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Historical Introduction

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This Directory draws together the names of some of the leading officials in Tibetan-inhabited areas in China. The names are selected from lists of leading officials in the government, as well as from the membership list of the three main institutions in China: the Communist Party, the People's Congress and the Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference. The list includes leading Chinese and Tibetan officials in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and prominent Tibetan cadres and officials from Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai and Yunnan.

The present elite in Tibet is composed of three main groups of people. The first consists of Chinese cadres who entered the region in 1950 or later, and the second group consists of those Tibetans who rose through the ranks of the Party during the early 1950s and 1960s, reaching maturity during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). A third group, which emerged during the period of liberalisation after 1979, consists of a sizeable number of persons recruited from the ranks of the traditional Tibetan aristocracy and from among high ranking lamas. This nexus of Chinese cadres, Tibetan cadres and traditional aristocrats and lamas makes up the main body of the elite.

The members of this elite often hold positions as either government or party cadres. The term cadre is applied to officials both in the government and the Party, and although there is no strict rule that all cadres must also be members of the Party, in practice the leading personnel in the government are almost always party members as well. One notable exception is that group of senior officials who are lamas: these people, mostly confined to the CPPCC, cannot be enrolled in the Party unless they have renounced all religious belief, since atheism is a basic requirement of Party membership.

Year

1986

Total number of cadres	52,311
Minority nationality cadres	31,567
Party members	23,268

Source: *Data for the History of CCP Organisation*

In 1993, the Party issued an internal document which showed that in 1986 a little over 60% of the cadres in the TAR were members of a "minority nationality", a term which in this context means that they were Tibetan. It also shows that a surprisingly low proportion of the total number of cadres were party members - less than 45% - although it is likely, as we have said, that the proportion of party members is much higher in the senior levels of the administration. Since those figures were published, the total number of cadres has increased to 60,000, but no figures have been given for the percentage of party members.

The Chinese system of elite politics has its own particular characteristics. One of those characteristics is that the two concepts of "power" and "position" are not automatically related, as they are in some societies. In the Chinese system, a high position does not necessarily bring with it power, and, similarly, the exercise of power does not require a formal position or office. In Tibet, this distinction is most readily apparent in the case of those former aristocrats and high ranking lamas who hold positions in the government or in the CPPCC which entitle them to considerable privileges and social prestige but which do not in practice enable them to participate in the decision-making process.

This dichotomy reflects another significant division in the Chinese system between the Party and the government. It is evident that power resides in the hands of the Party and that it is the Party which retains the prerogative of conferring positions on non-Party members. Although the Party is never referred to in the substantive text of the Chinese Constitution of 1982, its first article describes China as a "socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class", and the Preamble refers several times to the historic leadership role of the Party. The Constitution describes the People's Congress as the highest decision-making body, which selects and appoints government leaders. In reality, at regional just as at national level, the People's Congress acts more like an administrative organ, while real policy formulation and the exercise of power rest with the Party.

Since the various organs of governments are in practice secondary to the interests of the Party, it is appropriate to look into some details of the genesis of the structure of the Party and its subsidiary organisations in Tibet. The Party structure arrived relatively recently in Tibet, some 30 years after its formation in China; the structure of the Tibet regional CCP was based on the provincial system existing at the time in China.

As the sinologist George Moseley¹ has noted, the Communist Revolution in China was purely an ethnic Chinese affair. Few members of other ethnic groups in China were involved, unlike the October Revolution in Russia, which involved many different nationalities. In China, the Communist Party was essentially an ethnic Chinese

¹ "The Party and the National Question in China", Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1966.

organisation, and when the Communists came to power in October 1949, there were very few revolutionary activities in the non-Chinese nationality areas.

The Communists first came into contact with Tibetan speaking people during the Long March (October 1934 - October 1936) when the Communist army retreated into the Tibetan marshes. In April 1935, the First Front Army led by Mao and Zhu De crossed the Jinsha river (the Yangtse, in Tibetan the Driчу), bringing them into contact for the first time with non-Chinese people. Later the Communists marched north, crossing the Dadu River (the Mekong, in Tibetan the Gyamo Ngulchu) and for the first time coming into contact with Tibetans. At the same time the Fourth Army, led by Zhang Guotao, crossed into Tibetan territory and from November 1935 to June 1936 remained in Aba (Ngaba in Tibetan) in north-western Sichuan, an area traditionally regarded as part of Eastern Tibet.

