

CHAPTER V

China's Propaganda War

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the decision to dissolve the Tibetan Local Government on March 28, 1959, Peking launched a propaganda offensive against India. The Dalai Lama and his party had not yet crossed into India. The Government of India had not yet announced its decision to grant them asylum. As late as March 23, 1959, Mr Nehru had referred to Tibet as an internal affair of China. In short, the Government of India had done nothing which could by any stretch of logic be regarded as a provocation by the Chinese authorities. Also, it was only to be expected that Peking should pay heed to the fact that New Delhi had followed the policy of friendship for nearly a decade.

The Chinese rulers had, however, their own reasons to act in the manner they did. They had to explain the rebellion to their own people. They could not own the blame for the failure to win over the Tibetan people and had to shift it to others. With the outbreak of the open revolt in Lhasa, indirect references to "imperialists" did not suffice. The Communist rulers, therefore, put out the propaganda line that a small section of "upper strata" Tibetan reactionaries and the Local Government, had all along colluded with the "imperialists, Chiang Kai-shek bands and foreign reactionaries," to prevent the "unification of Tibet with the motherland." Also there is enough evidence to prove that Peking never trusted India and regarded her as a capitalist country and, therefore, in the final analysis an ally of "imperialism." On the question of Tibet, the rulers in Peking had all along been suspicious of India's *bona fides*.

Thus it was not surprising that the official *New China News Agency* should have issued a press release both in Peking and New Delhi on March 28, 1959, charging that for years Kalimpong has served as "the command centre of the rebellion." It said: "The rebellion was engineered by the imperialists, the Chiang Kai-shek bands and foreign reactionaries, the command centre of the rebellion was in Kalimpong; and the leader was the dismissed *situb* Lokongwa Tsewongrouten. *Many of their arms were brought in from abroad. The rebels' base south of Tasango river on a number of occasions received airdropped supplies from the Chiang Kai-shek bands, and radio stations were set up by agents sent by the imperialists and the Chiang Kai-shek bands to further their intrigues.*" (Italics mine) The references to Chiang Kai-shek and Western "imperialists" in fact did not amount to anything more than a cover for attack on India. It is also likely that India was bracketed with them deliberately to suggest by implication that India worked in secret collaboration with them.

The official communique on March 28, 1959, said that the Tibetan rebels looked to India for support. They calculated that if "we bring a large group of forces to Lhasa from other places to deal them (the Chinese forces) a blow, they will surely run away; if not, we can seize the Dalai Lama, take him to Loka and gather forces for a counter-attack to retake Lhasa; if we fail, we can run to India. India sympathises with us and may help us." The reason why the Chinese rulers thought the Tibetans hoped to mount a counter-attack from Loka on the Indian border was stated later in an editorial of *The People's Daily*, (Peking), on April 25, 1959. It said: "The Loka area was long the haunt of the rebels... these bands of rebels colluded with imperialism and foreign reactionaries... Taking advantage of the fact that the area adjoins foreign countries, they continuously received shipments of arms from abroad and airdropped supplies from foreign planes." The charge was made in the context of another allegation that Indian planes had often violated Chinese territory. The latter charge was made in an official

communication by Peking to New Delhi on January 12, 1959.

The communique sought to bar discussions on Tibet in the Indian Parliament. It said: "On the part of China there has never been interference in the internal affairs of India or discussion of the internal affairs of India at the sessions of the National People's Congress or its Standing Committee. *It considers such discussions of the internal affairs of a friendly country to be impolite and improper.*" (Italics mine) The protest sounds hollow in view of the Chinese support to the Communist parties in various countries, including India.

The charge that Kalimpong was the "command centre of the rebellion" was repudiated by the Government of India on March 29. Its spokesman said that the Tibetan refugees in India had been warned not to conduct any propaganda against China from the Indian soil. The last of these warnings was given six months ago. Also strict watch had been kept on all movements between India and Tibet. It was pointed out that not a single case of arms smuggling had ever been mentioned by the Chinese Government earlier. In previous years the Chinese Government had made some complaints which were investigated. But in spite of this strong repudiation, the charge was repeated by *The People's Daily* (Peking), on March 31, and was immediately taken up by the Communist Party of India, which made it its business to "substantiate" the Chinese charge. *The Peking Daily* said on March 31 that the Tibetan rebels hoped that "India and other neighbouring countries would act as their props."

The allegation about Kalimpong was not an isolated one. It was only the first shot in the propaganda war that was being planned against India. *The People's Daily* (Peking), said editorially on March 30 that the Dalai Lama had been abducted and was being held under duress by the "rebellious elements, *foreign aggressors* and the Chiang Kai-shek reactionary forces." (Italics mine) It demanded that the Government of India should continue to observe the five principles of peaceful co-existence and non-interference, implying thereby that India had been guilty of violating them. This charge was explicitly made by the Chinese

Ambassador in New Delhi in a statement to the Indian Foreign Secretary on May 16, 1959.¹

Thus opened the virulent campaign against Indian leaders, political parties and newspapers and above all against Mr Nehru and his Government. On April 14, 1959, the Panchen Lama repeated the charge that "most of the Kaloons and upper strata reactionary clique of the former Local Tibet Government colluded with imperialists, Chiang Kai-shek bandits and *external reactionary elements*, openly launched an all-out rebellion in Lhasa, abducted the Dalai Lama and openly betrayed the country." (Italics mine) The next day on April 15, the *New China News Agency* charged Indian newspapers and political leaders, particularly those belonging to the Praja Socialist Party and the Jan Sangh, with having distorted facts regarding the rebellion and slandered China.

The Chinese authorities pursued a dual policy in respect of India. On the one hand, they levelled the most serious charges, directly and indirectly, against her, and on the other they professed friendship for her. On the surface they and the Indian Communist Party appeared to make a distinction between "certain reactionary elements" and the Government of India and even between Mr Nehru and his Cabinet colleagues. How thin was the distinction has exposed by the notes Peking sent to New Delhi as published in the White Paper of September 1959. The Chinese rulers also sought to create doubts in the minds of the Indian people and leaders about the correctness of their stand on Tibet by insinuating that the "imperialists" were interested in creating dissensions between India and China.

This dual approach was expounded in an article in the *Jen-min Jih-pao* (Peking), on April 15. It said: "What deserves attention is the fact that while attacking the Chinese people, imperialism is setting its propaganda machine in motion in an open attempt to sow discord in the relations between China and its south-western neighbouring countries, India in particular. It puts out such absurdities as that in

¹ See White Paper issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, on September 6, 1959.

suppressing the rebellion in Tibet, China seemed to be clearing the way for further expansion southward and strategically moving towards India. . . . It is regrettable, however, that recently much has been said in India which was extremely incompatible with the Sino-Indian friendly relations. Some people openly described the suppression of the rebellion by the Chinese people in their own territory of Tibet as 'interference' and 'aggression' against others. It is as if Tibet were not Chinese territory, but a part of India. Some people went even further than that. They brazenly proclaimed that in putting down the rebellion in Tibet, China had 'threatened' the security of India and other nations and called for further reaction by the Government of India."

The article gave a rap on the knuckles of "many Indian friends," who had had the temerity to suggest that Tibet should be allowed autonomy even though within the framework of Chinese sovereignty. It said: "These Indian friends have landed themselves in an indefensible and contradictory position on this issue. Since Tibet is a part of China, the political system of Tibet is naturally the Chinese people's own affair. It cannot be considered appropriate for any outsider to advocate this or that on this issue any more than it is appropriate for any country to make a hue and cry on the policy of the Indian Government in relation to one of Indian States or one of India's national minorities." It added: "*Some Indian friends are particularly sensitive on the question of Kalimpong. This also cannot be considered realistic. It is an open secret that the Tibetan traitors use Kalimpong as their base outside the country to work with imperialist elements and engineer rebellious activities. . . . It is true that the traitors' activities in Kalimpong are sometimes open and sometimes secret. Our Indian friends may not be aware of it. But this does not surely warrant the conclusion that we also are not aware of it.*"² (Italics mine) By implication the Chinese claimed to have a superior and better organised espionage on Indian borders than the

² For China's protest of July 10, 1958 and India's reply of August 2, 1958, see White Paper, pp. 60-3.

Government of India, a claim they had established by scoring on the news of the Dalai Lama crossing into India.

Soon the outburst against India grew both in volume and intensity. Reports of speeches and articles criticising the "imperialists" and foreign "expansionists" appeared in the Chinese press day after day. The charge of expansionism was to be a prelude to Chinese claims to Indian territory which is discussed later. The Chinese rulers did not abandon the pretence of friendly feelings for the "people of India." This dual approach was further emphasised by the Chinese Prime Minister, Mr Chou En-lai, in his address to the Second National People's Congress in Peking on April 18, 1959. He gave the standardised explanation for the rebellion in Tibet and asserted that the Dalai Lama had been abducted to India. Mr Chou En-lai professed friendship for her, but spoke on this subject in a rather bantering and sarcastic manner. He indirectly charged India with having violated the five principles of peaceful co-existence. He repeated the charge regarding Kalimpong.

Even more significant was Mr Chou En-lai's reference to the border question between China and India and Burma. He said: "As is well known, the undetermined boundary line between our country and certain neighbours is the result of the many historical causes, first and foremost, prolonged imperialist aggression. Our country has always stood for a reasonable settlement of this question in accordance with the five principles of peaceful co-existence through peaceful negotiations with the countries concerned." The obvious implication of the statement was that China did not accept the present boundaries with India and Burma because they were the result of "prolonged imperialist aggression" against China. This was a warning, which, unfortunately, the Government of India did not heed.

As Mr Chou En-lai was speaking at the People's Congress in Peking, the Dalai Lama reached Tejpur in Assam (India) and made a statement to the press repudiating the Chinese charge that he was being held under duress. The Dalai Lama emphasised the historical fact that "there has always been a strong desire for independence on the part of the Tibetan

people," and that "throughout history this has been asserted on numerous occasions." Even at times when the Chinese Government succeeded in imposing its will on the Tibetan people, the "latter remained autonomous in control of its internal affairs," the Dalai Lama said. This position, he added, was maintained under the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement. But in violation of the Agreement, the Chinese officials usurped all powers. He then narrated the events leading to the revolt in Lhasa and his escape to India. He thanked the Government and the people of India for their "spontaneous and generous welcome and the asylum granted to him and his followers" and said: "India and Tibet have had religious, cultural and trade links for over a thousand years and for Tibetans it has always been the land of enlightenment, having given birth to Lord Buddha."³ This statement of the Dalai Lama made nonsense of the Chinese propaganda in previous weeks.

To cover their embarrassment, the Chinese rulers attacked it on three counts. First, they said that the fact that the statement "starts with a mention of so-called independence of Tibet proves that its author is reflecting the will of the imperialist aggressors." Secondly, the statement had been made in the third person, which they said, meant that the Dalai Lama was not its author. "This is definitely not Tibetan style of writing, but a European or near European style." Thirdly, an Indian official, who had proceeded to Tezpur to act as a liaison between the Dalai Lama and the large number of reporters assembled there from different parts of the world, distributed the English version of the statement. This act of courtesy on the part of the Indian official was interpreted to mean that the statement itself had been drafted by New Delhi and imposed on the Dalai Lama. In fact, the Chinese made the explicit charge that New Delhi was aware in advance of its contents. General Tan Kuan-san, Political Commissar of the Chinese army in Tibet, said on April 22: "The so-called statement of the Dalai Lama distributed by an Indian diplomatic official reflected the will of the imperialists and Indian

³ *The Times of India*, April 19, 1959.

expansionists instead of the wishes of the Dalai Lama." Implicit in it was the charge that the Dalai Lama had been "abducted" with the connivance and support of the Government of India and that it was holding him under duress in pursuance of its expansionistic ambitions.

At the plenary meetings of the People's Congress towards the end of April, scores of deputies, including the Panchen Lama, condemned "the support given by the imperialists and the Indian expansionists to the Tibetan rebels." The Panchen Lama led the campaign. He said on April 22, 1959: "The tone of the statement is not of the Dalai Lama himself, nor does it conform to our ordinary Tibetan usage. It is obvious that this so-called statement of the Dalai Lama was imposed on him by foreigners." Since no foreigners other than Indian officials had even access to the Dalai Lama before the statement was made on April 18, the implication clearly was that the Government of India had compelled him to make it. The Panchen Lama added: "It is worth noting that the reactionaries in India, treading the path of British imperialists, have *always* harboured expansionist ambitions towards Tibet and have carried out various forms of sabotage which undoubtedly benefit the imperialists and are unfavourable to the friendship between China and India."⁴ (*Italics mine*) The Tibetan collaborator, Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme, spoke in a similar refrain.

Lin Chi-Shen, chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, was even more explicit. He said on April 22: "If the rebellion has no connection with the Indian expansionists, why are certain Indian political figures so sympathetic with the traitorous crimes of the Tibetan reactionary clique? Why has it been possible for Kalimpong, for a long time, to be the centre of activities of these rebels abroad? Why is it that the so-called 'Dalai Lama's statement' was distributed by an Indian diplomatic official?" He added that the "expansionists in India have become feverish. They have regarded China's attitude in giving top consideration to Sino-Indian friendship in the

⁴ *Concerning the Question of Tibet, Peking, 1959.*

past few days as a sign of weakness that can be taken advantage of. They practically want to turn Tibet into an Indian colony or protectorate."⁵ Still another Deputy, Huang Yen-Pei, Chairman of the China Democratic National Construction Association, asked: "Is it possible that Indian official quarters had no beforehand knowledge of such a political document, which openly attacks our Government?" He said the rebels had fled to India where they were accorded "hospitality and enthusiastic welcome" and where they raised an "outcry for so-called independence." He added: "Now they can even distribute an absurd document through Indian official channels" and asked, "Can one find anything in all these happenings that is in accord with the five principles of peaceful co-existence?"⁶

The *New China News Agency* reported on April 23 that 41 deputies and members of National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference gave a warning to the Indian expansionists. "Their plot to realise their ambition of expansion through the Tibetan rebellion will never be accomplished," they said. Shirob Jaltso, Chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association, said that "the Indian expansionists made use of the Tibetan rebellion, created a commotion and made a shameless show of cheap and hypocritical tears over their own allegation that Buddhism was ruined in Tibet and put on an act of being heart-broken as if their parents had died. *If the expansionist do not alter their course, not only their expansionist dreams will never come true, but they will bring the wolves into their own house.*" (Italics mine) According to the *New China News Agency*, Cheng Chien, Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, condemned the imperialists and Indian expansionists for pulling strings behind the armed rebellion in Tibet. He "jeered at the Indian expansionists for allowing their eyes to be blinded by a tree-leaf so that they could not see things in their true light."

