch‘inghai province it was given to Chang chiang-Lin.\textsuperscript{238} Thus, the leadership changes in the above three autonomous regions tended to confirm Mao’s claim of having endeavoured to reduce the powers of Lin Piao and his Fourth Field Army, which had become so disproportionate during the ‘Cultural Revolution.’\textsuperscript{239} It is worthy of note that all the PLA regional officials were ethnically Han.\textsuperscript{240} Besides, out of a total of eleven commanders in as many military zones, eight fresh appointments were made and only three remained in their respective positions.

As far as transfer of military officials in various regions and military districts were concerned, Li Deh Sheng was posted at Xilian’s Military Command in Sheuyang, Chen was placed in charge of the Beijing Military Region, Ding Sheng was posted at Nanjing, Xu Shiyu was posted at Guangzhou. Yang Dezhi was sent to replace Deng Siyu at Wuhan, and the latter was posted at Jinan, while Han

\textsuperscript{235} For details see Whitson, n. 38, refer chart ‘C,’ p. 29.

\textsuperscript{236} Dreyer, n. 22, p. 239.

\textsuperscript{237} For details see Whitson, n. 38, refer Chart ‘C,’ p. 29.

\textsuperscript{238} Heaton Jr, n. 12, p.29.

\textsuperscript{239} Chinese Law and Government (New York), vol. 5, nos. 3-4, Fall-Winter 1972-73, pp. 31-32.

\textsuperscript{240} Heaton Jr, n. 12, p.179.
Xianzhu was transferred to Lanchow and finally Bi Dingchun was transferred to Foozhou. Political Commissars of these military regions were transferred and reshuffled too; the incumbents were Ji Denghui, the First Political Commissar of the Beijing Military Region, Wei Guojing the first political commissar of the Guangzhon military region and Bai Jubing, the First Political Commissar of the Jinan Military Region. Additionally, Wu De was elected as the second political commissar of the Beijing Military Region and Xu Lijing was appointed as the political commissar of the Jinan Military Region.

The above changes in the civil and military fields disturbed the balance between the party and army factions that took shape during the seventies. The alteration done after the exit of Lin Piao went in favour of pragmatists associated with Chou En-lai. And the losers in the civil-military power set-up were the members of the Lin Piao group and the ‘Leftists’ who represented the Shanghai faction. The transfer of Li Dehsaheng from Beijing Military Region to Shenyang military region significantly reduced supporters of the Leftists. Chan Xilien, who played a leading role in denouncing Lin Piao, and dominated the regions around the capital, also sided with the pragmatists in the tussle for power. Chen Xilian voluntarily relinquished his area of domination in the Northeast Sheyang Military Region, for which he was adequately compensated.

Lin Piao’s military region and canton was badly shaken and it was further accelerated by removing Ding Sheng. Additionally, Xu Shiwy, Ding’s successor, who remained neutral in the Lin Piao affair, also lost his stronghold in Nanjing Military Region, on which he held sway for twenty years. Yang Dezhi was not left untouched from Jinan Military Region, probably because he adopted a comparatively lenient attitude towards the ‘leftist group,’ and also because of his

242 Ibid.
243 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
close association with the Lin Piao group. Finally, the three commanders who were left untouched were Yang Yung of Sinkiang Military Region, Jiu Jiwei of the Chengdu Military Region and Wang Bizheng of the Kunming Military Region. Allegations against them, of ‘leftist attacks’ during the ‘Cultural Revolution,’ were proven, were rehabilitated in 1970.

A close scrutiny of the above reshuffle persuades one to make special mention of the transfer of Li Desheng from Beijing to ShenYang. Li, who was number two in the top military-leadership hierarchy in the nine member standing committee of the CCP Central Political Bureau, and was second only to Ye Chienying, while officiating as the director of general political department of the army at Beijing, helped the ‘leftist group.’ His transfer that deprived him of his former position, and the leftists of his help, was considered a great political loss to the leftist.

RECONSTRUCTION OF PEOPLE’S LIBERATION ARMY: 1973-76

Attention shall now be turned to the purge of Lin Piao and the criticism against him. Initially, it was in the Beijing Military Region that Lin started his civil military career and came into limelight in the Chinese Army, in particular, and Chinese politics in general. But, towards the evening of his career he failed to foresee his doom that occurred following the Tenth National Congress of the CCP in 1973. In this Congress a campaign was launched against Lin Piao. He was criticised of holding faith in, and following, the Confucian military line, and for hampering civil-military relations.

Mass meetings and rallies were organised in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia to criticise Lin, undo his influence on the army and to rehabilitate the veteran cadres. During this anti-Lin Piao and anti-Confucius campaign, the minorities were informed that Lin had sabotaged the party’s policy on nationalities, and that he had held minorities in low esteem, thereby creating divisions in the
An article alleged that Lin spoke such nonsense as when the Mongol met they conversed just about livestock and nothing else. This is derisiveness of the Mongols at its height.\footnote{Lanchuw Radio, 30 April 1974, quoted in Dreyer, n. 22, p. 249.}

Chinese official pronouncements, by criticising the poison left over by Lin Piao, asserted that it was absolutely impermissible for the army to become a tool of individual careerists in the CCP.\footnote{Honan Radio, 30 December 1971, China News Summary, no. 353, 14 January 1971, p. 134.} Lin was alleged to have said that "... army must control not only the military power but also the party and financial powers."\footnote{Quoted from Liu Maonan. Issues and Studies, vol. VIII, no. 6, March 1972, pp. 44-45.} In commemoration of the thirteenth anniversary of the publication of "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," Ye Jianjing said that Lin Piao used the army to keep the party and the government under control with a view to serving his own personal interests and ulterior motives. Lin was blamed to have attempted to place the army and not the party at the central command and at times providing a theoretical foundation for guns to command the party.\footnote{Ibid., p. 45.}

In another instance, during the annual new year spring-festival-campaign launched to promote civil-military unity, Lin Piao was alleged to have said, "The party, the army, the government and the mass organisations were[.] together[.] the fundamental components of the state." Among all the major organs of the state, Lin Piao said, "The people's army was the centre of all the centres and the key link of all the key links ... so long as the army does not change its colour, there will be a
way to deal with the others organs of the party, government and people. He was also supposed to have said that collective leadership weakened individual responsibility and hence imperiled the traditional practice of collective leadership in the CCP. Furthermore, Lin was also accused of having opposed, at one stage the practice of the ‘party representative system’ and also disturbed the ‘commissar’ and ‘commander system’ in the army.

