

PANCHSHEELA
AND
AFTER

Sino-Indian Relations
in the Context of the
Tibetan Insurrection

by GIRILAL JAIN

THE concept of Panchsheela has met with a serious set-back in the context of Sino-Indian relations. As Mr Girilal Jain points out, China adhered to Panchsheela only in a limited sense and her depredatory inroads into the neighbouring sovereign states is a tragic revelation of China's expansionist policies.

The debacle of Tibet is a debacle of Panchsheela. This and other recent explosive situations in Southeast Asia and the Far East raise the question whether free nations can survive under the ideology of Panchsheela.

Mr Girilal Jain also assails "the myth of traditional friendship between India and China" through a careful, well-documented historical analysis.

Tersely written to convey the drama of two strong clashing forces, the narrative maintains an objectivity that is a quiet but effective plea for an "agonising re-appraisal" of Panchsheela. Readers of his earlier book (*India Meets China in Nepal*, Asia Publishing House 1959) will remember well the author's gift for descriptive writing and his ability to correctly assess international trends and incidents.

GIRILAL JAIN was educated at Delhi University. Like many young students in the late thirties and the early forties, he was attracted to Marxism. His disillusionment began in 1941, following the change in Communist policy after the invasion of Russia by Germany. While still a student he plunged into Quit India Movement (1942) and courted arrest. His journalistic career began in 1946 with *The Vanguard*, an English daily of New Delhi. Subsequently, he was associated with *Independent India* edited by the late M. N. Roy. He then joined *The Indian News Chronicle*, later called *The Delhi Express*—the forerunner of the present *Indian Express* in Delhi. Mr Jain is now on the staff of *The Times of India*, Delhi.

In 1956 Mr Jain wrote a monograph, *Chinese Panch Sheel in Burma*; in 1957 he wrote his first book, *What Mao Really Means*. His *India Meets China in Nepal* appeared in 1959.

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A RE-APPRAISAL OF SINO-INDIAN
RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT
OF THE TIBETAN INSURRECTION

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GIRILAL JAIN



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Introduction

It is not a disputable issue that India's relations with Communist China provide the fulcrum round which India's foreign policy must revolve. It is also generally agreed now that this country's relations with the strong, militarised and totalitarian northern colossus cannot be conducted in terms of abstract principles or without sufficient regard to national interests. It has become a debatable issue whether the policy the Indian Government pursued during the last decade (1949-59) was best suited to produce the desired results in terms of securing at once the country's interests and friendly understanding with China.

Mr Nehru, the architect of India's foreign policy, has given expression to his disillusionment with the Chinese Government. He has come to the sad conclusion that the Chinese rulers are intoxicated with power and seek to bully India and that they have a "low estimate" of India's friendship. He is convinced that China is in an expansionist phase. He doubts if the Chinese rulers ever tried to understand the urges, aspirations, hopes and fears of democratic India, which has shaped her policies in the image of the Gandhian ideals of tolerance, understanding and love. He is aware that people's faith in "Panch Sheela" and Bandung principles has been shaken.

It should be common ground, therefore, that India must undertake an "agonising reappraisal" of her policy in respect of China, which must inevitably involve a re-examination of the entire basis and structure of foreign policy. It would not do for the Government to protest that it stands by certain immutable principles and that it would continue to do so whether the other party honours them or not. India must survive as an independent country in order that she is able to practise the principles which have been bequeathed

to her by, among others, the Father of the Nation. Before a realistic reassessment of India's relations with China can be undertaken, it is imperative to define national interests and to determine the weaknesses of the policy pursued so far.

On April 5, 1959, Mr Nehru laid down three factors, which would guide India's relations with China in years to come. They were: India's security and territorial integrity, friendship for China, and concern for the sufferings of the Tibetan people. In the past, two of these three principles were largely ignored because we accepted China's professions of friendship at their face value. For instance, the Government of India, for all practical purposes, wrote off Tibet as a bulwark of defence even before her independence was seriously threatened. As the threat grew, it allowed itself to be led into the belief that the Chinese rulers would settle the Tibetan issue peacefully. It did not concern itself with the objectives of Communist China's policies in Asia in general and in Tibet in particular. Beyond some ineffectual protests, which reflected confusion about the historical status of Tibet as also this country's stakes in her independence, it did nothing to secure what should have been the first and most legitimate objective of its foreign policy. Out of the policy of surrender in Tibet was born "Panch Sheela."

The results are there for everyone to see. Tibet's autonomy, way of life, religion and political institutions have been decimated. The Tibetan race faces virtual extinction through the dual process of massacre and absorption. While Tibetans are being moved to other parts of China, Hans are being settled in lakhs in Tibet. China's armies are firmly entrenched on the long undefended frontiers of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The validity of the entire Sino-Indian border has been thrown into doubt. For India, to accept and honour the awesome responsibility to man and defend the frontiers might involve the risk of slowing down the pace of economic development. To leave the frontiers unmanned and undefended is to present large parts of disputed territories at least, to begin with, to the Chinese on the platter. The alternatives are grim beyond doubt.

At home in 1949-50, the Communist Party was morally isolated because of its performance during the "Quit India" struggle of 1942-45, and the attempt at violent insurrection in 1948-49. In the shadow of "Panch Sheela" it has been able to rehabilitate itself. By early 1957, it had grown strong enough to form the Ministry in one state, Kerala, and claims to be the second largest and best organised party in the country. Thus a major threat has emerged to the country's independence externally and to its democratic institutions internally. This should be enough provocation to pause and ponder.

The awareness is now growing that the problem of Communism at home and abroad cannot be dealt with separately. While still the Congress President, Mrs Indira Gandhi propounded the view that "the Congress was not afraid of China, but was concerned over the activities of the Indian Communists who have proved beyond doubt that they are fifth-columnists.... Their extra-territorial allegiance and their creed of hatred... deserve to be condemned." Mr Nehru has himself spoken in a critical strain about the Communist Party of India and expressed doubts whether it is a national party at all and whether it can be fitted into the democratic and constitutional framework. This awareness has been considerably heightened by the developments in Tibet and as a result of the performance of the Communist Ministry in Kerala.

It is a reasonable view, therefore, that the struggle against the Communist Party at home and defence against aggression by China have to be conceived and organised as parts of one over-all plan. This might make it obligatory for India to modify her position on the issue of Chinese claims over Tibet. Mere feelings for the Tibetan people and concern over their sufferings would not meet either the demands of justice or those of national security. To attempt to restore to Tibet her independence should be an objective of Indian foreign policy. Besides India has security stakes in preventing the absorption of countries of south-east Asia in the Chinese Empire. To be concerned about the survival in independence of the small neighbouring countries is not to be confused with expansionism. In short, India can no longer, except at grave peril, refuse to face the challenge of Communist China and meet it.

CHAPTER I

China on the War-path

BY THE summer of 1949, the outcome of the civil war in China was no longer in doubt. The victory of the Communist Party over the nationalist regime was certain. In any situation, the consequent emergence of a strong and centralised administration in China would have been an event of momentous significance. In the given context of the cold war, its significance could not be over-emphasised. The success of Communism in China inevitably tilted the balance of power in favour of the Soviet bloc. In Asia it meant the rise of a revolutionary and aggressive power, which would make a deep impact on the life of the ancient continent. The warning had been given in advance. Encouraged by the sweeping victories of the Communist armies in China, local Communist parties in India, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines switched their policies in favour of open armed rebellions in the first half of 1948.

As the biggest and most populous country after China, India was bound to bear the brunt of this new development. India invited China's attention on other accounts as well. Like several other Asian nations, India had recently won her freedom. She had firmly taken to the path of democracy at home and neutrality abroad. Inevitably she was influencing the policies of other Asian countries in favour of democracy and neutrality. Thus she was China's competitor, particularly in south-east Asia, an area where India and China had met as rivals for centuries before the rise of European powers. Also in view of her geographical contiguity with Tibet and the history of close religious and commercial ties between the two countries, India exerted a measure of

influence in Tibet. This position the Chinese Communists could not accept in view of their clearly stated objective of "liberating" Tibet. Above all, the Chinese Communists, like their counterparts in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, regarded India still as being a colony, which was fit to be liberated.

In 1949, the Communist world as a whole had little use for India's neutrality. The leaders in the Kremlin and their followers the world over still pursued the policy that those who were not with them were against them. In that year Mao Tse-tung enunciated his famous theory of leaning on one side. He said: "The experiences of 47 years [those of Sun Yat-Sen] and 28 years [those of the Chinese Communist Party], respectively show that, without exception, the Chinese people either lean to the side of imperialism [the non-Communist world, and especially the US] or to the side of socialism [the Soviet bloc]. To sit on the fence is impossible, a third road does not exist. . . . Not only in China but also in the world, without exception, one either leans to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism. Neutrality is a camouflage and a third road does not exist."

In July 1949, following the break between Stalin and Tito, Liu Shao-chi, now chairman of the People's Republic of China, wrote a long article entitled "Nationalism and Internationalism." In this article, he characterised newly liberated countries like India, Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia and South Korea as colonies and semi-colonies. He laid down the line that the Communist parties should follow in these countries. He said: "In dealing with the property class reactionaries, who have surrendered before the imperialists (mostly the big upper class reactionaries), the Communists must likewise adopt a determined policy to oppose, their betrayal of national interests. It will be a great mistake otherwise. And in dealing with the national property class, who are still opposed to imperialism, the Communists must establish with them co-operation to oppose imperialism. . . . Though such co-operation is unreliable, temporary and shaky, it must be seriously

established." This formulation by Liu Shao-chi flowed from the Maoist tactics of destroying the enemy classes one by one.

Following Liu Shao-chi's characterisation of India as a colony or a semi-colony, a Chinese publication *World Culture* (Shanghai), on July 22, 1949, carried an article captioned "Crush the Scheme of the Pacific Anti-Communist Union." It was a commentary on the Baguio conference, which had been convened by the President of the Philippines, Mr Quirino, to discuss measures to contain Communism in Asia. At no stage was the Government of India associated with this move. It did not attend the conference because it stipulated explicitly that the Conference must not discuss Communist China. But the article paid no attention to these inconvenient facts and said: "The Baguio conference is just a prologue to a grand symphony to be indulged in by the horde of American imperialist running dogs, these members of the political garbage group in Asia, including Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee, Hatta, Soekarno, Bao Dai, Thakin Nu and Nehru."

At that time the Communist theoreticians in India and abroad were not clear whether India was a British or American colony. The confusion, which continued till 1954 in the thinking of the Indian Communists, was reflected in an article, which the *World Culture* carried in 1949. The writer, Yang Kang, enunciated the theory of Britain and America being locked in the struggle for supremacy in Asia in general, and in India in particular. He said: "*Anglo-American rivalry for India is an old story.* This struggle has been carried to great limits recently with America's attempts to win India's goodwill by all possible means. Nehru is now placed between great powers. He has attended the British Commonwealth Conference and agreed to suspend purchases from the US, his sister is making frantic appeals for American aid. This is one of the reasons why the US is proceeding with the Pacific Union without much regard to the susceptibilities of Britain". [*Italics mine*] The article did not mention that India had agreed to reduce imports from the US along with other Commonwealth nations on

account of the shortage of dollar earnings of the Sterling block as a whole.

On August 19, 1949, the same paper published still another article by one Chang-Chi-Cheng, which said: "Because the people's revolution in China is about to achieve complete victory, the struggle against imperialism on the part of peoples of Indonesia and other oppressed nations in south-east Asia will be encouraged. The imperialists consider it necessary, therefore, to construct in advance a dyke against this surging force. And this dyke is to consist of support for 'nationalism' against 'communism.' *In India it is support for Nehru.* And in Indonesia it is the putting up of this 'Indonesian nationalism' represented by the Soekarno-Hatta regime for the annihilation of the real people's revolutionary forces of Indonesia." [Italics mine]

In July 1949, the Tibetan Government expelled members of the Kuomintang mission from Lhasa on the ground that many of them were Communists and were conspiring against it. This upset the Communists, perhaps because it meant the end of their plan to take over Tibet through intrigue and subversion. The Government of India was made the object of a virulent attack. To quote one typical comment, the *World Culture*, wrote on September 9, 1949:

"Following the second world war, American imperialism, in the wake of its operations for the seizure of markets in the Far East (including India), began to participate actively in the aggression against Tibet. American imperialism sent spies into Tibet and attempted, through the hands of the upper strata of the country, to assume control of Tibet. Today, British imperialism has become a hireling of American imperialism, and *India is in effect in the control of American imperialism.* These two powers have now joined their forces in their opposition, impediment and sabotage of the over-all liberation of the Chinese people. [Italics mine]

"British imperialism, and its running dog India, through their officially controlled publications, have declared in unison that Tibet never acknowledged China's suzerainty over it, and that Britain never acknowledged China's claim that Tibet is a part of China."

Incidentally, the article admitted that "during the past 100 years and more, reactionary Governments in China had pursued a policy of oppression by the Han race of the minorities, and thereby encouraged many conflicts between China and Tibet."

This paper excelled its earlier performances against India when it published an article entitled "India and Anglo-American Imperialism" on September 16, 1949. The article deserves to be quoted at length because it set out in detail the Chinese Communist Party's assessment of India's position vis-a-vis America and Britain. It said:

"The fact that the Anglo-American imperialist designs for the annexation of Tibet are being carried out through the hands of Nehru, of India, is specially of great educational significance to the peoples of China and of south-east Asia.

"The India, of Nehru, attained 'dominion status' only two years ago, and is not even formally independent in the fullest sense of the word. But Nehru, riding behind the imperialists whose stooge he is, actually considers himself the leader of the Asian peoples. *Into his slavish and bourgeois reactionary character has now been instilled the beastly ambition for aggression, and he thinks that his role as a hireling of imperialism makes him an imperialist himself. He has announced that Bhutan is an Indian protectorate, and now proceeds to declare that 'Tibet has never acknowledged China's suzerainty' in order to carry out his plot to create incidents in Tibet.*

"Under the long standing influence of British imperialism, *the bourgeoisie of India, of whom Nehru is the representative, have learned the ways of the imperialists, and are harbouring intentions against Tibet and Sikkim as well as Bhutan.* Furthermore Nehru, to curry favours with his masters, the Anglo-American imperialists, is placing himself fully at their disposal, and shamelessly holds himself as the pillar of the anti-Communist movement in Asia." [Italics mine]

The article described the Prime Minister, Mr Nehru, as the Chiang Kai-shek of India. It said: "*As a rebel against the movement for national independence, as a blackguard, who undermines the progress of the people's liberation movement,*

and as a loyal slave of imperialism, Nehru has already been made the substitute of Chiang Kai-shek by the imperialists. [Italics mine]

"Nehru's betrayal of the national independence movement and of the people's liberation movement, like that of Chiang Kai-shek who preceded him, once more testifies to the truth of Lenin's analysis of the various classes. Lenin said: 'The bourgeoisie are never stable in their support of the revolution, being selfish and cowardly. As a group, the bourgeoisie cannot avoid turning away from revolution to counter-revolution, to dictatorship.' Nehru has set his heart wholly on following in the footsteps of Anglo-American imperialism, and is pursuing a domestic and foreign policy, which betrays his country, and undermines the interest of his people. It is no different from the policy pursued by Chiang Kai-shek for 20 odd years."

Referring to bourgeoisie's betrayal of the "people's democratic liberation movement" and its "co-operation with the imperialism," the writer quoted a resolution adopted by the second National Congress of the Communist Party of India in March 1948, in support of his wild charges against the Government of India and the Prime Minister. He added: "In his assumption of the role of the vanguard in the international gamble against the peoples of Asia, Nehru has committed a series of malicious intrigues, all following the victorious march of the liberation movement of the Chinese people. As early as in the days prior to India's 'independence,' Nehru had called a Pan-Asian conference. In 1948, when Chang Chun visited Japan and the talk of a Pacific Union was in the air, India and other British Dominions also stirred up the so-called South-East Asian Union in support of the move of Chang Chun." It is needless to add that India was at no stage a party to any arrangement against China.

The article said: "Early in 1949, Nehru called another Asian conference in New Delhi, outwardly with the motive of mediating in the Indonesian dispute, but actually for undertaking a preliminary discussion of south-east Asian alliance. On February 28, 1949, Nehru, nominally to mediate

in the Burmese civil war, called a conference of the British Dominions, the real purpose of which was to discuss the strengthening of measures for the anti-Communist alliance in south-east Asia. In March, 1949, Anthony Eden, Conservative British leader, under the supervision of the head of the Asiatic Affairs Section of the US State Department, called a secret meeting in New Delhi to discuss the 'propaganda' activities of Anglo-American imperialism against the peoples of Asia. *And so on up to the recent act of Nehru in serving as the hireling of Anglo-American imperialism in the attempt to invade Tibet, New Delhi has consistently served as the centre of imperialist intrigues for the obstruction and undermining of the people's liberation movements of Asia.* The spearheads of these malicious intrigues are directed against the great struggle put up by the peoples of China, Viet Nam, Burma, Malaya and Indonesia. [Italics mine]

"The decadence of Nehru proves that nationalism he blabs about is only the nationalism of the bourgeoisie, and it does not even go so far as the nationalism of the bourgeoisie of the West in the early days of the capitalist revolution. This is because this nationalism of Nehru cannot even achieve complete national independence, and sells itself to imperialism as soon as it is given a little concession by the latter.