Liu Ning-yi, Chinese trade union chief, told the Congress on April 24: "The Indian expansionists, heir to the British imperialists, have come out openly in support of the rebellion.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

It is proof that they have ulterior motives about Tibet." Similarly Tan Kan-keo, another Deputy, said on that day: "During the past few years, some aggressive elements in India have been steadily instigating the reactionaries of Tibetan upper strata to betray the motherland. These reactionaries include not only the imperialists and the Chiang Kai-shek elements, but also certain Indians. *They pretend to be honourable gentlemen and speak nicely about not wanting to interfere in China's internal affairs. But after all, the so-called statement of the Dalai Lama was distributed to the public through Indian diplomatic officials. We cannot but be incensed at such acts.*" (Italics mine)

The same day the *New China News Agency* quoted Mao Tun, Minister for Culture, as having said that the Dalai Lama's statement "exposed most fully the ugly features of the authors and of the expansionists, who have inherited the legacy of the old branch of imperialism." On April 25, General Fu Chung "warned the foreign expansionists and imperialists that any scheme to invade China's territory of Tibet would be crushed." The Agency quoted Ulanfu, one of China's Vice-Premiers, as having said on April 25 that the Indians wanted to convert Tibet into their colony or protectorate. He added: "We warn the Indian expansionists, who have taken over the ignominious legacy of British imperialism towards Tibet: Please be more clear headed. Do not lift a rock that will crush your own feet." The Panchen Lama on April 29 excelled his previous performances. He said that the Government of India had discriminated against his entourage during his and the Dalai Lama's visit to this country in 1956.

Up to April 27 the Chinese authorities did not produce any proof to substantiate their charge that Kalimpong had served as the commanding centre of the rebellion in Tibet. They had contented themselves with reproducing an article which the official organ of the Communist Party of India, the *New Age*, published on April 5 alleging that Indian officials had been deeply involved with the Tibetan rebels. The *New Age* had said that Mr George Patterson to whom the Communist weekly assigned an active role in the rebellion

was on the friendliest terms with Mr Appa Pant, Indian Political Officer in Sikkim, Tsering, "one of the high ups in the Central Intelligence branch, now posted at Gangtok, as also other officials holding important posts." It added that "Shakabpa and Thondup are also close friends of this circle of officials." Thondup is the Dalai Lama's brother and Shakabpa a Tibet official who had earlier taken asylum in India. The *New Age* had asserted that this tie-up between the Indian officials and Tibetan rebels was not the result of a "new policy." It recalled that the request of Mr Lowell Thomas, a US citizen, to visit Lhasa was forwarded from India and that at Yatung he was the guest of the Indian trade agent. Mr Thomas was repeatedly named as a dangerous American spy by the Chinese. The *New Age* regarded these acts of courtesy as positive proofs that India had interfered in the affairs of Tibet since 1949 when the Communists came into power in China. They had not yet moved into Tibet. This article annoyed the Indian Prime Minister so much that at his press conference on April 5, 1959, he said that the Communists were not Indians.

On April 27 the Chinese Government produced what it described as a proof of India's complicity in the rebellion. The Chinese papers published "Documents Captured by the Chinese People's Liberation Army from the Rebel Command in Tibet." An article in *The People's Daily* on April 29 claimed that these documents fully confirmed the charge of the Panchen Lama that "the reactionaries in India, walking in the footsteps of the British imperialists, have always harboured expansionist ambitions towards Tibet and have carried out various forms of sabotage activities." The documents in question were two messages believed to have been sent to Shagob-ba in Kalimpong from Lhasa. The first message read:

Kalimpong, Shagob-ba to be forwarded to the Society for the Cause of Tibetan welfare:

Independent State of Tibet already established on the first day of second month, Tibetan calendar. Please announce

this to all. Please go to Gangtok to receive telephone call on March 18.

(Signed)

*Tibetan Independence Conference
7th day of Second Month.
Tibetan calendar.*

The second message dated March 17 read :

Kalimpong, Shagob-ba Tzepon to be forwarded to the Society for the cause of Tibetan Welfare stationed in India :

Recently on the 1st day of Second Month, Tibetan calendar, all Tibetans, high and low, clerics and laymen, unanimous in their will, already declared standing up from under power of red Communist Party of Hans and establishment of independent State. Should make propaganda about this in your place. Han Government already preparing for large-scale suppression in areas surrounding Lhasa. This being likely, to avoid swallowing of weak by the strong, please report to Government of neighbouring country, India, Buddhist Conference, United Nations; send delegates here immediately to inspect real situation. Also please find ways to wire Indian representative in Lhasa who should know situation before hand. In short, better seek support by some means. Please carry on with all efforts in spirit of past knowledge of situation. Also please send inside information.

(Signed)

*Plenary Meeting of the People's Conference of Independent State of Tibet
8th day of Second Month, Tibetan Calendar.*

These were two of the four documents which the Chinese army claimed to have seized from the rebel command in Tibet. The other two documents were said to establish that the Dalai Lama was held under duress and deprived of freedom

of movement between March 10 and March 17 when he was finally "abducted" by the rebels to India. The authenticity and authorship of these documents, has yet to be established. But even if we do not challenge their authenticity, they do not, by any stretch of logic, establish that the "Indian expansionists" were behind the rebellion or that Kalimpong was its command base. These documents do not even suggest that the decision to declare Tibet an independent nation was made on the receipt of secret instructions from India. The messages were described as telegrams in the *Peking Review* fortnightly of May 5, 1959. It was not explained how the Tibetans could send out such telegrams or establish telephonic communication with a rebel in Kalimpong from Lhasa. Since 1954 both these services have been managed by the Chinese authorities.

II

The Chinese Communists did not confine their attack to Indian opposition parties, like the Praja Socialist Party, the Socialist Party and the Jana Sangh and the newspapers. They openly attacked the ruling party, the Indian National Congress, its President, Mrs Indira Gandhi, and Mr Nehru's other Congress colleagues. At the same time, the Communist Party of India, loyal ally of the Chinese in this campaign, and the Chinese rulers sought to create the impression that they did not regard the Prime Minister, Mr Nehru, as being personally guilty of harbouring expansionist ambitions. The impression was highly superficial. In fact in the case of Mr Nehru, the date of attack was shifted back to March 1947, when the first ever Asian conference was organised in New Delhi.

It is well known that Mr Nehru was the moving spirit behind the conference. The British Government had then decided to quit India and Mr Nehru was the Vice-Chairman of the Interim Government. The conference was conceived as part of India's efforts to bring together different countries of Asia so that the cause of freedom could be promoted in this part of the world. The leaders of the Indian freedom

movement, Mr Nehru foremost among them, had always regarded the British rule in this country as the corner-stone of imperialist domination in all Asia. Now that India was about to achieve independence, her leaders felt morally obliged to lend support to other nations in their struggle for freedom. But the Chinese Communists viewed the conference as part of the British design to "enslave Tibet." After years of protestations of friendship, they have not changed their view of this conference.

An article, which appeared in *The People's Daily* (Peking), in two instalments on April 25 and 26, said: "In March 1947, the Asian conference was convened by Britain in New Delhi, India, to which Tibet was invited as a 'country.' As a part of the imperialist plot, the 'Snow Mountains and Lions,' the religious pennant of Tibetan Buddhism, was displayed at the conference as the 'national flag' of Tibet among the flags of other Asian countries. The more shameless act was that on a map of Asia displayed at the conference, Tibet was drawn outside the boundaries of China in an attempt to make the 'Independence' of Tibet an accomplished fact."

In 1948 a Tibetan trade mission visited New Delhi to discuss with the Government of India commercial matters such as the relaxation of Indian control of Tibetan exports of wool and musk. The mission then went to Nanking and then visited Great Britain and the US and returned to New Delhi towards the end of 1948. The article quoted above alleged that "the reactionary elements in Tibet organised the trade mission at the dictation of the imperialists."

The Peking daily claimed that the People's Liberation Army was ordered to march into Tibet in October 1950, "to clear the situation there and to drive the imperialist forces out of Tibet at an early date." In 1950 only small Indian and Nepalese contingents were posted in Tibet to provide protection to Indian and Nepalese traders. This statement was followed by an even more astounding charge that "handful of reactionaries in the Tibetan ruling clique headed by the Regent, Tagcha, in collusion with imperialists and foreign expansionists, abducted the 14th Dalai Lama

to Yatung from where they planned to take him to India." (Italics mine) The paper contended that the scheme failed and the Dalai Lama decided to open negotiations with the People's Republic of China under the pressure of the three major monasteries, the broad masses of the Tibetan people and many *Kanpos* and *Kaloons*, who were close to him. If that were so, one is left to guess the identity of the "Tibetan reactionaries."

The Chinese rulers contended that even after 1951, Indians nursed the ambition to get the 17-point Agreement scrapped and promote an armed rebellion to "detach Tibet from the motherland and turn it into a colony." The article cited above said: "The Indian expansionists inherited the shameful legacy of the British imperialists' aggression against Tibet. They encouraged the Tibetan reactionary clique to carry out their criminal activities in betraying the motherland....*The Tibet Local Government priding itself on the backing of the imperialists, the sympathy and support of the Indian expansionists and arms airdropped by the Chiang Kai-shek gang, became more and more arrogant and finally launched all-out rebellion on March 10 this year in Lhasa.*" (Italics mine) It added that the rebellion "is a fresh plot laid by the imperialists and foreign expansionists with the aim of invading the Tibetan region....*The centre from where the rebellion is directed is in Kalimpong.*" (Italics mine) Since private individuals and parties, however influential cannot invade other countries, the charge of expansionism was clearly aimed at the Government of India. The subsequent charges regarding Indian "aggression" reinforce this view.

The paper poured ridicule on the official Indian and Mr Nehru's view that Tibet should be allowed to enjoy fullest autonomy within the People's Republic of China. It argued that Tibet's autonomy was not a pre-requisite of China's sovereignty over her. "Since Tibet is part of China, then autonomy for Tibet is only China's internal affair. How can it be a pre-requisite and restriction of China's sovereignty over Tibet?" It referred to the conflict between the British Government in India and Tibet in 1888 and added that this resulted "in the seizure of Sikkim." The

warning was clear enough. One day the Chinese Communists could claim Sikkim to be part of China on the plea that it was seized from Tibet, an integral part of China, by the British imperialists.

Another article in *The People's Daily* (Peking), said on April 29: "It is well-known to all that the traitors, who abducted the Dalai Lama and betrayed their own country, have received an unusually warm reception and welcome in India, while some Indian statesmen and newspapers have been extensively instigating the Tibetans to demand independence, and showing sympathy with the rebels; *all these were not only not discouraged by the Indian Government, but on the contrary were practically openly encouraged and supported by it.*" (Italics mine)

The *Ta Kung-pao* published on April 24 an article which was even explicit in its criticism of the Government of India. It said that the Indian expansionists were "anxious to embark on a new scheme of intervention in China's internal affairs by using the Dalai Lama, now being held under duress." It said that the so-called "statement of the Dalai Lama," distributed by an Indian official in Tezpur on April 18, had many loopholes. There was reason to suspect that it was imposed on the Dalai Lama. An exposition of these loopholes "has thrown into a panic the author of this statement, who issued another in the name of the Dalai Lama on April 22 with the purpose of proving that the Tezpur statement was from the Dalai Lama himself." The article added: "Since the Dalai Lama is being held under duress and a strict security cordon has been thrown around his Mussoorie residence, anything can be done in his name. To switch from a statement in the third person to a statement in the first person and from distribution of the statement by an Indian official to that by a Tibetan rebel is nothing but a poor and clumsy trick, which only accentuates the obvious after the truth is out."

After his meeting with the Dalai Lama in Mussoorie on April 24, Mr Nehru suggested that a conference should be held between the Dalai Lama and a high power representative of Peking. He invited the Panchen Lama to visit India

and talk it over with the Dalai Lama. The Chinese were greatly enraged at these suggestions of Mr Nehru. They adopted the circuitous route to get at him by denouncing the newspapers which had only endorsed this suggestion. Mr Nehru spoke of India's "spiritual links" with Tibet and of India being "emotionally concerned with developments in Tibet." The Chinese did not like even these factual references. On this account also they took him to task. The article in the *Ta Kung-pao* of April 24 quoted earlier said that "the Indian expansionists have, it was said, so-called 'spiritual links' with Tibet and are 'emotionally concerned' over developments in Tibet. This is strange logic indeed. There are acknowledged principles governing international relations. No one can find any grounds in international relations that interference in another country's internal affairs can be carried out by being 'emotionally concerned' in the affairs of that country. The use of 'spiritual links' and 'emotional concern' as a pretext for interfering in the domestic affairs of a country can only lead to the disruption of friendship and unity."

In another veiled reference to Mr Nehru, the article said: "certain Indian politicians alleged that the rebellion of the reactionaries among the upper social strata in Tibet was 'an expression of Tibetan patriotic sentiments.' This correctly serves as strong proof that their sentiments are identical with those of the rebels in Tibet. But to which country are these rebels patriotic? To China or to India? The fact that the handful of rebels, who fled to India, were accorded warm welcome and pompous reception, precisely proves the 'links' and 'sentiments' between them and the Indian expansionists. After the Dalai Lama's abduction to India, an Indian Government official went out of his way to distribute personally the so-called statement of the Dalai Lama defaming the Chinese Government and clamouring for Tibet's independence. Obviously, this is essentially what the Indian expansionists are seeking under the pretext of the so-called 'links' and 'concern'."