Lin Piao was included in the category of opportunistic chieftains like Chen Duxin, Wang Ming, Zhang Guotoo, Peng Te-huai and was also denounced for destroying the collective leadership of the party committees and forming secluded independent islands and setting up “sects” and “factions” to serve his selfish motives. To rectify these ideological mistakes in the army, important directives were issued warning the cadres and fighters that “the army can never be allowed to become the tool of individual careerists and any kind of patriarchal rule, sabotaging the unity of the party[,] shall not be entertained. In order to remove the pernicious influence left by Lin on the army, its officers and men were directed to carry out ideological campaigns to counteract his military line, for Lin was labelled to be practising the military line of the warlords which contained “ultra rightist essence.”

Added to the above, it was criticised that the ideological foundations of the ‘Lin political line of right reaction and capitulation’ and his bourgeois thinking on military affairs closely resembled the doctrine of Confucius says “To restrain oneself and restore rites.” Following Confucius’ principles Lin regulated the army by

252 Ibid
254 Ibid.
applying the rules of propriety, and, thus, attempted to change the nature of the army and made it his tool for restoring capitalism in the main land and the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. The cadres in the five regions were cautioned not to be arrogant and complacent. They were asked to act as comrades of the masses in the cause of revolution. They were also told to wage a struggle against the military line of Lin Piao and to repudiate his political programme of “restraining oneself and restoring the rites,” through which he attempted to restore the reactionary rule of the landlords and bourgeoisie.

During the course of the anti-Lin Piao campaign, army personnel in the five regions were asked to pay heedful attention to the Tenth Congress documents. They were also asked to affirm and enable themselves to acquire a deeper understanding of the party’s basic line throughout the historical period of socialism. Besides, everyone was prodded to decry Lin’s mammoth crime, of attempting to change the CCP’s basic line and policy, that undermined the unity between the army and the people, between army and the government and between the army and the party. They were also expected to keep in mind the dictum that it was the party which would command the gun and the gun must not be allowed to command the party.

Towards the middle of 1970s transfer of army officials and purges were effected. This resulted in shaking the basic organisational structure of the army as well as rendering civil-military posts vacant. Within a short time the Beijing government succeeded in remedying the same and stabilising most of the civil-military institutions. As far as military appointments were concerned, Marshal Ye

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257 “Criticism Of Lin Biao And His Military Line,” n. 255.
258 Renmin Ribao, 13 November 1974, SCMP, no. 5774.
Chiennyng was appointed as Defence Minister, Deng Xiaoping as Chief of Staff and Zhang Zhunjiao as the director of the general political department of the army. Deng, after his appointment to the post of the Vice-chairman of the CCP Central Committee, and his nomination to the membership of the standing committee of the CCP central political bureau, and his appointment as the senior Vice-premier of the State Council and the Vice-Chairman of the CCP central military affairs commission, emerged as the most powerful man in the echelons of Chinese political hierarchy.

In the case of the civil-military balance of power structure, Zhang Zhunjiao was posted as the Director of the general political department of the army. It was reported that by the first half of 1970s no less than 35 provincial military district commanders, deputy commanders and political commissars had been transferred, most of whom belonged to four military regions, namely Beijing, Kunming, Lanchow and Sinkiang. Some army officers were transferred to different military posts in the Beijing military region, while others were transferred to the border areas. The rehabilitated officers were appointed to new provincial positions. Reportedly, an estimated 30 officers, mostly the rehabilitated veterans, were posted to the army's central, the general staff, the general political and logistics departments, and also to the scientific and technological commission. On the other hand, eleven new first secretaries and 46 secretaries had been appointed to the various provincial party committees. Meanwhile, five first secretaries and 28 secretaries had lost their positions either because of death, transfer or dismissal.

The reshuffling process resulted in the transfer of army officials to distant places, causing a gradual decline in the army’s presence in civilian organs and affairs in the five regions. Evidently, the army’s percentage in civilian affairs came down drastically. In the new power structure which was established towards the end of 1975, of the 193 provincial First and Second secretaries, Deputy secretaries and

secretaries, 66 per cent belonged to civilian cadres and 34 per cent to army cadres. Similarly, army cadres accounted for 45 per cent. On the other hand, the second plenary session of the Tenth Central Committee of the CCP, in January 1975, gave substantial concessions to the radical leftists at the central, provincial and local levels. Wang Hongwen emerged supreme in civilian and military organisations. He was declared as one of the Vice-chairman of the CCP’s central military affairs commission. In retrospect, the army’s restructuring was intended to make it serve the interests of the masses.261

At around the same time, the breakdown of negotiations between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese government, in 1973, caused immediate repercussions on Tibet. The Dalai Lama was denounced by the official media and at public meetings.262 Simultaneously, efforts were made to develop Tibet and integrate it more firmly with mainland China. A large scale scientific survey of the Ch’inghai-Tibet plateau was initiated in 1973 to meet the diverse needs of its development. The survey was further expanded in 1974263 and the establishment of communes was completed by the end of the same year. Agricultural specialists and party members who were efficient in mobilising masses were sent there during the winter and a mass drive began for spring planting.264

Army units and Tibet Production and Construction Corps were enlisted in transporting manure to the fields and in constructing irrigation works. It was noted that during the year 1975, in Tibet, the PLA contributed more than 2,39,500 work days in support of farmland capital construction. The army men helped local Tibetans reclaim more than 25,000 man-made irrigation facilities, dug ditches more

261 Renmin Ribao, 6 August 1970, SCMP, no. 4720.
264 NCNA (Lhasa) 24 March 1973, SCMP, no. 5346, p. 103.
than 96,000 meters-long and collected more than 3,644 million catties of manure.\textsuperscript{265} Furthermore, army men repaired and donated 1,823 items of agricultural machinery.\textsuperscript{266} In Lanchow Military Region of Kansu province, PLA soldiers registered an annual average of more than 20,000 man-days in assisting minority herdsmen with various projects.\textsuperscript{267} In Sinkiang more than 7,00,000 man-days were contributed to construct canals, repair machinery, reclaim land and plant trees.\textsuperscript{268}

To rectify the erroneous tendencies which had crept into the army, it was proposed to pay needful attention while taking any further steps so that political and ideological work in the army would be strengthened.\textsuperscript{269} Besides, even at army anniversary celebrations as well as in official publications of the Enlarged Session of the Military Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the CCP, stress was laid on the need to properly handle ideological problems by giving theoretical justification to various official directives. It repeatedly invoked Lenin on the exercising of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, and emphasised the need to thoroughly understand the issue. Lack of understanding on this question would eventually lead to revisionism, it was emphasised. Hence, this should be brought to the knowledge of whole nation it was added.\textsuperscript{270}

Army men were asked to correctly understand the above problem while handling it. They were asked to steadfastly remain alert about the bourgeoisie sugar-coated bullets,\textsuperscript{271} for, the new bourgeoisie might attempt to actualise their

\textsuperscript{265} One Mou equals 1/6 acre and one catty equals 1.3 pounds.