"Only the Communist Party and the proletariat and peasantry under its leadership will fight to the last. Only then will complete independence and liberation be achieved and the nation delivered from feudalism and imperialism. *The victory of the Chinese people has brought dawn to the oppressed peoples of Asia and sealed the fate of Nehru and betrayers of his ilk. The Chiang Kai-sheks of India, Burma, Indonesia and others of their ilk must march on the same road to death as Chiang Kai-shek himself has already done.*" [Italics mine]

The basic assumption on which the article was based clearly was that a country could not be said to be liberated as long as it was not ruled by the Communist Party. The charge of Mr Nehru being the stooge and hireling of imperialism derived from this assumption. The Chinese were

chagrined over the 19-nation conference which met in New Delhi in January 1949, on the initiative of Mr Nehru to mobilise world opinion against the Dutch aggression in Indonesia and in favour of Indonesian independence. It is common knowledge that this conference played an important role in promoting developments leading to Indonesia's independence. The outcome of the conference on Burma was that the Commonwealth of Nations agreed to provide £6 million to the Burmese Government to help it tide over financial difficulties caused by widespread rebellion. India sold small arms as well to Burma. But even a more notable point was the reference to Bhutan and Sikkim in the article. The new Chinese regime did not wish to recognise their existing relations with India.

What was implicit in the article quoted above was made explicit in another article which appeared in *New Construction* (Shanghai), on September 22, 1949. The article was entitled "An Exposure of Imperialist Intrigues for Aggression in Tibet." It referred to the first ever Asian Conference which was held in New Delhi in March 1947, and criticised the organisers for inviting a delegation from Tibet, and showing Tibet to be located outside the national boundaries of China on the map hung in the conference hall. Inevitably it accused Britain and America of conspiring to tear Tibet away from the motherland and convert her into a colony. The article added:

"Their thoughts now turn to Nehru, of India. They hope to use India as their Asian base to resist the new democracies of Asia. *Tibet is the natural barrier to India. They have earmarked Tibet, like Taiwan, as part of their defence system. To preserve their rule over India, they must control Tibet. This is the real purpose of imperialism.*" (Italics mine)

There could not be a more explicit statement of the intention on the part of the Chinese Communists to remove the last "barrier to India" so that the people of India could be "liberated from feudalism and imperialism" and "join the family of people's democracies," to quote from Mao Tse-tung's message to the Communist Party of India during the same period. The Chinese Communists could not have

missed the point that they would not have succeeded in overthrowing Chiang Kai-shek if the Soviet Union did not equip them with arms and ammunition seized from the Japanese army and make over to them Manchuria and thus provide them with a safe base. In the case of India, Chinese-controlled Tibet could serve as the base and the arsenal. The Chinese rulers could not be unaware that there had been no Communist revolution in any country which did not have contiguous frontiers with another Communist country since 1917. The Communist insurrection in Greece collapsed as soon as it was denied a safe hinterland in Yugoslavia. The *coup* in Czechoslovakia would not have succeeded if the country was not bordered by countries of the Soviet bloc. In India, the absence of such a contiguous frontier with a Communist country was advanced as an argument in their favour by the opponents of armed insurrection inside the Communist Party in 1949 and 1950. A Party resolution in 1951 said that the situation in India was different from that in China. One important difference was that India did not have common frontier with a "socialist" country.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China was formally announced on October 1, 1949. On October 28, 1949, *World Culture* (Shanghai), carried an article captioned "American Imperialism Lays Hand on a New Slave." The immediate provocation for the article was Mr Nehru's visit to the United States. It said:

"Two months after Quirino received his summons to have audience with his overlord at the White House, another imperialist slave, who has newly won the favour of American imperialism, Pandit Nehru, of India, has been 'invited' to visit the US. . . .

"It is not strange that this slave whom American imperialism has just squeezed out of the hands of British imperialism should receive such attention. India, where Nehru is the ruler, has a population of 340 millions, is rich in resources, and is near the Soviet Union. The man himself is masquerading as a 'nationalist,' which places him politically at a higher place than Quirino. . . .

"In spite of the terrorist measures carried out by the reactionary Nehru Government for the suppression of the Indian people and the oppression of the Communist Party of India so that India has virtually been converted into a large concentration camp, the Communists in India are unrelenting in their struggle and strikes continue to develop all over the country. Accordingly, Nehru who takes pride before the world in being an opponent of Communism, is appealing for help from the acknowledged leader of the world camp against Communism, American imperialism, for both military and political support."

In line with the tradition of Communist propaganda, the article showed no respect for facts. It was common knowledge that Mr Nehru had not gone to the US to seek military aid or political support. He even refused to agree to barter monozite sand and other strategic materials to the US in exchange for capital goods and food that India desperately needed. Mr Nehru refused to fall in line with the US policy of anti-Communism. On all accounts Mr Nehru's visit to America in 1949 did not go well. But the writer was convinced that Mr Nehru had already openly "expressed his willingness to accept the role of the principal slave of US imperialism in the Far East in the campaign against Communism."

The writer could not help taking note of the fact that Mr Nehru was pressing the US Government to recognise Communist China. But he dismissed it as "only a gesture to raise his own status" which could not "affect his mission to sell out the Indian nation to American imperialism."

In November 1949, a trade union conference of Asian and Australasian countries was held in Peking. Mr. Liu Shao-chi delivered the presidential address in which he said: "The imperialists, and their lackeys do not give the people any democratic rights whatsoever. . . . In a colony or semi-colony, if the people do not have arms to defend themselves, they have nothing. The existence and development of a national united front is intimately linked with the existence of such an armed struggle. *This is the sole path for many colonial and semi-colonial peoples in their struggle for*

independence." (Italics mine) He did not list India among the countries where the situation was propitious for an armed struggle, though she was regarded as a colony or semi-colony.

In the wake of the conference, the *World Culture* launched another attack on the Government of India on December 2, 1949, in the form of an article by one Wang Yu, who charged that the Government of India "resort to the use of cruel force to suppress, detain and slaughter the peace-loving people as a sign of their practice of democracy." It described the Government of India's desire to abolish landlordism and its claim to have abolished the princely States as fake. The article added: "Under the leadership of the Communist Party of India, the peasants of Hyderabad started an armed revolt, expelled the brutal princes and created a rule by labourers and peasants. More than 2,500 villages were liberated and more than 100,000 *mou* of land were given away to landless peasants. In the area covering 13,000 sq. miles 5,000,000 workers took their fate in their own hands. The Central Government of India, however, despatched a large army to the aid of the former ruler of Hyderabad, in a punitive campaign against the peasants. All terrorist measures are being resorted to for the punishment of those taken prisoners. . . . In their efforts to prevent the people from coming into their own, the rulers of India have concentrated their attention on the vanguard of the people — the Communist Party of India. Ever since independence, 25,000 Indian Communists, labour union leaders, workers, *warriors*, and peasants have been aided to the prison cells of India."

Nothing could be a greater travesty of facts. As is known, the Indian army marched into Hyderabad because a fanatical band of people known as Razakars had let loose a reign of terror, particularly against the Hindu majority community, and forcibly prevented the Nizam from acceding to the Indian Union. Since the Communists sided with the Razakars in an attempt to prevent the merger of the State with the Indian Union and they continued to resort to terrorism, the authorities had to take action against them. The then Defence Minister, Mr Gopalaswami Ayyangar, said in May

1952, in the Parliament: "In Hyderabad the Communists have so far killed 1,026 men and women. People were tied to trees and shot or cut into pieces." Most of these massacres took place in the Telengana area. Telengana was supposed to show the way for the "liberation" of India.

This campaign against India was linked with the Chinese Communist rulers' decision to take over Tibet. Statements were issued in the name of the 11-year-old Panchen Lama appealing to the Communist leaders to "liberate" Tibet. The Panchen Lama had been taken over by the Communists as a useful instrument for the implementation of their scheme for Tibet at the time of their conquest of Chinghai province in 1949. These appeals by the Panchen Lama provided another opportunity to the *World Culture* to attack India. On December 9, 1949, in an article by Hu Chin, it said that "the reactionary Nehru Government naturally follows in the wake of its British masters in the exhibition of anxiety over Tibet."

What is even more remarkable, the writer objected that "efforts are being made to give great importance to the north and north-east frontiers of India." This was a pointer to developments years later. The writer asserted that "the fate of the decadent imperialists in Asia can no longer be saved by a handful of quislings like Nehru, Thakin Nu, Bao Dai and Hatta, betrayers of their respective countries." It noted with satisfaction that "in India, the anti-imperialist [Communist] movement continues to gain strength."

The Government of India accorded recognition to the new regime in China on December 30, 1949. After Burma, India was the second non-Communist country to recognise Communist China. This did not mean the end of the Chinese campaign against India. *The Observer* (Shanghai), said on April 11, 1950: "It is on India that America has pinned her real hope. That is why the US is giving priority to India in its *Point Four* and other schemes of assistance. Here it is a matter of Nehru weighing his desire for US assistance against his need to assume the hypocritical role of a progressive to deceive the Indian people." (Italics mine)

By now Moscow had come to accept that the Maoist strategy of co-operation between the four classes of workers, peasants, national bourgeoisie and the intellectuals was applicable to Asia. That was why the Cominform journal *For a Lasting Peace, For People's Democracy*, said editorially on January 27, 1950, that the path taken by the Chinese people "should be the path taken by the people of many colonial countries in their struggle for national independence and people's democracy." It specifically emphasised the significance of the Chinese experience for India. Immediately the General Secretary of the Indian Communist Party, Mr B. T. Ranadive, issued a statement expressing full acceptance of the conclusions drawn by the editorial. Earlier, he had strongly criticised Mao Tse-Tung's views.¹

The Chinese rulers were not content to leave it unstated that they had acquired a say in the affairs of the Indian Communist Party. In reply to one Mr Huang Tse-chun, the editor of the *People's Daily* (Peking), cited evidence to establish the fact of China's impact on the policy of the Communist Party of India, on June 16, 1950. He added: "Armed struggle against imperialist aggression is essential for the liberation of many colonies. *But the time and place for conducting this kind of revolutionary armed struggle must be decided according to concrete conditions.* . . . Today the people of Viet Nam have already scored tremendous success in their armed struggle. In Burma, Malaya, the Philippine islands etc. the people's armed struggle is just in the process of wide expansion." (Italics mine) Significantly, India was not mentioned in this list. The paper emphasised that the Chinese Communist Party's experience of seizing power had general validity for backward and under-developed countries.

To remove all scope for doubt that these writings reflected the official policy of the Chinese Communist Party, we quote some of the official broadcasts of that period. On July 1, 1949, Peking Radio broadcast said that on behalf of its 22 million members, the All-China Democratic Women's Federation had protested strongly to the Nehru Government

¹ For a detailed discussion see *Moscow and Communist Party of India* by John H. Kautsky, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Massachusetts.

of India against the "arrest and slaughter of democratic women by the Police." The letter of protest was quoted as having said: "Instead of leading its countrymen to struggle for national liberation and free the people as early as possible from the colonial yoke of slavery, the Indian Government cold-bloodedly murdered the people fighting for real national independence and better living conditions and mercilessly repressed democratic movements. Indian women were not spared from these outrages. Such actions of the Indian Government are really the acts of an accomplice of British and American imperialism."

On September 2, another broadcast from Peking said: "On July 8 the Tibetan local authorities expelled the Han people and KMT personnel in Tibet under the instigation of British and American imperialism and their stooge, the Indian Nehru Government.

"The purpose of this 'anti-communist incident' enacted by British, American and Indian reactionaries working hand in glove with the Tibetan reactionary authorities is an attempt not only to prevent the Tibetan people from attaining liberation at a time when the People's Liberation Army is about to liberate all China, but also to deprive Tibet of independence and freedom. . . ."

A broadcast from Peking on September 3, 1949, quoted *The Kwangming Daily*, organ of the China Democratic League, to "warn the American, British and Indian Governments against their intrigue to invade Tibet." Inevitably the Government of India on September 4, 1949, expressed surprise over these statements. In reply Peking Radio broadcast on September 13 an article entitled, "The Nehru Government Cannot Explain Away the Plot To Annex Tibet," by a Chinese jurist, Ho Hsu-Ching, in the *People's Daily*, Peking.

The article said: "The Nehru Government spokesman claims that the Chinese Communist Party had no grounds for accusing the British and American imperialists of plotting with their lackey, the Indian Government, to encroach on Tibet. The accusation of the Chinese Communist Party is based on the following facts:

"The expelling of the Han people and Han Lamas, and the closing down of Han schools by Tibetan authorities on July 8, lays bare an international plot. On July 27, the official news agency of the Nehru Government announced that Tibet had never recognised Chinese suzerainty. On the same day, British authoritative circles told the United Press that if China attempted to force her rule on Tibet, Tibet could seek British intervention.

"It was certainly not without reason that the official news agency of the Nehru Government announced on July 27 that Tibet had never recognised Chinese suzerainty. Following this argument, suzerainty over Tibet should logically fall into the pocket of the Nehru Government.

"The Nehru Government cannot deny that it has sent men to Lhasa. *The New York Times* reported from New Delhi on August 8 that the spokesman of the Indian Foreign Ministry announced that night that Bhutan had become a protectorate of India. Since the Nehru Government has announced its suzerainty over Bhutan and declared that Tibet had never recognised Chinese suzerainty, will it not declare suzerainty over Tibet?

"Suzerainty stands for the dark vassal state system, the protective system, and is another name for foreign oppression and enslavement. . . . The Nehru Government has no legal right to announce its protectorate over Bhutan. The United Nations should examine the matter. . . .

"Nehru and company are openly engineering a cleavage between the different peoples in China, undermining their unity, and interfering in China's internal affairs by declaring in the name of a foreign country that Tibet has never recognised Chinese suzerainty. This is a grave unlawful act. . . ."

On May 13, 1950, nearly six months after India recognised the new regime, a Peking Radio broadcast said: "The American Government and the reactionary clique of the Indian Government are now conspiring an imperialistic expansion into a territory under the authority of the Chinese Government—namely, the Province of Tibet.

"According to a despatch from New Delhi, the American Ambassador to New Delhi, Mr Loy Henderson, has reached

an agreement with the Indian Government. They agreed that the US Government would send weapons such as rifles, machine guns, and so forth, to Calcutta. From Calcutta the weapons would be carried into Tibet over the mountain roads.

"The agreement also says that the weapons and other war materials from the US Government will be exempted from inspection inside Indian territory. The weapons will be entrusted to an American mission which is fully equipped.

"These American imperialists and their fellow conspirators are attempting to prevent the peoples' forces from liberating Tibet and to convert the territory into a colonial domain."

It is superfluous to add there was no such agreement. The Chinese allegation was wholly fictitious. Also messages were broadcast making allegations of suppression of the peasants and workers in India. It is significant that many of them related to the measures the authorities in India had taken to suppress the Communist armed revolt in the Telengana districts in Hyderabad.

CHAPTER II

History of Doubtful Claims

THE GOVERNMENT of India would have been well within its rights to take a serious view of the vicious Chinese campaign. In fact, there was not much point in establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations with a regime which did not even regard India as an independent country. The Chinese rulers on their part did not leave India in any doubt that their plan to occupy Tibet was, at least partly, aimed against her. Otherwise there was just no sense in linking up the campaign for the "liberation" of Tibet with the propaganda drive against India. India would, therefore, have been justified in treating any move against Tibet as a hostile act against her. The history and geography of Tibet would have lent support to such an interpretation on the part of New Delhi.

It is common knowledge that the Indo-Tibetan ties antedated Sino-Tibetan relations. They date back to the beginning of Tibet's history. The first Tibetan king, who reigned long before the beginning of the Christian era, came from India. He was the fifth son of the King of Kosala. It is, therefore, likely that Hinduism influenced the Tibetan way of life to some degree. These ties were cemented during the reign of Srong-tsan Gampo in the seventh century AD. This great king, who united different principalities of Tibet under one kingdom, is believed to have come from Ladakh, now part of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. His empire extended to parts of China and Nepal and he secured in marriage Nepalese and Chinese princesses. These princesses introduced the Tibetan king to Buddhism.