On April 26, *The People's Daily* (Peking), devoted an entire page to readers' letters under the banner headline

of "Indian Expansionists, Heed the Warnings of the Chinese People." Many of these letters dealt with a demonstration in Bombay in which tomatoes were thrown at a picture of Mao Tse-tung, which was not an unusual phenomenon. One of these letters said: "The insult to our leader by a handful of Indian 'demonstrators' is a serious political provocation. More serious still, 80 of the 'demonstrators' were members of the Praja Socialist Party which holds seats in the Indian Parliament. The demonstration was an organised political action. *It is intolerable that the Indian police worked hand in glove with the demonstrators.*" (Italics mine) Another letter said: "We demand that the Indian Government stop all interference in our domestic affairs and punish the reactionaries, who insulted our leader, and give assurance that there will be no recurrence of such incidents."⁷ The demonstration was organised by the Socialist Party and not the PSP. The police had removed the poster.

A commentator in the *Ta Kung-pao* on May 1 described Mr Nehru's statement in Parliament of April 27 as an act of interference in China's internal affairs. Asserting that Tibet was an inalienable part of China, the article said: "It is indeed regrettable that the Indian Prime Minister seemed to feel that he does not have to respect that unimpeachable position of the Chinese people and *so once again he talked in a way that interfered in the internal affairs of China.*" (Italics mine) The commentator quoted Mr Nehru's statement that "to say that a number of 'upper strata' reactionaries in Tibet were solely responsible for this [rebellion] appears to be an extraordinary simplification of the complicated situation." According to Mr Nehru the basis of the revolt must have been a strong feeling of nationalism. The commentator added: "*Obviously, Prime Minister Nehru tried to cover up with the flag of 'nationalism' the heinous crimes committed by a handful of Tibetan rebels, who betrayed their own country in collaboration with foreign forces.*" (Italics mine) He added: "There are in all 1.2 million Tibetan

⁷ On April 27, China officially protested to India. The language of the note was unrestrained and threatening. For text and India's reply, see the White Paper, pp. 70-1.

people and the number of rebels is only 20,000. Of these 20,000, the great majority were forced to join the rebellion. Only a handful of inhuman and ultra-reactionary big serf owners have persisted in joining foreign forces from within and engage in high treason. Now Prime Minister Nehru arbitrarily mixes this handful of traitors and rebels together with the broad masses of Tibetan people, who love their country. Why? *There is perfect reason to believe that in doing so, Prime Minister Nehru tries to shield the disgraceful activities of certain Indian political circles.*" (Italics mine)

The commentator challenged Mr Nehru's statement that India's reaction to developments in Tibet was not essentially political. He added: "The fact is that prior to the outbreak of the rebellion in the Chinese territory of Tibet, a town within the Indian territory was used as a commanding centre for the rebellion and Indian newspapers foretold accurately the outbreak of the rebellion, and the date of the Dalai Lama's abduction into India. Following the outbreak and putting down of the rebellion, the Indian expansionists and the reactionary press at once unleashed a general offensive to smear China. May we ask, is all this not politics?"

"Certain Indian political circles and publications unscrupulously denied China's sovereignty over Tibet, most vociferously called for the 'independence of Tibet' and termed Tibet as a 'country.' Even Prime Minister Nehru himself said that 'Tibetans are not Chinese.' May we ask, is all this not politics? The Tibetan rebels abducted the Dalai Lama to India and *the Indian expansionists use the Dalai Lama as a hostage to blackmail China in an attempt to force her to renounce her sovereignty over the Tibet region. Is this not politics?*" (Italics mine)

The commentator said that the "Indian expansionists do not sympathise with the Tibetan people for sentimental or humanitarian reasons. They sympathise with the handful of rebels and even support them to the utmost because of their own expansionist ambitions. *This naturally is of a strongly class and political character.*" (Italics mine) The italicised last sentence was particularly significant because

it indicated return to the 1949 line that as a "capitalist state," India could not help being expansionistic.

The Chinese Communists were greatly chagrined at Mr Nehru's references to considerations of India's security in the context of developments in Tibet. It could no longer be contended that the talk of security was an imperialist device to create dissensions between India and China. Thus it was necessary to take up cudgels against Mr Nehru himself. The commentary in *Ta Kung-pao* quoted earlier said: "It gives one the impression that he [Mr Nehru] believes that the exercise by the Chinese Government of its sovereignty in quelling the rebellion on its own territory would threaten India's security. . . . The putting down of the rebellion in Tibet opens the way for prosperity and progress. How can this constitute a threat to India's security? Is it a crime for China to be strong and united? Must China remain weak and divided so that India's security is not affected? Must China's territory of Tibet be kept away from the motherland and its dark and backward social system preserved in order to conform with the desires of India? *To say so is, of course, to parrot the arguments of imperialism.* It should not be the position of Prime Minister Nehru." (Italics mine)

The Chinese rulers themselves were not averse to talking of security on the question of Tibet. In fact, the whole campaign against India was based on the theme of national security. On April 25, *The Peking Daily* (Peking), said editorially: "*At present our troops are in control of the wide area south of the Tsangpo river and north of the Himalayan mountains and of all key frontier outposts for national defence in this area. . . . The great victory of the suppression of the rebels in the Loka area is a mortal blow to the Tibetan clique of traitors. It is also a heavy blow to imperialism and the foreign expansionists. The victory not only greatly strengthens the cause of national unity and solidarity among the nationalities, but also further strengthens our national defence in the south-western part of our country and protects the integrity of our territory and sovereignty. With the People's Liberation Army stationed in the key frontier outposts of*

national defence, imperialism and foreign reactionaries will no longer be able, as they did before, to send agents and spies freely, to smuggle arms and ammunition, cross and recross our frontiers and carry out aggressive activities. . . . This, of course, is a very fine thing for the security of China." (Italics mine)

On May 6, *The People's Daily* (Peking), published a statement in reply to a speech by Mr Nehru on April 27. Mr Nehru had expressed the view that there existed "mental and emotional barriers" between the Chinese and the Tibetans and that the revolt was not the handiwork of a small number of "upper strata reactionaries" but was the result of a "strong feeling of nationalism." He had added that the "strong and widespread reaction in India" was not the creation of the Government. "This reaction was not essentially political. It was largely one of sympathy based on sentiment and humanitarian reasons; also on a certain feeling of kinship with the Tibetan people derived from long-established religious and cultural contacts," Mr Nehru said.

The Peking daily painted a distorted and terrifying picture of the Tibetan society and its rulers in an attempt to repudiate Mr Nehru's views. It ignored the fact that the Chinese Government had signed the 1951 agreement with the Local Tibetan Government guaranteeing it freedom from interference and thus the right to perpetuate the "reactionary, dark, cruel and barbarous serf system." Even in subsequent years, the Chinese authorities claimed that they had respected the autonomy of Tibet, thus conceding that they had not regarded it necessary to end the system.

The article repeated the charge that men like Mr Nehru sympathised not with the Tibetan people "but those who for generations oppressed, exploited and slaughtered the Tibetan people, those chiefs of the cannibalistic system in Tibet." It said that Mr Nehru had allowed himself to be "pushed into an important role in the so-called sympathy-with-Tibet movement." It is not surprising that the article in *The People's Daily* quoted the same paras as the Yudin article from Mr Nehru's autobiography to prove that earlier

he had held "progressive views." It then added: "But what a different tune he was piping in his statement on April 27, 1959. Either he has completely cast away the views he once expressed, *or else he really did not understand the scientific Marxist methods which he had thought he understood.* Now he blames us for not having been able to convert the privileged ruling class in Tibet into forsaking power and giving up its privileges, and tries to write off at one stroke the class analysis of Tibetan society as 'worn-out words, phrases and slogans.' Moreover, he described the two extremely antagonistic classes of serfs and serf-owners as a single society 'fearful of what might be done to it in the name of reform.' Of course, we find it impossible to agree with this attempt of Nehru's. *The class antagonism in Tibetan society is a living fact.* It is by no means a matter of word, phrases or slogans, to say nothing of their being worn-out." (Italics mine)

Rejecting Mr Nehru's claim that India had never interfered in the affairs of Tibet, the article said: "Interference by one country in the internal affairs of another may take diverse forms. To say that the Indian Government in the past and at present has not interfered in China's Tibet in any way does not sound convincing." It then referred, as the Chinese press and leaders had done earlier, to India's notes to China at the time of the invasion of Tibet in 1950 in support of this charge of interference. Indirectly, it repeated the charge that the Tibetan delegation at that time had been held in India and was allowed to proceed to China only after the People's Liberation Army had smashed the Tibetan resistance at Chamdo. "It may not be pleasant to recall this episode. However, facts are facts. How can it be said that the Indian Government has never interfered in Tibet?" It added: "Unfortunately such interference still continues in certain forms." It characterised Mr Nehru's own statements as acts of such interference. It called into question the propriety of the welcome extended to the Dalai Lama and Mr Nehru's meeting with him. It was because Mr Nehru had not followed a clear-cut policy that the campaign for Tibet's freedom had been built in India in which

the Congress and its leaders, including the President, Mrs Indira Gandhi, had participated, it contended.

The article held out the threat that China might foment trouble in India. It said that once Tibet was fully consolidated, a "people's committee to support Assam" or a "committee for Uttar Pradesh" could be set up to "interfere in India's States of Assam or Uttar Pradesh under the pretext of ancient religious and cultural links. Could not the Government of the Autonomous Region of Tibet or the Government of China as a whole declare deep sympathy with the people of Assam or Uttar Pradesh as a basic policy and in pursuance of such a policy find fault with this and that in the affairs of these states?"

Not to miss the opportunity to discuss the ideological aspect, the Editorial Board said: "Interference in China's internal affairs by certain political figures in India is not fortuitous. It bears the sign of the times. . . *the Indian big bourgeoisie maintains innumerable links with imperialism and is, to a certain extent, dependent on foreign capital. Moreover, by its class nature, the big bourgeoisie has a certain urge for outward expansion.* That is why. . . it more or less reflects, consciously or unconsciously, certain influences of imperialist policy of intervention. For historical reasons, India's big bourgeoisie has inherited and is attempting to maintain a certain legacy from the British colonialist rulers." (Italics mine)

The article said in conclusion: "At present, it seems that the slander campaign against us in certain foreign lands is already ebbing, and reason is getting the upper hand; but there are still a tiny number of people trying to continue fanning the flames. We can tell these people plainly: 'so long as you do not end your anti-Chinese slander campaign, we will not cease hitting back. We are prepared to expend as much time on this as you want to. We are prepared too, if you should incite other countries to beleaguer us. We are also prepared to find all the imperialists in the world backing you up in clamour'."

Ten days later on May 16, the Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi made a statement to the Foreign Secretary,⁸

⁸ *Ibid*, 1959, pp. 73, 74, 75 and 76.

in which he said that since the outbreak of the rebellion "there have appeared deplorable abnormalities in the relations between India and China. The situation was caused by the Indian side." The Chinese Ambassador proceeded to repeat the charges of interference, support to the Tibetan rebels and slandering of China and added: "Groups of ruffians were allowed to make provocations and disturbances in front of the Chinese Embassy and Consulates-General in India." He charged: "These words and deeds were in the nature of serious interference in China's internal affairs and sabotage of Sino-Indian friendship." He added that "responsible members of the Indian Government, though they could not possibly be better acquainted with the situation in Tibet than the Chinese Government openly expressed doubts about documents published by China officially, refused to accept the Chinese Government's account of the facts, and asserted that the basis of the rebellion in Tibet 'must have been a strong feeling of nationalism' and that the upper strata reactionaries in Tibet were not solely responsible for the rebellion. They even charged that agreement between Tibet and China on the autonomous status of Tibet and the assurances given to India had not been kept by the Chinese Government, and described the Chinese Government's putting down the rebellion in Tibet as 'armed intervention' and as oppressing and suppressing the Tibetan people." He repeated the charges regarding the Dalai Lama's statements, the welcome granted to him and Mr Nehru's meeting with him. "All these statements and actions of the Indian Government, no matter what the subjective intentions might be, undoubtedly played an objective role of encouraging the Tibetan rebels."

He added: "On the whole, India is a friend of China, this has been so in the past thousand and more years, and we believe will certainly continue to be so in one thousand, ten thousand years to come. The enemy of the Chinese people lies in the East—the US imperialists have many military bases in Taiwan, in south Korea, Japan and in the Philippines which are all directed against China. China's main attention and policy of struggle are directed

to the east, to the west Pacific region, to the vicious and aggressive US imperialism, and not to India or any other country in the south-east Asia and south Asia. Although the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan have joined the SEATO which is designed to oppose China, we have not treated those three countries as our principal enemy; our principal enemy is US imperialism. India has not taken part in the South-East Asia Treaty, it is not an opponent but a friend to our country. *China will not be so foolish as to antagonise the United States in the east and again to antagonise India in the west.* The putting down of the rebellion and the carrying out of democratic reforms in Tibet will not in the least endanger India. You can wait and see. As the Chinese proverb goes 'the strength of a horse is borne out by the distance travelled, and the heart of a person is seen with the lapse of time.' You will ultimately see whether relations between the Tibet region of China and India are friendly or hostile by watching three, five, ten, twenty, a hundred . . . years.

"We cannot have two centres of attention, nor can we take friend for foe. This is our state policy. *The quarrel between our two countries in the past few years, particularly in the last three months, is but an interlude in the course of thousands upon thousands of years of friendship between the two countries and does not warrant a big fuss on the part of the broad masses and the Government authorities of our countries.*

"The principles, positions and distinctions between right and wrong as set forth in the foregoing paragraphs have to be set forth; otherwise the current difference between our countries cannot be resolved. But so far as the extent of the implication of those words is concerned, it is only temporary and local; that is to say, they refer only to a temporary difference between our two countries and concern solely the region of Tibet.