\textsuperscript{266} FBIS, 11 September, 1975.

\textsuperscript{267} SCMP, October 1975, no. 5915, pp. 160-161.

\textsuperscript{268} FBIS, 30 September 1975.

\textsuperscript{269} Renmin Ribao, 6 August 1970, SCMP, no. 304, p.5.

\textsuperscript{270} Liang Xiao. "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." Renmin Ribao, 10 February 1975, SCMP, no. 5797.

\textsuperscript{271} Guangming Ribao, 17 December, 1973, SCMP, no. 5532.
wily machinations on the Chinese society. The army men were warned to remain cautious of any one who could attempt to sabotage the CCP’s collective leadership and democratic centralism,\textsuperscript{272} or indulge in plots or schemes, organising factions, sabotaging harmonious civil-military relations or interfering in Mao’s revolutionary line.\textsuperscript{273} The Beijing leadership, by linking the re-building of the army campaign with anti-Lin Piao and anti-Confucius campaign, laid special emphasis on retaining genuine proletarian political qualities and organising struggle to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The CCP, in its eagerness to bring the army under its ideological leadership, reiterated that “the gun must for ever be kept in the hands of the party and the people.”\textsuperscript{274} The party also stressed that the army should obey the leadership of the central party, and within a region, the centralised leadership of the total party committee.\textsuperscript{275} Besides, though the army was both a fighting force and a work force, it was stated that their nature of work may change according to the revolutionary situation; nevertheless, the status of the army under the leadership of the party cannot be changed.\textsuperscript{276}

To rectify the bourgeois military line the military commission called upon the army men to build military and political power. In building a revolutionary military, it was emphasised that correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political lines should be borne in mind because following the correct ideological line would enable them to implement the correct political line. In order to build a strong base for political power, it was argued that the army can not be built on a strong foundation unless the correct political line of Mao was followed. It was asserted

\textsuperscript{272} Hang Zhen Radio, 24 July 1975, FBIS, 30 July 1975.


\textsuperscript{275} Hang Zhen Radio, 24 July 1975, FBIS, 30 July 1975.

\textsuperscript{276} Cheihfang Chunbao, 25 February 1977, FBIS, 2 March 1977. p. 16.
that it was Mao’s military line which represented one of the important developments in Marxist military science. In fact, Mao’s line, they asserted was relevant to the present and the future. To correctly grasp the revolutionary military line the army men were asked to deepen their understanding of Mao’s view of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthening their ability to identify genuine Marxism, thus, raising consciousness of implementing his revolutionary line.277

Besides this, the army men who held the view that military affairs and official policies were not complementary, and opposed using the army as a tool for political ends, were bitterly criticised,278 while, on the contrary, Mao Tse-tung’s military line was praised. It was said that this type of military line would split subjectivity from objectivity and divorced knowledge from practice,279 violated the law of developments and finally obstructed the building of the revolutionary army. Finally, to change the world view of the army, they were instructed to learn from the people and to take an active part in bringing about socialist revolution as well as in other official construction activities. To protect the country from foreign aggression and other calamities the army was asked to be prepared against war and natural disasters and always help people.280 To meet any foreign aggression soldiers were asked to dig deep tunnels, store grain and never seek hegemony.281 To improve vigilance and combat readiness the army men were asked to run the military well. Besides, they were asked to endeavour to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat to defend the country and to protect it from subversion, all kinds of aggression by the capitalists and social imperialism.

277 Renmin Ribao, 7 and 8 November 1975, NCNA, SCMP, no. 5981.
279 Ibid.
THE PEOPLE'S MILITIA

"If the enemy dares attack us, they will be drowned in the great sea of the people's armed forces, and there will be no place to bury them." 282

Lenin, while in exile, in March 1917, wrote a "Third Letter from Afar" to revolutionary comrades in Petrogard. In this epistle, Lenin discussed the creation of a 'Proletarian Militia,' and described it as the "task of the day the slogan of the present hour." 283 Lenin designed a People's Militia comprising all adult citizens of both sexes between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five. Officers and non-commissioned officers were to be elected by direct vote. After improving its strength and experience, it would arm, train and educate the illiterate masses, assure them an opportunity to participate "in the affairs of state ..., draw the youngsters into political life," 284 and tear adult women "away from the stupefying domestic and kitchen atmosphere." 285 Unless such a Militia were organised, "it would be impossible to secure real freedom .... impossible to build a democracy, let alone socialism." 286

Though Mao Tse-tung was conversant with Lenin's view of proletarian militia, the situation in China during its liberation did not favour the establishment of a quasi-military organisation. In fact, he preferred a regular army under the directives of the party. As he said, "The existence of regular Red Army with an adequate strength is a necessity for the existence of 'red' political power. A militia

284 Griffith, n. 7, p. 265.
285 Ibid
286 V.I. Lenin, n. 283, p. 46.
with a local character alone, without regular army then we can facilitate dealing with house to house Militia (the local forces of the landlords), but not regular white troops. Hence, without regular armed forces of adequate strength we cannot create an independent regime, let alone an independent regime that lasts long and develops daily.²²²⁷ He further asserted, the army’s mission was to deal with the regular white troops and the Militia is a subsidiary, local organisation with local functions. This was the pattern in China that fell under communist control.

Thus, Chinese communists had evolved this force along with the main military force, the People’s Liberation Army. The People’s Militia functioned as a paramilitary force throughout the national liberation period in the main land and in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. It came into being as a systematic mass organisation in 1928 due to the demise of the first United Front i.e., between the Kuomintang and the CCP. This ‘Militia’ or ‘Red Soldiers,’ initially known as ‘Home Guards,’ then as ‘Self Defence Corps’ was finally established on a regular basis.²²⁸ It gained popularity during the Sino-Japanese War ²²⁹ and blossomed out into a huge organisation called Ming Ping or Militia²²⁰.