The PLA's experience in Eastern Tibet is now described in Communist Party mythology as a period of extreme hardship. In some areas the exhausted Red Army came under attack from local Tibetans, while in other parts they were welcomed and helped by the local people. The meeting in 1936 between Zhu De, the leader of the People's Liberation Army, and Getag Rinpoche, the head of Beri Monastery in Kandze, has passed into the party's hagiography and is portrayed in official writing as well as in paintings and posters as a symbol of Tibetan and Chinese unity.

At that time, the Party did not make any overt attempts to recruit members and preferred to work instead through traditional local leaders - an "united front" strategy that is described in official literature as one of the Party's "magic weapons". In the early period the policy was, sensibly, not to alarm indigenous leaders or the local people by criticising the local social system or by openly recruiting party members. Even so, a number of young Tibetans are said to have run away from home and joined the Party. The most notable among these are Tian Bao (known in Tibetan as Sangye Yeshe) and Yang Dongsheng (Sherab Dondrub), who were sent to the Party School in Yan'an in 1937. Later they were to occupy leading positions in the government and the Party. The Communists had always envisaged that such early recruits would form the backbone of their administration in these areas.

However, the Communists realised from the outset that although the Nationalists had exercised nominal control over Tibetan areas in Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan and Xikang (the name for the separate province that covered the eastern areas of the traditional Tibetan region of Kham, dissolved into Sichuan in 1955), the areas lacked any kind of modern administrative infrastructure. The areas had effectively been ruled by traditional hereditary rulers, known in Tibetan as "pons", and when the Communists first came into power, they found themselves having to recruit new cadres and to establish a totally new administrative structure. It was the new rulers' lack of any structure for their rule that obliged them initially to adopt a policy of winning over the traditional ruling elite to serving the Communists' cause.

Although it was evident that the Communists lacked tangible support in all Tibetan areas, given their military strength it did not prove difficult for them to establish control over much of the area that had been under the nominal control of the Guomindang. In December 1949, when Liu Wenhua, the nationalist governor of Xikang, defected to the Communists, and Ma Pufang fled from Qinghai, all the Tibetan speaking areas in

Eastern Tibet finally fell under the direct rule of the new regime. The Communists quickly created elementary administrative structures in these areas and declared that the areas inhabited by minority groups would enjoy "autonomy", allowing them to manage their own affairs. It is beyond the scope of this introduction to trace the evolution of Chinese nationality policy; it is sufficient to say that the Chinese communists rejected the Soviet ideal of a republic and adopted the notion of creating "autonomous" areas within a unitary state.

The history of Tibet proper before 1950 is complex. Put at its simplest, it can be said that the traditional government under the Dalai Lama exercised total control over its external and internal affairs at the time of the Chinese invasion. Neither was there any significant Chinese presence in the area under the direct control of the Lhasa government - roughly corresponding to the present-day TAR - when the People's Republic was founded in Beijing in 1949. It was only after the attack on Chamdo in October 1950 that the signing of the 17 Point Agreement by the Dalai Lama's government seven months later finally established Chinese rule in Tibet. The agreement stipulated, from the Chinese side, that no changes would be made in the governing structure of the region, and that the Tibetans would not be forced to introduce social reforms. The agreement thus safeguarded Tibet from the reforms that were promulgated in China.

However, the situation was different in Tibetan-inhabited areas in Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu. These areas were regarded as falling outside the scope of the 17 Point Agreement and were therefore subjected to the same political and administrative changes as the rest of China. Most of the traditional Tibetan area of Kham, which since the 1920s had been treated by Chinese governments as a separate province, was amalgamated in 1955 into the larger province of Sichuan, and the Tibetan areas known as Amdo were treated as part of the former Ma Pufang's province of Qinghai.