"Our Indian friends! What is your mind? Will you be agreeing to our thinking regarding the view that China can only concentrate its main attention eastward of China, but not south-westward of China, nor is it necessary for it

to do so. Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the leader of our country, talked on many occasions with Mr R. K. Nehru, former Indian Ambassador to China, who could well understand and appreciate it. We do not know whether the former Indian Ambassador conveyed this to the Indian authorities. Friends! *It seems to us that you too cannot have two fronts. Is it not so? If it is, here then lies the meeting point of our two sides. Will you please think it over?*" (Italics mine)

The language was highly intemperate. The purpose clearly was to intimidate India. But the more significant point was the unambiguous statement that the Chinese rulers could put India in her place if only they were not required to meet the American challenge. It also showed that the charges of expansionism and interference were all along aimed at Mr Nehru and the Government of India and not the opposition parties.

CHAPTER VI

Ideology Behind the Offensive

BY AND LARGE, the people in India were taken by surprise by the outbreak of the rebellion in Tibet. It is doubtful if even the Government of India was prepared for this development. In any event, there was no manifestation that the Indian Government anticipated Tibet's determined bid for independence. The officially directed Chinese propaganda offensive against India was even a greater surprise and shock for the common people, who had been led to believe that China genuinely subscribed to the five principles of peaceful co-existence and that her professions of friendship could be taken at their face value. This was more a measure of our political innocence than that of the cleverness of the Chinese Communist rulers. The latter had provided enough clues to their plans in Asia, including India.

On the surface, the Chinese were not averse to appearing to be friendly with India after their open and direct involvement in the Korean war. But there was no, and there could not be any, change of heart in Peking. The Chinese rulers could not be expected to give up their faith in Communism, in its superiority over all other social, economic and political systems and the inevitability of its triumphing over rival ideologies. It was also unthinkable that they would not be aware of the fact that in all Asia, India alone could be a rival centre of attraction for smaller countries. Similarly, they were bound to be resentful of the survival of Indian influence in Tibet, particularly in view of the fact that the Tibetan people had not been subdued. The efforts that the Chinese authorities made to eliminate Indian traders from Tibet and the harassment to which they and pilgrims from

India were exposed have been described in detail in the Government's white papers and need not be recounted here. Above all, they could not escape the irreversible logic of the totalitarian system that it either expands or bursts. In order to consolidate their rule at home, they had to extend their influence abroad. In such a programme of expansionism, India was bound to be regarded as a major obstacle.

The situation in the minds of Indian leaders was, however, put out of focus because of the emergence of the US as an Asian power. For Peking, America was the main enemy because she alone had the physical resources to meet the Chinese challenge in the Far East and South Asia. Peking's first policy objective, therefore, had to be to isolate America. Peking won considerable success in the direction of isolating America in Asia during the Korean war itself. Stories of brutal bombings by the US planes and ill-advised pronouncements by General Douglas MacArthur and other US military leaders subserved Communist objectives. Also the Chinese at one point nearly succeeded in throwing out the UN army into the sea. This victory of an Asian power against the world's strongest power was welcomed by many in Asia, including India, because they still thought of political developments in racial and anti-Western terms. The successes of the Chinese-supported Viet Minh in Indo-China helped China to strike the pose of a great power. During this period, China was able successfully to cover her adventurism and expansions behind the facade of anti-imperialism.

Normally India should have viewed with dismay the rise of China as a major world power. But her reaction was influenced greatly by the erroneous view that the Communist revolution in China was part of the nationalist upsurge in all Asia. Many Indians, Mr Nehru included, had a sneaking sympathy with a regime which was able to hurl defiance at the West. An element of anti-Americanism was implicit in the Indian attitude. Some of the top leaders shared the Communist view that America was an imperialist power, though of a different kind from European imperialist powers. Subsequently the fact of US entering into a military alliance

with Pakistan in 1953 and sponsoring the formation of SEATO in 1954 coloured India's outlook and influenced her policies in favour of the Communist powers generally. India had the additional compulsion to seek Russia's favours in view of the general Western support to Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

In 1953, the ruling party, the Indian National Congress, itself carried on a virulent campaign against US-Pakistan military alliance and Mr Nehru himself set the pace rather fast. In the context of estranged relations with Pakistan, in alliance with America, it appeared inevitable that even greater importance should be attached to winning China's friendship. The Sino-Indian Agreement of April 28, 1954, was signed in this background. In June 1954, Mr Chou En-lai visited New Delhi. In October the same year Mr Nehru returned the visit. Thus the era of "peaceful co-existence" and "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" (Indians and Chinese are brothers) was launched.

But up to 1954 the Chinese Communists continued to tell their own people that India was not fully independent and was still a colony. For instance the *Jen-min Jih-pao* (Peking), carried an article on May 22, 1953, which said: "Obviously a country not economically independent cannot be considered an industrialised country. Stalin has given the example of India, where there was general industrial development, but which could not be considered industrialised. India has many industrial undertakings; industry continues to be developed there, but only such enterprises which do not produce capital goods, and such capital goods as are needed are imported from Britain. Accordingly India's industry is totally subservient to Britain's industry. . . . *India's economy is still colonial economy, and not industrialised economy.*" (Italics mine)

The same argument was repeated in the section of India in a *Handbook on World Affairs* published in Peking in 1954. After the Partition in 1947, it said, "British influence on Indian politics has superficially given the appearance of being a thing of the past. But in reality, the British rulers have made use of their concessions to retain and even

increase their wealth pillaged from India. Feudalism and landlordism were still powerful in India and vagrants made up 40 per cent of the total agricultural population." The situation was getting worse, not better, it said.

Indian residents in China fared badly under the new dispensation. According to a letter to the editor in *The Times of India*, Bombay, October 30, 1954: "Indian firms in China, especially in Canton and Shanghai, numbering about 130 (some did business for a hundred years or more) had to close on the entry of the Communists. Business difficulties were so great that Indian merchants were happy to leave by selling their business at miserable prices."

After Mr Chou En-lai's visit to New Delhi and Mr Nehru's visit to Peking, this kind of insidious attacks on India ceased. But this did not mean that truly friendly relations had been established between the two countries. In Tibet, word-of-mouth propaganda against India continued. Also as we are now aware, border incursions began to occur soon after the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement under which India acknowledged Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. After the Bandung conference the Chinese felt emboldened to pursue their objectives in a more forthright manner. In 1956, China administered to India a series of shocks.

First, the Chinese Government intervened in the internal affairs of Burma by financing the thinly disguised Communist front organisation, the United National Front, at the time of the General Elections in April 1956. The then Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu and U Ba Swe, made an explicit charge to this effect.¹ Subsequently Chinese troops marched into the Wa states on the plea that the border between the two countries had never been defined and demarcated. This naturally caused concern in New Delhi because the Chinese rulers regarded the Sino-Indian border also as not having been properly defined and demarcated. They had already published maps showing more than 60,000 sq. miles of Indian territory within the frontiers of China. The Burmese press wrote critically on the question

¹ For a detailed discussion, see this writer's *Chinese Panchsheela in Burma*, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1956.

of officially sponsored mass illegal immigration of Chinese nationals into their country.² The new immigrants found the resources to set up business houses in Burma. These Chinese businessmen displaced mostly the Indians in Burma.

Secondly, in October 1956, China concluded with Nepal an aid agreement. The Nepalese Government was then headed by Acharya Tanka Prasad who has been consistently anti-Indian in his sentiments and policy. In 1951-52, he had headed an anti-Indian united front with the Communist Party. Its major plank was to promote anti-Indian sentiment in Nepal. Under the aid agreement, which aroused deep misgivings in India, China agreed to give to Nepal economic assistance amounting to six crores of rupees in three years. This meant that China had decided to make a dramatic entry into an area, which her leaders had acknowledged at the time of Nehru's visit to Peking in October 1954, fell within India's legitimate sphere of influence.³

Thirdly, in October-November 1956, the Chinese Government fully endorsed Russia's massive armed intervention in Hungary in utter disregard for the susceptibilities of the peoples of Asia. Mr Chou En-lai himself visited Asian countries, including India, to persuade their leaders to accept the Sino-Soviet line that the rebellion in Hungary had been engineered by the imperialists and that but for the Soviet intervention a Fascist regime would have been established in Hungary. This line on the part of the Chinese Prime Minister disillusioned many in India and compelled them to realise that the concept of peaceful co-existence meant one thing to them and quite another to the Communists.

Fourthly, during this 1956-57 visit to India, Mr Chou En-lai found time to visit Nepal where Mr Tanka Prasad, no friend of India, was still the Prime Minister. The significance of Mr Chou En-lai's speeches there and the joint communique issued by him and Mr Tanka Prasad has been discussed by this writer in his book *India Meets China in*

² *Ibid.*

³ For a detailed discussion see this writer's *India Meets China in Nepal*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1959.

Nepal. Here it would suffice to say that this open display of Chinese interest in Nepal, key to India's defence in the north, was not welcome in New Delhi, even though it was still under the illusion of having friendly relations with China. Mr Chou En-lai made oblique references to Indian personnel who had been loaned to the Nepalese Government to man the check-posts on the Sino-Nepalese border. He spoke of blood ties between the Nepalese and the Chinese even though no such ties existed. He insinuated that Nepal's freedom was in danger of being encroached upon by India.⁴

Fifthly, during his travel in India and Nepal, Mr Chou En-lai was repeatedly asked to define his Government's policy on the issue of the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir. Mr Chou En-lai was, unlike the Soviet leaders, non-committal. This lent some indirect confirmation to unconfirmed reports then prevalent in New Delhi that the Chinese rulers were not wholly averse to the idea of having a deal with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. It was then said in New Delhi that since Ladakh was once a part of the Tibetan empire, the Chinese Government would at some stage lay claim to it. The fact of the Ladakhis having religious, social, economic and ethnical ties with the Tibetans was an additional attraction for the Chinese rulers. A part of Ladakh figured in the Chinese maps. It is now known that they had occupied in 1956 itself over 5,000 square miles of territory in Ladakh.

Finally, at about the same time Mr Nehru and his close foreign policy advisers had a unique opportunity to learn first hand from the Dalai Lama how the Chinese authorities had violated the 1951 Agreement with Tibet and attempted to colonise it with the Hans. The Dalai Lama has now confirmed that he had despaired of persuading the Chinese authorities to respect the autonomy of Tibet and decided not to return to Lhasa. It was only when Mr Nehru conveyed to him the assurance of Mr Chou En-lai that the Tibetan people's right to autonomy and religious freedom would be fully respected that the Dalai Lama agreed to return to Lhasa. Though Mr Nehru was thus able to escape a major

⁴ *Ibid.*

embarrassment in his relations with the Chinese, there is little evidence to prove that he and his advisers were wholly reassured about the situation in Tibet by the Chinese Prime Minister's promise to honour the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement. Mr Nehru was to personally visit Lhasa in August 1958, to see for himself whether the assurance to him was being implemented. He was prevented from doing so by the Chinese. Mr Nehru could not be unaware of the campaign that the Chinese authorities had launched in Tibet against India in 1957 itself.

In 1957 and 1958 the Chinese leadership conducted a ruthless drive against the leaders of the so-called democratic parties, "rightists and revisionists" and the intellectuals as a class. This campaign of rectification was followed by the formation of communes all over the country in the face of strong opposition from the peasants. Peking had thus returned to the tough Stalinist line of eliminating all forms of resistance. In international relations it was reflected in the renewed campaign against Tito and subsequent attempts to extend their influence abroad. Some of the well informed commentators concluded that China was staking out her claim to the ideological, if not the physical, leadership of the Communist movement. India had reasons to be alarmed at these developments. But what is even more significant, China could not have had much use for neutralist India's friendship in the context of the adoption of the tough Stalinist line. The trouble in Tibet provided an additional argument to the Chinese to be cold towards India.

China's suspicions against India must have been strengthened when the West responded favourably to India's plea for economic assistance on a bigger scale than so far. An indication that the Communist powers were having second thoughts on India was available from the columns of the *New Age* weekly, which said on September 7, 1958, that India's foreign policy was undergoing a change in favour of the West. A strong confirmation of this indication was available in December 1958, when the *World Marxist Review*, a monthly publication of international Communism, successor to the *For a Lasting Peace, for People's Democracy*,

carried an article entitled "Reply to Jawaharlal Nehru's 'The Basic Approach'." The article was written by Mr Yudin, then Russian Ambassador in Peking. Mr Yudin, it may be recalled, was one of the secretaries of both the Comintern and the Cominform.

There was general agreement among the students of international Communism that the publication of the article was a significant event, though it was debatable whether it reflected the thinking of Moscow or Peking or both. This writer regards it highly probable that the initiative that such an article be written and published came from Peking. We take this view for a variety of reasons. First, it reflected the tough line that Peking was already adopting towards neutralist powers in general and India in particular. Secondly, the article was written at a time when the propaganda drive against "foreign reactionaries and the imperialists" was moving towards a climax in Tibet. Thirdly, as in 1950, the Chinese path was once again recommended to the Indian people in their struggle for "emancipation" in this article. Fourthly, the achievements of China were described in glowing terms and contrasted with the "slow rate of development" in India, which incidentally, is far from being true. Finally, the article proved to be forerunner of China's Hate India campaign in 1959.

Mr Yudin opened his attack on Mr Nehru in an apparently academic vein. Mr Nehru was accused of giving up the "historical approach" to problems in favour of "such an abstract way that he cannot but arrive at subjectivism and erroneous conclusions." Mr Yudin proceeded to pour ridicule on Mr Nehru's view that the cause of the present crisis in the world was the lag between man's moral and spiritual progress and the scientific and technological advance. He expressed the traditional Communist view that the present crisis was rooted in the "nature of capitalism, which wants to use science for inhuman purposes."

