scattered in a dozen mountainous spots throughout southern and central China. They were to become the backbone of the New Fourth Army, the counterpart of the Eighth Route Army in northern China, during the Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) and then of the Third Field Army in the Civil War (1946–49). Despite its obvious importance, however, only a few scholarly publications – among them Chen Yung-fa's study of the Communist movement in Eastern and Central China and the volume of Gregor Benton under review – have dealt with that part of Communist history.

This is one of the Leeds East Asia Papers recently issued under Benton's editorship. It attempts mainly to provide a concise description of the origins and early development of the New Fourth Army, and that is I believe successfully accomplished. Drawing on various documentary sources and secondary literature from Taiwan and China, Benton offers a solid piece of work about Chinese Communist history in general and that of eastern and central China in the late 1930s in particular.

The most interesting parts of the book are perhaps the sections about the tensions and confrontations growing from within the New Fourth Army, such as those of the rank and file level between the veteran guerrillas and the newly-recruited urban elements (pp. 17–18), and of the higher leadership between the Army commander, Ye Ting and the Party commissar, Xiang Ying (pp. 15–16 and 18–19). Sketchy as they may be, these sections portray a complex and yet credible picture of the people and events of the New Fourth Army in its formative years.

Although some of Benton's analysis is good, there are drawbacks. He aligns Ye Ding and Mao Zedong on one side and Xiang Ying and Wang Ming on the other, based on their personal characters and strategic thinking. As a counter-argument I would stress the similarities between Mao and Xiang and between Ye and Wang in respect of their personal dispositions and political attitudes, and would explain the contemporary alignment of Mao and Ye against Wang and Xiang mainly as a result of their respective power holdings. Indeed, the rise of Mao as compared to Wang as a figurehead in the Communist Party Centre and Xiang Ying's *de facto* control over the New Fourth Army in contrast to Ye as the titular commander had earlier provided the potential for such an alignment.

Nevertheless, this study provides an excellent summary of a difficult and previously neglected field of research.

BENJAMIN YANG

The Ili Rebellion: The Moslem Challenge to Chinese Authority in Xinjiang, 1944–1949. By LINDA BENSON. [Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990. 265 pp. $45.00. ISBN 0 87332 509 5.]

It is now quite ironic and perhaps prescient that in this welcome and detailed investigation of the brief but critical uprising which helped precipitate the end of China's short-lived Nationalist control of the remote north-western region known as Xinjiang, Benson attempts to counter the long-held and convenient supposition that the Soviets, as usual, were to blame for unrest in the area. "Disturbances in the Xinjiang

area," she notes, "could possibly infect the Soviets' own Central Asian minorities" (p. 39). The situation has now quite reversed itself.

This thoughtful and clearly written account, based on a careful combing of Chinese, English and Turkic sources, from archives in Britain, Taiwan and China, and personal interviews with participants from the region, provides the best description yet of the events which led up to and followed the Ili Rebellion of 1944–49. Benson's is a necessary-but-not-sufficient argument: Soviet support for the uprising was required to give local nationalists the arms and wherewithal to stage the rebellion, but it was not enough to explain why they rebelled in the first place (*contra* Andrew Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia* (1986), the only other work to examine seriously Republican ethnopolitics in the region). Benson is careful to point out that though the Chinese Qing dynasty under the Manchu was the first to bring what became known as Xinjiang ("New Dominions") under direct colonial control in the mid-18th century, it was an intermittent and sparsely effective administration, interrupted by frequent rebellions and often cut off from central control. Even after 1911, when the Nationalists attempted once again to assert Chinese control of the region, Benson cogently notes that the ruthless Sheng Shicai, *de facto* ruler of the province from 1931 to 1944, spent as much time cultivating Soviet, then British and even American relations as he did Nationalist Chinese, as a way of maintaining his independent power-base in the region. The lifting of his boot provided the opportunity for a well-organized uprising in Xinjiang's north-westernmost region of Ili.