The new Chinese authorities made a legal and practical distinction between the areas that lay to the west of the Driчу river (the Yangtse), which included mainly the areas ruled by the Lhasa government and some other Tibetan speaking areas, and those areas to the east of the river, which had been under the nominal rule of the Nationalist government. While the area to the west of the river enjoyed the guarantees offered by the 17 Point Agreement, the Tibetans in other provinces were granted the right to local autonomy under a quasi constitutional document promulgated in 1949 called the "Common Programme". In 1954, when the first constitution was adopted, the right to autonomy for such areas was guaranteed, allowing areas with a sizeable minority population to set up a self-governing administration. The first such Tibetan autonomy had already been established in a county in Gansu province: the Pari (Tianzhu in Chinese) Tibetan Autonomous County had been founded on 6th May 1950, five months before the assault on Chamdo. By 1954 most of the Tibetan areas east of the Driчу river had been organised into autonomous counties or prefectures.

As far as the Tibetan heartlands were concerned, a very different policy was pursued. In January 1950, at a meeting in the ancient Buddhist pilgrimage town of Leshan in Sichuan, the Party established the Tibet Working Committee. Its members were cadres from the South West Military Region, whose leadership at the time included Deng Xiaoping. Zhang Guohua was appointed as secretary of the Tibet Working Committee

and Tan Guansan as deputy secretary; the other members were Chang Binggui, Chen Mingyi and Liu Zhenguo.

These cadres had been given the task of devising strategic and military plans for the invasion of Tibet, while Beijing concentrated on winning over the Lhasa government by diplomatic means. However, this group was to assume great significance and became the main ruling body in Tibet after October 1951, operating as a party organ behind the official administration, which was still in theory the Kashag and the traditional Tibetan Government under the Dalai Lama.

The only Tibetan member at the founding meeting of the Tibet Working Committee in Leshan was Tian Bao. Later, Baba Phuntsog Wangyal (the term Baba here is an epithet added in conversation by Tibetans to indicate that he is from Batang in Kham) was admitted as a member of the Working Committee on the instructions of the Central Committee in Beijing.

Some months later, the North-West Military Command, which controlled Qinghai and Gansu, ordered the formation of its own Tibet Working Committee, with Fan Ming as the secretary of the group. It appears that from the outset there was some conflict between the two groups on who should be responsible for Tibetan affairs. Both groups controlled large areas of Tibetan-speaking population and each felt that it should handle the Tibetan question.

The establishment of two groups created a lasting division within the PLA, which was to have serious repercussions in Tibet. We know that the South-West Military Command was to become the dominant player in Tibet, but it was only after the signing of the 17 Point Agreement that the two groups were forced to merge on order of the Party's Central Committee. In December 1951 the North West Tibet Working Committee was formally disbanded and in December 1952 the Central Committee appointed Zhang Jingwu to be the secretary of the new amalgamated committee, with Zhang Guohua as the 1st deputy secretary and Tan Guansan and Fan Ming as the 2nd and 3rd deputy secretaries.

The new Tibet Working Committee was now made up of two military groups, and it was from within this organisation that most of the senior Chinese leadership figures were to emerge. Although none of the present leadership in Tibet have any immediate connection with the first batch of Chinese cadres, the first batches of party and government cadres were drawn from former soldiers from the 18th Route Army, which was the main unit under the South West Military Command to be moved into Tibet after 1950.

The Tibet Working Committee was disbanded only in 1965, nine years after the setting up of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART), a quasi-governmental body which was made up of Tibetans and Chinese officials. Many of the Tibetan elite served on the PCART, which functioned as a joint body. The original PCART had to be disbanded and immediately reformed in the aftermath of the Tibetan uprising of March 1959, because many of its members had been involved in the rebellion, and had either fled the country or been imprisoned.