The academician Ambassador expressed annoyance at Mr Nehru's statement that Communism came in the wake of disillusionment with religion because such a view did not accord with the Marxist teleology that the "replacement

of capitalism by Communism is a historical inevitability and it occurs as the outcome of hard and long struggle by the working people for their emancipation."

Mr Yudin took special exception to Mr Nehru's view that Communism failed, in spite of its apparent success, "because of its rigidity, and even more so because it ignores certain needs of human nature" and that there existed "contradictions in the rigid framework of Communism itself. Its suppression of individual freedom brings about powerful reactions.... Its unfortunate association with violence encourages certain evil tendency in human beings.... Means distorted ends." Mr Yudin retorted: "*These statements repeat what western propaganda says about socialism.*" (Italics mine) This was a polite way of suggesting that Mr Nehru was tending to go over to the side of the imperialists. The charge tallied with the Chinese propaganda line in Tibet.

From this point onwards, the criticism became sharp. Mr Yudin held that the State was essentially an organ of repression, exerting "compulsion over a certain category of people." The important point was against whom and against what class the State used its organs of repression, he said, adding that in socialist countries the State used violence against the "enemies of the people" and "agents of imperialism." In capitalist States, on the other hand, violence was used against the working class. "*In India the bourgeoisie and the landlords use the State machine as an instrument of violence against the people, the workers and peasants in the first place.* The way 'democracy' and 'freedom' are practised in some of the States [in India] is a matter for astonishment; the Government organs display marvels of ingenuity in the use of violence against opposition parties and undesirable individuals. In the matter of violence against the people, the Indian State bodies are no different from those in any other bourgeois State." (Italics mine)

Mr Yudin ridiculed Mr Nehru's references to freedom and democracy. He said that democracy and freedom could not be achieved under capitalism which was based on "oppression and violence by the bourgeoisie over the workers

and all working people." He described freedom of speech under capitalism as a "sheer mockery," for it "is a class privilege of those in power and their parties." He added: "Talk about individual freedom under capitalism is either deliberate fraud or illusion." India, he added, had not "yet got rid of economic dependence on foreign monopolies," and had not "done away with feudalism."

The Soviet Ambassador cited instances in support of his charge that in India the State used violence against the workers. He said that "numerous arrests have been made of political figures—Communist and non-communist—active in progressive organisations. To this day an ultra-reactionary law on preventive detention operates in India The facts of reprisals against workers in . . . industrial centres are fairly well known. Every year charges are brought against thousand of workers and peasants and large numbers are arrested in different parts of the country. Mass killings . . . of workers in privately owned plantations in Darjeeling, etc. testify to a systematic and fairly wide use of violence in India's political life." The reference to Darjeeling, a border town, was significant.

Referring to Mr Nehru's concept of socialism as something distinct from Communism, Mr Yudin said that it had "very little likeness to real socialism." In fact, "It is difficult to say what really Mr Nehru means by socialism. For Mr Nehru, Marxist socialism is Communism, and he attributes to it two factors: violence and lack of individual freedom. Thus he separates socialism from Communism, and then, in effect, vilifies Communism by comparing it with Fascism."

Mr Yudin contended that the Congress under the leadership of Mr Nehru had not found a way to end India's poverty. "India is still faced with the task of winning full freedom from the economic fetters of colonialism." In fact, according to him, the fetters were being strengthened because India was receiving loans and grants from the West. Mr Yudin did not stop there. He drew a political conclusion and said: "*It follows from what has been said that the question of India's economic independence, her freedom from imperialist influence, is an acute one, and it will have to be solved if the*

Indian National Congress intends to pursue a consistent policy of making the country independent of the former colonialists. Here, too, the need for struggle can be foreseen, since the method of persuasion will hardly help where the foreign monopolists are concerned." (Italics mine)

This was a key paragraph in the article. To spell out its implications briefly, it meant that India was following two sets of policies; a relatively progressive foreign policy of supporting the cause of peace and a wholly reactionary policy at home. Her foreign policy was also not consistent. India had to make concessions to "Western imperialism" because of her economic dependence. This had been the Indian Communist Party's thesis for years. Mr Yudin made the significant point that the question of resolving this contradiction in India's foreign policy had become "acute" and India would drift towards, if not into, the "Western imperialist camp" if it was not resolved.

In his effort to prove that India had not emerged from feudalism, Mr Yudin distorted facts. He made it appear as if land reforms had not been introduced at all since independence. What was worse, he said that the ruling party in India had "taken the way of large-scale farming based on capitalist estates and big farms." This view is totally false. He painted a terrible picture of the Indian peasantry. He prescribed for India the Chinese method for eliminating feudalism and foreign monopolies. He praised China's achievements, though he could not be unaware that Peking's claims were highly exaggerated. Also he did not mention the price the Chinese people had paid for the much advertised accelerated pace of economic development. The article was written when the Chinese had not scrapped the "Leap Forward" programme. They did so in August 1959.

Mr Yudin indirectly asked the Indian Communists to be ready even for civil conflict and civil war, if necessary, in future. For, he said: "The alternative is either a radical reform (land) to be implemented from the top, that is, on the initiative of the Government, or an even more radical reform to be realised from below, by the people.... As soon as India starts to implement her land reform, the feudal

lords and the big landowners will offer increasing resistance, they will use violence against the peasants to retain the land in their hands. The Government, if it takes the side of the peasants and not of the feudal lords, will then inevitably have to resort to compulsion against the latter....*If struggle against reaction is necessary, it should be kept in mind that the choice of means, whether peaceful or non-peaceful, violent or non-violent, hardly ever depends on the progressive forces. A situation may arise when these forces will be unable to refrain from the use of violence unless they choose to give up the fight altogether.*" (Italics mine) It is difficult to miss the implications of this statement.

To sum up, Mr Yudin expressed the view that India was a feudal country which continued to be dominated by the imperialists and foreign monopolists. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mr Nehru had failed to eliminate feudalism and the hold of foreign monopolists. In fact, this hold had been strengthened in the post-independence period. Mr Nehru's talk of socialism, democracy and individual freedom was fraudulent. In practice the Indian State under the Prime Ministership of Mr Nehru served as an instrument of oppression against the common people, the working class and progressive organisations. The people had thus to be emancipated.

This was the Sino-Soviet view of Mr Nehru and his Government before the rebellion broke out in Tibet. The article in question was not written in the heat of the moment. Mr Nehru's notes on "basic approach" had appeared in the *AICC Economic Review* in its issue of August 15, 1958. The reply by Mr Yudin appeared four months later. In view of India's and Mr Nehru's importance in the Sino-Soviet plan of penetrating Asia and isolating the West in the region, the reply must have been discussed at the highest level before it was decided to publish it. Events in Tibet were moving towards a climax when the article was published.

For want of space, it is not possible to quote equally extensively from the pre-1954 writings in the Soviet press and publications to show that Mr Yudin's article followed closely the same line of argument. Before 1954, the Soviet

view, as reflected in these writings, was that India was an Anglo-American colony under the grip of foreign monopolies and local feudal lords and capitalists and that the state apparatus was used to oppress the starving millions. The Chinese Communists apparently shared this view. The Sino-Soviet basic characterisation of the Indian State did not change after 1954, even though China and Russia adopted different tactics in dealing with India. In 1959, for obvious reasons, it was China's turn to conduct the anti-Indian campaign.

The fulminations against India in the Chinese press quoted in the previous chapter showed that while willing to praise those facets of Mr Nehru's foreign policy which suited their over-all objective, the Communists still regarded the Indian society a feudalist-capitalist one. There could, therefore, be no basis for long-term understanding between India and the Communist world.

CHAPTER VII

Absence of a Policy in India

INDIA'S inability and unwillingness to help Tibet preserve her independence in 1950-51 marked a turning point in India's foreign policy. The compulsions of the attempt to mediate in Korea and Indo-China pushed India further in the direction of winning China's goodwill, at all cost. The 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement regarding Tibet was the logical conclusion.¹ As noted earlier, China's professions of friendship, never sincere, began to wear thin towards the end of 1956. This caused some people in New Delhi to take a fresh look at the policy towards China. There were fleeting and vague indications to this effect in 1957 and 1958. But the leaders and the officials remained tight-lipped and the Communist Party of India and its front organisations continued to spread the erroneous impression that on the issues of war and peace and colonialism and freedom, there was complete identity of views between the Governments of the Soviet bloc, including China, and the Government of India. The success of China in the tasks of economic reconstruction was exaggerated and magnified out of all proportions by a host of official delegations. On the whole the picture remained confused.

In this context, the sharp and spontaneous reaction in India to the brutal suppression of Tibet's struggle for freedom was indeed remarkable. The people brushed aside the question of the legality or otherwise of the Chinese claim of sovereignty over Tibet as irrelevant. Deeply stirred by

¹ For discussion of the consequences of the agreement, see the author's *India Meets China in Nepal*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

the Tibetan people's desperate struggle for independence and their colossal sacrifices, the people did not wait for a lead from the Government or even the Prime Minister, Mr Nehru. In fact Mr Nehru and other Government spokesmen were compelled to take note of the upsurge of popular feeling and emotion on this issue and adapt their attitude and pronouncements accordingly. It would appear that in spite of the intensive and extensive pro-China campaigns for nearly five years, the Indian intelligentsia had retained a measure of capacity for scepticism and critical approach, particularly on the fundamental issue of freedom.

Mr Nehru still hedged, which was inevitable. It was neither possible nor proper for him suddenly to reverse his policy. He clearly saw the imperative necessity to move away from the previous position. But he was still a prisoner of the past. This dual and contradictory approach was reflected in his brief speech in Parliament on March 23, 1959. On the one hand, he described the situation in Tibet as "difficult and delicate" and said: "We have no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of China with whom we have friendly relations." On the other hand, he emphasised: "*There is a long tradition of cultural ties between India and the Tibet region of China.* In this region lie many places of pilgrimage which are considered holy by both Hindus and Buddhists and large numbers of our people visit them every year. The Dalai Lama, whom we had the honour and pleasure of receiving in our country in 1956-57, is held in high veneration by our people and we hope he is safe. We earnestly trust that the present troubles will be resolved peacefully." (Italics mine)

In spite of the conciliatory gesture from Mr Nehru, Peking made the charge on March 28 that Kalimpong was the commanding centre of the rebellion. This was a grave affront and provocation. Meanwhile reports poured in of mass massacres in and around Lhasa by the Chinese troops. The tempo of public feeling in India rose sharply. It was reflected in the speeches of Indian leaders and writings in the press.

The consensus of opinion in the country was that the Chinese Communist rulers had not respected the 1951

Sino-Tibetan Agreement. They had systematically attempted to subvert the Local Tibet Government and the power of the Dalai Lama and the monasteries to prepare the ground for the communisation of the land and its colonisation by Hans. The people in India had nothing but admiration for the manner in which the Tibetan people had stood up against enslavement and tyranny. There was a widespread demand that the Government of India should not stretch the concept of non-interference in the "internal affairs of China" to such a point that it was reduced to the position of a helpless spectator to the tragedy in Tibet and consequent threat to its own frontiers.

"Tibet is dead. Much else could die with Tibet if we do not even now heed the warning. There falls the shadow of China in the lands all around us. It is a dark shadow for our influence. After Tibet they are bound to ask if there was wisdom in our counsel. It is a fair question and we shall not retain many friends by shrinking from the answer. We need a realistic reassessment of the basis of our foreign policy," warned *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), in an editorial on March 30, 1959.²

By now Mr Nehru had moved a little from his previous position. On March 30, 1959, he made a statement in Parliament. His main defence of the Government's policy in 1950-51 was that it was not within India's power to have done anything to help Tibet. "In the circumstances, we could do nothing," he said. Similarly, regarding the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement he said: "All I can say is that we had to recognise Chinese sovereignty over Tibet." Also he took this opportunity to disclose that in 1956, the Chinese Prime Minister, Mr Chou En-lai, had given him an assurance that Tibet's right of autonomy would be respected. "I said that if this was fully acted upon and was well known to Tibetans, the difficulties would be much less. I remember difficulties had arisen already three years ago."³

² *The Dalai Lama and India*, Hind Book House, New Delhi, 1959. The compilation contains numerous such articles from papers all over India.

³ *Ibid.*

The Prime Minister referred to the Khampa revolt, the trouble in and around Lhasa, the inability of the Indian Consul-General to report on the developments even in Lhasa because he was unable to move out and the damage to old monasteries and valuable manuscripts. He repudiated the Chinese charge of Kalimpong being the commanding centre of the rebellion. Mr Nehru still dodged the question of granting asylum to Tibetan refugees, though there was no doubt that he would do so. On the question of surrender of privileges in Tibet by India under the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954, he said that India would have done so whether the Chinese had moved into Tibet or not. Independent India did not desire to claim extra-territorial rights or maintain her troops on foreign soil.⁴

The Chinese Communists stepped up the campaign against India. This provoked a storm of protests in India. In Parliament on April 1, 1959, the Home Minister, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, and the Deputy Foreign Minister, Mrs Lakshmi Menon, gave expression to the mood of the House and the country and strongly repudiated the Chinese charges. But surprisingly enough, Mr Nehru poured cold water on the feelings of the House the next day on April 2, 1959. His statement, in fact, constituted an indirect repudiation of his two colleagues, the Home Minister and the Deputy Foreign Minister. He said that Kalimpong was an international espionage centre where people of all shades of opinion, and different nationalities operated. The over-all impression was that the Prime Minister was still labouring under the illusory hope that he could salvage the policy of friendship with China.

This policy of over-caution on the part of the Prime Minister notwithstanding, the political scene in India had undergone a sea change. Outside the Communist Party and its supporters, there was unanimity in the country that the Chinese had been guilty of the most brutal aggression in Tibet and that the destruction of the autonomy of Tibet and the concentration of Chinese troops posed a major threat to India's security. The initiative no longer lay with

⁴ *Ibid.*

Mr Nehru. He was being overtaken by events, which were imposing on him a course of action different from the one he had pursued so far.

