



## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

### **New training camp for Party cadres in Tibet demonstrates tougher approach and challenges in ensuring loyalty**

<http://www.savetibet.org/new-training-camp-for-party-cadres-in-tibet-demonstrates-tougher-approach-and-challenges-in-ensuring-loyalty/>

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#### **Inside Tibet report**

- In a disturbing indicator of Xi Jinping's focus on total ideological control and deepening suppression in Tibet, the Chinese state media has announced the opening of a new training camp in Tibet under paramilitary supervision aiming to "correct" and mold the thinking of Party cadres carrying out political "education" in broader Tibetan society.
- The new facility in Shigatse (Chinese: Rikaze), the Tibet Autonomous Region, reported by the Chinese state media on January 22 (2019), follows the announcement of the establishment of a large 'Tibet Youth Palace' in Lhasa to strengthen "patriotic education" among young people to be opened in May (2019).
- The facilities represent the deepening institutionalization of the current policy model in both Tibet and Xinjiang, which combines coercive securitization and militarization with efforts to accelerate political and cultural transformation. In Tibet, this means the Chinese authorities are seeking to obliterate loyalty to the Dalai Lama and replace it with allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party and to 'Sinicize' Tibetan Buddhism.

The new "political education camp" in Shigatse is intended to provide ideological training to some of the thousands of Party cadres who have been deployed across Tibet in recent years in private homes, monasteries and schools and in line with Chinese leader Xi Jinping's agenda of deepening control.

The Chinese state media report refers to the importance for Party cadres of changing their attitudes not just at the superficial level of reciting Party slogans, but in terms of achieving a complete ideological shift.<sup>1</sup> It reflects the current approach of securitization combined with tougher attempts at rewiring Tibetan political thinking, with the stated official aim of "breaking lineage, breaking roots, breaking connections, and breaking origins" of Uyghurs and Tibetans.<sup>2</sup> In Xinjiang, in an

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<sup>1</sup> Chinese state media online, 'Exploring new ways of education and training for party members in the new era', January 22, 2019, [http://epaper.chinatibetnews.com/xzrb/html/2019-01/22/content\\_873596.htm](http://epaper.chinatibetnews.com/xzrb/html/2019-01/22/content_873596.htm)

<sup>2</sup> This quote from an official government document was cited by Agence France-Presse, which reviewed more than 1,500 publicly available government documents also describing disturbing purchases made by government agencies that oversee the so-called education centers: 2,768 police batons, 550 electric cattle prods, 1,367 pairs of handcuffs, and 2,792 cans of pepper spray. In one of the government documents, officials argued that to build new, better Chinese citizens, the reeducation centers must first "break their lineage, break their roots, break their connections, and break their origins." Ben Dooley for AFP, October 24, 2018, <https://news.abc-cbn.com/overseas/10/24/18/inside-chinas-internment-camps-tear-gas-tasers-and-textbooks>. See International Campaign for Tibet report, 'Alignment of Xinjiang, Tibet security forces underline China's lockdown policies for Tibetans and Uyghurs', January 22, 2019, [https://www.savetibet.org/lockdown\\_policies\\_for\\_tibetans\\_and\\_uyghurs/](https://www.savetibet.org/lockdown_policies_for_tibetans_and_uyghurs/) Also see International Campaign for Tibet report, 'The origin of the 'Xinjiang model' in Tibet under Chen Quanguo: Securitizing ethnicity and accelerating assimilation', December 10, 2018, <https://www.savetibet.org/the-origin-of-the-xinjiang-model-in-tibet/>

unprecedented and horrifying development, an extensive prison camp system of “de-extremification training centers” has been created where around a million Uyghurs and Kazakhs are being held.<sup>3</sup>

The new training camp in Shigatse, established in a year that the Chinese Communist Party marks the 70th year of its foundation on October 1, is focused at training “grass roots Party cadres in rural and pastoral areas” in line with the methodology for Party members in Xi Jinping’s so-called “new era” announced at the 19th Party Congress in October, 2017.<sup>4</sup>

Stating that daily activities will include raising the Party red flag and singing the national anthem, the ideological function of the center as a center of “anti-secession struggle” is underlined in the state media article. The repressive nature of the facility is clear with a reference to “paramilitary” discipline and management in order to ensure compliance, and the state media report warns of the punitive element of “self-criticism” and the need to “correct people’s thinking”. The training does not only target individuals’ political beliefs and the need for compliance to Party policy, but also their personal lives, consistent with the more pervasive and systematic imposition of “patriotic education” strategies across Tibet in recent years.

The article also states that the training includes “simulations of the election of branch elections and convening Party members’ meetings” to educate the cadres, possibly indicating an acknowledgement of lack of trust in Party structures.