It was not until September 1965 that Tibet was formally declared an autonomous region, with a regional government and administration of its own closely modelled on the Chinese provincial system. At the same time, a Tibet regional branch of the Communist Party was finally established. This brought Tibet firmly within the constitutional and administrative system of China. The regional People's Congress was inaugurated and Ngabo Ngawang Jigme was appointed as the first Governor or head of the administration. The role of Zhang Jingwu, who until then had been referred to as the "representative of the Central Government" in Tibet, was given less emphasis, and his position as leader of the party in the region was played down; shortly afterwards he was promoted and moved to Beijing to assume the post of deputy director of the United Front. Zhang Guohua, who had served as the 2nd secretary of Tibet Working Committee, was promoted to become 1st secretary of the new branch of the Communist Party in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

By 1965, when it was officially instituted as a separate branch organisation, the Party had been actively recruiting Tibetan and Chinese members in the Tibet region for some time. The total membership of the new TAR Party was 14,830, with 7,153 of its members coming from the minority nationalities, which meant that some 48% of the Party were Tibetans. This represented considerable progress for the Chinese, for official Party statistics show that in 1952 there had been only 877 members of the Communist Party in Tibet; no figure at all is given for the number of Tibetan party members. In fact, this is not strictly accurate, since we know that a tiny number of Tibetans had joined the Party before this period. Dorje Tseten, for example, the present Director of the Tibetology Research Centre in Beijing, had joined the Party in 1949, and Tian Bao, as we saw earlier, was a veteran of the Long March. It may be that the membership of these and other early Tibetan communists is recorded in the archives of the Sichuan Party branch, for during the early period all the Tibetans who had any connection with the CCP were from Eastern Tibet. Today, we have few figures for Tibetan party membership in provinces other than the TAR.

In the early period, even in the TAR, most prominent Tibetan Party members came from Kham. This is partly explained by geography and partly by their knowledge of the Chinese language. As a result, the early group of Tibetan communists from Eastern Tibet came to occupy important posts in the TAR.

The majority of Tibetan members are said to be from peasant backgrounds. Membership of course did not mean that these Tibetans began to exercise any real power. Although in the early period the Tibetans who had joined the Red Army came to occupy various positions in the Party and government, their roles were largely ornamental, fulfilling propaganda requirements for a display of minority involvement in Party affairs.

By 1986, Tibetans constituted 78% of the membership of the TAR Communist Party. By the end of 1989, there were 70,000 Party members, of whom minority members numbered 56,000, about 80% of the total membership. Yet still the only Tibetan to occupy any really significant post in the Party appears to have been Baba Phuntsog Wangyal, a leading Marxist intellectual. He had been the Director of the Propaganda Department of the 18th Corps, under the South-West Military Party Committee. At the time he was the only Tibetan with a measure of status and political power in the Communist Party, having not only a competent knowledge of Chinese but an

ideological commitment to communism which enabled him to compete for positions of power and influence. But by 1957 he had fallen from favour during the anti-rightist campaign; he was purged from the Party and detained for nearly 20 years, never to hold any position of power again. Today, he lives in Beijing and devotes his time to writing.

The regional Communist Party system follows the provincial Party structure in existence in China, with a regional equivalent of the Central Committee, led by a Party secretary who presides over day-to-day affairs in the region.

Under the regional central committee, there are a number of departments or agencies, of which it is generally agreed that the most important are the following three:

- (1) the Organisation Department, which is responsible for appointments and personnel;
- (2) the Propaganda Department, which oversees education, cultural matters, the media, political studies and public health as well as propaganda; and
- (3) the United Front, which looks after relations with non-party organisations and traditional elites.

These three agencies are known as "party organs" and are directly responsible to the regional Party Central Committee which in turn reports to the Central Committee in Beijing. They operate both as organs of administration and as supervisors overseeing the implementation of Party policy in the relevant offices of the administration. The heads of these organisations wield significant authority in day-to-day affairs of the region.

The most senior figure in Tibet is the Party secretary of the regional CCP, who is appointed by the Party's Central Committee in Beijing in a highly secretive process. Since the establishment of the regional CCP in Tibet in 1965, there have been seven Party secretaries in Tibet. The first was Zhang Guohua, who was one of the PLA Generals who had led the attack at Chamdo in 1950. His tenure lasted until the middle of the Cultural Revolution when he came under severe attack from Red Guards and was accused of creating a fiefdom for himself. He was, however, never actually disgraced or removed and in 1968 was transferred peaceably to Sichuan.