His replacement, Zhang Zhizhong, was an effective administrator who leaned more strongly toward Sun Yat-sen's pluralistic federalism than Chiang Kai-shek's assimilationist centrism. Zhang negotiated a peaceful settlement to the uprising that had by late 1944 controlled most of North-western Xinjiang through promising real power-sharing, proportional representation, free religious practice, the limiting of Han immigration, and more local control over regional resources. The leadership of the rebellion, known as the "Eastern Turkestan Republic" (ETR), agreed to a coalition government, emphasizing they "had no desire to separate from China, that they desired autonomy for the districts . . . and that the reason for the revolt had been past oppression" (p. 54). This coalition fell apart once it became clear that Chiang's central government was not about to support such ethno-religious power-sharing, and the removal of Zhang in 1947 led to the return of oppressive military rule. Making strikingly similar promises as those promoted by the Nationalist Chairman Zhang Zhizhong, the Communists were welcomed into Xinjiang with fairly open arms on 12 October 1949.

Benson takes ethnic and religious nationalism seriously, describing how some leaders brokered power through their appeal to local interests (like Ahmat Jan Kasimi, Izhak Jan Mura Haji and Burhan Shahidi), while other political appointees lacked such appeal, even though they were of the correct ethnicity (such as Mesut Sabrioglu, regarded as the classic "Uncle Tom" representing only Chinese interests). The reader only wishes that Benson had gone further into the complicated ethnic, religious and linguistic distinctives of the region which may have shed further light on the geopolitical obstacles to ETR success. Kazakh, Kirghiz and Uighur Turkic dialectical variations are not so small, as

Benson suggests, "that speakers can generally understand each other" (p. x), as any Turkish traveller to Central Asia can tell you (as well as the Ankara Turkish government, currently spending huge sums to teach nearly 10,000 Turkic speakers from Central Asia how to speak Turkish). Glossing the multi-ethnic composition of the ETR as "Turki Nationalism" (p. 119, 182) does not do justice to the ethnic and religious diversity of the coalition, which included non-Turks, such as Hui (Dungan, or Muslim Chinese), Manchu, White Russians and Mongols, as well as other peoples Benson briefly notes but who no longer find themselves on China's minority nationality lists (such as the Taranchi and Solon). This may even help shed some light on the enigmatic figure of Osman Batur, the Turkic Kazakh nationalist and charismatic leader who was perhaps most responsible for the factional schisms which wreaked havoc on the solidarity of the ETR, or why the southern Tarim basin region, site of the first ETR attempt, did not join in with the second ETR attempt in the far Northwestern corner of Xinjiang. Arguing that "Islam" was a force that bound the ETR together requires more than a single-page treatment (p. 145). The oft-neglected question of "which Islam?" or what kind of Islam is especially important in Xinjiang given the history of Sufi-inspired political movements in the region, a plurality of Sunni Islamic associations influenced by movements as far away and as diverse as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and even the presence of Ismaili Shi'ism among at least one Muslim people in the region.

For anyone interested in the intrigues of what was once known as Chinese Turkestan to the early Great Game explorers, continues to be referred to as Eastern Turkestan by most Turks outside China, and today endures as Xinjiang to the Chinese, this book is required reading and helps to explain why today the Beijing government is still reluctant to admit that this region belongs culturally, if no longer demographically, to Central Asia.

DRU C. GLADNEY

To the People: James Yen and Village China. By CHARLES W. HAYFORD. [New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. 304 pp. $48.50. ISBN 0 231 07204 X.]

A biography of James Yen and of his organization, the Mass Education Movement (MEM), *To the People* addresses several historical questions of Republican period China at several levels. The book's proclaimed motif is the political and cultural battle over versions of the pastoral, or how urban intellectuals related to their country cousins. Through a clever bit of Zeitgeist-stalking, Hayford astutely observes that a transition of sorts took place, from the 1920s New Culture image of rural China as a depressing sinkage of backwardness and shame waiting for civilization, to a 1930s image in which "the vast countryside became a resource" produced by a new "strain of militant pastoral" (p. 111).

The June 1989 unpleasantness and that eerie spectre of the goddess of Liberty on Tiananmen Square has induced many to ruminate anew on the ultimate fate of American-style "liberalism" in China. Probably the book will be perceived primarily as a contribution to that ongoing discourse. Yen and his associates were what Hayford terms "Transpacific Liberals."