These men, in spite of being military in character, differed from the regular forces and ordinary civil bodies. “They [were] the Lieutenants of regular armed forces and constitute the latter’s principal reserve strength.”²²¹ The People’s Militia occasionally participated in the field of production and also undertook full-time or part-time military job. Further, the Militia was a home-based defence force which

²²⁸ Gittings, n. 3, pp. 203-04.
²²⁹ Ting Li; Military of Communist China: Communist China Problem Series (Hong Kong,1955), pp. 2-3.
²²¹ Ting Li, n.289; p. 1; and also see Nelsen, n.110, pp.177-79; and also see O’Ballance. n.290, p. 141.
was generally geared up to meet the interests of local community, although its members could be called upon for service in the regular forces. Both men and women from about ages 16-50 were eligible and accepted into the services, excepting those with landlord or reactionary class backgrounds and criminal history. It is interesting to note that in 1974 Sinkiang claimed that 25 per cent of the population enrolled in the Militia and this probably could be the highest claim since the days of the Great Leap Forward.292

As early as in the First Revolutionary Civil War, a ‘Peasants Self Defence Army’ and ‘Workers Pickets’ were organised in villages and cities under the control of revolutionary forces to co-operate with the North Expedition Army. It was during this time that the Militia, as an elite local force, was originally set-up to oppose the white home guards (*min-t'uan*).293 In a broader perspective the People’s Militia can be explained as a popular military organisation recruited on a voluntary and democratic basis whose members never divorced from production and who never quit their civilian occupation.294

The roots of the idea of a Militia in communist China can be traced to the very nature of the guerilla warfare. The armed forces during the pre-liberation days did not have a systematic organisation that could supply provisions or replenishments; instead they depended entirely on the regions for men and material in the course of their military operations.295 The revolutionary army, in its strategic counter-attack, used the People’s Militia for tactical defence purposes wherever they succeeded to occupy cities and towns in the main land and as well as in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. The scattered communist bases behind enemy lines


293 Gittings, n.3, p.203.

294 Ibid., and also see O’Ballance, n. 290, p. 141.

295 Gittings, n. 3, pp. 203-04.
created the need for a localised defence force which could supplement the mobile activities of the People's Liberation Army and the guerrilla warfare.\footnote{Ibid.}

Reiterating the necessity of popular mass organisation, Mao said that the guerilla warfare behind enemy lines could be sustained without the existence of operation bases. Areas without operation bases may, for a time, come under the control of guerrilla corps, but when the latter have left they would again fall back to the control of the puppet regime.\footnote{Ting Li, n. 289, pp. 3-4.} In the infant stages of its evolution, the PLA failed to evolve a proper conscription system. Hence the Militia organisation was used to supplement the man power and work as the conscription system to solve the problems of expenses and new recruits for regular military forces in the five regions.

During the time of PLA's pre-occupation with battles of offensive defence and war of attrition against the nationalist forces, the Militia units from the five regions were also used, which in turn enhanced the numerical superiority of the PLA. The Militia cordinated with the regular armed forces to boost its strength and morale. Its cadres were asked to engage in activities like beating of the drum gongs, firing crackers and making all sorts of noises in the battlefield to irritate the enemy and to unnerve him. The Militia were directed to employ knives, spears, indigenous cannons, fowling pieces and locally made mines and bombs against the enemy. Further, they also prepared traps and launched attacks from all directions in concentrated formations on the enemy, to confuse and disarm him.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 48-49.}

Along with the main land Militia, the Militia from the five regions were also assigned the tasks of protecting the outer flanks of the red forces and taking charge of intelligence and message-transmission works, in addition to other simple...
assignments like manning observations posts at night and carrying out patrol and sentry duties. On the battle front the Militia units were required to assist the regular armed forces in actual fighting, while acting as alternate fighting corps in sundry and auxiliary duties. The effective functioning of the Militia was noticed during the civil war period. When acting behind the enemy lines, it was concerned more with civil defence rather than actual fighting. In fact, throughout the pre-liberation days the Militia was required to function almost in every type of subsidiary military operations.

In the process of the People's Militia's evolution, the Chinese communists seem to have been convinced with Lenin's statement, "... This kind of Militia, armed and trained with military knowledge is very unlikely to attempt counter-revolutionary restoration. As an organisation composed entirely of the people the Militia is an executive organisation of the workers and soldiers and [would] win the utmost respect and trust of the people." Stimulated by Lenin's view of arming the people, the Chinese revolutionaries organised the peasants in the form of 'local self-defence corps' and the 'People's Militia' during the prolonged and protracted armed struggle.

Speaking about Chinese revolution, Mao Tse-tung once said, "It is important to arouse all the people who are opposed to the enemy to arm themselves to the last man, make wide spread raids on the enemy and also prevent the leakage of news and provide a screen for our own forces, in this way the enemy will be kept in the dark about where and when our forces will attack and objective basis will be

\[\text{299 Ibid., p. 47.}\]
\[\text{300 Ibid., p. 49.}\]
\[\text{301 Gittings, n. 3, p. 204.}\]
\[\text{302 Whitson, n. 217, p. 136.}\]
\[\text{303 Marxism-Leninism On War And The Army (Beijing, 1937). pp. 2-3.}\]
created for misconceptions and unpreparedness of his part."  

During the Chinese revolutionaries’ struggle against the Japanese, Mao is said to have “prepared the entire Chinese masses to struggle against Japan.” Further, the CCP did organise People’s Militia along with guerrilla and self defence forces so as to make certain areas secure and to coordinate with field armies. Wherever the PLA succeeded to liberate the guerrilla pockets in the Chinese Central Asian Regions, attempts were made to organise men and women from early the young to the middle ages into people’s anti-Japanese self defence corps on a voluntary democratic basis.

The Militia in national minority regions of Chinese Central Asia was established as an adjunct to the mobilisation and socialisation efforts. The PLA recruited national minority soldiers in these five regions and used many of them in Militia work. The minority soldiers in these regions who could understand local languages and customs, have facilitated for the effective functioning of the Militia programmes. But the use of minority soldiers in Militia work was not without friction and the development of an unhealthy atmosphere between the army and the minority Militia. Additionally, the assignment of minority soldiers in general to Militia work reflects subtle discrimination on the part of the Han commanders, even though it appears to be functional, practical and the easiest direction to go in assignment policy.

The army taught Chinese language to the minority Militia in the five regions and provided military training. In a way, the minority social organisation was

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307 Heaton Jr., n.12, p. 182.
transformed so as to create new socialist border areas.\textsuperscript{308} The minority Militia in these regions were used for border patrolling along with the regular armed forces. Acknowledging the contribution of the Militia, Mao once declared, "Without the co-operation of these armed organisations of the masses, it would have been utterly difficult to defeat the enemy."\textsuperscript{309} During the days of national liberation, when the chief fighting force was primarily busy in conducting mobile operations in the widely scattered rural areas, the People’s Militia was used as a subordinate paramilitary force\textsuperscript{310} to help the chief fighting force. If the PLA happened to face any crucial situation with the enemy, the Militia units were mobilised to provide rescue operations to army men, to evacuate wounded soldiers from the war zones, or to provide any logistic support. Besides, when the regular forces were engaged in conducting mobile operations, such as encircling a place and destroying the rescue or blocking the rescue and destroying the place, \textsuperscript{311} the People’s Militia in general was tactically used to cut enemy communication systems and putting the enemy in a hopeless position. All this, in turn, gave an easy access to the PLA for its movements and operations.