On March 31, 1959, the Dalai Lama crossed into India with about 80 men. He was received in accordance with instructions from New Delhi by the Assistant Political Officer of the Tawang sub-division of the North-East Frontier Agency. The arrival of the Dalai Lama on the Indian soil was an event of the highest significance; it was no longer possible for Indians to obliterate the memory of Tibet.

On April 5, 1959, Mr Nehru addressed a press conference when the outlines of India's policy emerged more clearly than before. Mr Nehru said that the Dalai Lama was not expected to function politically in India. He was careful enough to add that since the Dalai Lama was greatly revered in India, "it is not our intention to put what might be called undesirable curbs on him." The Prime Minister made the public statement that India was "obviously concerned and interested" in the political developments in Tibet. Its importance was not wholly detracted by the fact that once again, the same old plea of non-interference in the internal affairs of Tibet was advanced as an alibi for lack of action. The more significant point was that Mr Nehru showed awareness of, and appreciation for, the change in the mood of the people. "Members of every group, every party in the Lok Sabha, except the Communist Party, were vastly exercised over this question," he said, adding that Tibet was deeply rooted in national sentiment and over-rode party considerations.

While emphasising the desirability of maintaining friendly relations with China, Mr Nehru said that this policy was conditioned always by the necessity of "guarding and protecting the interests of India and the larger causes that we hold dear." In this context, he emphasised once again that "Tibet affects some deep chords in our hearts. Tibet, culturally speaking, is an off-shoot of India, that is to say, of Buddhism. Buddha is the greatest Indian that ever lived and we still in India are under the umbrella of this feeling

for the Buddha. Tibet, of course, is far more so and there is this tremendous bond."

Mr Nehru reaffirmed that "McMahon Line was India's frontier. There was no question of going back into history because that would not settle anything. By the same token, you might go back a little when Asoka governed the whole of Central Asia and China governed at one time or another Burma and Indo-China and Tibet at one time governed a bit of China."⁵

Finally, Mr Nehru defined the considerations that would guide India's policy in respect of China. "We have to keep the various factors in view, the major factor being, of course, our own security. After all, every Government's first duty is to protect its country in every way. The second factor is our desire to have and continue to have friendly relations with China. The third factor is our strong feeling about developments in Tibet. Now, sometimes there is a certain contradiction in these. That is inevitable. One has, therefore, insofar as one can, to balance, adjust and sometimes to make difficult choices."⁶

The border issue between India and China had come to the forefront by now. In his letter on January. . . , 1959, Mr Chou En-lai had indicated his Government's unwillingness to accept either the McMahon Line or the rest of the Indo-Tibetan frontier. Mr Nehru had reiterated India's position in his reply to the Chinese Prime Minister on March 22, 1959. As such, Mr Nehru could not help being aware of the new threat to his country's territorial integrity. The people were, however, ignorant of the exchanges between the two Prime Ministers on the border issue. The first White Paper containing these and other documents was published by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, only in September.

On April 25, Mr Nehru met the Dalai Lama in Mussoorie. Meanwhile a large number of Tibetan refugees had crossed into India and been granted asylum. Mr Nehru reported these developments to Parliament on April 27. Since the Chinese authorities took the greatest exception to this statement, it deserves to be quoted at some length.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

Mr Nehru refuted the Chinese charges that the Tezpur statement had been imposed on the Dalai Lama, that he had been abducted to India and that he was being held under duress. He characterised the Chinese charges as irresponsible. "Our officers had nothing to do with the drafting or preparation of these statements," he said, adding that "the Dalai Lama entered India entirely of his own volition. At no time had we suggested that he should come to India.... His entry with a large party in a remote corner of our country created special problems of transport, organisation and security. We deputed an officer to meet the Dalai Lama and his party at Bomdila and to escort them to Mussoorie.... There was no desire on our part to put any undue restrictions on him, but in the special circumstances, certain arrangements had necessarily to be made to prevent any mishap."⁷ He added that the developments in Tibet were serious which might have far-reaching consequences. "*Tragedy has been and is being enacted in Tibet, passions have been let loose, charges made and language used which cannot but worsen the situation and our relations with our northern neighbour.... All I can say is that I have been greatly distressed at the tone of the comments and the charges made against India by responsible people in China. They have used the language of cold war regardless of truth and propriety.... The charges made against India are so fantastic that I find it difficult to deal with them.*" (Italics mine)

Asserting that the Dalai Lama was not, and could not be kept under duress and India had no intention to do so, Mr Nehru said: "In any event, this matter can be easily cleared. It is open to the Dalai Lama at any time to go back to Tibet or wherever he wants to. As the Panchen Lama has made himself responsible specially for some strange statements, I have stated that we would welcome him to come to India and meet the Dalai Lama himself.... I have further said that the Chinese Ambassador or any other emissary of the Chinese Government can come to India for this purpose and meet the Dalai Lama. There is no barrier for anyone to come peacefully to India, and

⁷ *Ibid.*

whether we agree with him or not, we shall treat him with courtesy due to a guest."

Mr Nehru spoke sharply about the Chinese charge of expansionism. He once again emphasised that independent India did not wish to retain extra-territorial rights in Tibet. "But in the early days after Independence and partition, our hands were full . . . and we had to face very difficult situations in our own country. We ignored, if I may say so, Tibet. Not being able to find a suitable person to act as our representative at Lhasa, we allowed for some time the existing British representative to continue at Lhasa. Later an Indian took his place."

Mr Nehru referred briefly to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and said: "We laid down the five principles of the 'Panch Sheela' and placed our relationship with the Tibet region on a new footing. What we were anxious about was to preserve the traditional connections between India and Tibet in regard to pilgrim traffic and trade. Our action in this matter and whatever we have done subsequently in regard to Tibet is proof enough of our policy and that India had no political or ulterior ambitions in Tibet.... Ever since then we have endeavoured not only to act up to the agreement we made, but to cultivate the friendship of the Chinese State and people."

Mr Nehru again listed the three broad considerations governing India's policy. He said: "That policy we shall continue to follow, because we think that is a correct policy, not only for the present but even more so for the future. It would be a tragedy if the two great countries of Asia, India and China, which have been peaceful neighbours for ages past, should develop feelings of hostility against each other. We for our part, will follow this policy, but we hope that China also will do likewise and that nothing will be said or done which endangers the friendly relations of the two countries, which are so important from the wider point of view of the peace of Asia and the world. The five principles have laid down, *inter alia*, mutual respect for each other. Such mutual respect is gravely impaired, if unfounded charges are made and the language of cold war used."

Mr Nehru spoke rather sharply on the Chinese charge regarding Kalimpong: "To imagine or to say that a small group of persons sitting in Kalimpong organised a major upheaval in Tibet seems to me to make a large draft on imagination and to slur over obvious facts.... The Khampa revolt started in an area of China proper adjoining Tibet, more than three years ago. Is Kalimpong supposed to be responsible for that? This revolt gradually spread and, no doubt, created a powerful impression on the minds of large numbers of Tibetans, who had kept away from the revolt. Fears and apprehensions about their future gripped their minds and the nationalist upsurge swayed their feelings. Their fears may have been unjustified, but surely they [their existence] cannot be denied. Such feelings can only be dealt with adequately by gentler methods than warfare."

The Prime Minister recalled the assurance that Mr Chou En-lai had given in respect of Tibet's autonomy and the role that he himself had played in persuading the Dalai Lama to accept the assurance on its face value. He indicated that the Dalai Lama was not opposed to socio-economic reforms in Tibet. "It is not for us to say how far these friendly intentions and approaches materialised. The circumstances were undoubtedly difficult," he said.

Mr Nehru referred to what the Dalai Lama told him "of the difficulties he had to face; of the growing resentment of his people at the conditions existing there and how he sought to restrain them; of his feelings that the religion of the Buddha, which was more to him than life itself, was being endangered." Mr Nehru quoted the Dalai Lama as having said that up to the last moment he did not wish to leave Lhasa. It was only on the afternoon of March 17 when, according to him, some shells were fired at his palace and fell in a pond near by that the sudden decision was taken to leave Lhasa.⁸

Apparently the statement did not suit the Chinese Communists, though there was little that an impartial observer could take exception to. On the evidence provided by Peking itself there did exist a wide gulf between the

⁸ *Ibid.*

Chinese and the Tibetans. The Chinese themselves admitted that Tibet had been treated as colony and the people pushed about, which the Tibetans resented. If anything, the statement, in spite of the tough language, was unsatisfactory from both the Tibetan and Indian points of view. It did not enunciate a policy in respect of Tibet. In fact, it indicated that the Government of India had decided to accept the complete destruction of not only Tibetan autonomy but of her distinct personality itself as a *fait accompli*.

On May 4, 1959, Mr Nehru, in the course of his reply to a debate on the situation in Tibet in the Rajya Sabha, disclosed that the Chinese rulers distrusted New Delhi to such an extent that they were not prepared to accept its version on even such a small matter as a demonstration in Bombay. Instead they depended on the information obtained "through certain intelligence agents they may have at Kalimpong or elsewhere." In this address, the Prime Minister defended his adherence to the concept of "Panch Sheela" and rejected Pakistan's offer of joint defence. But he was constrained to admit that the faith of the people in "Panch Sheela" or the Bandung spirit had suffered considerably. He showed awareness that Peking and its supporters had exploited these concepts to further their aggressive designs.

Mr Nehru asserted that the Indian Government was within its sovereign rights to grant asylum to the Dalai Lama, his party and thousands of refugees who followed. Also in view of the popular sentiment it was inconceivable that the Government of India could have acted otherwise.

Once again, Mr Nehru repudiated the charge of Kalimpong being the commanding centre of the rebellion. He was aggrieved at the new Chinese charge that the commanding centre had shifted to Mussoorie. He said more in sorrow than in anger: "I know words have lost their meaning and I find it very difficult to deal with these charges. And why has the commanding centre gone to Mussoorie? Because the Dalai Lama is there and because the brother of the Dalai Lama, who normally lives in Darjeeling, I think went to see him, and after seeing him went back to Darjeeling

or Kalimpong. These are very serious charges against a country's leaders being made irresponsibly in this way by the leaders of a people whom we have not only honoured and respected but whom we have considered particularly advanced in culture and politeness and the gentler art of civilisation."⁹

Mr Nehru again detailed the circumstances in which the Dalai Lama and other Tibetans sought and were given asylum in India and said: "And now we are called expansionists and imperialists and what not . . . coming from those whom we consider friends, they do hurt us. They go back now to what had happened in 1950, that is, to some memoranda that we had sent, when Chinese armies were entering Tibet. Very polite memoranda they were. The answers were not very polite, but the point now is that they refer to them, [they say] that what we wrote to them was after consultation with the British Government, that though we called ourselves independent, we really acted as stooges or tools of the British Government." The anguish, which Mr Nehru experienced at the collapse of his policy of friendship with China is reflected in this statement.

Even in the midst of charges from China, Mr Nehru decided to raise the issue of China's admission to the UN at its General Assembly session in September. In defence of this policy he said that it was not connected with developments in Tibet. India could not change her policy just because the people were "angry with something that happens in China." By now the Chinese Government had refused to accept the existing frontier with India.

The Lok Sabha discussed the situation in Tibet on May 8, 1959. In his reply, Mr Nehru referred to the past history of Sino-Tibetan relations to draw the inference that no firm conclusion could be drawn regarding the status of Tibet vis-a-vis China. But instead of pursuing this argument to its logical conclusion, he rushed to the conclusion that the only alternative to accepting the settlement imposed by China on Tibet was to "prepare for an armed conflict on

⁹ *Ibid.*

this issue." From this he jumped to his general view that the only way to avoid war was to settle issues peacefully. On this ground, he justified his general policy towards China and the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954.

Inevitably the members of Parliament had raised the issue of China's cartographic aggression against India. Mr Nehru spoke more sharply on this issue than ever before. He said: "There is no doubt that continuance of what are called old maps of China, which show certain fairly large areas of Indian territory as if they belong to the Chinese State, has been a factor in creating continual irritation in the minds of people in this country." Even now he did not disclose that China had repudiated India's existing frontier. In fact, he created the impression that there was no new element in the situation. He said: "It was not a question of some odd little pocket here and there, which might be in dispute. There are two or three pockets about which India had, and would have, discussions.... But this business of issuing these maps, which are not true to fact, which are factually untrue, and which can hardly be justified on the ground of history, of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's regime or any previous regime," was an altogether different matter.

On June 20, 1957, His Holiness the Dalai addressed a press conference in Mussoorie. He challenged the validity of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951 on two counts. First, it had been imposed on Tibet under the threat of arms; and secondly, it had subsequently been violated by the Chinese authorities in both letter and spirit. He challenged the Chinese Government to "agree to an investigation by an international commission" into the charges of reign of terror, forced labour, compulsory exactions, a systematic persecution of the people, plunder and confiscation of property belonging to monasteries and individuals and execution of certain leading men in Tibet. He added: "*On our part I and my Government will readily agree to abide by the verdict of such an impartial body.*" (Italics mine) Thus he stated his claim to be an *émigré* Government. To leave no one in doubt, the Dalai used the phrases "I

and my Government" "me and my Government," repeatedly in the course of the press conference.

It is noteworthy that the Dalai Lama did not say that he expected the Government of India to recognise him and his Ministers as an *émigré* Government of Tibet. His was merely a statement of fact. But probably in view of the rising tempo of public opinion in India and more particularly, Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan's efforts to mobilise support among Asian and African countries for the cause of Tibet, the Government felt it necessary to make it clear that it did not recognise the Dalai Lama and his Ministers as constituting an *émigré* Government. It is also highly likely that the Indian Government was hopeful of persuading the Chinese Government to adopt a helpful approach on the border issue by reassuring it on the Tibetan question.