In a further example of the institutionalization of the process of political “re-education” the Chinese state media announced the establishment of a large “Tibet Youth Palace” in Lhasa, to be opened in May (2019). An article in the official press said that it would be “an important place for carrying out extracurricular activities, inheriting traditional culture and strengthening patriotism education, which provides scientific, cultural, artistic space with ethnic characteristics for youth in the whole southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region.”<sup>5</sup>

The reference to “traditional culture” means entirely the opposite; the Chinese authorities are increasingly criminalizing expressions of authentic Tibetan culture and seeking to undermine and ‘Sinicize’ Buddhist religious practice.<sup>6</sup> Central to that is the political campaign to eradicate the Dalai Lama’s influence, which has intensified in recent weeks, possibly linked to the upcoming 60th anniversary of the March, 1959 Uprising and Dalai Lama’s escape into exile, as well as this year’s anniversary of the foundation of the PRC on October 1, 1949.

### **Authorities emphasize anti-Dalai Lama struggle**

The Chinese leadership has emphasized that the struggle against the Dalai Lama is on a war footing, with one official recently reported as saying that “a tit-for-tat battle with the Dalai Lama and his group” is being waged. The unnamed official from the regional commission for discipline inspection was cited by the Global Times on February 1 (2019) as saying: “If any CPC member has the wrong attitude on this subject, it would be a serious problem.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> International Campaign for Tibet report, ‘The origin of the ‘Xinjiang model’ in Tibet under Chen Quanguo: Securitized ethnicity and accelerating assimilation’, December 10, 2018, <https://www.savetibet.org/the-origin-of-the-xinjiang-model-in-tibet/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> China Tibet Online, November 21, 2018, <http://en.tibetol.cn/html/News/Tibet/ES/2018/1121/5017.html>

<sup>6</sup> In January, the Global Times announced a five-year plan to ‘Sinicize’ Islam linked to the crackdown in Xinjiang. It stated: “The main purpose of China’s five-year plan to sinicize Islam is to seek governance that tallies with Chinese practice, and it is not only limited to Islam. Such governance should be suitable for all religions in China.” ‘China explores effective governance of religion in secular world’, January 6, 2019, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1134750.shtml>. Also see International Campaign for Tibet report, ‘China tightens screws on Tibetan Buddhism’, September 11, 2018, <https://www.savetibet.org/china-tightens-screws-on-tibetan-buddhism/>

<sup>7</sup> Global Times, ‘Taking religious beliefs, sympathizing separatists violate Party rules’, February 1, 2019, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1137878.shtml>

The same state media report makes thinly veiled official warnings about the dangers of Party members maintaining loyalty to traditional Buddhist culture and the Dalai Lama, revealing that three Party officials had been expelled from the Party for worshipping unspecified “illicit objects” in Tibet, which may have been Buddhist icons or pictures of the Tibetan religious leader. The Global Times stated: “Apart from these two-faced people, there are also other CPC members and officials who committed mistakes due to a lack of politic [sic] sensitivity and consciousness.”<sup>8</sup>

The new institute for training Party cadres on a paramilitary basis in Shigatse appears to be consistent with this acknowledgement at the highest levels of the Party that it has not fully secured the allegiance of officials or the broader Tibetan public.

### **Tibetan monks compelled to lead re-education**

The same methodologies of intensified securitization and ideological training have been developed with increasing rigor in the Tibetan monastic system. It is no longer enough that work teams provide training for monks and nuns. Now individual monks are required to adopt roles in training others to be “reliable in politics”.

In a recent development, the state media revealed that Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns are compelled to be ‘facilitators’ for the training of others in politics. The Global Times reported on a training course in Lhasa last summer detailing what these monks and nuns were required to do in order “to strengthen their political beliefs”.<sup>9</sup> A new ethos of the ‘Four Standards’ has been introduced in which monks are required to take “a firm and clear-cut stance” in terms of “political reliability”, which means compliance to the CCP, and also to be “profound in religious knowledge, convincing in morality and play an active role at critical moments”, according to the same Global Times article.

This propaganda campaign is being promoted throughout the TAR, and the state media has featured a number of articles stating that it is only through striving to adopt the ‘Four Standards’ that a monk can ‘advance’ and that the authorities’ aims of “social stability” – meaning compliance to Party policy – can be achieved. One article stated that it is only through practice of the “Four Standards” that “the vast majority of monks and nuns have deeper feelings and experience on how to do a good job of patriotism, education, and law-abiding.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Context: Grass roots Party organisations as “battle fortresses”**

Despite the already oppressive measures in place, the leadership in Tibet has emphasized even stricter “rectification” with grassroots Party organizations warned to be even more “effective battle fortresses.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Global Times, June 4, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1105552.shtml>

<sup>10</sup> Tibet Daily, November 7, 2018, [http://epaper.chinatibetnews.com/xzrb/html/2018-11/07/content\\_861472.htm](http://epaper.chinatibetnews.com/xzrb/html/2018-11/07/content_861472.htm)