His departure led to fierce in-fighting between various factions in Tibet, causing havoc in normal working procedures. Many of the leading Party officials came under attack and the Party's structure totally disintegrated. In September 1968, Beijing ordered the cessation of factional fighting and instructed all regions to establish a "Revolutionary Committee" based on the "three way alliance" between three forces: the Party, the cadres and the army. The Party structure was abandoned and power was then transferred to the Revolutionary Committee, described as "a temporary supreme organ of power".

The Revolutionary Committee in the TAR was made up of 27 people, of whom 12 were selected from mass organisations, 10 from the army and 5 representing the cadres. At its head was Zeng Yongya, a veteran army officer, and among its members were only

four Tibetans: Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Ragdi, Pasang and Tian Bao. It was significant that even at the height of the Cultural Revolution the Party felt the need to exhibit some kind of Tibetan participation in elite politics in the region, and even to maintain the role of Ngabo, whose aristocratic name appeared incongruously in the list of Revolutionary activists. These appointments were, however, largely cosmetic; Ngabo, for example, remained in Beijing during the period and did not attend any of the meetings. Even if he had been able to attend he would not have been in any position to make any stand in the committee, given his lack of support among the mass organisations, the military and the various factions.

The most interesting development at this time was the emergence of a new Tibetan party corps comprising figures such as Ragdi and Pasang, young Tibetans recruited by the Party in the mid-1950s and sent for education in China. This was an attempt by the Party to nurture an indigenous, ideologically pure political elite which would be politically and ideologically motivated in serving the new regime. The main criterion for membership of this new ruling elite was having the correct class background. During the Cultural Revolution, this became the sole requirement for selection.

Pasang and Ragdi are the two most prominent members of the Tibet regional Party to have emerged during the Cultural Revolution. Pasang came to public notice early in the 1960s, when she was promoted as a model of new revolutionary consciousness-raising among the Tibetan masses. Pasang, who was said to have been the *nang zen* or household servant of a wealthy aristocratic family, had run away from home at the age of 18 to join the PLA troops that had arrived in Tibet. She is said to have joined the Communist Party in 1959 and to have been sent to study in a nationality institute in China. There are few accounts of her holding any position during the early period between 1960 and 1968, other than a description of her as a "deputy magistrate in Nang County", but her name appeared regularly as that of a model cadre possessing the correct political and class backgrounds. Her first significant public appointment came during the Cultural Revolution, when in 1968 she was appointed as a vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee. The appointment indicated a huge leap in her status within the regional CCP to a senior level which she has occupied ever since.

Ragdi has a similar history. He is said to have come from a poor peasant background and to have joined the Communist Party in 1961. Like many young Tibetans, he first came into contact with the Party during the early 1950s, when the Party was wooing young people with poor peasant backgrounds to go to China to study. It is most likely that he attended one of the nationality institutes established in China to educate young students from Tibet and other minority areas. In 1961 he joined the Party and a year later returned to Nagchu where he served in the Prefectural Party Committee.

Because of their class backgrounds these two Tibetans rose rapidly through the ranks of the Party and by 1968 were the highest ranking Tibetan officials in the TAR. Ragdi is still at this level, with Pasang still nominally amongst the highest TAR elite.

As for the other Tibetan areas in Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai and Yunnan, we have very little record of Tibetan participation in elite politics during the Cultural Revolution. It is most likely that cadres and Party members with clean class backgrounds were promoted to the foreground and that Party members with bad class backgrounds were purged. In the TAR, people such as Dorje Tseten, by then a party member for nearly 20

years who had been active in the late '50s and early '60s, disappeared during the Cultural Revolution, only to re-emerge much later.

The official statistics on Party membership omit figures for the years 1966-1971. This is partly explained by the fact that during the Cultural Revolution the Party organisation had fallen into disarray. It was during this period that a larger number of Tibetans began to join the party, and by the end of the Cultural Revolution they made up 33% of the Party membership.