Highlighting the significant role played by the People’s Militia, Marshal Chu De, in one of his speeches, said, "Our army never had such a huge military organisation before, successes in organising the Militia is of unlimited significance to us. Once the Militia is organised it will fight in coordination with the regular army or if possible by itself. The Militia has given tremendous protection to production activities in the liberated areas."\textsuperscript{312} In the social sector, the Militiamen were entrusted the task of handling the bandits and counter-revolutionaries in these five

\textsuperscript{308} Yen Shuai, “Build up the Border Region, Defend the Mother Country” in \textit{Red Flag}, no. 9, August, quoted from \textit{Ibid.}, p. 182.


\textsuperscript{310} Nelsen, n.110, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{311} Gittings, n. 3, p. 205.

\textsuperscript{312} Chu De, \textit{On the Battle field of the Liberated Areas} (Beijing,1952), pp. 37-49.
regions who were creating disturbances in the liberated areas. After the liberation they were entrusted the job of maintaining law and order and implementing land reforms. Perhaps, Article 23 of the Common Programme, which states, "the Chinese People's Republic shall use the People's Militia to maintain local order, lay the foundation for national mobilisation and prepare for the enforcement of an obligatory military service system at the appropriate moment," is a clear testimony to the above fact.

The Korean War witnessed the despatch of thousands of Militiamen and PLA forces to guard China's North-eastern frontier, while some others had left to do service as volunteers or transport workers. But the Korean crisis gave a serious setback to the Militia. Additionally, the 1955 Military Service Law stated that the Militiamen would continue to maintain local security and protect production and construction tasks. There was no specific report about Militia activities during the second half of 1950s, except for some isolated activities in the Fujian coast. Young leaders who played a dominant role in the Militia representing Chinese Central Asian Regions and the mainland, latter became civilian leaders of the village.

Having considered the setbacks to the People's Militia due to the Korean War, the Beijing leadership intended to regularise and modernise the armed forces on Soviet line. But the protagonists of professionalism in the army criticised and questioned the very relevance of the Militia and its suitability to meet the requirements of modern warfare. The same attitude persisted till the purge of the

313 Gittings, n. 3, p. 205.
314 O'Ballance, n. 290, pp. 192-93.
317 Schurmann, n. 92, p. 463.
then defence minister Peng Te-huai in 1958. Later, the launching of "Everyone a Soldier" campaign in the same year brought the People's Militia into the limelight. In fact, the process of the proletarian revolutionary-militarisation in China took a turning point and the significant role of the Militia in the national defence system came to the forefront.\(^\text{318}\) The Militia, as a voluntary popular organisation, started to work and activate itself when Mao gave the call for "all out organisation of Militia divisions."\(^\text{319}\) Finally, with the launching of mass campaign of the \textit{People's Commune}, in 1958, the Militia movement, in general, received a fresh impetus. All eligible people from Chinese Central Asian Regions had been enrolled. In January 1959 a total of 220 million men and women in the whole country had joined the Militia organisation,\(^\text{320}\) of whom 30 million were armed.\(^\text{321}\)

Communes were formed in most of the minority areas of Chinese Central Asia outside Tibet, regardless of the previous level of socialist reforms. Chuang and Korean (higher level and lower level agricultural producers), co-operative and mutual-aid teams of herding areas and primitive South western (i.e., Tibet) and the adjacent areas which had recently carried out democratic reforms were transformed into communes, literally overnight.\(^\text{322}\) As early as October it was claimed that 30 million inhabitants in Szechwan province and 14 million in Kiangsu were participating daily in drilling.\(^\text{323}\) The Militia was intended to turn the commune system in a sort of military organisation so that national production and construction work could be undertaken on a war footing.\(^\text{324}\) For instance, in

\(^{318}\) Quoted from Gittings, n.3, p. 209.

\(^{319}\) NCNA, 1 October 1958, quoted from Gittings, n.3, p. 209; and also see Franz Michael \textit{Mao's Perpetual Revolution} (New York, 1978), p. 204; and also see sitr Cheng, n. 90, pp. 565-66.

\(^{320}\) Gittings, n. 3, p. 209.

\(^{321}\) Schurmann, n. 92, p. 478.

\(^{322}\) Dreyer, n.22. p. 163.

\(^{323}\) Griffith, n.7, pp. 270-71.

\(^{324}\) Gittings, n. 3, p. 212.
Szechwan a close co-ordination of the Militia organisation with the peoples commune movement was to cultivate "the habit and spirit of rising, eating, sleeping, setting out to work and returning from work together." This in turn strengthened the collectivisation of life and the organisational discipline and nurtured the fighting style in the field of all production work.\textsuperscript{325}

The Militia structure in the five regions closely parallel to that of people's commune. At the lower level the production team formed a Militia company while the commune was classified according to its size, as a Militia battalion, regiment or division.\textsuperscript{326} It is to be noted that the popularisation of Militia throughout the country was intended to increase the organisation, discipline and militancy of the people and eradicate disunity and backwardness which had been left over by the previous regime.\textsuperscript{327} On the other hand, the Militia members stole weapons, set-up road blocks, seized stocks of grain and engaged in widespread armed robbery\textsuperscript{328} in some of the minority areas of Chinese Central Asia, for which the Militia were bitterly hated by large sections of the population.\textsuperscript{329} Further, the failure of communes and natural calamities in 1959 and 1960, gave a death blow to the Militia organisation as a whole. All these resulted in a change in official policy which incorporated four points, namely: stronger party leadership, training of Militia cadres, more political work for the hard core and strengthening of tactical troops.

In the 1960 a National Militia Conference was held in Beijing, where it was decided to continue the policy of further intensifying Militia construction and large-

\textsuperscript{325} NCNA. 5 October 1959, quoted from Gittings, n. 3, p. 212; and also see Edward E. Rice, \textit{Mao's Way} (Berkeley, 1972), p. 163.

\textsuperscript{326} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 213.

\textsuperscript{327} Fu Qintao, "People's Militia,Favourite System of People", \textit{Zhexu Yanjiu}, no.1, 1959 (EC MM-159). quoted from Gittings, n. 3, p. 213.


\textsuperscript{329} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 119.
scale organisation of Militia units in the future. But latter, the same idea was dropped by laying emphasis on production. The participants at the conference—Lin Piao, Lo Ronghuan, Lo Ruijing, Chu De and Deng Xiaoping—stressed that all activities of the People’s Militia should centre on the development of production.

To recover the earlier agricultural loss, Militia cadres were directed to pay proper attention to national production and construction tasks and to whip up a high tide to make a Great Leap Forward in the various fronts. As the question of national building earned a higher priority, the Militia’s military training was lowered down in the five regions.