The statement issued on behalf of the Ministry of External Affairs was remarkable for its curtness. It offended the sentiments of most Indians. Also, it did not achieve the desired result of persuading Peking to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards this country as was evident by the rigid position Peking took on the border issue.

A week later on July 8, Mr Nehru was asked at his monthly conference whether he was aware that the Dalai Lama was contemplating to take the issue to the UN. He said that the UN had handicapped itself in the matter by keeping China out. In any event, it would hardly serve any useful purpose. Asked if he had reconciled himself to be a silent spectator of Tibet being absorbed by China, Mr Nehru said that was not his attitude, but he had to recognise his limitations. The Prime Minister explained that the Government of India did not agree with all that the Dalai Lama had said recently. Whatever our reaction to the events in Tibet, it would be improper to recognise any kind of Tibetan Government functioning on Indian soil, he said.

On June 27, 1959, *Blitz*, a Bombay weekly, generally pro-Communist in its policy, carried an interview between its editor Mr R. K. Karanjia and Mr Nehru dealing mainly with Tibet. Much of it covered familiar ground. Mr Nehru said a couple of things which deserve to be noted. First,

"The solution, I suppose, is Tibetan autonomy in a Chinese State. Apart from all the historical, religious and other factors, the Tibetan terrain makes it impossible for anyone to dominate or colonise them [the country]. That is what the Tibetans claim to fighting against—the loss of their autonomy and colonisation by the Chinese." Secondly he committed himself to the position that "talk of a buffer state has no meaning today. It is a nineteenth century idea which we reject without reservation whatsoever." Thirdly, he said: "This controversy over maps and frontiers is certainly an irritating issue. We have written to Peking, but no reply has been received yet. The source of these irritations is that Peking has somehow found it necessary to adopt rigid and inflexible postures in regard to Tibet and other issues. However, we hope all will end well."

To sum up, the Government of India and the Prime Minister, Mr Nehru, were at one with the people of India in their deep sympathy with the Tibetan people and concern over their brutal suppression by the Chinese armed forces. But they found themselves helpless to do anything in the matter. They were partly the prisoners of their own past mistakes. It was, for instance, remarkable that India should have agreed to the absorption of Tibet into the Chinese empire without insisting on the Tibetan people's right to autonomy. Also, India would have been within her rights to demand that China did not post an unlimited number of troops in Tibet and on the border to ensure both the autonomy of Tibet and the security of India. At least, the Indian Government should have secured the acceptance by Peking of its frontiers before signing away its rights and privileges in Tibet. Mr Nehru's plea on December 21, 1959, that he was marking time and sought to avoid a showdown is not convincing in view of the fact that China needed India's valuable support to win respectability in Asia.

The strongest criticism of Mr Nehru's policy came from Mr Jaya Prakash Narayan. For instance, in a speech on July 10 in New Delhi, he argued that China's claim of suzerainty over Tibet could not "survive the assassination of Tibetan autonomy." He said that the least that should

be done was that the countries, that had accepted Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, should declare "that they do not recognise the forcible annexation of Tibet by China and demand the right of self-determination for Tibet. It would be meaningless to ask for restoration of the *status quo ante* because of the failure of China to keep her pledged word."

Mr Narayan argued that it was the responsibility of all nations to ensure that the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement was honoured. If this was not so, what was the value of that agreement between a powerful, big nation and a weak, small one?, he asked. According to him, the present situation in Tibet could be looked at from three points of view. First, there were those who never accepted the suzerainty formula and always stood for full independence for Tibet. For them the events in Tibet and the declarations of the Dalai Lama had come only as confirmation of their own view. Secondly, there were those who accepted the suzerainty-with-autonomy formula. Mr Narayan was sorry that this formula was accepted even by countries that had recently won their own freedom. This was, he argued, an age above everything of anti-imperialism and national freedom and the very concept of any country's suzerainty over another was alien to it. In any event, suzerainty was to be recognised only on the understanding that Tibet remained autonomous. Tibet was no longer autonomous. China had deliberately, and against the advice and warning of her friends, forcibly destroyed the autonomy of Tibet.

Finally, there was the human point of view. "The miseries and misfortunes of the Tibetan people, the injustices and wrongs to which they have been subjected, the crimes and atrocities that have been committed there have all combined to lift the issue of Tibet from the tangled domain of legal and constitutional disputations to that of simple unvarnished humanity." The human issue was a universal issue and concerned the entire human family. Like the treatment of Negroes and Asians in South Africa, events in Tibet could not be regarded as internal affair of China. These questions had been raised in different international bodies. This supreme question of suppression of human

rights in Tibet must be faced by the people and Governments of the world. "Not to do so is abdication of humanity," Mr Narayan added.

Mr Narayan did not share the view that with China firmly lodged in Tibet, nothing could be done about it. "To my way of thinking this is not only immoral but even politically unwise. If this were the attitude to be adopted towards every so-called accomplished fact of history, this world would become a veritable hell and every wrong committed by the strong would be perpetuated." Conceding that it might not be possible to do much to help Tibet in the immediate future, he reminded the audience that nothing in history remained unchanged. "Even the greatest empires have withered away with the passing of time. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that there will never be any change in China and Tibet."

He said that it was in the hope of change in the future that he considered that the Tibet question should be raised in the United Nations. It was not that the "mere raising of an issue in the UN means that a solution will be found." But with all its weakness, "the UN is the only organisation the human family has that gives some guarantee that the world will not be converted into a jungle where the strong will eat up the weak." Apparently in reply to Mr Nehru, he said, "Every issue that is sent to the UN gets involved in the cold war. But that has not prevented India and other countries from appealing to the UN when the occasion demanded it."

He recalled that Britain and India had held out the assurance of a peaceful solution when El Salvador raised the Tibetan issue in the UN in 1950. Since the Chinese had now resorted to the use of "ruthless military means," the duty of India and Britain was clear. While supporting China's admission to the UN, he did not think that her not being a member should stand in the way of Tibet issue being raised in the world organisation.¹⁰

On August 30, the Dalai Lama issued a statement to announce that he had decided to refer the Tibetan issue to

¹⁰ *The Times of India*, New Delhi, July 11, 1959.

the UN in the absence of any alternative. He said that on June 20 last, while giving to "the world a glimpse of the dark and dismal tragedy of my people," he had made it clear that he and his Government were fully prepared to accept a just and peaceful solution of the entire problem. Since then, the picture of Tibet had become immeasurably darker and gloomier. There had been no response to his appeal for peace and justice. He had no alternative but to go to the UN.

On September 4, the Lok Sabha debated a non-official resolution demanding that the Government of India should refer the Tibetan issue to the UN. The resolution was opposed by Mr Nehru and consequently rejected by the House by a voice vote. In his statement on this occasion, Mr Nehru once again expressed his concern with developments in Tibet. "As everyone knows, the Government has given refuge and asylum not only to the Dalai Lama but to nearly 13,000 Tibetans. The fact that India gave refuge to everyone who came from Tibet was evidence of her deepest feelings for Tibet," he said.

But on the issue of referring the Tibetan question to the UN, Mr Nehru said quite apart from the sympathy for Tibet and Tibetans, if any action was taken, it should be justifiable in law and constitution and should be expected to produce the desired results. He said that the United Nations could come into the picture for two reasons. One was violation of human rights and the other aggression. Violation of human rights applied to those who had accepted the Charter of the UN. Strictly speaking, the Charter could not be applied to a people, who had not accepted it and who had not been allowed to go into the UN. Secondly, "if you talk about aggression, it is by one sovereign independent State on another and so far as the world affairs are concerned, Tibet has not been acknowledged as an independent State for a considerable time. . . . Therefore, it is difficult to justify the charge of aggression. You may say these are rather legal pleas, but I am merely pointing out constitutional and procedural difficulties."

Mr Nehru said that if the legal difficulties were got over, it might result in a general debate in the UN General

Assembly or the Security Council. After the debate was over, the promoters of the resolution would do nothing more. "Obviously, nobody is going to send an army to Tibet or China. If this was not done in the case of Hungary which is in the heart of Europe, it is fantastic to imagine that anybody is going to move into Tibet. So, all that is possible is an expression of strong opinion. . . and the matter being raised to the level of cold war and probably producing reactions on the Chinese Government which are more adverse for Tibet and Tibetan people. So the ultimate result is no relief to Tibetan people but something reverse of that. Thus, from the constitutional and legal points of view the question is not clear. From the practical point of view, it brings no good results."

In spite of the Government of India's negative attitude the issue was inscribed on the agenda of the UN General Assembly. Ireland and Malaya took the initiative. India and other countries, which heeded her advice, stayed neutral. Mr V. K. Krishna Menon, leader of the Indian delegation on October 22, 1959, explained to the Assembly India's position. He had precious little to add to Mr Nehru's statement quoted earlier. But surprisingly enough, he expressed the hope, in fact, confidence, that the Chinese Government would in course of time adopt an attitude of reconciliation. Once again the Government of India had let down Tibet and ignored her own national interests. There was no recognition of the fact that with Tibet's independence was inextricable bound India's defence and the survival of democratic institutions.

CHAPTER VIII

Revival of Chinese Expansionism

EVEN a casual acquaintance with the geography, history, social, economic, and cultural life of the sub-Himalayan belt would suffice to indicate the magnitude of the stake India has in Tibet's freedom. The Himalayan ranges are not impenetrable. In the past they served as a line of defence, mainly because for centuries there did not exist a centralised and strong military State in Tibet. Tibet was sparsely populated by a small peaceful Buddhist community. That made it possible for rulers in India virtually to ignore the defence of the Indo-Tibetan border. But in spite of Tibet's weakness as a military power, she exerted a powerful influence on the life of the people in the sub-Himalayan belt.

It is common knowledge that the original inhabitants of Bhutan and Sikkim, the Bhotia and the Lepchas, still practise the Tibetan form of Buddhism. In the case of Sikkim, the ruling family is of Tibetan stock. Leading families in both States have social ties across the border in Tibet. Both Sikkim and Bhutan acknowledged Tibet's suzerainty for several hundred years till they became British protectorates in 1890 and 1910 respectively. Ladakh was a part of Tibet till 1832 and the way of life there even today is strikingly similar to that of the Tibetans. The influence of Tibetan religion and culture is evident among the people in the bordering areas of Himachal Pradesh, UP and Assam. The Indo-Tibetan border area in the north-east was surveyed only between 1911 and 1913 and the frontier defined at the tripartite Simla Conference in 1913-14.

The compulsions of history, geography and religion made it binding on India to work for the preservation of Tibet's freedom, particularly in the context of the rise of a strong and centralised Communist regime in China. With the triumph of Communism, China was armed with a proselytising faith. It was inevitable that she should seek to spread the faith, if necessary, at the point of the bayonet. India's national interests demanded that her Government should have sought to contain the revolutionary tide emanating from China beyond at least Outer Tibet.

India herself was the focal point of another kind of revolution with its accent on nationalism and democracy. An independent Tibet was the pre-requisite for the success of any attempt to hold back the Chinese tide and to prevent the clash of two revolutionary ideologies emanating from India and China. The challenge to India from China did not come only from the side of Tibet. With the withdrawal of European imperialist powers from Asia in the post-war period, China and India became potential rivals. Before the rise of European powers in Asia, India and China had met in south-east Asia as rivals and competitors. The two countries did not get involved in armed conflicts primarily because the extension of Indian influence in this region was by and large not the work of organised States. That China worked for the destruction of the Hindu influence in this area is too well known to be emphasised.

The history of Indo-China provides an interesting illustration of the result of the meeting of the Indian and Chinese cultures. From the beginning of the Christian era, the Hindu State of Champa existed alongside the sinicised State of Annam. There was hardly any cultural exchange between them. Instead there were ceaseless wars between them resulting in 1471 in the capture of Champa's capital city of Vijaya by the Annamese, who massacred 60,000 people and took 30,000 prisoners. Champa was finally annexed to Annam. A French scholar wrote: "The various countries of Insulinidia and Indo-China (both the insular and the peninsular parts of south-east Asia), which were civilized by India, also gravitated, as a result of their

geographical location, into the political orbit of China.... The Chinese have never looked with favour on the establishment of powerful States in the South Seas, and it is a fact worth mentioning that the zenith of Fu-man, Cambodia, and the Javanese Kingdoms generally coincided with the decline of the Chinese dynasties."¹ As is known, both Java and Cambodia were deeply influenced by Indian culture.

The presence of sizable Indian and Chinese minorities in these countries of south-east Asia reinforces the view that a measure of rivalry and competition was implicit in the situation. It was bound to be aggravated in this era of industrialisation and expanded trade, whatever might have been the character of the regimes in New Delhi and Peking. Even Nationalist China was suspicious of independent India. In fact, India and China had clashed at the first Asian conference in New Delhi in March 1947, when India was still on the threshold of independence. The communisation of China added a new dimension to this problem because China's age-old imperialistic ambitions could now be realised under the cover of an ideology.

China's expansionism throughout the ages is a patent fact of history. There are two aspects of it, which deserve attention. First, the Han Chinese extended their power to South China inhabited by hundreds of non-Han tribes. They migrated into these territories swamping the tribes. Even today 20 million of these non-Han peoples are struggling for survival in South China. Secondly, the Han Chinese sought to extend their empire beyond the frontiers of China even if South China is regarded part of it.

The Han dynasty, which ruled over China from 202 BC to AD 221, laid the foundation of the Chinese empire. The reign of Wu Ti, the sixth Han emperor, who ascended the throne in 140 BC, witnessed a remarkable expansion of the empire. He annexed territories, which now comprise considerable parts of the provinces of Szechwan, Yunnan, Kansu and Kwantung. Even today there is a sizable population of non-Han nationalities in these provinces. In 110

¹ *Les Etats Hindouises de L'Indochina et d'Indonesie* by G. Celdes, Paris, 1948.