Srong-tsan Gampo realised the importance of a written language for his country and sent one of his ablest Ministers, Thonmi-Shambhota, to India to make a thorough study of the art of writing and devise a script and grammar suitable to the Tibetan dialect. Shambhota studied at Indian centres of learning and prepared a script and grammar for his country. He also translated Sanskrit works into this new language and thus laid the foundation of cultural exchanges between the two countries in centuries to come. At that time the Tantrik form of Buddhism was prevalent in northern India. It derived from the Mahayana school of Buddhism, which provided for deities, superhuman beings, rituals and personal devotion. It is this form of Buddhism which went to Tibet from India.

For about 100 years after the death of Srong-tsan Gampo, Buddhism made little progress in Tibet in the face of formidable resistance from the Bon priests. Gampo's great-great grandson, Tri-de Tsuk-ten, resumed the work of promoting Buddhism. He got some of the sutras (texts) and works on astrology and medicine translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. Later King Ti-song Detsen carried forward the work of spreading Buddhism. He sent one of his officials to Nepal to meet an Indian monk, Shanti Rakshita, and to persuade him to visit Tibet. On his advice, the King got the well known Tantrik teacher, Padam Sambhava, to visit the country. Padam Sambhava founded the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet at Sam-ye, 30 miles south-east of Lhasa. Even today it is one of the important monasteries in the country. It should thus be beyond question that it was India that provided the base for the spread of Buddhism in Tibet.

In subsequent decades and centuries literally hundreds of Indian scholars were taken to Tibet to translate sacred books with the assistance of Tibetan scholars. Dharma Kirti, a well known Tantrik teacher of his time, went to Tibet from India to preach the message. When the Chinese teachers sought to dispute the authority of the Indian sages and teachers after the death of Shanti Rakshita, another Indian philosopher from Nalanda, Kamlashila, was invited to Lhasa to debate with the chief Chinese theologian. He

won in the debate and stayed on in Tibet till he was killed by the Chinese. His body was embalmed and preserved in a monastery near Lhasa.

During the reign of Ral-pan-Chan, Tibet was involved in a war with China. Buddhist priests arranged peace between the two countries. Ral-pan-Chan standardised weights, measures and coins after the Indian pattern. He tried to purify the Tantrik form of Buddhism and bring it in line with the teachings of Lord Buddha. But before he could accomplish much in this direction, he was killed by Bon priests. Buddhism suffered a serious set-back and Indian monks were expelled from Tibet. Ral-pan-Chan's brother, Lang dar-ma, succeeded him to the throne. After his death, the kingdom was divided between his two sons. Subsequently Tibet split into several principalities. After nearly 80 years of persecution, the Buddhist faith began to revive in Amdo, north-east province of Tibet. Once again Indian scholars began to return to Tibet and Tibetan students began to visit Indian centres of learning, particularly Nalanda and Vikramashila in Bihar. Subhati Shri Shanti, of Kashmir, was one of the prominent Indian sages to be invited to western Tibet by the descendants of Lang dar-ma.

Tibet's relations with China were far from being friendly. During the eighth and ninth centuries, for a hundred years at least, the Tibetans were masters of a large part of China. They successfully challenged China's power and took a yearly tribute of 50,000 rolls of silk from the emperor. When the emperor considered it unfitting to pay tribute to Tibet, a Tibetan expedition marched into the heart of China, sacked the Chinese capital and put the emperor to flight.

In 1039 AD another Indian scholar from Bengal, Atisha, was persuaded to go to western Tibet and he stayed there for 13 long years. He exercised the greatest influence on the development of Buddhism, which had by then become the dominant faith in Tibet. His disciple founded the Re-ting monastery, 60 miles from Lhasa. Similarly another Indian sage, Sakya Shri, lived in Tibet from 1202 to 1212 AD. This form of contact with India declined after the Muslim invaders destroyed the Buddhist centres of learning

in Bihar in 1204. The surviving monks of Vikramashila took refuge in Tibet. They took with them whatever manuscripts they could salvage from the sack and pillage of the monastery. Sri Bhadre, high-priest of Vikramashila, was among them. He founded a monastery in Tibet.

Tibet's contact with China was firmly established only in the thirteenth century when the Mongols conquered China. This relationship derived from two sources. First, the Mongols were ethnically close to the Tibetans. Secondly, Dro-gon Pak-pa, of the Sakya monastery, which had been established in 1071 AD south-west of Shigatse, was the teacher of Kublai Khan, successor of Ghenghis Khan. Kublai Khan was favourably disposed towards the Tibetan form of Buddhism and favoured its adoption as the state religion of his empire. As a reward of his adaptation of the existing Tibetan and Brahmic scripts to the Mongolian dialect, Kublai Khan raised Pak-pa to the status of priest-king in 1270 and made him the ruler of Tibet proper consisting of the 13 districts of U and Tsang, Kham and Amdo. This marked the beginning of the rise of a theocratic state in Tibet.

After the establishment of the Mongol dynasty in China in the thirteenth century Buddhism received great fillip in Tibet. Towards the end of the dynasty's rule a reformer, Tsong-Ka-pa (1358-1419) rose in Tibet. He formed the followers of the Indian saint Atisha, into a new sect called the Yellow Hats to distinguish them from the orthodox Lamas, who wore red hats. The emperor of China realised his growing influence in Tibet and invited him to visit the imperial court. The Tibetan leader declined the invitation. His successor reconverted the Mongols to Buddhism in the latter half of the sixteenth century. It was then that the system of incarnations was introduced in Tibet. Go-dun Gya-tso, leader of the Yellow Hats, was regarded as the incarnation of Tsong-Ka-pa. So-nam Gya-tso was invited by Altan Khan to preach Buddhism in Mongolia. The Khan conferred on So-nam Gya-tso the title of Dalai Lama Vajradhara. So-nam Gya-tso became the third Dalai Lama because the title was conferred posthumously on his two

predecessors. He visited China as well, at the invitation of the emperor. He was treated as an independent sovereign because at that time the power of the Lamas, who enjoyed the support of the Mongol chiefs, was not something to be trifled with. Gya-tso mediated in the dispute between China and a border tribe in 1587 and again visited China. In 1589 he was incarnated, according to popular belief, as the son of Altan Khan's successor. This brought the Tibetans and the Mongols still closer together.

But the authority of the Yellow Hats was still not secure in Tibet. The orthodox Lamas were a formidable power. In fact the power of the Yellow Hats declined from 1610 to 1642. It was only when Gusri Khan defeated the chief of Tsang province and conquered Tibet in 1642 that the fifth Dalai Lama became the supreme ruler, spiritual as well as temporal, of his country. Though indifferent to Buddhism for its own sake—Buddhism virtually died in China in 845 AD—the Manchu emperor thought it profitable to have friendly relations with the Dalai Lama because he felt that it would help him to control the Mongols.

The relations between China and Tibet, which had been greatly weakened after the overthrow of the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty, were thus resumed only with the establishment of the Manchu rule. In 1652 the fifth Dalai Lama visited the Chinese emperor, Shih-tsu. He was treated with respect and ceremony due to an independent sovereign. The emperor at one stage thought of meeting the Dalai Lama at the frontier. There was no reasonable ground for the Chinese emperor to behave differently.

The Manchu emperor, Kang-hsi, who ascended the throne in 1662 AD, was the first Chinese ruler to think seriously of conquering Tibet. It was in the thirty-eight year of his reign in 1700 AD that his army took up position at Tachienlu, gateway to eastern Tibet and key to the road to Lhasa. Another eight years elapsed before he found an opportunity to intervene in the internal affairs of Tibet.

This opportunity arose as a result of trouble in Tibet after the death of the fifth Dalai Lama. In the interest of being able to complete the Potala, winter residence of the

Dalai Lama, the Regent kept the news of the death a closely guarded secret for anything from nine to fifteen years. The Mongol chiefs doubted if the boy, who was finally installed as the sixth Dalai Lama, was the true incarnation. The sixth Dalai Lama himself gave cause for suspicion by renouncing the vow of celibacy and monkhood. The Mongol Commander-in-Chief, Latsang Khan, had the Regent, who sided with the Dalai Lama, put to death. Having failed to secure the Dalai Lama's deposition by the council of leading Lamas, Latsang Khan resorted to the use of force. In 1706 he compelled the Dalai Lama to leave on a journey to Peking. This so enraged the monks of Drepung, the biggest monastery in the whole world, that they broke out into a rebellion and rescued the Dalai Lama. The Mongol Chief retaliated by capturing the monastery. Shortly afterwards the Dalai Lama died.

Latsang Khan tried to instal a 25-year-old person as the sixth Dalai Lama, ignoring the controversial incumbent of the high office. But the Tibetans did not find him acceptable. The sixth Dalai Lama had said that he would be incarnated in Litang. A boy, who answered the description for the new Dalai Lama, was found there. This dispute between the Mongols and the Tibetans offered to Kang-hsi the opportunity for which he had waited for years. He sent envoys to Lhasa to take a hand in the installation of one of the two candidates to the high office.

The invasion of Tibet by the Jungar (Mongol) tribe with the avowed objective of installing the Tibetan candidate, who had been confined in the Kum-bum monastery in Kansu, as the seventh Dalai Lama alarmed the Chinese emperor and Latsang Khan. The Jungars captured Lhasa and killed Latsang Khan in December 1718. The Manchu emperor sent an army into Tibet. This army was overwhelmed by the might of the Mongols and the Tibetans. In 1720, however, a Chinese army was able to make its way to Lhasa and drive out the Mongols. Thus for the first time ever, the Chinese gained effective sway over Tibet. Kang-hsi annexed a large part of eastern Tibet to his empire, garrisoned Lhasa and the route from Tachienlu to the

Tibetan capital. He appointed his nominees as Ministers in Lhasa.

The Tibetans were not reconciled to Chinese domination. In 1727, a rebellion broke out in Lhasa reportedly at the instigation of the Dalai Lama and his father. The pro-China Prime Minister was murdered. But the pro-China Governor of Tsang was able to put down the rebellion. The rebel Ministers were put to the sword and the Dalai Lama himself was abducted and confined in eastern Tibet in Ka-ta monastery close to the Chinese garrison. His father was taken to Peking and humiliated. He was ordered not to stay in Lhasa beyond one month at one time. The Tibetan people did not accept the new dispensation. Since there was widespread discontent in Tibet, the Dalai Lama had to be restored to his office after seven years.

Another rebellion broke out in Lhasa in 1750 when the Chinese garrison was more or less annihilated. Once again the Chinese army was able to re-conquer Tibet. But soon enough the Panchen Lama became the *de facto* ruler of Tibet after the death of the 7th Dalai Lama in 1767 and during the minority of the 8th Dalai Lama. In practice, he was able to assume independence of Chinese control. In 1788 the Gorkhas of Nepal invaded Tibet. In 1791 they marched up to Shigatse and plundered the monastery. This compelled the Tibetan rulers to appeal to the Chinese emperor for help. A combined Sino-Tibetan force defeated the Gorkhas and pursued them up to Nawakot, 20 miles from the Nepalese capital city of Kathmandu. The Tibeto-Nepalese conflict afforded another opportunity to the Manchu emperor to extend his control over Tibet. Even then, Tibet was not annexed to the Chinese empire.

II

By now the British East India Company had become the ruler of Bengal and begun to explore the possibilities of discovering new markets for its goods in Tibet and other neighbouring countries. In 1768 its Court of Directors in

London decided that it should be explored whether British goods could find a market in Tibet. The British expedition into Bhutan in 1773 marked the opening of some kind of relations with Tibet because at that time Bhutan was regarded by Tibet as its dependency. From this point onwards, developments in Tibet have to be examined in reference to pressures from China and British India. The Tibetans themselves sought to play one against the other in an effort to maintain their independence, in fact, if not in theory.

In the immediate post-1791 period the Chinese authority reached its height in Tibet when the Ambans (Chinese Residents) became the *de facto* rulers. The Chinese supremacy, however, did not last long. The misconduct of the Residents, Tse-pa-ke (1804-05) and Wen-Kan (1820-23) greatly weakened the prestige of this office. China's defeat in the first Opium War in 1840 affected adversely her position in Tibet. Even earlier in 1832 Dogra troops belonging to the Kingdom of Jammu invaded Ladakh and occupied it. They later advanced into Tibet proper. The Chinese emperor was not able to afford any assistance to the Tibetans in their struggle against the Dogras. In 1855, the Gorkhas again marched into Tibet and imposed on the Tibetans the Treaty of 1856 under which the latter agreed to pay to the former an annual tribute of Rs 10,000 and to allow extra-territorial rights to Nepalese nationals in its territory. This time again the Chinese did not afford any assistance to the Tibetans. The Chinese claim of suzerainty, even if it had any validity earlier, became defunct with their failure to protect Tibet and her dependencies against foreign invasions.

The Chinese authorities have made much of Article II of the Tibeto-Nepalese Treaty of 1856 by which both countries agreed to show respect to the Chinese emperor. They have insisted that Nepal and Tibet sent tributary missions to Peking. The Chinese claim does not amount to much. First, in those days it was customary for nations to send embassies bearing gifts to one another because that was the only known method of establishing relations between them. Secondly, for several hundred years China attracted attention

because she was the most powerful organised State in this part of the world. Apart from Turkestan, Annam, Korea and upper parts of Burma, which were often invaded and occupied by Chinese emperors, countries like the Philippines, Java, Sumatra, Ceylon, Cambodia, Siam and Kashmir sent missions to the Chinese court at different times. At one stage, the Chinese emperor listed even Britain among his vassal states. In 1656, the Russian Ambassador had to return home after staying in Peking for six months without even having been able to initiate talks on border problems because the Chinese insisted that he must *kowtow* before the emperor. If he had complied, Russia would have certainly been listed in Chinese chronicles as a vassal state.

Finally, the neighbouring Kingdoms found it profitable to send such missions. To quote a well-known authority, W. W. Rockhill, from his *Notes on Relations of Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago*, in 1889 he met a Nepalese "tributary mission" in South China. "The mission was not in hurry to get home, as the chiefs and even the servants were in receipt of a daily allowance from the Chinese Government as long as they were in the empire, and were transported, fed and lodged free of all expense, nor did they have to pay any duty or octroi dues on their goods, either when going to Peking or when returning home.... It is no wonder that the right to present tribute to the emperor is considered a valuable privilege, and is eagerly sought after by tribes and peoples living near the Chinese border."

The Chinese authorities used other forms of bribery also on an extensive scale. In 1405, for instance, emperor Yung Lo sent Cheng Ho, a court eunuch, on an expedition of south-east Asian kingdoms. He was accompanied by 62 ships loaded with gold, silk and other valuables. Cheng Ho made a liberal use of these supplies to induce rulers to accept the overlordship of the Chinese emperor. A king of Siam was allowed year after year to send two 1,000-ton ships to China loaded with merchandise without payment of duty on the ground that they carried tribute to the emperor.

Even otherwise there is no dearth of evidence to prove conclusively that China's authority in Tibet became shadowy in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Taiping revolt broke out in 1860 to be followed by widespread rebellion in Chinese Turkestan, Kansu and Yunnan. The imperial authority was hardly restored in these areas by 1876 when the country was hit by widespread drought and famine. In 1894 China suffered a major defeat at the hands of Japan. This destroyed her pretence to be a major power. China was compelled to recognise the independence of Korea, and to cede Pescadores and Formosa islands to Japan. Earlier in 1885 she had recognised Annam to be a French protectorate. On July 24, 1886, she had signed a convention with the British Government recognising the incorporation of Upper Burma into the British empire.

Following the British expedition to Lhasa in 1904, the Chinese Government made a fresh attempt to reimpose its authority over Tibet in 1905. The Tibetans reacted sharply to these efforts and murdered the Deputy Resident stationed at Batang. An expedition was led into Tibet in 1906. In February, 1910, the imperial army marched from Chamdo to Lhasa resulting in the Dalai Lama's flight to India. He returned to Lhasa in 1912 after the collapse of the Manchu dynasty and made a declaration that Tibet was an independent country. On January 6, 1913, the Chinese Resident and the remaining troops were compelled to leave Lhasa. After 1912, China did not have even a semblance of influence in Tibet.

III

The British East India Company began its efforts to open up Tibet for trade in the latter half of the eighteenth century when the Chinese exercised real authority in the country. At that time it was unavoidable that the Company should recognise China's overlordship over Tibet. However, at times the British Government accepted China's past claims of suzerainty without justification as long as such an acceptance did not militate against its own interests. For

instance, in 1886 it conceded by implication that China had exercised the powers of a suzerain over Burma. The Anglo-Chinese convention in that year provided that "inasmuch as it has been the practice of Burma to send decennial missions to present articles of local produce, England agrees that the highest authority in Burma shall send the customary decennial missions, the members to be of the Burmese race," and "China agrees that in all matter whatsoever appertaining to the authority and rule which England is now exercising over Burma, England shall be free to do whatever she deems fit and proper." It was not at all necessary for the British Government to secure China's approval for its conquest and occupation of Burma. It signed the convention with China primarily for two reasons. It had an exaggerated idea of the power of China and it wanted to legalise its conquest of Burma in this far-fetched manner.