Today, the Party secretary remains the single most important figure in Tibet. Between 1965 and 1984 there was a clear trend governing the appointments to this position: Zhang Guohua (1965-1967), Zhou Renshan (acting Party secretary in 1967), Zeng Yongya (1968-1971), Ren Rong (1971-1980), and Yin Fatang (1980-1985) were all veteran military cadres who belonged to the 18th Route Army of the 4th Field Army (under the South-west Military Command), which had entered Tibet in the 1950s. Cadres from this group dominated higher echelons of the Party and the ranks of cadres in Tibet. There also appears to have been a natural progression in this string of senior army officers, who on appointment to the position of Party secretary also assumed the role of Political Commissar of the Tibet Military District.

It was not until 1985 that this pattern of appointments began to change. In 1985 Wu Jinghua was appointed as the new Party secretary. He had no previous links with the region and as a member of the Yi nationality, was not even an ethnic Chinese. However, Wu had worked in Sichuan implementing Deng's reform policies in minority areas and had come to the notice of Hu Yaobang.

At the same time, another section of the elite was emerging - the Tibetan Party elite. Tian Bao, Ragdi and Pasang continued to hold senior posts as deputy secretaries, much as they had during the Cultural Revolution, but new Tibetans also emerged, most prominently Dorje Tsering, Dorje Tseten, and Gyaltsen Norbu. Under Wu Jinghua the majority of the deputy secretaries were Tibetans.

However, no Tibetan has yet occupied the post of the Party secretary in the region. While there is a constitutional requirement for the chairman of an autonomous government to be a national of the region, there is no such legal obligation on the Party. This failure remains a crucial test of the Party's ability to nurture indigenous figures with leadership qualities. After some forty years of Communist rule, their failure to appoint a Tibetan leader in the region seems increasingly hard to justify.

Today, a sizeable number of Tibetan cadres and senior party members have a vested interest in ensuring that the reins of leadership are passed on to them. However, for this to happen, there would have to be a change in the nature of Tibetan participation in the region's elite politics. Between 1950 and 1984, the role of Tibetans in elite politics was marginal and symbolic. The prominence of Tian Bao, who has held both government and party positions, is based on his role as one of the few minority members of the Long March, and depends upon the symbolic significance of that epic event in the Party's history. Ngabo Ngawang Jigme's sustained position in the leadership also owes much to symbolism in that, as a leading official in the traditional Government and as a signatory to the 17 Point Agreement, he represents the continuity between old Tibet

and the new regime. Both Ngabo and Tian Bao are now, however, retired from active politics.

Even during the Cultural Revolution, when people like Ragdi and Pasang were in the forefront of politics in the region, their posts in the hierarchy can best be described as positional, since their presence did not alter the overall situation. One indication that their roles were primarily decorative is the fact that they survived so many upheavals and radical changes among the leadership. This suggests either that they did not present any threat to the leadership, or that they did not advance any particular policies. This earned them the reputation of reliable officials to be maintained in the highest positions as a sign of Tibetan involvement in the decision-making process.

A younger generation of Tibetan leadership is now emerging which includes well-educated men and women with strong ideological and class backgrounds, who are thus qualified to assert themselves in the higher politics of the Party. However, we have yet to see the Tibet region emerge as an autonomous political entity with its own internal elite political agenda, independent of connections in Beijing. The region's chronic dependence on subsidies from the centre and its lack of strong indigenous leadership continues to mean that, despite references to autonomy, the TAR still exercises less freedom than a normal province.

The degree of centralisation in Tibet policy formulation is exemplified by the role of the Work Forum on Tibet, or as it is properly called, the National Forum on Work in Tibet. A body of this sort had existed in 1959. It re-emerged in 1980 at the request of the new Party Secretariat in Beijing, indicating that the main work of policy planning for the region was to be carried out by the senior leadership in the Chinese capital. The First Work Forum was convened by Hu Yaobang in 1980 and ushered in the most liberal period in recent history of Tibet; its basic policy was described as "leniency, leniency, leniency"². Four years later Hu Yaobang convened the Second Work Forum on Tibet, which called on the region to "open up" and linked its economic development with the rest of China. It was not until 1994, some ten years later, that the Third Work Forum on Tibet was convened in Beijing, calling for rapid economic developments and further integration with China³.