<sup>11</sup> In a speech prior to the 19th Party Congress, Tibet Autonomous Region Party chief Wu Yingjie focused on grass roots measures of social control by the CCP, indicating that at the time of the Party Congress every single person should be involved in the drive for political ‘stability’. Party Secretary Wu referred to the need for intensified engagement on a war footing with the requirement to: “Make grassroots Party organisations effective battle fortresses, raise the level of comprehensive rectification [...] Carry through the principles of prevention as the key, attention to problematic issues, sifting through the multitude of opinion, and readily responding to any enquiry [or challenge]”. “ChinaTibetNews” (Tibetan), October 1, 2017, [http://tb.chinatibetnews.com/zw/ldhd/201710/t20171001\\_1988149.html](http://tb.chinatibetnews.com/zw/ldhd/201710/t20171001_1988149.html). Cited in International Campaign for Tibet report, ‘New developments in China’s Tibet policy as Communist Party’s 19th Congress begins’, October 17, 2017, <https://www.savetibet.org/new-developments-in-chinas-tibet-policy-as-communist-partys-19th-congress-begins/>

The Chinese government adopted the strategy of actively establishing Party presence in rural areas as the answer to “instability” following the overwhelmingly peaceful protests that swept across Tibetan areas just prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. This led to a more pervasive and systematic approach to “patriotic education” and a dramatic increase in work teams and Party cadres in rural areas of the TAR as well as well-resourced initiatives in cultural and social spheres.

Just a month after the protests and riot in Lhasa on March 14, 2008, the launch of a mass “patriotic education” campaign was announced in the TAR. The focus was on two main groups – Party members of the “four ranks” (meaning those in the TAR government, prefectures, counties and townships) and ordinary Tibetans who are non-Party members in monasteries, nunneries and broader lay society.

A month after the mass campaign was announced, in May, 2008, the official news media made an admission. It was reported that because of what had happened on March 14, 2008 – which has become known as the “3/14” incident – the “four ranks” of Party members had failed in their duties. On May 17, 2008, Xizang TV news reported the following: “There are 224,000 well paid Party members in the TAR. However there is evidence that ‘four ranks’ Party members in the region did not effectively monitor mass activities and thought, nor did they build a good relationship with the masses in order to protect and maintain public security.”

The announcement of the new training center for cadres and its functions indicates that those uncertainties still exist at the Party’s highest levels.

New campaigns began, in addition to the mass transfer of Party cadres particularly to rural areas of Tibet.

As part of this focus, in 2009, the TAR government tested a trial of “one Party member to make contact with five families” within communities in the Barkhor area of Lhasa. Tibet Daily reported that: “The responsibility of one party member is to deliver party’s important messages to five families’ members on time, to make sure they understand Party policy, to help them and watch them and deeply understand the political thoughts and concepts which influence their lifestyle.” (Tibet Daily, May 26, 2009.)

The hardline former Party boss of the TAR Chen Quanguo, who was transferred in 2016 to Xinjiang, presided over the systematic transfer of thousands of Party cadres to Tibet from 2011 onwards. During his tenure in Tibet, Chen Quanguo made it clear that individuals’ deepest loyalties and private thoughts are targeted in the “re-education” process when he announced punishments of officials on political grounds allied to the authorities’ “anti-separatist” struggle, stating in 2014 that: “Those who have fantasies about the 14th Dalai Clique, those who follow the 14th Dalai Clique, and those Party cadres involved in supporting separatist infiltration and sabotage activities will be strictly disciplined and severely punished in accordance with the law.”<sup>12</sup> Two years later in Xinjiang, Chen Quanguo launched a campaign against “two-faced” officials who exhibit political disloyalty, which has resulted in the arrest of numerous prominent Uyghur officials and scholars.

The practice of turning villagers into informers, and setting neighbors against neighbors, has been replicated in Xinjiang where the system of Party cadres based in people’s homes is well-established. More than a million Chinese civilians (most ethnic Chinese) have been mobilized to aid the military and police in their campaign by occupying the homes of the region’s Uighurs and other Muslim

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<sup>12</sup> Xinhua, November 5, 2014 [http://epaper.chinatibetnews.com/xzrb/html/2014-11/05/content\\_579554.htm](http://epaper.chinatibetnews.com/xzrb/html/2014-11/05/content_579554.htm)

minorities, and undertaking programs of indoctrination and surveillance, while presenting themselves as older siblings of the men and women they might then decide to consign to the camps.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> According to an article in Global Times, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has implemented the pairing and assistance program between officials and the ethnic minority citizens to promote communication and interaction among different ethnic groups in Xinjiang. The article stated: "Until September 2018, some 1.1 million civil servants have paired up with more than 1.69 million ethnic minority citizens, especially village residents, People's Daily reported on Wednesday. The report said that various administrative departments, enterprises from the central government and military departments, including the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and Xinjiang Armed Police Corps, have visited over 49 million residents. The number of activities themed 'ethnics unite as a family', held by these departments, reached more than 11 million. 'The pairing and assistance program has been implemented for two years, which is a successful practice for Xinjiang,' Zhu Weiqun, former head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing, told the Global Times." Global Times, November 7, 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1126378.shtml>