The development of relations between the British authorities in India and Tibet was influenced by three factors. First, the Lama hierarchy was following the policy of closing the country to all outside contacts for the fear that their independence and religion might be undermined. The Lamas were particularly suspicious of the West with its totally different values and way of life. That was why they had expelled the Capuchin monks. This policy of isolation coupled with the fact of Chinese authority in the eighteenth century persuaded the British Government to seek China's approval for its efforts to open up Tibet for trade. Secondly, the expanding British power in India inevitably encroached on the centres of Tibetan influence on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. No centrally organised State in India could accept an extension of Tibet's political influence within the geographical boundaries of India as delineated by the Himalayas. The resulting clash of interests between British India and Tibet in the sub-Himalayan belt accentuated the latter's distrust and fear of the British. These two negative aspects were partly offset in India's favour by Tibet's distrust of China.

The story of the Bogle and Turner missions to Shigatse to meet the Panchen Lama and their failure to establish

trade relations with Tibet has often been written about at length and need not be repeated here. The significant point to note is that following the Gorkha invasion of Tibet in 1788, the Panchen Lama took the initiative in resuming communications with the British authorities in India. In his letter to the Governor-General, the Panchen Lama wrote that the Chinese Amban in Lhasa had informed the Chinese emperor of the fact of the invasion, and the latter would send troops to fight against the Gorkhas. He said that he was worried about the prospects of Chinese troops coming to Tibet because they might do damage to his people. This showed that the Tibetans were intensely suspicious of the Chinese rulers. This suspicion was rooted in past experience.

The Panchen Lama added that he wanted to make peace with the Gorkha King but he feared the latter would not agree to peace and could not, in any case, be trusted to keep his word. He, therefore, pleaded with the Governor-General to send troops against the Gorkhas. The least that he could do was not to send troops to the Gorkhas if the latter appealed for assistance. Lord Cornwallis, the then Governor-General, promised not to help the Gorkhas, but found himself unable to send an army against them. The Gorkhas retired from Tibet before the Chinese emperor could send an army. But in 1791 the Gorkhas again invaded Tibet. This time the Chinese army arrived. The British East India Company again remained neutral and offered to mediate. Both parties spurned the offer.

Thus the British East India Company did not succeed in establishing relations with Tibet. The same situation continued even after the British Government took over the administration of India in 1857 and China's influence in Tibet declined.

The British Government in India decided to send another mission to Tibet in 1885. Though by now China's influence had been completely eliminated from Tibet, it still approached Peking for permission to send the mission. Britain wanted to keep China in good humour. Peking agreed, though it was in no position to help the mission to go to

Tibet. Colman Macaulay, Secretary to the Bengal Government, was to head the mission. The Tibetans refused to accept the mission and the Government of India agreed to drop the proposal.

Taking the decision to abandon the mission as a sign of British weakness, the Tibetans crossed into Sikkim and built a fort at Lingtu. They persuaded the ruler of Sikkim to move the seat of his Government back into Tibet in violation of the Anglo-Sikkimese Treaty of 1861. The British Government could not be expected to be a silent and helpless spectator to the threat to its influence in Sikkim. It moved into Sikkim in 1888, drove the Tibetans out of Lingtu and took up positions at Gangtok. Two years later in 1890 it negotiated an agreement with China under which the latter recognised Sikkim as an Indian protectorate. Another agreement was signed between China and the British Government in 1893 regarding the establishment of a trade mart at Yatung and the rights of British subjects in Tibet. The Tibetan Government refused to accept both these agreements on the ground that it was not a party to them. This again exposed how ridiculous was the Chinese claim of suzerainty over Tibet.

Clearly the British Government had no expansionist design on Tibet. The experience in the mountainous country of Afghanistan should have been a strong enough deterrent. What is equally significant, it had no intention whatsoever to eliminate China's influence from Tibet. On the contrary, all along it tried to deal with Tibet through China. The loss of China's control over Tibet in the latter part of the nineteenth century had nothing to do with the activities of the British Government. It flowed directly from the decline in the power of the Central Government in Peking and the determination of the freedom-loving Tibetans to shake off China's domination.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the British Government was primarily concerned with the threat to the empire arising from the expansion of the Russian empire in Central Asia. As long as there was no danger from the side of Tibet to the security of India, she could be left

alone. A somewhat different approach came to be applied to Tibet at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly when Lord Curzon took over as the new Viceroy and Governor-General of India in 1899. He was more than alive to the Russian threat to the Indian empire from the side of Tibet. He thought of Tibet as a buffer between India and Russia on the one hand and India and China on the other. Since the Tibetans had successfully eliminated the Chinese control long before Lord Curzon appeared on the Indian scene, Tibet was already a buffer between India and China. The Government of India's primary concern, therefore, was to see to it that Russia did not encroach on Tibet. To ensure it, Lord Curzon thought it necessary to establish relations with Tibet. But all his efforts failed. His letter to the Dalai Lama was returned unopened. He felt greatly hurt. Also he could not but be aware that the pretence of China's overlordship had long worn thin. In his letter of January 8, 1903, to the Secretary of State for India, he rightly described Chinese suzerainty over Tibet as a "constitutional fiction—a political affectation which has only been maintained because of its convenience to both parties."

Russia had given the British Government enough cause for concern. From 1870 onwards, Russian explorers had surveyed Tibet and Mongolia. In August 1901, some important Lamas visited Russia and were received by the head of the State. This was considered a sufficiently strong provocation by the British Government for asking its Ambassador, Sir C. Scott, to inform the Russian Foreign Minister that "His Majesty's Government could not regard with indifference any proceedings that might have a tendency to alter or disturb the existing status of Tibet." In 1902 the impression gained ground that a secret treaty was being negotiated between China and Russia involving Chinese recognition of Russia's right to extend control over Tibet. In September, 1902, Sir C. Satow, Minister in Peking, protested that "should any agreement affecting the political status of Tibet be entered into by China with another power, His Majesty's Government would be compelled to take steps for the protection of British interests."

Despite Russia's and China's assurances, Lord Curzon was not convinced that a threat was not developing to India's security from the side of Tibet. The activities of Dorjief, the Buriat monk who had been the Dalai Lama's teacher and enjoyed his confidence, reinforced the worst fears of the British authorities in India. Dorjief visited Petersburg, presumably on the authority of the Dalai Lama. It could not be ruled out that the Dalai Lama and his advisers were trying to enlist Russian support to counteract the possible rise of British influence in their country.

An incident on the Sikkim-Tibet border offered the Government of India an opportunity for opening talks with Tibet. While the British authorities took the view that the talks would cover the entire question of future relations between India and Tibet, Tibet thought the discussion would relate only to the border problem. Delay in the opening of talks led to the Col. Younghusband's expedition to Tibet, which proceeded up to Lhasa. The Government of India was acting out of impatience and as such resorted to the use of strong arm methods. It did not pay sufficient attention to legal and diplomatic considerations.

As the expedition advanced, the Dalai Lama left Lhasa for Mongolia. On September 1, 1904, the Lhasa convention was signed in the absence of the Dalai Lama. The Chinese Amban had issued a declaration deposing the Dalai Lama to provide legal sanction to the Lhasa convention. Its important provisions were :

1. The Government of Tibet agreed to respect the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1890 and to recognise the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet as defined in Article I of the said convention.

2. In addition to Yatung, two fresh trade marts were to be opened at Gyantse and at Gartok.

3. The Tibetan Government agreed not to levy any dues other than those provided for in the tariff to be mutually agreed upon.

4. An indemnity of Rs 75 lakhs was to be paid by Tibet in 75 annual instalments. Till the payment of the

final instalment, the Chumbi Valley was to remain under British occupation.

5. The Tibetan Government agreed to demolish all forts and remove all armaments which might impede free communication between India and Gyantse and Lhasa.

6. Without British consent no Tibetan territory was to be ceded or leased to any foreign power, no concession for mines and roads was to be given and no part of Tibetan Government's revenue was to be pledged to a foreign power or any of its subjects. No foreign power was to be permitted to interfere in Tibet's affairs or to send Agents to Tibet.

It was clearly beyond Tibet's capacity to pay the amount of the indemnity. On the insistence of London, the indemnity was reduced to Rs 25 lakhs and Chumbi Valley was itself evacuated after this amount had been paid in three annual instalments. The Chumbi Valley was strategically important. That the British Government in London should have been anxious to evacuate it showed that it did not have a proper appreciation of the importance of Tibet from the viewpoint of India's defence. Col. Young-husband himself was criticised. There were sharp differences of opinion between the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy on the issue. While the latter viewed the problem strictly from considerations of India's security, the former was guided by his appreciation of Britain's larger interests. The British Government in London made almost a fetish of China's suzerainty over Tibet. That Tibet had for all practical purposes been an independent country and that its rulers were not prepared to accept and honour any arrangement entered into by China in respect of their country were facts of the situation to which London did not pay much heed.

China agreed to adhere to the Lhasa convention in 1906 after prolonged negotiations. The difficulty had arisen because the Government of India explicitly excluded any reference to Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. In 1907 a convention was signed between Russia and Britain which bound the two parties not to interfere in the internal affairs

of Tibet and to respect her territorial integrity. In the preamble to convention the suzerainty rights of China and Britain's special interests in the maintenance of the *status quo* were recognised.

After his flight from Lhasa in 1904, the Dalai Lama returned home in December 1909, *via* Peking assured that the Chinese empress had no intention to interfere in his country's affairs. No sooner had he reached Lhasa than the Chinese army was ordered into Tibet in defiance of protests from the British Government. Once again the Dalai Lama felt compelled to leave Lhasa, this time in the direction of India. The Dalai Lama looked to the Government of India for help and protection against China. His Ministers proposed an alliance between India and Tibet so that the "relations between India and Tibet will be those of a father to his children," to quote the thirteenth Dalai Lama himself. He even desired to visit London to arrange such an alliance. But the British Government gave him no encouragement. If the British Government had so desired, Tibet could at this point be converted into an Indian protectorate. Britain instead followed the policy of leaving Tibet alone and of recognising China's nominal suzerainty as long as the obligations flowing from the Lhasa convention of 1904 and the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906 were honoured by the other parties.

The policy was unsatisfactory from every point of view. The acceptance of its claim of suzerainty did not satisfy Peking and it, therefore, tried to convert suzerainty into sovereignty. The Tibetans felt let down. By refusing to accede to the Dalai Lama's repeated pleas for assistance the British Government proved conclusively it was not prepared to take an effective step to defend the "autonomy of Tibet . . . without Chinese interference." All that it was prepared to do was to protest to the Chinese Government and if the latter ignored the protests, it had no alternative but to acquiesce in the conquest of Tibet by China. The British Government wanted that Tibet should remain a buffer state, but was not prepared to enforce this desire.

The Republican Government of China, which succeeded the Manchu dynasty, was well aware that the British policy in respect of Tibet suffered from lack of decisiveness and clarity. On April 12, 1912, President Yuan Shih-kai proclaimed Tibet to be a province of China and mobilised an expeditionary force with the object of annexing Tibet. Britain held out the threat that she would not recognise the new regime if it did not give up the intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Tibet and of posting an unlimited number of troops there.

Meanwhile on October 21, 1912, the Russo-Mongolian agreement was signed under which Mongolia became virtually a Russian protectorate. On January 13, 1913, it was reported in the press that acting as the accredited representative of the Dalai Lama, Dorjjeff had signed a treaty with Mongolia. The preamble to the Tibetan-Mongolian Treaty asserted that both Tibet and Mongolia had shaken off Chinese domination and become independent States. They now declared themselves to be allies in view of their common religion. The British Government whose policies in respect of Tibet had primarily been determined by the fear of Russia was alarmed at this reported development. It, therefore, desired to negotiate a new treaty with Tibet to secure its interests. China agreed to participate in the proposed Simla conference to determine the status of Tibet and settle other allied issues only when the British Government threatened that it would negotiate a bilateral agreement with Tibet.

Emboldened by developments since 1912 the Tibetan delegate, who had been accepted as a plenipotentiary of equal status with the British and Chinese delegates, demanded that his country should be recognised as independent and territories once belonging to it should be restored to it. The Chinese delegate on the other hand demanded that Tibet should be recognised as an integral part of China. The British delegate took up a middle position and produced a solution based on the division of Tibet into Inner and Outer Zones on the lines of a similar division of Mongolia by the Russian Government. Under this arrangement, China

was debarred from interfering in the affairs of Outer Tibet bordering on India. She had no right to send troops or officials there excepting a Resident at Lhasa with an escort of not more than 300 men. Also the Tibetan Government was to retain its existing rights in Inner Tibet including those relating to the appointment of high priests and control over the monasteries. The Chinese representative accepted all this. He even agreed that differences between China and Tibet arising out of the convention would be referred to Britain. The Chinese delegate initialled the draft treaty, even though he objected to the boundary between Inner and Outer Tibet and between Tibet and China. On receipt of instructions from his Government, he refused to sign the agreement. The Chinese Government refused to ratify it on the same issue of boundary demarcation. Since the Chinese Government refused to sign and ratify the agreement, it cannot claim suzerainty over Tibet on its basis.

The virtual independence of Tibet is proved by subsequent developments. In 1917 the Chinese Commander at Chamdo provoked the Tibetans into hostility. In the summer of 1918, the Tibetan army captured Chamdo, Draya, Markam, Gonjo and Dege. It was approaching Kanze and Nyrong in one direction and Batang in the other when the Chinese authorities secured the mediation of the British Consul at Tachienlu to arrange a truce. Another 11 years were to elapse before the Central Chinese Government could send Miss Lie Manchong on a semi-official mission to Lhasa. In 1930 Kung Chueh-chung-ni visited Lhasa. He submitted written questions to the Dalai Lama on behalf of his Government. There is nothing in the Dalai Lama's replies to indicate that the Tibetan Government accepted any measure of Chinese control. The text of these questions and replies have been published by Tieh-tsen Li in his book *The Historical Status of Tibet* (New York, 1956).

Before efforts at rapprochement could produce results, hostilities broke out between the Tibetans and the Chinese forces once again towards the end of 1930. There is no worthwhile evidence to substantiate the charge that the Government of India backed the Tibetans when they

pushed eastward to regain control over areas which had belonged to them in the past. In 1931 there were renewed hostilities between Tibet and China following the breakdown of talks on the border problem. On October 12, 1932, a truce was signed according to which the Chinese army remained on the eastern bank of the Upper Yangtse and the Tibetan army on the other bank. On July 15, 1933, the two commanders signed a truce providing for a demilitarised zone to avoid further trouble. These agreements cannot be interpreted to suggest that Tibet was subservient in any manner to China.

The thirteenth Dalai Lama died on December 17, 1933. In 1934 fighting again broke out between the Chinese and Tibetan forces on the border question, but an agreement was worked out confirming the earlier truce arrangements. In the same year an unsuccessful effort was made by China to persuade the Tibetan authorities to accept her control. Peking also tried to send back the Panchen Lama to Tibet. He had been in exile in China since 1923. He died there in 1937.

After the installation of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, the Wu mission made another effort to sort out China's relations with Tibet. The talks did not yield much result because at the very outset the Tibetans demanded that Dege, Huoko and Nyarong should be returned to them. Mr Wu's attempt to persuade the Regent to accept the appointment of a High Commissioner in Tibet failed. In 1942 the Tibetan Government refused to allow war goods to pass through its territory. In 1943 the Bureau of Foreign Affairs was set up at Lhasa and the Chinese office of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission at Chungking was informed that it would in future deal with the Bureau and not the Kashag (Cabinet) directly.

Following the Sino-Soviet Treaty of August 14, 1945, whereby China recognised the independence of Outer Mongolia, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek made a statement on August 25 regarding Tibet. He said that "if and when the Tibetans attain the stage of complete self-reliance in political and economic conditions, the Chinese Government would like

to take the same attitude as it did towards Outer Mongolia, by supporting their independence. However, Tibet should be able to maintain and promote its own independent position in order that the historical tragedy of Korea might not be repeated." Shorn of its patronising tone peculiar to Chinese rulers, the statement was an acknowledgement of the fact that Tibet was an independent country.

There was no major development in Sino-Tibetan relations till the fall of the Nationalist regime in 1948-49. The Communist Government, which came to power in 1949, had no title to claim that Tibet was an integral part of China and had been such since the thirteenth century. Even on the basis of China's own claims, the position of Tibet was not different from that of a number of neighbouring countries like Annam, Korea, Outer Mongolia, Burma and even Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal. In the case of the last three states, China claimed suzerainty till 1910. The difference between Tibet on the one hand and Burma, Annam and Korea on the other arose because the latter countries came to be occupied by Britain, France and Japan. The Chinese Government had no choice but to get reconciled to the new situation.