Since 1980, the Work Forums have become the main policy organ for Tibet. The way they operate demonstrates how policies for the region are formulated and put into practice: they are chaired by the General Secretary of the CCP, with cadres from Tibet being summoned to Beijing to hear the deliberations. The Tibet Work Forum is made up of senior Party leaders and although even the regional Party secretary is excluded from the working group, senior Party officials are allowed to present evidence to the group. This shows that policy decisions concerning the TAR are made at the highest level.

The theoretical structure of governance in the TAR is similar to that of the provincial governments in China, with the regional congress defined as the supreme organ of government and invested with the power to modify national law, to enact local legislation, and to appoint government and judicial officials. The constitution requires

² Yang Jingren, then the head of the United Front.

³ For a detailed account of the policies of the Third Forum, see *Cutting Off the Serpent's Head: Tightening Control in Tibet, 1994-5*, Tibet Information Network/Human Rights Watch-Asia, London & New York 1996.

that the chairman of the government and of the congress of each region and province must be a member of the majority indigenous ethnic group of that region or province, with the result that ever since the establishment of the TAR in 1965, its Chairman has always been Tibetan - firstly Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, and after the Cultural Revolution, Tian Bao, Dorje Tseten, Dorje Tsering, and currently Gyaltzen Norbu, another Party member. The Congress too has always been headed by a Tibetan, and today more than 80% of the deputies at all levels of the People's Congress in the TAR are Tibetans.

In practice, as we have seen, the dominant members of the TAR People's Congress, as of the Government, remain the Party members. They occupy the most important positions and are most likely to dominate the decision making. Indeed, each session of the Congress openly includes in its schedule the convening of an *ad hoc* Party committee for that session, representing all the Party members present at the session and allocating them roles of influence in their respective sections of the Congress or the Consultative Conference. Because of the extreme secrecy involved and the paucity of source materials, it is difficult to discern whether conflict arises between the People's Congresses and the Party in the Tibetan areas, or how such conflicts are resolved. Nor is it possible to examine the intricacy of the appointments system. But in general the deputies to the People's Congress, who include a number of "leading figures" such as former high ranking lamas, can be said only to be occupying "positions" which allow them to act as a legitimising agency for the Party. In this respect, they do not enjoy much more power than the regional chapter of the People's Political Consultative Conference, which, despite its role as an assembly for the airing of non-Party views, includes a significant number of Party members and also convenes an *ad hoc* Party committee to regulate or influence each session.

The regional People's Congress was first established in 1965, and like most institutions, it did not meet during the Cultural Revolution. The Congress was reconvened only after 1977, but it was not until 1979 that the revised Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China for the National People's Congress and the Local People's Congress at All Levels was passed. This legislation formalised the functions of the NPC enshrined in the Constitution, and was further supplemented by the Organic Law for Local People's Congresses and Local People's Governments.

These laws established the four tiers of the People's Congress. The National People's Congress, the highest level of the four, is elected for a full five year term; at the second level, the People's Congresses in each of the 29 provinces and autonomous regions also have five-year terms. Below these Congresses in the hierarchy are the prefectural and county level People's Congresses.

The regional People's Congresses, like the National People's Congress, serve as legislative bodies with power to modify national law and to enact laws. The People's Congresses have the dual role of being the legislative organ of the government and supervising the administration of officers in governing bodies and judicial organs. However, the regional People's Congresses meet only once a year, for a limited time, and they make no legislation or policy decisions. The dominant members of the National People's Congress remain the Party members, who play a leading role in guiding the non-Party members; it is these individuals who are most likely to exercise decision-making powers. The main role of the People's Congress is to signify that "the

people of the whole country....enjoy the supreme power to manage the state". The election and existence of the Congress legitimise the power of the CCP and imply that the entire nation assents to its exercise of power.

Another important institution which plays a significant role in Tibet is the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. The CPPCC was described by Ye Xuanping, a vice-chairman of the CPPCC, not as an administrative organ exercising power, but as "an important political consultative organization that plays a patriotic united front role".