As a result of reduced military-training, according to a military affairs committee release, the Militia system was sought to be reorganised. By adopting purely democratic methods undesirable elements in the five regions were removed. Emphasis was also laid on political education of the cadres and establishing Militia divisions and units in the vast sphere of the Chinese life, covering villages, towns, cities, people's communes, industrial areas, enterprises, mines, public organs and schools. It was pointed out that in a modernised future war the militia’s role will be gaining greater importance and as such it must never be weakened. Mao took keen interest to rebuild the Militia and issued directions for the same. The later years saw the Militia coming up quite strong politically, organisationally and militarily.

Further, an official document entitled, “Militia’s ‘There major duties’, and ‘Ten Requirements,” published in 1962, delineated, in detail, the Militia’s role in the

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330 Fu Qintao, n. 327, p. 215.
331 SCMP, no. 2247.
332 SCMP, no. 2252.
334 Ibid
peaceful transitory phase involving national production, construction tasks and military training. In the minority regions of Chinese Central Asian, production gained an upper hand over military training throughout 1962-64. In Sinkiang the Militia was said to have played a leading role on the production fronts, and during leisure, indulged in military training. In times of emergency the Militia were ordered to temporarily suspend their training and were sent to the front-line of agricultural production with a view to reinforcing the cadres.

On the other hand, more attention was paid to the Militia in the frontier provinces along the coast at Kiangsi, Kwangtung and Sinkiang (on the Sino-Soviet border). During 1962 the Beijing government was worried that the nationalists, backed by the US, would invade to take advantage of an internal crisis before the conditions could be stabilised. To note the directive of Military Affairs Committee, it emphasised; in January 1961, the need preserve the safety of both South-western and North-western frontiers and called for strengthening border defences.

Hundred of thousands of Militiamen in Sinkiang were said to have given active support both in the campaign against India on the Ladakh frontier and in maintaining order within the province.

The idea behind rebuilding the Militia by large-scale political and ideological campaigns was to place it as an ideological instrument in the hands of the most reliable ‘class brothers’ who would be loyal to the CCP, the people, the revolution and finally to the cause of socialism, along with the main army. Conforming to

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335 Cheihfang-Chun Hua-Pao, 16 March 1962, quoted from Gittings, n. 25, p. 221.

336 Cheihfang-Chu Hua-Pao, 16 March 1962, ECMM, no. 316, p.5.

337 Changsha Radio, 12 March 1964, quoted from Gittings, n. 3, p. 222.


339 Urumchi Radio (Urumchi), 2 October 1964,SWB/FE (2) 1963 quoted from Gittings, n. 3, p. 222.

the policies of the CCP Central Committee and Mao Tse-tung’s military concepts, there was an upward trend in the Militia’s work system. Attempts were made to mould the Militia in these five regions in order to use it as a class weapon on various social and military fronts in the years that were to come.

THE ROLE OF PEOPLE’S MILITIA IN CULTURAL REVOLUTION:1966-76

The Socialist Education Movement preceding the ‘Cultural Revolution’ was initially launched in response to Mao Tse-tung’s impassionate plea to the CCP Central Committee’s Tenth Plenum, held in September 1962. It read, “Never forget class struggle.” The Socialist Education Movement aimed at correcting a number of unorthodox political, ideological and economic tendencies after the Great Leap Forward. The Militiamen in the five regions, in general, along with the mainland Militia were directed to re-educate men in proletarian and socialist ideologies for uniting the cadres and the masses to fight against the class enemies.

As noted earlier, the Socialist Education Movement beat the last drums of retreat when the opening salvos of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ were fired in August in 1966. The onset of the ‘Cultural Revolution’ made the Beijing leadership to direct the People’s Militia to participate in the ‘power seizure’ campaign. The Militia was to give support to proletarian revolutionaries in the game of power seizure in the three-way alliance, which constituted the cadres, the representatives of the masses and the members of the PLA. In 1967 Mao made an off-the-cuff remark that the Militia had three million guns and directed them to support the ‘left masses’ and be prepared, at all times, to smash the counter-revolutionary current pushed up by a

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342 Cheihfang Chunbiao, Liberation Army Daily, (Beijing) 5 March, 1967, China Topics Year Book (Armed Forces-26), November 1969; and also see Communist China Digest, no.184, Joint Publication Research Service (here after JPRS) (Hong Kong), no. 41147, 25 May 1967, p. 30.
handful of party people in authority who were taking the capitalist road. The rank
and file of the Militia, in these five regions were entrusted with the responsibility of
safeguarding the 'Cultural Revolution.' They were also asked to shoulder the
responsibilities of working in factories, rural areas, financial sector, trading, cultural
and education departments and in the party and government organisations.

Thus, the Militia cadres stood resolutely on the side of Mao's revolutionary
line in the struggle between revolutionaries and reactionaries. In the two-line
struggle, the Militia cadres criticised the pacifist and lethargic attitudes in the civil
and military organisations. They were expected to fight against the dubious
legacy of Lo Ruijing and Peng Te-huai, who were criticised for conspiring to
capture power in party, usurp military, political power and also for attempting to
bring about capitalist restoration. They were denounced for opposing the policy
of arming the Chinese masses and organising large contingents of People's Militia in
the five regions. They were also blamed for advocating a pro-military view point in
the course of Militia-building and for having opposed giving prominence to politics
with a view to transforming the People's Militia and it giving it bourgeois
outlook.

Additionally, they were blamed for using vicious means like hook-swinging,
deception, threats and incitement with a view to pulling certain Militia cadres and
men of the five regions to the side of the bourgeois reactionary line. The Militia in
these regions also blamed the military for having ventured to make use of them to

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343 Chiehfang Chunbao, 16 March 1967, China Topics Year Book (Armed Forces-26), November 1969.

344 Chieh fang Chun bao, Liberation Army Daily (Beijing) 6 August 1967, China Topics Year Book

345 Wuhan Radio, 29 July 1969, China Topics Year Book (Armed Forces-26), November 1969.

346 Ibid

347 Ibid.
assist, beat up and detain people and for having forced them to take part in certain reactionary activities in the Chinese Central Asian Regions. The military officials were also blamed for inciting Militiamen in rural areas to go and suppress the proletarian revolutionaries in the cities. They also blamed them for directing the Militiamen to undermine production, communication and social order.\textsuperscript{348}

In retrospect, the People’s Militia members were told to exhibit loyalty to Mao and support the revolutionary left to counter all unhealthy tendencies. As a part of their political duty, they were instructed to participate in the ‘struggle, criticism-transformation,’ to rectify unhealthy tendencies and purify the unreliable elements and finally consolidate proletarian dictatorship.\textsuperscript{349} The Militiamen were supplied with simple ideological weapons—slogans like “Fight Selfishness and Criticise Revisionism.”\textsuperscript{350} The press encouraged them and provided examples, by drawing analogies between military problems and those arising in a revolutionary struggle. They were asked to repudiate Liu Shao-chi’s views on army, Militia and economic affairs, which were considered to be generating “self interest and revisionism” among the Chinese masses\textsuperscript{351} in minority occupied areas of Chinese Central Asia.