In any event, it was strange that a revolutionary regime should lay claim to Tibet on the strength of past history. History has never been known to settle issues of freedom and nationhood. New States were carved out in Europe after the First World War. A number of sovereign States have come into being in Asia and Africa after the Second World War. The only criterion to determine whether a community is a nation is whether it has a distinct personality and is conscious of it. The emergence of such a personality is the result of a variety of factors, like religion, way of life, history, race and geography. By every standard, Tibet had a distinct personality. In fact, it had little in common with China or any other nation in the world. The Tibetan religion and way of life were different from those of China. The Hans and the Tibetans were ethnically different. Geographically, Tibet could not be regarded as part of China. Chinese and Tibetans armies often in the past fought against

each other in assertion of rival claims over border areas. The Tibetans missed no opportunity to assert their independence of China's control and domination. All these factors favoured the Tibetan claim that they constituted a nation and were, therefore, entitled to independence.

CHAPTER III

India's Failure in Tibet

WITH THE establishment of a Communist regime in China, collaboration between Moscow and Peking was a foregone conclusion. Thus the fear that had haunted Lord Curzon in the early part of the century had come true. More than ever before India needed that Tibet be preserved as a buffer between her and the Sino-Soviet alliance. As an infant democracy, which had decided to keep out of military alignments, India needed protection from the disruptive impact of powerful Communist states. To defend the independence of Tibet with all the resources at her disposal should, therefore, have been an article of faith for the Government of India.

It is not a debatable issue that India did not have the military strength to push back the Chinese armies once they had started rolling into Tibet. The armistice with Pakistan had been signed only on January 1, 1949, after a 15-month localised war in Kashmir. Most of the troops still remained locked in Kashmir and on the Indo-Pakistan border in the west and the east. Also the general situation at home was disturbed. The Communist insurrection had been smashed, but there was widespread discontent in the country. Millions of refugees, who had poured into the country from Pakistan, remained to be rehabilitated. The threat of a widespread famine loomed large on the horizon. These were disabling factors, but it is also true that there was no adequate appreciation of the nature and magnitude of the threat.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the Chinese Communists did not leave India in doubt regarding their hostility

towards her and the decision to annex Tibet. The Government of India reacted, but in an unco-ordinated and spasmodic way. The anxiety to secure the Himalayan frontier, should Tibet pass under the Chinese occupation, was reflected in the desire to conclude new treaties with the border states of Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal and to secure the liberalisation of the Rana autocratic regime in Nepal.¹ This would show that even at that early stage, the decision to write off Tibet as a bulwark of the Indian defence system had more or less been made in New Delhi.

Within weeks of the establishment of the Communist regime in Peking, Mr Nehru visited America on the invitation of President Truman. It is doubtful if Mr Nehru on his part even mentioned the threat to Tibet and the security problems India would face if Tibet was overrun by the Chinese Communists. The American press during that period was filled with reports and editorials spotlighting the importance that had come to be attached in America to India as the bulwark of democracy in Asia.² The American people and administration were hopefully anxious that India would agree to play the role which history had cast on her by virtue of the success of her independence struggle and the communisation of China. It may be debatable whether the American policy of containing the Communist threat in Asia was suited to achieve the desired result. The weaknesses of the American position with its excessive emphasis on the military approach and unwillingness to recognise China have often been emphasised. But the important point to note here is that India did not present a coherent alternative policy. Mr Nehru well-nigh blurred the distinction between the nationalist upsurge in Asia and the Communist revolution in China. If anything, the relations between India and the US were soured as a result of this visit.

Inevitably, the threat to Tibet steadily mounted. Early in January, 1950, within days of India recognising the new

¹ For a detailed discussion, see the author's *India Meets China in Nepal*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1959.

² *American Shadow over India*, by L. Natarajan, People's Publishing House, New Delhi.

regime, Marshal Chu Teh, Vice-Chairman of the People's Republic, announced that the "liberation of Tibet" was on the cards. In March 1950, the Chinese occupied Tachienlu, traditional gateway to Lhasa. Several thousand labourers were deployed to improve the roads leading to Tibet. Border incidents began to take place between the large Chinese armies well equipped with modern weapons, and small ill-trained and ill-armed Tibetan contingents, who were led by officers wholly unfamiliar with warfare. In May, Peking Radio called upon the Dalai Lama to accept "peaceful liberation of Tibet." In June 1950, Mao Tse-tung himself spoke of the forthcoming invasion of Tibet.

In spite of the impressive Chinese military build-up on the borders of Tibet, the Government of India allowed itself to be fobbed off by Peking's assurances that it would seek to solve the Tibetan issue peacefully. Even a slight acquaintance with the history of Sino-Tibetan relations and Communist techniques would have left no one in doubt that as far as Peking was concerned, it offered the Tibetans a choice between military conquest and peaceful surrender. One can only speculate if New Delhi even made it clear to the Chinese rulers that it did not see any justification for changing the existing relations between Tibet and China. At that stage and even subsequently, the Government of India fought shy of admitting that the country's security in the north was in any way linked with the survival of Tibet as an autonomous, if not an independent, country.

In June the Korean War broke out. In the first instance, India supported the resolution branding North Korea as the aggressor. But soon enough, Mr Nehru apparently developed second thoughts on the role that India should play. He chose for himself and his country the mediatory role. Since it was clear that the North Korean Government had acted in concert with Moscow and Peking, New Delhi had to cultivate the leaders of international Communism and to win their confidence. Stalin encouraged Mr Nehru in the belief that he was most suited to bring about a peaceful settlement of the war in Korea. At this point entered a false note in India's foreign policy. In this new found

enthusiasm for the role of the peace-makers, Indian leaders paid little attention to developments in Tibet. New Delhi did not heed the possibility that the outbreak of the war in Korea and the proposed invasion of Tibet might well be part of an over-all plan to extend Communism to other Asian lands.

By now, the Tibetan leaders had lost all hope of finding any support abroad for their cause. In the absence of active efforts on the part of India, the country most concerned, to mobilise opinion in favour of Tibet's independence, the world's great powers found it convenient to turn a blind eye on the unfortunate land. The Tibetan leaders knew that they had no chance of survival in a military struggle against China. A delegation, which had been in India, tried to find a basis of a negotiated settlement by opening discussions with the new Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi. The departure of this delegation to Peking was delayed on various accounts. Meanwhile on October 7, 1950, the Chinese launched a full-scale invasion of Tibet. Forty thousand Chinese troops crossed the eastern border on this date after they had been acclimatised to Tibetan weather. It was not before October 25, 1950, that the Government of India came to know that Tibet had been invaded and that also from an official announcement by Peking Radio. The Chinese armies were already in occupation of Chamdo and Lhodzong on the route to Lhasa.

It would appear that towards the end of the second week of October 1950, the Government of India had a vague feeling that the invasion of Tibet was imminent. That was why it addressed a communication to Peking on October 21, 1950. But in this communication, the Government of India took the weakest possible line. It said that military action in Tibet would adversely affect the chances of China's admission to the UN. It admitted explicitly that Tibet was an internal matter for China to settle. It said: "They [the Government of India] feel that an incautious move at the present time, *even in a matter which is within its own sphere*, will be used by those, who are unfriendly to China, to prejudice China's case in the United Nations and generally before neutral

opinion." (*Italics mine*) This line of argument constituted a departure from the British policy and the terms of the Simla convention. The British Government never recognised that China had the right to march troops into Tibet to settle any issue between them. China's suzerainty over Outer Tibet was only nominal.

The Government of India said in its note that it was deeply convinced that the admission of China to the UN was necessary "for the restoration of peaceful atmosphere." If that was so, China had no reason to feel beholden to India for championing the cause of her admission to the world organisation. Also, since China had already decided to get involved in a war with the United Nations forces in Korea—the Chinese intervention in Korea became public on November 1—she could not be too keen to win admission to the international body. India was then aware of Peking's decision to intervene in Korea.

On the receipt of the information regarding invasion, the Indian Government on October 26 sent another note to Peking, which said: "We have been repeatedly assured of the desire of the Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means and negotiations." The Tibetan delegation had left for China on October 25 to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the issue. "In view of these facts, to order the advance of China's troops into Tibet appears to us most surprising and regrettable," the note said.

The Government of India, in its note, explained the circumstances in which the departure of the Tibetan delegation to Peking had been delayed. First, the *visas* did not arrive from Hong Kong. Secondly, China herself had expressed the desire that preliminary talks should be held in New Delhi between the delegation and the Chinese Ambassador and the delegation had, therefore, to return to New Delhi. Finally, the Tibetans had no knowledge of dealing with other Governments and had to obtain instructions from their Government, which in turn had to consult its assemblies. It denied the suggestion that foreign influences hostile to China had been at work in New Delhi and that they had been responsible for holding up the departure of

the delegation. The language was firmer than that of the previous communication, but it gave no indication that India was willing to take up the cause of Tibet's independence. The same story was repeated in 1959.

The Chinese reply of October 30 left no scope for doubt that the Communist rulers had at no stage accepted the Government of India's *bona fides*. It asserted: "Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory, the problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. *The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China.*" (Italics mine) The need to defend the frontiers of China could arise only because India's *bona fides* was suspect. In spite of the earlier explanation from the Government of India, it charged that foreign instigation was responsible for holding up the Tibetan delegation in New Delhi. Clearly, the charge was aimed at the Government of India itself. It warned: "No foreign influence will be tolerated in Tibet." Peking did not find it difficult to demolish the Indian case on the question of its admission to the UN by pointing out that there was no connection between it and the Tibetan issue.

Not to leave the Government of India in doubt about what it thought of its protestations of friendship, the Chinese Government added: "*Therefore, with regard to the viewpoint of the Government of India on what it regards as deplorable, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China cannot but consider it as having been affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet and hence expresses its deep regret.*" (Italics mine) It was a devious way of saying that India continued to be dominated by imperialist powers and as such remained a colony. The charge made over Peking Radio that Mr Nehru was a "running dog of British imperialism" has to be read in this context.

The Government of India reacted sharply to these insinuations and repudiated them in its note of November 1, 1950, which said that India's policy was independent and "directed solely towards a peaceful settlement of international disputes and avoidance of anything calculated to increase the

present deplorable tensions in the world." It strongly denied that the delegation had been delayed in India because of foreign instigation. It added: "It is with no desire to interfere or gain any advantage that the Government of India have sought earnestly that a settlement of the Tibetan problem should be effected by peaceful negotiations, adjusting legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty. . . . The Government of India's repeated suggestions that Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and Tibetan autonomy should be reconciled by peaceful negotiations were not, as the Chinese Government seems to suggest, unwarranted interference in China's internal affairs, but well meant advice by a friendly Government which has a natural interest in the solution of problems concerning its neighbours by peaceful methods." The note emphasised that "there has been no allegation that there has been any provocation or any resort to non-peaceful methods on the part of the Tibetans. Hence there is no justification whatever for such military operations against them. Such a step involving an attempt to impose a decision by force could not possibly be reconciled with peaceful settlement." The note said: "The Government of India have repeatedly made it clear that they have no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet and they do not seek any novel privilege for themselves or their nationals in Tibet. At the same time they have pointed out that certain rights have grown out of usage and agreements which are natural between neighbours with close cultural and commercial relations." It reaffirmed its policy of friendship for China and expressed concern that "*recent developments in Tibet have affected these friendly relations and the interest of peace the world over.*" (Italics mine)

A careful perusal of the note would reveal that it was riddled with contradictions. If the Tibetans had not given any provocation and they were entitled to autonomy, there could be no question of a fresh settlement between them and Peking, peaceful or otherwise. Also, if India had acquired certain rights, out of usage and agreements, she was fully entitled to defend them. Similarly, the Indian Government

could not reconcile its policy of friendship with China with its view that the latter was imposing decision by force on Tibet. Also the general tone contrasted sharply with the lack of willingness to help the victim of an unprovoked aggression. India was covering her retreat behind a thick wall of brave words.

The Chinese took 15 days to reply to this note. The Chinese reply dated November 16, 1950, was sharply critical of India. It reiterated the claim that Tibet, being an integral part of China, was her domestic problem. It added: "According to the provisions of the common programme adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the regional autonomy granted by the Chinese Government to the national minorities inside the country is an autonomy within the confines of Chinese sovereignty. *This point has been recognised by the Indian Government in its aide memoire to the Chinese Government dated August 26 this year.* However, when the Chinese Government actually exercised its sovereign rights and began to liberate the Tibetan people and drive out foreign forces and influences to ensure that Tibet will be free from aggression and will realise regional autonomy and religious freedom, the Indian Government attempted to influence and obstruct the exercise of its sovereign rights in Tibet by the Chinese Government." (Italics mine) The charge that the departure of the Tibetan delegation from India to Peking had been obstructed was reaffirmed. The Chinese could not have made it clearer what they meant by autonomy for Tibet. Tibet's autonomy was not to be based on the existing situation or historical precedents. It was to be limited in terms of the common programme and finally destroyed.

The Chinese note said: "On August 31, 1950, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Indian Government through Ambassador Panikkar that the Chinese People's Liberation Army was going to take action soon in West Sikang according to set plans and expressed the hope that the Indian Government would assist the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet so that it might arrive in Peking in mid-September to begin peace

negotiations." This as well as the earlier Chinese note said that regardless of whether the Local Tibetan Government wanted to settle the issue peacefully or not, no foreign interference would be permitted.

Towards the end of November 1950, a spokesman of the Government of India said that the use of the phrase "autonomy within the framework of Chinese sovereignty" in the *aide memoire* of August 26, 1950, did not mean anything other than "autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty." On the face of it, it was an untenable position. Who was responsible for the use of the word "sovereignty" in place of "suzerainty," has never been disclosed officially. But Mr Panikkar continued to represent India in Peking. In fact he was regarded as a successful envoy presumably because he had come to enjoy the confidence of Peking on issues relating to Korea.

After the Chinese note of November 16, 1950, India lapsed into silence as far as the Tibetan issue was concerned. It would appear from Mr Nehru's speech in Parliament on November 25, 1959, that in 1951, Mr Nehru did receive some assurances from the Chinese Prime Minister, Mr Chou En-lai, regarding the preservation of Indian interests in Tibet.³ But it was clear beyond doubt that India was not willing to help the Tibetans protect their freedom. The Tibetans turned to the United Nations for support. On November 7, 1950, the Tibetan delegation in Kalimpong on the receipt of instructions from Lhasa sent a cable to the President of the UN General Assembly complaining that the "armed invasion of Tibet for her incorporation within the fold of Chinese Communism through sheer physical force was a clear case of aggression." The complaint repudiated the claim that Tibet had always been a part of China.

All major powers were lukewarm to the Tibetan complaint. El Salvador, a small Latin American country, made the request that the issue be placed on the agenda of the Assembly. The British delegate told the Steering Committee, which was to decide whether the issue should be discussed by the General Assembly, that the legal position of Tibet

³ *The Times of India*, November 26, 1959.

was not clear. Also, it was not known what was happening there. He proposed that decision on the complaint be postponed. How far the British decision to take up this legalistic position was determined by considerations of maintaining its control over Hong Kong or by its desire not to embarrass the Government of India, is not known.

The Indian delegate supported the British view. He said on November 25, 1950: "In the Peking Government's latest note to the Government of India, they have stated that they have not given up the desire for settling the problem peacefully." To say the least the statement was a cynical one. Without doubt, India had written off Tibet. The Russian delegate seconded the British proposal and supported the Chinese claim that Tibet was China's domestic problem and the UN had no jurisdiction to interfere. The Nationalist Chinese delegate asserted that Tibet had been a part of China for several hundred years.

The Tibetan delegation in Kalimpong sent frantic messages to the UN. Finding that the task of resisting the Chinese army was hopeless and there was no possibility of receiving even diplomatic support from anywhere, the Dalai Lama on the advice of his Ministers left Lhasa on December 21 to arrive at Gyantse on December 26, 1950. From there he proceeded to Yatung on the Indian border. Apparently the Tibetan leaders and Ministers again reviewed the situation and concluded that they had no alternative but to make the best of the hopeless situation by trying to secure some concessions from the Chinese. They, therefore, decided to open negotiations with Peking. A Tibetan delegation was sent to Peking. It reached there towards the end of April, 1951. On May 23, 1951, a 17-article Agreement was signed.

The Sino-Tibetan Agreement was a compromise solution which did not satisfy either party. The Tibetans signed the agreement under duress. As a disarmed nation with no hope of support from the outside world, they had to choose between surrender and total extermination. The Chinese rulers, on the other hand, made certain concessions to the Tibetan sentiment and susceptibilities as a part of their broader strategy and in the confidence that in course of

time they would be able to divide, and thus pulverise the resistance of, the Tibetan people. Involvement in the Korean war made it necessary for Peking to try to settle the Tibetan issue. At that stage, Peking's real purpose was to secure the annexation of Tibet and to instal its army on the frontiers of India. The Agreement secured both these objectives.