The CPPCC does not have any legal status in the Constitution of the PRC, but it exists as a secondary institution established by the Communist Party. The existence of the CPPCC depends on the assumption of the dominant role by the Party. In China as a whole, the CPPCC has very little significance and does not have any real impact in governance of the country, but in Tibet it still plays a special role. Like the People's Congress, the CPPCC exists at four levels: national, regional, prefectural and county. However, unlike the People's Congresses, where members are supposedly elected by universal suffrage, appointment as a member of the CPPCC is a gift solely in the hands of the Party. The organisation is established by the Communist Party as a means of forming an alliance with non-Party members and organisations, who are said to exercise some degree of influence in society but are separated from the Party because of their class background or ideological orientation. The primary criterion for selection is the individual's acceptance of four cardinal principles: (1) leadership of the Communist Party (2) the guiding role of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought (3) the people's dictatorship and (4) the socialist road.

To be selected as a member of the CPPCC, an individual must show that he or she is thoroughly reformed and willing to work under the people's democratic dictatorship. This category of people includes leaders like Lhalu Tsewang Dorje, one of the governors of Eastern Tibet and a former member of the Kashag. Lhalu was arrested in 1959 and imprisoned until 1979. Another significant figure is Chamdo Phagpa-lha (Phagpa-lha Geleg Namgyal), originally the head of Chamdo monastery, who has held high positions in the government and the CPPCC since 1960.

The CPPCC had important propaganda work to carry out during the early years, in order to show that the Communist Party was willing to accommodate non-communists. There was also an added emphasis on the benevolence of the Party towards class enemies. Today, this role has shifted, with the emphasis now on the organisation as disseminator of Party policy to the people. While on paper the Party emphasises that the CPPCC is a means of soliciting the views of influential members of society, in practice the system is designed to contain voices of dissent. In reference to the powerlessness of the CPPCC, people often mockingly refer to the three functions of the CPPCC as: "three things you must do with your hands: when you enter the meeting hall, you must shake hands, when the speeches are read, you must clap your hands, and finally when the vote is cast, you must raise your hands".

Notwithstanding this implication of passivity, in reality individual members can be quite assertive and make hostile criticisms. It was reported that during the height of pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa in the late 1980s, the members of the CPPCC submitted a document criticising the Party's handling of the demonstrations. In recent

years, one of the most difficult issues to be discussed in the forum was the recognition of the Dalai Lama. It was reported that many members refused to comment, while others reportedly stated that "there was no meeting of minds between the Central Government and ourselves, and whatever we have to say will not please the ears of the Party".

As we have seen, Tibetans are increasingly involved in the administration of the Party and government in the TAR. But it would be a mistake to assume that Tibetans are playing a more dominant role in the region. The highly centralised nature of the decision-making process and the rigidity of authority make it difficult for individual Party members or government cadres to raise issues which conflict with established policies, and the region's economic dependence on the centre decreases its political leverage. Outside the TAR, where Tibetans constitute only a tiny minority, their ability to compete with ethnic Chinese for political power within the hierarchy of communist politics is limited.

In elite politics, whether in the Party or the government, the central issue is the degree to which special concessions should be made with regard to the region's historical and cultural separateness from China. This is termed "special circumstances" or "special needs". While the moderate factions in the Party argue that Tibet uniqueness must be taken into account and concessions must be made to the social and religious sentiments of the Tibetan people, the hard-liners or leftists argue that "special needs" is merely a term used by nationalists to obstruct "socialist construction". This debate has echoes of the struggle in the late 1950s between "local nationalists" and "Han chauvinists". Today, the issue has been made a test of political allegiance by the present Party secretary Chen Kuiyuan, who has attacked those who advocate "Tibet's special circumstances" as pandering to separatists.

In summary, we have in this Directory focused on elite politics and on the people who work for the regime. The question of the wider politics of Tibet - religious freedom, the Dalai Lama and ultimately the independence of the Tibet - are taboo subjects for the authorities, who expect Party members and government cadres to hold a single view and to oppose any idea of Tibetan independence. It is these sensitive subjects that are, however, the main concerns of the Tibetan people. As a result, this dichotomy has become a source of division between the people and their leaders in Tibet today.