The Ninth Congress of the CCP and the second Plenary Session of the Ninth Central Committee of the CCP gave a different twist to the Militia cadres by laying emphasis on their education and politicisation. The Militiamen were instructed to study the military writings of Marx, Lenin and Mao. A strong mass campaign was launched to fight ‘ultra rightist essence’ and the counter-revolutionary revisionist

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{348} Ibid.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{349} Harbin Radio, 28 May 1968, China Topics Year Book (Armed Forces-26), November 1969-December 1969, p.35.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{350} Mao’s slogan put forward by Lin Piao in his National Day Speech, 1 October 1967, Peking Review, no. 41, 6 October 1967, p. 10.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{351} Ibid.; and also see Lan Zhou Radio, 5 December 1968, China Topics Year Book (Armed Forces-26), November 1969, p.35.}
tendencies which were noted to be manifesting within the Chinese society, and to bring fundamental changes in the socialist society. In this connection, mass contingents of Militiamen in the five regions and the main land were mobilised to actively participate in the campaign with a view to consolidating power in the hands of the proletariat. In this task, they were asked to act as a political force with a high sense of proletarian responsibility. The Militiamen were instructed to join hands with the PLA to wage a combined battle against these reactionary elements.\textsuperscript{352} The turning of the entire population into a military force and organising contingents of People's Militia on a large scale was aimed at consolidating power in the hands of the proletariat.\textsuperscript{353}

To accomplish this task the CCP pleaded for strengthening the Militia as a politically independent force and also opined that Militia participation was needed for the stability of people's power. The CCP instructed the Militia to give a death blow to the counter-revolutionaries and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat by participating in the class struggle. Militiamen were told to remould the Chinese society by defending the socialist new-born things and heralding revolution in the 'Super-structure,' production relations, production techniques, as well as cultural aspects.\textsuperscript{354} Additionally, the Militia was asked to participate in the nation-wide ideological campaign which was launched against the bourgeoisie attempts at capturing power, party and the 'capitalist roaders,' who were venturing to popularise the capitalist road.\textsuperscript{355}

In the CCP's ideological campaign, the Militia in general were directed to solve the ideological difficulties by distinguishing between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary lines and by waging a battle against revisionism. To wipe out

\textsuperscript{352} For details see Edward E. Rice, \textit{Mao's Way} (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 394-95.


\textsuperscript{355} Whitson, n.45, pp. 143-44.
the reactionary ideology of the past which had effected the people in the five regions and the main land, the Militia men were asked to carry out mass criticism against the former's erroneous ideology, by bringing out the virtues and vices of the two conflicting ideologies.

The Militia were directed to demarcate the proletarian and bourgeoisie military line of thinking and to consolidate the past socialist achievements and reject formalism. The Militia in the five regions, along with the other regions were asked to be alert and give a fitting rebuttal to the clever and cunning tactics of the reactionaries, who, it was feared, might retard the successes of the revolutionaries and hamper the socialist order. Besides, the Militia was expected to attack the culture of the exploiting and oppressive old classes. In fact, it was aimed at building a proletarian super-structure by transforming the bourgeois super-structure, which was an oppressive and destructive essence of the ideologies of the old ruling classes.

According to the instructions of the Beijing government, the Militia were expected to fight against the 'Four Olds' and replace the same by the “Four News.” It was strongly felt that unless the old ideology, culture, customs and habits were not replaced by the proletarian ideology, culture, customs and habits, the hangovers of the exploiting society could not be eradicated and the benefits of new socialist society could not be assured. To fulfil this task the Militia cadres were expected to pay adequate attention to “Three basic principles,” namely: to cultivate the practice of Marxism, to be united, to be open and broad minded and finally not to intrigue and conspire.

To uphold the proletarian character, the Militia in Chinese Central Asia was expected to be cautious about tendencies like ‘pure military viewpoint,’ and the


new stage of peace and democracy. They were also asked to strengthen discipline among the masses by employing ideas like "Unity-Criticism-Unity" and adopting methods of discussion with reason, criticism and self-criticism. Over and above, they were directed to solve ideological difficulties by maintaining "modesty, vigilance and prudence without permitting arrogance and unworthiness in their work style." In retrospect, in order to alter the social life and human behaviour they were to maintain 'plain-living, high-thinking and put in hard work and not permit laziness, either in thoughts or deeds, among the rank and file of the Militia.

CONCLUSION

Marx and Engels, with a view to transforming the existing society, felt the necessity to organise the proletarian army of the working class. Further, they also felt that unless the oppressed class were militarily organised and fought against the oppressive system and its army, the exploited masses would not succeed in safeguarding their interests. It is was exactly this kind of military model which Lenin had evolved during the course of communist take over by wiping out the Czarist regime in Russia. This very type of military model presented a nucleus upon which the Chinese communists planned to establish their own proletarian armed forces, namely the Peoples Liberation Army and Peoples Militia. They were focused, organised and equipped according to the conditions then obtaining, for the Chinese struggle. But one should not forget that the PLA and Peoples Militia are overwhelmingly composed of ethnic Han Chinese due to their numerical superiority. The peasants and workers (both Han and non-Han) of Chinese Central Asia, who had been exploited for long by the ruling classes, were the main components of these armed forces. Ever since the revolution began in the 1930s, the PLA and Peoples Militia have had an important role to play along with the non-Han ethnic

358 Nanjing Jiangsu Provincial Service, 11 June 1975, FBIS, 13 June 1975, p.GS.
minorities of Ch'inghai, Kansu provinces and Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet Autonomous Regions of Chinese Central Asia. The peasants and workers who had been the main components of PLA have actively participated in the mainstream politics of Chinese Central Asia.

Since the PLA's founding in 1927, it played a dominant role in military and non-military affairs in the five regions. The army was primarily built with a view to making it an ideological instrument in the hands of the party, to carry out the policies of the CCP. It was also felt that the army must be indoctrinated ideologically so that its members could understand accurately the very nature of the Chinese revolutionary war and marched towards its goals. From the very beginning the army were told to destroy the existing social order in the five regions and to establish a retrograde social order. With this view, young men and women, belonging to the same strata of society in the five regions, were enrolled in the army to fight against the oppressive system alongside the armed forces and emancipate the masses in the five regions from the octopus grip of semi-feudal and semi-capitalist oppression. Later, after the Gudian conference it was decided that the army should be prepared militarily according to the needs of proletarian set up to carry out the protracted armed struggle against the enemy. In order to defeat the nationalist forces, and also to organise the guerrilla forces, the local Red Guards and People's Militia in Chinese Central Asian Regions were given a free hand and complete support.