As Communists, who believe in the most centralised form of administration and despise religion as "opiate of the people," the Chinese rulers could not be sincere about the provision that "the central authorities will not alter the existing political system in Tibet. The central authorities will not alter the established status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks will hold office as usual." (Art. IV) Similarly they would have been untrue to their Marxist faith if they meant to implement the provisions of Articles VII and XI. Article VII said: "The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected, and the Lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries." Article XI said: "In matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The Local Government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people raise demands for reforms, they shall be settled by means of negotiation with the leading personnel of Tibet."

From the Chinese viewpoint, the important articles of the agreement were, however, those which secured the annexation of Tibet. The relevant articles provided:

1. The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the motherland—the People's Republic of China. (Art. I)
2. The Local Government of Tibet shall actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence. (Art. II)
3. Tibetan troops shall be organised by stages into the People's Liberation Army, and become part of the national

defence forces of the People's Republic of China. (Art. VIII)

4. The Central People's Government shall conduct the centralised handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet. (Art. XIV)

5. In order to ensure the implementation of this Agreement, the Central People's Government shall set up a military and administrative committee and a military area headquarters in Tibet, and apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People's Government shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work. (Art. XV)

6. The Local Government of Tibet will assist the People's Liberation Army in the purchase and transport of food, fodder and other daily necessities. (Art. XVI)

The Tibetans made a great concession when they agreed to accept the Chinese-chosen Panchen Lama. The Tibetans had found their own incarnation of the Panchen Lama. In later years when the Panchen Lama returned to Tibet he came to be called Mao's Panchen. The Agreement had, however, no validity for the Tibetan people unless the Dalai Lama's seal was affixed to it. The Chinese Government was not prepared to take any risk and forged a seal, which it has kept in its possession ever since.⁴ The Dalai Lama confirmed the Agreement in a communication to Mao Tse-tung on October 24, 1951, one and a half month after the advance units of the People's Liberation Army had moved into Lhasa on September 9, 1951. The Military Area Headquarters were established in Lhasa on February 10, 1952. Thus Tibet's freedom was destroyed and the Chinese Army was installed on India's frontier.

⁴ The Dalai Lama made a statement to this effect on June 20, 1959. See *The Times of India*, June 21, 1959.

CHAPTER IV

Tibetans Under Communism

THE CHINESE authorities were alive to the fact that the people in Inner and Outer Tibet were not reconciled to their rule. They knew that they had to be circumspect in their dealings with the Tibetans lest they provoked a revolt. In 1951 itself, the 8,000-strong Onla tribe of Tibetans in Inner Tibet revolted. It was later reported that led by Hsiang Chien, the tribe had revolted against the People's Government in September 1951, and launched armed attacks. "From September 1951, till April 1952, the Provincial Government had sent, as many as 17 times special envoys to persuade Hsiang. For three times in February 1951, he threw more than 1,000 men each time to invade the bordering counties and attacked the local army. In the meantime he sent his men secretly to Tungte, Hinghai and Tulong counties with the intention of stirring the people to enlarge the revolt." Hsiang surrendered on July 1952, only after the Central Government had "appropriated 200 million yuan and 80,000 catties of grain" for the relief of the Onla tribe.¹ This was a strong warning for the Chinese authorities to go slow.

The issue, however, was not the behaviour of the Chinese officers. The freedom-loving Tibetans prized their religion and way of life above everything. They regarded the Chinese as foreigners and were determined to overthrow the Chinese rule. Whatever the Chinese authorities did or did not do, it all fanned the flames of nationalism. Throughout the last nine years, the Tibetans have been hostile to foreign rulers. Thus in spite of the handicaps and absence of support

¹ *Chung Chung Jih-pao*, Siam, October 21, 1952.

either from India or any other country, the Tibetans served as India's and thus south Asia's first line of defence against the Communist China's expansionism.

Following the 17-article Agreement, thousands of troops poured into Tibet. A larger number of them moved to the Indo-Tibetan frontier. This latter move was logical in view of China's distrust of and hostility towards India. An elaborate propaganda apparatus was organised in Lhasa and other Tibetan towns as a part of the drive to win over the Tibetans. Tens of thousands of Chinese labourers were mobilised to build roads and bridges and the communication system to provide the necessary logistical support for the consolidation of Peking's hold over Tibet.

In the beginning the Chinese rulers were by and large on their best behaviour. The Tibetans were paid reasonable wages for labour and pack animals. They put up the appearance of showing their respect to the monks and other leaders of the Tibetan society. Cultural troupes came from China to entertain them. But simultaneously thousands of Chinese settlers began to move into Lhasa and other parts of the country resulting in food shortages. Peking Radio announced that in ten years the population of Tibet would be raised to ten million. This was a measure of the proposed colonisation in Tibet, which alarmed the Tibetans.

Meanwhile a group of leading Tibetans had formed an organisation known as the Mimang to resist encroachments on the country's autonomy. The organisation received valuable support from the Lamas and the local authorities. Within a short time it covered almost the whole country. It received accurate information from different parts of Tibet about the activities of the Chinese troops and officials and the difficulties of the common people. In the early part of 1952 itself, posters appeared in Lhasa demanding that the Chinese quit Tibet. Riots broke out in the city and the people defied the curfew order. According to the Chinese authorities themselves, some important members of the Local Government were at the back of the People's Assembly, which began to function publicly in March 1952. "On April 1, it sent a deputation to the Chinese Resident,

Chang Ching-Wu, asking for the withdrawal of the Chinese army. At the same time, the Tibetan army surrounded the Resident's headquarters in Lhasa, there was some shooting and for a while the situation was extremely tense."² The tension lasted "a whole month" till the Dalai Lama presumably under pressure, ordered the Assembly to be dissolved. The Chinese secured the dismissal of the two Prime Ministers who had resisted Chinese pressure.

By and large, 1953 was relatively a calm year in Tibet and other regions inhabited by minority nationalities. This did not mean that they were beginning to get reconciled to the Communist rule. The absence of revolts was due to a variety of factors. In 1953, a large number of trained Communist cadres were sent to these areas. Politically they adopted the method of "divide and rule." Forty-seven "minority peoples' autonomous regions" at the *hsien* level were established in 1953 to divide the recalcitrant minority nationalities and merge them with Han majority areas. In the economic field, beginning from the middle of 1952 the Communists had concentrated on spreading a network of highways in these regions so that it could be possible to apply greater military pressure. For the time being, the introduction of Communist style "land reforms" in these areas was postponed.

In Tibet proper, trouble continued to simmer. The people found means to frustrate the attempts of the Chinese officials to channelise all trade through official agencies. Resentment grew when the Chinese authorities began to commandeer the Tibetans with their pack animals to work on construction projects far from their homes. The wages were sharply reduced and hundreds of people died working on road construction. The number of "petitions" asking the Chinese to quit the country grew. The Mimang members numbering over 4,000 became bolder and started convening meetings of representatives from different parts of the country. The monasteries became more active in the cause of Tibet's independence.

² *China News Analysis* (Hong Kong), No. 282, June 26, 1959.

The Chinese rulers were inevitably frustrated. They devised a dual plan of action. To reduce the authority of the Local Government and thus of the Dalai Lama, symbol of the hopes of the people, they set up a Panchen Lama *Kanpo Lija* (Panchen Lama's Administrative Council) in 1954. The so-called Chamdo People's Liberation Committee had been in existence since 1951. Simultaneously they decided to take the Dalai Lama to Peking with a view to indoctrinating him. Both these moves boomeranged against them.

On all evidence, the people grew hysterical when they learnt that the Dalai Lama would be taken to Peking. They feared that he might not be allowed to return. People from the farthest parts of Tibet poured into Lhasa to petition the Dalai Lama not to go. Special prayers were held all over the country. On July 11, 1954, when the Dalai Lama finally left the Potala on the journey to Peking, the streets of Lhasa were packed with people, who prostrated at his feet. Hundreds of people jumped into the river in a frenzy. Life was not worth living without the protection of the "Living God." The Chinese must have been stunned by this display of reverence towards the Dalai Lama. Even in Peking, the Dalai Lama received hundreds of letters and telegrams asking him to return to Lhasa. Deputations of Tibetans waited on him. The attempts at indoctrination failed miserably.³ The People's Assembly again came out into the open in 1954 and it was particularly active in the agitation demanding the Dalai Lama's prompt return to Lhasa. But the Dalai Lama was taken on a tour of China and allowed to return home only in March next year. In January 1955, the People's Assembly, according to the Chinese sources, established an association to provide relief for Tibetans. *The People's Daily* (Peking), said on April 23, 1959, that the Assembly used the opportunity to spread "reactionary propaganda."

The Chinese rulers were thus left with no alternative but to undermine, and if possible eliminate, the authority of the Local Government. Therefore, as the Dalai Lama and

³ For a detailed version see *Silent War in Tibet*, by Lowell Thomas Jr. (Doubleday & Company Inc., New York).

Panchen Lama left Peking for Lhasa in March 1955, the State Council announced its decision to form a Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Committee was to serve as a State organ directly under the control of the State Council in Peking and was "charged with the responsibility of making preparations to establish the Tibet Autonomous Region." Thus in 1955 Tibet was not regarded as an autonomous region, presumably because it still enjoyed a measure of genuine autonomy and because it had not yet been flooded with Hans to convert the Tibetans into a small minority. The Preparatory Committee was intended to supplant in course of time the Local Government, the *Panchen Kanpo Lija* and the People's Liberation Committee for Chamdo area. It is almost certain that the stay of the Dalai Lama in China was prolonged month after month because he would not easily agree to the formation of the Preparatory Committee, an instrument of Chinese domination.

Simultaneously, the Chinese Communists pushed ahead with their plans of "socialist transformation" and "agricultural co-operativisation" in border areas inhabited by Tibetans and other nationalities. In effect, these changes sought to undermine their way of life and institutions, particularly religious ones. This resulted in widespread discontent and frequent riots in areas bordering Tibet proper such as Yunnan, Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Szechwan. For instance, it was reported in *Yunnan Jih-pao* on April 10, 1956, that "the rural cadres and activists in Chenhsung county were tied up and beaten during a riot; reactionary army officers in Chunching county stored up arms and ammunition, and gathered together the landlords and rich peasants and started an uprising; the Secretary of the Party branch in Mileh county was hacked to death by a counter-revolutionary; all the nine family members of Cheng Cheng-mei, a people's deputy of Huitse county, were slaughtered.... The co-operative in Mengtzu county was set on fire 11 times...." In Sinkiang martial law had to be introduced to deal with the situation resulting from widespread resistance to the Communist rule.

The Chinese could not avoid facing the fact that they had completely failed to either terrorise the Tibetans into surrender or to win them over. In 1955 they were driven to a point when they had to confess their failure. They admitted that they had made mistakes in dealing with the Tibetans. They confessed that Tibet had been treated virtually as a colony. For instance, on March 9, 1955, the official representative of the Central People's Government to Tibet said in a report to the State Council: "Numerous are the shortcomings and errors on the part of the Han Chinese working personnel in Tibet. Part of the Han cadres have demonstrated a varying degree of the remnant concept of great Hanism, such as lack of respect for the religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetans, insufficient recognition of the merits of the Tibetan cadres and lack of due respect and warm support to them. In addition to this, some Han cadres, without a full grasp of the conditions in Tibet, mechanically apply the experience of the Han districts to the Tibetans; besides that they show sentiments of hastiness in the course of their work." He added: "*Concerning the purchase and transport work, they fail to make timely price adjustments, causing part of the Tibetans a considerable loss for which compensation and amends have to be made later.* In individual cases, there has even been breach of law and discipline and the phenomenon of commandism."⁴ (Italics mine) The latter part of the statement showed that the Chinese had deprived the Tibetans of their goods and animals and thus disrupted Tibet's economic life. The full impact of the disruption is described in a letter by a Tibetan official, who fled Tibet in 1956.⁵

The Tibetan collaborator, Ngabou Ngawang Jigme, made a similar report to the State Council. He said: "In individual cases, some cadres and PLA officers and soldiers, due to ignorance of Tibetan customs and habits and because of language difficulties, occasionally committed defects and errors in trading and transport work in certain districts."

⁴ *The People's Daily* (Peking), March 10, 1956.

⁵ See text in the interim report of the International Commission of Jurists, Geneva.

He added that the "disunity" between the Chinese and the Tibetans was so great that the Tibetans refrained from expressing their views openly in the presence of Chinese cadres and officials. He said that the Tibetan officials "sometimes considered discussion merely a matter of form, dared not express their opinions or feared that even if their opinions were expressed, they would not be respected. As a result, they could not see a bright future for Tibet, nor would they show any enthusiasm in creating favourable conditions. No great results, were, therefore, obtained."

The Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region took a whole year to be established, which again indicated the extent of opposition to the move. In his book entitled *The Silent War in Tibet*, Mr Lowell Thomas has contended that the decision to set the Committee provoked widespread opposition. The Tibetans interpreted it as a move to destroy their autonomy. During this period the Dalai Lama retreated into prayers and religious ceremonies. The Chinese formed a five-man committee to prepare for the formation of the Preparatory Committee. According to him, the decision to prepare for armed rebellion was taken by the Mimang in 1955 itself. When it was established on April 22, 1956, the Preparatory Committee included the representatives of the Local Government, *Panchen Kanpo Lija*, the People's Liberation Committee for Chamdo area and the Chinese Communists. The Dalai Lama was named the Chairman and the Panchen Lama and Gen. Chang Kuo-hua as Vice-Chairmen. Many of the Committee's offices were headed by a Chinese Communist. By this time the rebellion in Golok and Litang had already broken out resulting in widespread and intensive bombing by the Chinese.

The Committee consisted of 15 members from the Local Government, 10 from the *Panchen Kanpo Lija*, 10 from the People's Liberation Committee of Chamdo, 5 from the Central Government and 11 from the monasteries, religious sects and people's organisations. It was to work directly under the control of the State Council. All its decisions were subject to approval by the Council. The PLA was not

under the Committee. The Chinese were all-powerful in the ten departments under the Committee where all the work was to be conducted.

The establishment of the Committee was a strong indication that the Chinese planned to introduce major changes. But the Dalai Lama and his Government did not fall in line with the Chinese policy. At the time of the establishment of the Preparatory Committee in Lhasa, Marshal Ch'en Yi, now Foreign Minister, the only important Chinese leader to visit Tibet, was present. At the inaugural function, the Dalai Lama made a long speech. He said: "In accordance with the instructions of Chairman Mao, after discussions with the members of the Tibetan Local Government, of the Council of the Panchen Lama and the Liberation Committee of the Chengtu [Chamdo area] *an agreement was reached with the representatives of the Central Government to establish, instead of the Tibetan Military Area, a Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Area.*" (Italics mine) This was a significant observation. It revealed two things: first, it showed that the Dalai Lama had agreed to the establishment of the Committee on the assurance that the Military Area would be disbanded. The Tibetans had been demanding the withdrawal of the Chinese army since 1951. Secondly, the Dalai Lama was trying to interpret the functions of the Committee in a manner that suited the cause of Tibetan autonomy.

In this address, the Dalai Lama added: "When recently from neighbouring provinces the news of reforms reached Tibet, it caused doubt and anxiety. *Some purposely spread the rumour that with the establishment of the Preparatory Committee, Tibet would undergo reforms. This is an entirely malicious rumour.* To this I say the following: 'Tibet has no other way to travel but the way of socialism.' But Tibet and socialism are still very different from each other. A gradual reform has to be carried out, but when and how? *This will depend on the circumstances and it will be carried out by the leaders and people of Tibet and will not be imposed on them by force by other people.*"⁶ (Italics mine) The meaning

⁶ *The People's Daily* (Peking), April 25, 1956.

of this pronouncement could not be lost on the Chinese authorities. The Dalai Lama politely but firmly put them on notice that they must not seek to destroy Tibet's autonomy and push the programme of collectivisation in his land. In fact, he charged the Preparatory Committee with the task of guaranteeing religious freedom and protecting the monasteries.

In early 1956 the warlike Khampas in the Kham area in the eastern part of Sikang—Tibet plateau around Kantze in Szechwan province had been driven to desperation and open revolt. Even earlier, they had resisted Chinese authority. They were deprived of their land and pastures in the name of socialist reforms. A large number of Hans were settled on these lands as a part of a larger scheme to swamp minority nationality areas with them. Monasteries and temples were ransacked and their properties looted to finance "socialist reconstruction." The Chinese pretended that these were loans to the Government, but they were not repaid. Monks were forced to do slave labour on road construction projects.

Denunciation meetings were organised to create dissensions among different sections of the community, a technique which had been tried and perfected in China proper. The Chinese resorted to extreme measures, including the bombing of Litang, to suppress the revolt. Official Chinese sources, including *The People's Daily*, have alleged that members of the Local Tibet Government, who had accompanied the Dalai Lama to Peking, had fomented the revolt. According to them, on their return journey these members of the Tibet Local Government divided themselves into two parties. They travelled through Sikang and Szechwan, one by the northern route and the other by the southern route, and incited the people to revolt in the name of religion.

In 1959 Peking admitted that the revolt of the Khampas was widespread and violence took place on an extensive scale. Roads were cut, lorries destroyed and Chinese and Tibetan Communist cadres were killed. All communications were disrupted and army posts were attacked. But in

August 1956, a Chinese official was quoted in *L'Unita'* Italian Communist Party daily, as having said that the revolt was a minor affair and had been put down. Mr Chou En-lai made a similar statement at Calcutta on December 9, 1956, during his visit to India. With their homes destroyed and their religion and way of life imperilled, the Khampas continued the fight. Many of them moved into Tibet proper where they were assured of support and sympathy from the Tibetan people. It was in this context that the Dalai Lama was speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

In view of popular opposition, the Communist-style reforms had to be postponed, though Peking made it clear that they had not been abandoned. Throughout 1956, the situation in Tibet was tense. We are now told by Gen. Chang Kuo-hua, Commander of the Chinese Army in Tibet, that the Tibetan Government's plan was to organise an armed rebellion in Sikang and block the two highways from China to Tibet so that in the rear Lhasa could work for complete independence. He said that the masses were tricked into joining the rebellion (of Khampas) on religious slogans. Also the rebels, according to him, terrorised the people to join them.⁷ This is an indirect confirmation that the Khampa revolt was widespread and commanded the support of a large number of Tibetans.

The decision to postpone the introduction of "democratic reforms" must have been taken to avoid the outbreak of a rebellion in Tibet itself. The tension prevailing there was reflected in the speeches made by Communist officials in the latter part of 1956. For instance, addressing the 8th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party on September 20, 1956, Gen. Chang Kuo-hua, Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, said: "In terms of the demands of the Tibetan people, we have done very little. During the early stages after liberation, the People's Liberation Army and Government personnel sent to Tibet failed to adjust the prices in time in their purchases of some daily commodities and hiring of yaks for transport purposes, thus causing the

⁷ *The People's Daily* (Peking), April 26, 1959.

local people to suffer some damage for a short period of time. . . . In the training of Tibetan cadres during the past six years, the work has been quite slow. On certain problems, the consultations conducted with public leaders of the local people was far from adequate. Defects also existed in other fields of work."⁸

Emphasising the need for the indoctrination of the Tibetans, he said that during the last six years 2,100 Tibetan cadres had been trained. He added: "In order to expedite the training of Tibetan cadres, cadre schools and training centres will be set up this year in Tibet with the aim of recruiting from 5,000 to 8,000 Tibetan students in the coming four years and training another 10,000 in rotation. . . . In addition large numbers of students will be sent to study in the Central Institute of Nationalities and the South-West and North-West Institutes for Nationalities."⁹ This would show how the Chinese proposed to indoctrinate the Tibetans. Already over 20,000 students had been sent to China to be trained as Communists. This programme was only a partial success and many of them had returned home anti-Communists.

Referring to the desirability of postponing reforms, the General said: "The following conditions must be realised before any reform can be initiated: (1) The reform must be demanded by the labouring people and whole-heartedly supported by the upper strata of society; (2) There must be a set of reform measures based on scientific investigation of the social and economic conditions of Tibet and agreed to by the representatives of all strata of the people; and (3) There must be a certain number of Tibetan cadres. As these conditions do not exist, the reforms cannot begin for a comparatively long time to come." He warned: "Premature reforms will certainly affect unity within the Tibetan nationality as well as that between the Tibetans and other nationalities and will only create difficulties for a smooth progress in peaceful reforms."¹⁰

⁸ *The People's Daily* (Peking), September 21, 1956.

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ *The People's Daily* (Peking), September 21, 1956.

General Chang Kuo-hua admitted indirectly that the Chinese Communists had not been able to subvert the loyalty of the Tibetan people to their leaders. He said: "The reason for the Party giving special consideration to the interests of the upper strata of Tibetans during and after the reforms is based on the concrete situation in Tibet. As the upper strata Tibetans have intimate relations with the broad masses of the Tibetan people, as they have contributed much during the past several years to the unification of the motherland and the unity and progress of Tibet, and as these people have themselves made varying degrees of progress, the people of other nationalities . . . will have no justifiable reason not to unite with them or take care of their interests." It will be seen that at this stage the resistance on the part of the Tibetans was not blamed, at least not wholly, on foreign "imperialists." It was also conceded that the Tibetan people were not enthusiastic about the proposed "reforms."

Earlier on September 14, 1956, Marshal Ch'en Yi, after his visit to Lhasa, reported: "At the meeting [of the Preparatory Committee] all the representatives speaking on the question of the democratic reform were worried because the news of reforms from the neighbouring provinces reached Tibet together with rumours spread by counter-revolutionary elements. . . . The representatives pointed out that in Tibet the reform must be carried out from above and in a peaceful way, and that the time of reform should be discussed by the autonomous organs of the Tibetan region, and would require the consent of the common leader [the Dalai Lama]." He added that the Preparatory Committee had decided that the administration of Tibet would be divided into eight units called "Chi Chiao Chi," equivalent to the special district in the interior of China.¹¹

Writings in the *Tibet Daily* (Lhasa), towards the end of 1956 showed that the Chinese Communists had on their own admission treated Tibet as a colony and that the Tibetan people as a whole were opposed to the imposition of the Communist regime over them. For instance, on October 23, 1956, the paper cited instances of how top Chinese officials

¹¹ *The People's Daily* (Peking), September 15, 1956.

had been rude and insulting to the Tibetan cadres and said: "Since this is the attitude of the leadership towards the Tibetan cadres and workers, Han cadres and workers at the lower level naturally look down on the Tibetan workers." It gave instances of Tibetan workers having been beaten by the Chinese officials. "Cases like these are noted by the leadership, but no action is taken," it said.

The Chinese authorities did not want to allow the Dalai Lama to visit India to participate in the 2500th anniversary of Lord Buddha. The reasons were obvious. The Chinese authorities did not trust the Dalai Lama in view of his unwillingness to act as a stooge. They did not wish the ties with India to be renewed. They feared that he might seek support for the cause of Tibet's independence while in India. They never accepted India as a friendly country. Finally, they were already faced with a widespread rebellion in the Kham area and were afraid that it might spread to other parts of Tibet. At one stage Peking told New Delhi that the Dalai and Panchen Lamas were too preoccupied at home to be able to participate in the celebrations. The Dalai Lama insisted on accepting India's invitation.

He came to India in November 1956. It came to be known even at that time that he did not want to return to Lhasa. He agreed to do so only when Mr Nehru secured from Mr Chou En-lai an assurance that the autonomy of Tibet would be respected. This development strengthened China's suspicious against India because it showed the measure of India's continuing influence in Tibet. On his part, the Dalai Lama took his own time before he made the final decision to return. That was presumably why he stayed on for a fortnight in Sikkim after the Panchen Lama's party had returned to Tibet. During his speeches in India, he never spoke of Tibet's ties with China, but he dwelt on India as the land of the Buddha. He spoke of the need to defend the freedom of small nations, an oblique hint that Tibet desired to be wholly independent.

In his speech on Contradictions on February 27, 1957, Mao Tse-tung apparently discussed the Tibetan unrest at considerable length. In the edited version of the speech,

which was released in June 1957, the following reference to Tibet remained: "Because conditions in Tibet are not ripe, democratic reforms have not been carried out there. According to the 17-point Agreement reached between the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet, reform of the social system must eventually be carried out. But we should not be impatient; when all this will be done can only be decided when the great majority of the people of Tibet and their leading public figures consider it practicable. It has now been decided not to proceed with democratic reform in Tibet during the period of the second five-year Plan, and we can only decide whether it will be done in the period of the third five-year Plan in the light of the situation obtaining at that time."

According to some of those who heard a tape-recorded version of the original speech, Mao Tse-tung spoke sharply about past mistakes in Tibet. He disclosed that the Dalai Lama had virtually been lost to India. He added that it was a result of Mr Chou En-lai's efforts that the Dalai Lama was persuaded to return to Lhasa. Mao Tse-tung did not even mention Mr Nehru in this connection.

The Dalai Lama returned to Tibet a few days after this address by Mao was made. One can only speculate if there was some connection between the two events. The decision to postpone the reforms was formally announced in a Government decree at a rally at Lhasa on April 22, 1957.

At the first anniversary celebrations of the Preparatory Committee, the Dalai Lama spoke out firmly, though politely and discreetly, on the situation in Tibet. He said that decisions had been taken without due consideration to local conditions and could not, therefore, be carried out. The price of food had risen due to drought and bad harvest and steps were not taken to check it. The bureaus of religious affairs numbering over 50 had been overstaffed with Chinese and they did not pay sufficient attention to the customs of the Tibetans. Young people were being forced to join Government schools. Chinese cadres ignored local customs. The Tibetan cadres were slothful and did not think they were working from the Preparatory Committee. The implication

clearly was that they functioned as agents of the Chinese authorities. There were divergent opinions about the national character of the Committee, he said.¹² Significantly, the Panchen Lama was not present at this function. His pro-China address was read out in his absence.

On all accounts, 1956 marked a change in China's policy towards India. In Tibet the Chinese Communist propaganda became loud in its condemnation of "imperialistic intrigues" after the Dalai Lama's visit to India. Such references earlier had been played down. A Tibetan representative to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in March 1957, Po-pa-la, said that there were "still certain imperialist adventurers trying to plot and instigate dissension between the people and the party and Government." Even then, the Chinese rulers could not run away from the fact that their actions in border areas inhabited by non-Hans had caused concern in Tibet. Bangtayangbi, head of the Commerce and Industry Department in the Preparatory Committee, said at the Political Consultative Conference: "Last year in the Tibetan area of Szechwan province and at Teko and other places on the eastern side of the Chingsha river, during the introduction of the reforms—although the policy of the Central Government cannot be erroneous—the cadres carrying out the policy erred, *and since the reform was badly done, it caused consternation in the whole area, and rich and poor fled to the western side of the river and many fled to Lhasa. That is why the Tibetan people think of the reform with terror and anxiety.*"¹³ (Italics mine)

But when the decision to postpone "reforms" in Tibet was announced on April 22, 1957, the speakers dwelt on the theme of "imperialist intrigues." Gen. Chang Kuo-hua appealed for "constant vigilance against the subversive activities of imperialist elements and the rebellious activities of the separatists." *The Tibet Daily* also called for vigilance against the activities of the "imperialists and the criminal and traitorous activities of the separatists." On the anniversary of Sino-Tibetan Agreement on May 23, 1957, the

¹² *China News Analysis* (Hong Kong), April 3, 1959.

¹³ *The People's Daily* (Peking), March 23, 1957.

Governor said that "imperialist and separatist elements" were the enemy and "undoubtedly these people will go on committing all kinds of destruction and, therefore, unity and vigilance are required and a determined struggle will be carried on against the reactionary forces."¹⁴ This confirmed stories of widespread resistance against the Chinese rule.

The fact that the unrest in Tibet continued to grow was recognised by implication in an article in the *Tibet Daily* on August 1, 1957, by the Political Commissar of the Chinese Army, Tan Kuan-san. He wrote: "The American imperialists are engaged in carrying out subversive activities through some refugees from Tibet. Judging by the reactionary leaflets handed out by the refugees and the series of events which occurred during the past few months, it is apparent that these were political activities in line with the subversive policy of the American imperialists. We must, therefore, greatly heighten our vigilance. If these refugees continue to engage themselves in subversive activities of provocation, our *People's Liberation Army units stationed in Tibet will deal a counter-blow in accordance with the 17-article Agreement for the purpose of safeguarding the fatherland's unification, protecting the interests of the fatherland's Tibetan people and uniting more closely with the masses of people in Tibet.*" (Italics mine)

This was the first public statement recognising that a number of political refugees had fled Tibet and those refugees had found local support for the demand for independence. Indirectly the warning was aimed at India because most of the refugees had taken asylum in this country and lived in Kalimpong and Darjeeling. The charge against "American imperialists" was in the nature of a cover. The cover was worn thin by the threat that the People's Liberation Army would deal counter-blows. The Army could deal blows only at India. These shrieking references to "imperialists" showed that in 1957 itself the situation in Tibet was steadily moving towards a climax.

The Chinese rulers followed a dual policy to cope with the situation. On the one hand, they reduced the number of

¹⁴ *Ibid*, May 24, 1957.

Han Communist cadres and on the other they strengthened the army. They held out threats to the people. Simultaneously they stepped up the propaganda that the "reforms" would not be carried out. The Tibetan cadres were allowed to go home because, to quote a directive published in the *Tibet Daily* on August 2, 1957, being "influenced by the feeling of opposition shown by certain upper level personages, they harbour doubts and wish to leave their posts and go home." It was also indicated that many of the Tibetan cadres would be sent to China for further indoctrination. The directive admitted that "the unreasonable phenomenon of drafting people into schools had appeared in certain localities arousing many complaints from the parents."

Coupled with the warning to "imperialist and subversive elements" came the assurance that "from now on, all affairs of local nature in Tibet should be managed by Tibetans themselves; Han cadres are still responsible for lending assistance but should not monopolise things and do things on behalf of the Tibetans. The CCP Tibet Working Committee and its various branches must strengthen their political and ideological leadership in this respect."

An attempt was made in the directive to justify the drastic changes in the adjoining provinces, particularly in the Tibetan-inhabited part of Szechwan. It said: "Historical conditions in Tibetan nationality areas in other provinces are different from those in Tibet. These Tibetan nationality areas belong to other provinces and autonomy has long been given to these areas where national affairs local in nature should be handled by the local people themselves. The democratic reform in the Tibetan nationality areas in Szechwan province has been conducted according to actual conditions there, as well as the wish of the local people of various circles. . . . People in Tibet should sympathise with the reforms undertaken by the people in those areas, and should neither take conditions in Tibet as basis, nor take the case of Tibet as a precedent for interfering with the democratic reform of the Tibetan nationality areas. . . . But there are some people, who are ignorant of their duty and who secretly support and even direct the rebellious elements in Szechwan

... This is not right and not permissible and will not produce good results." There could not be a more candid confession that the revolts in Szechwan were assuming more and more serious dimensions.

The same issue of *The Tibet Daily* emphasised what had been obvious for months. Having failed to subvert the loyalty of the Tibetan people to their leaders and undermine their will for freedom, the Chinese found it necessary to revert to the basic objective of consolidating their occupation. The paper quoted Gen. Chang Kuo-hua as having told a meeting called by the United Front Department of the Chinese Communist Party's Tibet Working Committee: "According to actual conditions now prevailing in Tibet, one of the main tasks before us was how to further consolidate the anti-imperialist and patriotic strength and struggle against those who assumed an unpatriotic attitude towards our motherland."

On August 8, 1957, *The Tibet Daily* reported that "by the end of July, organs and units under the direct jurisdiction of the CCP Tibetan Working Committee have already transferred and sent away 91.6 per cent of the Han cadres and workers, as well as Tibetan cadres who sought to be transferred or sent away after the readjustment."

The problem of Chinese disregard for Tibetan customs and susceptibilities continued to be reported prominently in official accounts, and in October 1957, Fan Ming, member of the Chinese Communist Party's Tibetan Working Committee, made a comment which showed that, in fact, the problem was becoming worse. He said: "The common characteristic of great Han chauvinism and local nationalism is the failure to realise the importance of equality, unity, mutual aid and co-operation between the various nationalities. . . . Great Han chauvinism in Tibet is manifested in the feeling of superiority of the Han race, repugnance at the backwardness of Tibet, discrimination against Tibet, distortion of Tibet, failure to respect the freedom of religious belief and traditional customs of the Tibetan people, failure to realise that the Tibetan people are hard working, brave and simple, inadequate understanding of the fine qualities

of the Tibetan cadres, and the withholding of due respect and help. In certain work, we do not start from realities and mechanically apply the working experience in the Han areas, and are not good at holding consultations with the Tibetan people and their leaders in doing business.

"Some people only saw that the Han nationality was helping the Tibetan people and that the mother country was helping Tibet, but not that Tibetans were assisting the mother country and that the Tibetan nationality was helping the Han nationality. They mistakenly treated themselves as benefactors, became conceited and arrogant, and cherished the thought of having special privileges. Particularly during the past one or two years, the relaxation of education on the nationalities policy helped the growth of great Han chauvinism among the People's Liberation Army and the working personnel stationed in Tibet. As a result, some cases have occurred where the nationalities policy was impaired, law and discipline were violated, and the freedom of religious belief and the customs of the Tibetan were not respected."