After the Chinese civil war, the Chinese communists relied on the military to run the administration until the training of cadres and the expansion of CCP organs permitted the restoration of civil authority. Most of the national minorities of Chinese Central Asia, along with the other regions, were organised into administrative units known as "Autonomous" Regions "Counties," etc. In fact, these units were governed much as ordinary provinces, counties, etc. Even though civil authority in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia paralleled that of the non-
minority regions, the military continued to be stationed there, both for purposes of national defence and public security.

The army built its organisational structure under the ideological leadership of the CCP and later improved its military training, which was of tremendous help to it in carrying out its ideological responsibilities in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. On its part, the army maintained its integrity and loyalty to the civilian leaders in the five regions, for it was essential to maintain cordiality in the relations between the army and the party. Viewed against this backdrop, it is not surprising that there was maximum harmony between the army and the people in the five regions as well.

After establishing communist regime in 1949 the communist leaders entrusted the army with wide-ranging nation-building tasks, in the five regions which were primarily civilian in nature. Even during the Korean War, the army which included the national minorities, though their exact strength cannot be ascertained, was in complete control. During the Great Leap Forward the army did support the Beijing government’s efforts in socialisation programmes, in the mainland and Chinese Central Asia. But partly due to tardy implementation, coupled with natural calamities, the Leap resulted in a complete failure. The Great Leap Forward was characterised by a struggle against local nationalism on the part of minorities in Chinese Central Asia. There was hardly any report relating to minority recruitment. The resultant decline of production, during the Leap in Chinese Central Asia and in the mainland, had its inevitable repercussions on the PLA. Later, the Chinese leadership’s measures resulted in replacing Peng Te-huai with Lin Piao as the new Defence Minister.

When the opening salvos of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution were fired army men were entrusted with a different role altogether. The army was asked to support the Revolutionary Rebels and the Red Guards in their efforts to seize power from the reactionaries in the five regions. Additionally, they were expected
to destroy the growing tendencies of bureaucratism and the prevailing non-responsiveness towards civilian affairs in the same regions.

Coming to the formation of revolutionary committees, the role of the army has been vital in all the three autonomous regions and the two provinces of Chinese Central Asia. The revolutionary committees were practically created by the PLA garrison forces and the commanders of those areas reluctantly agreed to take part in the formation of the committees after imposing disciplinary measures on Maoist organisations. Further, the revolutionary committees were formed in Tibet and Ch’inghai only after new commanders had been appointed. The participation of the army was crucial in the second and third phases of establishing the revolutionary committees. Han army men dominated the standing committees.

After the army’s intervention in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and its leaders’ subsequent assumption of control in the five regions, the army did not initially seek power through coup as the military had done in many developing countries. Rather, till August 1967 the army got increasingly involved in political affairs largely against its will and in many respects power came to it by default. If analysed in the same vein, the PLA did not intervene in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ against the wishes of the political leadership but was rather brought into the political arena by this leadership itself. Further, it did not intervene as a result of disaffection or a desire to safeguard its sectional interests against encroachment by the civilians either. It moved into the political arena to aid Mao’s group in an intra-party conflict. Finally the army did not grab power in a coup, but rather power gravitated to it in the course of a protracted process which was neither planned nor predicted by the army’s high command.

As already stated, the Cultural Revolution opened the flood gates for the army to make an initial dent and make their presence felt, in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. The Ninth Congress, held in 1969, has demonstrated the army’s dominant place in important positions of power at the Centre and as well as
in the five regions. Further, the army consolidated its stranglehold on national affairs by virtue of its hold over most of the top echelons in the civilian establishments at the Centre and in the provinces, which included the five regions of Chinese Central Asia.

The above developments hampered the complete power structure built prior to the 'Cultural Revolution,' disturbed the healthy relations between the party and army, by virtue of its growing importance, the army lowered the importance of the party. Later, when the army was called to restore law and order, it had become an easy task for the army officers to strengthen their hold on all important positions in the administration of all the five regions. There is no doubt, the nature and character of the role played by army during the 'Cultural Revolution' was entirely different from that it played during the pre-liberation and post-liberation periods.

Due to the army's involvement the relations between soldiers and party members, in general, were not so strained as they were after the GPCR. Further, the healthy coordination between the Centre and the five regions of Chinese Central Asia weakened, resulting in non-implementation or partial implementation of Central Committee directives by the five regional authorities. Besides, there were other bottlenecks like open confrontation between the commissars and professional commanders of the five regions regarding policy matters.

When the army men were asked to rebuild the civilian power structure in all the regions, alongside in the other regions, the army men got an opportunity to enhance their power in the five regions of Chinese Central Asia. As a result, power centred in the hands of the military personnel and resentment grew in the ranks of the party men, which ultimately culminated in the form of factional rivalry and differences between the civilian and the military authorities on the one hand, and between the military officers themselves on the other, in all the five regions of Chinese Central Asia.
In the post-Lin Piao era the army was once again entrusted with various tasks when the ‘anti-Lin Piao’ and ‘anti-Confucius’ campaigns were launched in the five regions; major stress was laid on cleansing the super-structure. In these campaigns the army and the militia cadres in the five regions were asked to criticise vehemently the erroneous military legacy of Lin Piao. This was aimed at doing away with the old super-structure and replacing it with a new one. The army, in all the five regions, was to solve problems relating to political affairs, professional work, politics and production.

Thus, by giving due prominence to proletarian politics and by carrying out political responsibilities, the army, in the five regions, was to consolidate proletarian dictatorship and proletarian state power. It was to build a powerful and modern socialist state by studying and applying Mao’s theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Coming to the ‘two line’ power struggle, the army was to handle military problems from a political viewpoint. They were to handle all the military problems with a Marxist viewpoint and oppose a purely military point of view which divorced the army from political affairs.

Further, they were to support proletarian politics and fight, ideologically, any form of opportunism. By enlisting the support of the progressive forces and isolating the reactionary ones, the army was to consolidate power in the hands of the proletariat. Be that as it may, the army was used as an instrument in the five regions, by the factions within the policy makers, who were politically divided amongst themselves, to acquire more power. When the radical faction was on the ascendancy the PLA, in the five regions, too, became highly radicalised and whenever the moderates were on the ascendancy the PLA also became moderate. In retrospect, the PLA was used as a stabilising factor in the Chinese political system.