In spite of these assurances and threats, there was no improvement in the situation in Tibet. Apparently, the lack of improvement can be accounted for on two grounds. First, the Tibetan people were determined to be independent of Chinese domination. The more their nationalism was suppressed, the stronger it became. Secondly, the development in neighbouring provinces convinced the Tibetans that their religion and social institutions were in danger of being destroyed. The immigration of lakhs of Hans into the border areas and Tibet promoted the fear that in course of time the personality of Tibet itself would be annihilated. By the beginning of 1958, the situation in Tibet had further deteriorated. The Chinese officials blamed their failure to win over the Tibetan people on the subversive role of imaginary imperialist agents and "handful of reactionaries." The demand for independence had clearly emerged by this time.

The gravity of the situation in Tibet and other minority nationality areas was reflected in the report submitted by

Wang Feng, Deputy Chairman of the Nationality Affairs Commission of the State Council, at its meeting on February 9, 1958. He said: "The imperialists are still employing all means and tricks to spoil relations among the nationalities in our country, in an attempt to create division among the nationalities so as to restore their rule and achieve their aim of enslaving our nationalities. For instance, American and British imperialists have bought up a handful of Tibetan reactionaries to carry out so called 'independent nation' activities; fostered Assa and Imin, who escaped from Kinsiang, as 'Greater Turkistan movement' and instigated Ma Pu-feng, an exile of the Hui nationality to carry out intrigues for the establishment of a 'Taiwan on the mainland' in the Hui region in the Northwest.... The 'independence' activities in Tibet is the prominent example in this respect."¹⁵

By now the Tibetans were openly demanding that the Preparatory Committee be scrapped. On the occasion of its second anniversary, Gen. Chang Kuo-hua himself admitted that the Committee was criticised by the Tibetans for being an "agency of Han nationals." The Panchen Lama, as if to excel even his Chinese overlords, warned against the "treacherous activities of the imperialists and separatists" and threatened that "if such reactionary elements do not repent immediately, they will never be forgiven by the people and will be wrecked by the revolutionary tide." Significantly, the Dalai Lama, in his anniversary address, dissociated himself from the cadres and identified himself with the "broad masses of Tibetans."

The Chinese authorities said after the outbreak of the open revolt in March 1959, that the rebels had come out into the open in May and June 1958. The Local Government was asked to pacify the country. But it would not act against its own people and supporters. In fact they admitted that last year "the rebels were everywhere." In Hei-ho district, for instance, those who collaborated with the Chinese were killed, on the plea that "working for the Communists offends the Buddha." Communist songs were

¹⁵ *The People's Daily* (Peking), February 10, 1958.

prohibited as anti-religious.¹⁶ In some districts the people were forbidden to accept aid from the Chinese. Grain distributed by the Chinese was made over to the rebels in the Shigatse area. The Khampas were "fed and armed by the Local Government." Every family was asked to contribute one man in the struggle.¹⁷

Enough evidence is available from Chinese sources to give an idea of the pressure that was exerted on minority nationalities, including the Tibetans in provinces bordering on Tibet. On August 14, 1958, the *Kwang Ming Jih-pao*, quoted Ulanfu, chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and First Secretary of the regional Party Committee, as having said that 100 per cent of the Lamas of the Houlein temple, 90 per cent of the Wangkai temple and 85 per cent of the Aopaotai temple had joined pastoral co-operatives. He said that the Lamas were indoctrinated and made to do manual work for 260 days in a year. Similarly, *Modern Buddhism* (Peking), announced on August 13, 1958, that 85 per cent of the Lamas of Kan-Chu-erh temple in Inner Mongolia had joined "productive work."

In his report to the third session of the Yunnan Communist Party's Provincial Congress on September 25, 1958, Sun Yu-tung said: "During the past several years, precisely under this basic principle that the essence of the nationalities question is a question of class, we have resolutely led the people of various nationalities in realising land reforms before socialist transformation and various other socialist undertakings, thereby not only rapidly changing the political, economic and cultural conditions of the minority regions, but also gradually eliminating the social origin of local nationalism, elevating the class awareness of the minority peoples, and fundamentally changing the relations of nationalities."¹⁸

An article in the *Nationalities Unity* illustrated how the reforms were carried out in Szechwan. The article said that "some 450,000 people were recruited as members of the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, April 12, 1959.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, May 11 and April 17, 1959.

¹⁸ *Yunnan Jih-pao*, October 11, 1958.

Peasants' Association or Labouring People's Association, and over 170,000 enrolled as members of the armed self-defence guard; more than 80,000 activists emerged; over 10,000 nationality cadres at county and district level were trained; both the Communist Party and the Young Communist League were expanded....*The principal task of democratic reform is to crush the old and corrupt social system....Precisely because of this, the reform must necessarily be a violent, sharp and most complicated class struggle....We must pay constant attention to overcoming the dangerous trend of local nationalism.* For, following the unleashing of the class struggle, the slave owners and feudal lords, who are not willing to die, will always take advantage of certain defects and errors in our work to spread their nationalistic poison under the banner of nationality and religion. As the cadres of minority nationalities are seeped in individualism and localism, they are most likely to be eroded by the enemy and trapped in the mire of nationalism." (Italics mine)

The same paper in its November issue discussed at length the techniques of promoting divisions and conflicts among the Tibetans in Chinghai. It implied that the policy of peaceful reform did not succeed because "the feudalistic class has always been reluctant to perish." Therefore the policy of "wiping out all counter-revolutionary and bad elements" was adopted. The article said that "the great socialist revolution in the pastoral areas has been a very violent class struggle of life and death. After the accusations and expositions of the vast masses, the reactionary essence and ugly features of the feudalistic exploiting class has been fully revealed....After they perceived the reactionary essence of the feudalistic exploiting class, they were greatly surprised, and rose up with set teeth to accuse the exploiting class of their tremendous crimes; and they voluntarily bound up the counter-revolutionary and bad elements and handed them over to the Government asking for punishment." (Italics mine)

It added: "After stripping off the religious overcoat of the counter-revolutionary elements in the religious circles, they exposed their fraud, and the masses said: 'We shall

never permit these men eating wolves to do evil things while riding on the neck of the people with religious banners.' "

(Italics mine). The article claimed that communes had been set up in Hai-hsi (West Chinghai), Hai-pei (North Chinghai), Huang-nan (South of Yellow River) and Hai-nan (South Chinghai) autonomous regions and in two counties each in Yushu and Kolo autonomous regions. The article said: "The experience of the past few months has vividly taught us: *In a class society, the problem of nations, is in essence the problem of classes, without an understanding of this essence, without a life-and-death struggle with the class enemy, without a firm destruction of all feudalistic forces, without firm opposition to all anti-socialist reactionary forces, it would be absolutely impossible to liberate the labouring herdsmen... and to thoroughly solve the problem of nations.*" (Italics mine)

The Tibetans could not miss the meaning of these campaigns. They realised that the Chinese rulers would apply in a more intensified manner the same technique to split them and promote hatred among them with a view to destroying their way of life and religion. As if to leave the Tibetan people in no doubt, the Chinese Communists further stepped up the campaign against monks, monasteries and the Buddhist religion in Tibetan-inhabited regions of Inner Tibet. For instance, in September and October 1958, a campaign developed in Tsinghai and Kansu which had as its obvious purpose the destruction of Buddhism in those areas. Monks and religious leaders were accused of exploiting the masses, of committing practically every crime against humanity and morality, and having "reactionary political connections." Attention was given to "exposing superstitions."

In an article, which appeared in Peking's *Nationalities Unity* of January 6, 1959, Wang Feng, Vice-Chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission, wrote: "In some minority regions where the people believe in Islam or Buddhism, on the basis of mobilising the masses, a struggle has been launched against the system of oppression and exploitation in religion; and important victories have been won. During the struggle, thanks to the exposure of the

harmful nature of the oppression and exploitation system in religion and to the revelations of many religious evil-doers and their evil deeds as well as the scheming activities of some of the counter-revolutionary elements, the level of understanding of the masses has been raised and they have, therefore, raised the positive demand for liberation from religious oppression. As a result of the struggle merciless blows have been dealt to the counter-revolutionaries and wicked elements hidden in the religious circle; religious oppression and exploitation have been abolished.... On this account, the struggle essentially became another liberation of the minority people from feudalism."

A writer, Chou Wei, describing with approval the events of the autumn campaign in the Kanan Tibetan autonomous *chou*, Kansu, said: "During the struggle of reasoning against counter-revolutionaries and wicked elements in the Lama circle, having clearly realised the true face of these people, who seem to be of exceptional virtue and purity of conduct but who are really extremely evil and dissipated, the masses gnashed their teeth in hatred and unanimously refuted their crimes. Those who had suffered from the hands of these evil-doers went up to the platform one after another, accusing these inhuman creatures of bringing suffering to their life; under the influence and pressure of the peasants and herdsmen, the poverty-stricken lamas also stood up, narrated their own pitiful sufferings at the hands of the 'living Buddhas' and unmasked the ugly faces of the 'living Buddhas'."

On March 6, the *Nationalities Unity* (Peking), carried an article by Chu Ching entitled "Communists Are Thorough-Going Atheists." It said: "Some Communist Party members of national minority origin, who by tradition are religious people, appear to entertain certain muddled ideas on the question of religion. They seem to think that religion and Communism are not in opposition to each other or that religion does not wield a corrupting influence over a socialist society. Evidently they are utterly mistaken. For a Communist to be a true Communist fighter, he must be a thorough-going atheist." The article made it clear that the

policy of respect for religious freedom had been accepted as an expedient. It discussed the theory of dialectical materialism to show how it could not be reconciled with religious beliefs. Religious beliefs were described as stumbling blocks in the path of social and economic reconstruction.

We have quoted extensively from the Chinese press to establish beyond doubt that the traditional form of society was being decimated among the Tibetans in Inner Tibet. The extension of this drive into Outer Tibet where the Dalai Lama was still the head was, therefore, only a matter of time. In Outer Tibet the Chinese had since early 1957 kept up a steady campaign against the "schemes and subversive activities of the reactionaries and imperialists." This clearly was a pretext for putting pressure on the Dalai Lama to get rid of most of his advisers and other influential persons so that the path could be cleared for converting Tibet into an "autonomous region" of Chinese Communist definition. Under the pretext of defending the national frontier, the Chinese authorities had greatly strengthened their army in Tibet. The references to "the subversive activities of a small number of reactionaries to deceive the people under the flag of nationalism and emancipation" lent credence to the view that the Tibetan leaders had been driven to a point of desperation and appealed to all members of the United Nations to help them be rid of Chinese oppression.

According to *The Daily Telegraph* (London), of August 12, 1958, the Tibetan exiles in India had on behalf of the Tibetan Government sent a manifesto to all members of the UN, which said that they had suffered "untold agonies" under the Chinese occupation. The manifesto, signed with the seals of six members of the *Chulka Sum*, a rebel organisation, added: "Shall the august world body, which stands for peace and justice in the present world, justify the atrocious actions of Communist China in Tibet, a peace-loving and religious country, while the people are fighting tooth and nail in the struggle for their very existence." The manifesto spoke of the economic distress caused by the immigration of a large number of Chinese into Tibet, and

the removal of thousands of Tibetan children to China for ideological indoctrination and consequent-alienation from their own tradition and people in the name of education. It added that the resources of the monasteries had been seized and monks used as labourers for road construction. Also thousands of monks and lay Tibetans had been starved to death and killed while engaged in the construction of roads. In 1958, the Tibetan exiles in India sent a memorandum to the Indian Prime Minister, Mr Nehru, as well.

Having failed to suppress the revolts by the Khampas, the Chinese brought pressure on the Dalai Lama to exert his authority against them. The pressure increased considerably during the summer of 1958 when thousands of Khampas flocked to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama refused to act against his own people. He did not send the small Tibetan army against them. With the Chinese authorities he took the plea that it was too weak to fight against the Khampas and there was the danger of the army crossing over to their side if it was ordered into action. Frustrated by this attitude of the Dalai Lama, the Chinese prepared to strike at the Khampas assembled in Lhasa. The Khampas anticipated this move and scattered into surrounding districts where they were joined by others from their homelands to the north and the east. Towards the end of 1958 they were reported to be active in Nagchu and Giamda, north-east and east of Lhasa, Yamdrok Lake area to the south bordering Bhutan, and along the north-eastern frontier of India at places such as Tsona, Lhuntze and Chayul.¹⁹

As the winter retreated, the Khampa resistance quickened and reports reaching India suggested that they were in virtual control of the Brahmaputra basin and had liberated all territory between the river and the Bhutan-India border east of Shigatse and Gyantse. The authorities in Lhasa faced a cruel dilemma. To have refused support to the Khampas and moved against them would have meant depriving them of the inspiration to continue resistance in the common struggle for freedom or at least genuine autonomy. To side with them openly would have meant Chinese

¹⁹ *The Statesman*, New Delhi, January 4, 1959.

onslaught. But meanwhile events moved towards a climax in Lhasa leaving the Dalai Lama and his advisers no time or opportunity to make a conscious choice.

According to Gen. Chang Kuo-hua, before March, 1959, "there was a series of anti-Communist incidents, the Local Government and the Tibetan army arrested a Chinese Communist and held him illegally for questioning and trial, more than once the Tibetan armed forces surrounded the Communist offices and bureaus in Lhasa, the reactionaries distributed pamphlets, spread false rumours, and perpetrated all kinds of anti-Communist acts. For the sake of the nation's unity, and in the hope that the Local Government would in time see its error, the Central Government adopted repeatedly an attitude of compromise."²⁰

The Tibetan New Year opened on February 18, 1959. This year as in previous years thousands of devotees poured into Lhasa from all parts of Tibet to receive blessings from the Dalai Lama. Among them were a large number of Khampas. The Chinese were not in a position to prevent their entry. It is, however, quite likely that the Chinese might have welcomed the concentration of the Khampas in one place because that would have enabled them to destroy the Khampas in one fell swoop. At this time, Gen. Chang Kuo-hua, who had 50,000 to 70,000 troops at his disposal, invited the Dalai Lama to visit the military area headquarters on March 10. The news leaked out. The Dalai Lama was not to be accompanied by his guards. This alarmed the Tibetans. This reaction on the part of the Tibetans was not surprising in the prevailing atmosphere of tension and utter lack of trust between the Chinese and the Tibetans. Early in the morning of March 10, more than 20,000 Tibetans demonstrated shouting anti-Chinese slogans. The crowd surged two miles outside the town of Lhasa to the Norbulingka, the Dalai Lama's summer palace, and demanded that he should not go to the military area headquarters.

Feelings ran high and on March 11 more than 5,000 women demonstrated carrying black flags, and shouting anti-Chinese slogans. The people asked the Indian

²⁰ *The People's Daily* (Peking), May 1, 1959.

Consul-General to accompany them to the Chinese authorities because they wanted to present a memorandum to them. They pleaded that he should be present at that time. The Consul-General maintained that he could not do so. This strong reaction among the ordinary Tibetans was a measure of their veneration for the Dalai Lama.

These massive demonstrations synchronised with the deliberations of the Kashag and the Tibetan Assembly in the Dalai Lama's summer palace. The Tibetan leaders could not have been unaware that they had little chance to wage a successful struggle against the overwhelmingly stronger Chinese army. It was in a measure of their desperation that they decided to hurl defiance at this mighty army and to tear up the 1951 Agreement and make a dash towards freedom. The Tibetan Cabinet and National Assembly formally announced that Tibet was an independent and sovereign nation. On March 17 the Dalai Lama and his party secretly left Lhasa to take asylum in India. The falling of three shells inside the palace settled the issue because it was now clear that it was no longer safe for the Dalai Lama to stay in Lhasa. But even otherwise he and his advisers would have been compelled to leave Tibet. That was the irrevocable logic of the decision to make the hopeless bid for freedom. It is significant that in Lhasa fighting broke out only on March 19 when the leaders had already left. Even then the provocation came from the Chinese army. It surrounded the Norbulingka palace and started shelling it.

On March 28, 1959, the Central Government in Peking announced the dissolution of the Local Tibet Government and the appointment of the Panchen Lama as the acting President of the Preparatory Committee, which was now charged with the functions of the Local Government. The announcement must have been made when they no longer hoped to be able to capture the Dalai Lama. It was while announcing this decision on March 28 that the Chinese press gave the first hint of trouble in Tibet.

The magnitude of the Tibetan resistance was reflected in the Chinese statement that (1) "rebellious bandits"

numbered about 20,000; (2) the Tibetan Local army participated in the rebellion; (3) the Tibetans "launched armed attacks against the People's Liberation Army garrisons in Lhasa during the night of March 19"; (4) the Chinese army seized over 4,000 rebels, 8,000 small arms, over 100 heavier weapons and 10 million bullets in the first week of fighting; and (5) the Tibetan Local Government had encouraged and supported the rebellion. Peking named four out of six members of the Kashag (Cabinet) as leaders of the revolt and dismissed 18 members of the Preparatory Committee, and the Chinese Communist army established military control committees all over Tibet.