BC Annam was added to the empire. Wu Ti's armies marched beyond the Great Wall in the north-east and by 108 BC Manchuria up to the present Manchurian railway together with the north-eastern part of the Korean peninsula had been conquered. Embassies were sent to the tribal chiefs in Central Asia to make them accept China's overlordship. By and large, Wu Ti indicated the direction of Chinese expansionism in centuries to come.

During the reign of his successors, the policy of establishing diplomatic and commercial relations with the western tribes yielded place to one of outright conquest and absorption. By 59 BC areas now constituting Sinkiang had been brought under control of the central Chinese authority. By the beginning of the Christian era, China had attained such power and prestige that the overlordship of the Han emperor was recognised even by rulers of Transoxiana and Bactria. Subsequently, during the reign of emperor Ming Ti, a military leader, Pan Chao, established in AD 74 Chinese overlordship over the states of Khotan, Karashar, Kucha and Kashgar and other smaller tribes. By AD 94, fifty rulers and tribal chiefs sent hostages to the Chinese court at Loyang. But as weak rulers ascended the throne, the empire disintegrated and by the middle of the second century AD only a few of the neighbouring kingdoms and tribes acknowledged Chinese authority.

After the collapse of the Han dynasty, China was divided into three kingdoms. The country was reunited under the Tsin dynasty in AD 280. It could not consolidate its rule and the last emperor was driven out in AD 316. For 273 years till AD 589 southern China was ruled by a succession of short-lived dynasties and northern China by invaders. In AD 589 Wei Ti, founder of the Sui dynasty, reunited China under one kingdom. Once again China resumed her career of expansionism. Wei Ti invaded Annam, which had become an independent kingdom sixty years ago. The conquest of Annam was completed during the reign of his successor, Yang Ti, who posted Chinese officials there to run the administration. The southern neighbouring Hindu kingdom of Champa was invaded and plundered. The

Chinese armies returned home mainly because they did not find the climate of Champa favourable. In AD 607 Yang Ti sent an expedition to Luchu islands and an embassy to Siam. Two expeditions were sent to the kingdom of Koguryu, northernmost of the three Korean kingdoms, because the ruler refused to accept China's overlordship. The expeditions were beaten back. In AD 614 the emperor personally led the third expedition. He was about to complete the conquest of the kingdom when trouble broke at home and he had to return. The emperor abdicated in 617 leading to the collapse of the dynasty.

Under the succeeding Tang dynasty, China regained her dominant position in Central and Eastern Asia. The second emperor, Tai Tsung, made a notable contribution towards this end. He conciliated the powerful Tibetan King, Tsrongtsan Gampo, by offering him in marriage a Chinese princess in AD 641. According to Chinese sources, in the same year an embassy was sent by Emperor Harsha of Kanauj (India), to the Chinese court. Two years later a Chinese mission visited Kanauj. Still another mission was sent there in AD 647. By now Harsha was dead. The mission ran into trouble with the new Indian King Arjuna who had its members murdered. The leader, Wang Hiuen-tse, escaped to Nepal with just one companion. There he recruited 7,000 Nepalese and 1,200 Tibetans and besieged Kanauj. He captured the king and brought him to the Chinese court at Changan, according to Chinese records. The Indian historians, including Mr R. C. Mazumdar, regard this account as exaggerated.

True to the Chinese tradition, Tai Tsung sent two expeditions in AD 645 and 646 to conquer Korea. These expeditions did not succeed. But Tai Tsung's successor, Kao Tsung, reduced to submission all the three Korean Kingdoms of Koguryu, Pakche and Silla between AD 660 and 668. The Laotung portions of Koguryu and districts north of the Taitong were annexed to the empire and the remaining parts of the peninsula were merged in the kingdom of Silla, which was pro-China. With the decline of the Tang dynasty's power, the Koreans overthrew the Chinese

domination in AD 935. But the Korean kings continued to pay tribute to the Sung emperors, who were not able to exercise an effective control even on the northern parts of China. The Korean rulers were apparently anxious to avoid trouble.

In AD 670 the Tibetans captured the four important garrison towns of Turkestan—Kucha, Khotan, Kashgar and Karashar. In AD 679 an alliance was worked out between the Turks and the Tibetans and the Chinese domination over Turkestan appeared to be lost. Fortunately for the Chinese, the alliance broke down and they were thus able to recapture the garrison towns in AD 692. The reign of Hsuan Tsung (712–56) again saw the rise of China's power and prestige in Central Asia. In AD 720 even the ruler of Kashmir, Chandrapida, is said to have sought and received from the Chinese emperor recognition of his royal title. In AD 733 the Kashmir ruler sent an embassy to the Chinese court at Changan to render homage and seek an alliance with the emperor. These moves were inspired by his fear of the Tibetans, who in alliance with the Arabs, extended their power in Central Asia subjugating a number of small states, which had been China's tributaries earlier.

In AD 747 the Chinese emperor sent a force of 10,000 men across the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush as far as Yasin and Gilgit. He organised similar campaigns in Western Turkestan in AD 748 and 749. But these expeditions could not hold back the rising power of the Arabs and the defeat of the Chinese forces at Attlach marked the end of Chinese hegemony in large parts of Central Asia and its replacement by Arab dominance. The Chinese authorities now followed a policy of reconciliation with the Arabs, who in the bargain helped to save the tottering dynasty in AD 756. Between AD 763 and 801 the Tibetans repeatedly invaded the Tang dominions. In AD 763 itself they sacked the capital city of Changan. In 798 the Chinese emperor entered into an alliance with Caliph Haroun al Raschid to be able to deal with the Tibetans. A peace treaty was signed between China and Tibet in AD 822.

Till the conquest of China by Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, Korea, Central Asia and Annam attracted

the attention of various Chinese emperors at different times. With some breaks the Chinese remained dominant in Annam for nearly 1,000 years till the second quarter of the tenth century AD and the Chinese way of life and political institutions were firmly established in the country. The Annamese were able to overthrow China's domination in AD 939. From that time onwards till AD 1400 local dynasties rose and fell in Annam. They all adopted Chinese political and social institutions. During the rule of the Tang dynasty, even the rulers of Champa sent tributary missions to the Chinese capital at Changan. The missions ceased to be sent towards the end of the eighth century and were resumed during the rule of the Sung dynasty. After AD 615 the Cambodian rulers also recognised China's overlordship.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Kublai Khan, successor of Genghis Khan, sent armies into Burma, Annam and Champa. The Mongol conquests of Burma, Annam and Champa did not last. Kublai Khan died in AD 1294 and the Mongol dynasty came to an end in 1368. In AD 1406 the Ming emperor, Lung Ho, sent an army into Annam on the plea of ending the dispute between it and Champa. The ruler of Annam was deposed and in 1407 Annam was once again annexed to the empire. It remained a part of the Chinese empire till 1428 when the Annamese under the leadership of Le Lois opened the struggle for independence. By 1438 the Chinese gave up the hope of reconquering Annam and agreed to receive a mission from Le Lois and grant him the official seal and patent of investiture. Earlier in AD 1384 and 1385 formal diplomatic relations had been established with Nepal and Burma. It is believed that Nepalese embassies visited China from AD 1387 and 1427. The Chinese emperor made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer Burma in 1449. But the failure of the attempt notwithstanding, the Burmese kingdoms of Ava, Pegu and Hsenwi were regarded by the Chinese as vassals during the period.

In AD 1392 the Ming ruler restored Chinese hegemony over Korea which had disappeared at the time of the collapse of the Mongol empire in 1368. From 1392 onwards

the relations of a suzerain and vassal were maintained between China and Korea, with a single break at the time of the fall of the Ming dynasty, for 500 years till 1894-95 when China suffered a major defeat at the hands of Japan and was compelled to recognise Korea as an independent country. Tributary missions were sent from Seoul to the Chinese imperial court. In return the Chinese did not interfere in the internal affairs of Korea.

In 1405 the emperor sent his commander Chang Ho with a fleet of 62 ships on a mission which took him to the Philippines islands, Borneo, Cochin-China, Cambodia, Siam, Malaya, Sumatra and Java. The ships were loaded with gold, silver, silk and other valuables and Chang Ho fully utilised these valuable goods to win the favour of rulers he visited. When he returned two years later in AD 1407, he was accompanied by envoys from kings, who had agreed to accept China's hegemony, and the ruler of Palembang in Sumatra whom Chang Ho had made a prisoner. During this period, Malacca, facing an invasion from Java and Siam, appealed to the Chinese emperor for help and accepted his suzerainty. He sent tributary missions. Similar missions from the kings of Borneo, Luzon and Bruni visited the Chinese court in 1406. Malacca paid tribute to China till the arrival of the Portuguese on the scene a century later.

In 1408 Chang Ho led a fresh expedition to the south-east Asia. The ruler of Ceylon, who did not prove amenable to his blandishments and threats, was captured and brought to China to be deposed in AD 1411. The Chinese emperor appointed his nominee to rule Ceylon and the new ruler paid tribute to China till 1459. Chang Ho led a third expedition in 1415 and made four more similar voyages in later years. This show of wealth and power established firmly China's prestige as a leading power in south-east Asia. Periodic visits of the Chinese fleet prevented the restoration of the power of the Madjapahit dynasty in Indonesia. This virtually marked the end of the Hindu power, which had dominated the Malayan archipelago for nearly a thousand years. This was followed by the rise of the Arab power to be followed by Western domination.

The establishment of the Manchu dynasty in the first half of the seventeenth century coincided with the expansion of the Russian power in Central Asia. Russian and Chinese armies clashed in AD 1652. A Russian envoy arrived in Peking in 1656 and remained there for six months without being able even to initiate talks with the Chinese authorities because he was unwilling to *kowtow* before the Chinese emperor. Also, Russian raids in the Amur valley continued. In 1658, however, the Chinese forces were able to clear the Amur valley of the Russians. In 1689 was signed the Treaty of Nerchinsk—the first treaty ever between Russia and China. It defined the boundaries between the two empires leaving the Chinese in control of the disputed Amur valley. The treaty, which was slightly amended in 1727 and 1768 in respect of the provisions relating to trade, remained in force till AD 1858. The developments in Tibet during the Manchu period have been discussed earlier.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Chinese empire extended so far to the west that it was able to bring under its control not only the people of Zungaria and eastern Turkestan, but also the tribes living on the western slopes of the Altai and in the valley of the Ili river. At least partly this success of the Chinese was due to the policy of friendship with the Lama hierarchy of Tibet. Between AD 1765 and 1769 Chinese forces invaded Burma four times. They were pushed back every time. Even so the Burmese Kings agreed to send missions every ten years to the Chinese imperial court presumably to buy their peace and to propitiate the Chinese rulers. The Chinese treated them as tributary missions from a vassal state.

As is well known, the Chinese power steadily declined in the nineteenth century. A more significant development was that Western imperialist powers occupied almost the whole of south-east Asia leaving no scope for Chinese expansionism in that direction. Following the three wars of 1826, 1852 and 1886, Britain finally annexed Burma to the Indian empire. In 1862, the French forces occupied Cochinchina; the next year they extended their protectorate over Cambodia. In 1873 hostilities broke out between the

French and Annam when the latter refused to grant to the former permission to send merchandise up the Red river into Yunna. In 1874 was signed the French-Annamese treaty under which France recognised the independence of Annam in return for the right to trade along the Red river and to advise Annam on foreign relations. But Annam continued to send tribute to China and two such missions visited China in 1876 and 1880. Encouraged by this gesture on the part of Annam, the Chinese in 1881 took up the stand that the former was not an independent country.

In 1882 Annam appealed to China for help against encroachments by the French. The latter invaded the country in April 1883. In August 1883, Annam became a French protectorate. Still the Chinese authorities sent troops to assist the irregular Annamese forces in the Tongking area. But later China agreed to withdraw her troops and recognise the French treaty with Annam. The French and Chinese troops clashed once again and China repudiated the earlier agreement. Finally, the Treaty of Tientsin was signed between France and China on June 9, 1885, reaffirming the terms of the earlier convention.

During this period of decline, China accepted Japanese sovereignty over the Luchu islands, which encouraged Japan to challenge China's authority over Korea a few years later. China's defeat at the hands of Japan in 1894-95 forced her in addition to recognising the independence of Korea, to cede Formosa and the Pescadores islands to Japan. Only the intervention by Russia, France and Germany in favour of China prevented the Japanese from occupying large parts of Manchuria. In return France secured the rectification of the Annamese frontier. The Manchu empire collapsed in 1911.

The Republican Government claimed that its territories included all those over which the Manchus had exercised control. But it was not in a position to make good the claim. Under secret agreements between Russia and Japan of 1907, 1910 and 1912, Mongolia with the exception of the eastern portion close to Manchuria was recognised as falling within the Russian sphere of influence. The Mongol princes

declared themselves to be independent. In November 1912, Russia concluded agreement with the Mongol princes and undertook to maintain the autonomy of Outer Mongolia and forbid the entry of Chinese troops or colonists into Outer Mongolia. On November 5, 1913, China recognised the autonomy of Outer Mongolia under her own suzerainty and undertook not to interfere in its internal administration and not to send troops or permit its colonisation. Russia gave a similar guarantee. On June 7, 1915, this agreement was confirmed at a tripartite conference at Kiakhta between Russia, China and Outer Mongolia. Under this treaty the Mongols were free to enter into treaty relations with other countries in respect of trade and commerce. The number of resident representatives to be maintained there by Russia and China and the size of the Chinese military escort were fixed to ensure that Outer Mongolia enjoyed effective freedom in the internal administration. The division of Tibet into Inner and Outer zones at the Simla convention of 1914 was inspired by this arrangement in respect of Mongolia.

The Chinese were, however, not reconciled to this loss of control over Outer Mongolia. They sent their armies there to annul the arrangement as soon as in July 1919, Soviet Russia repudiated treaties and agreements whereby the Tsarist Government had extended its rule over foreign territories. But China could not hold on for long in Outer Mongolia, which became independent in 1921. It was converted into a people's republic in November 1924 with all that the description implied in terms of Russian influence.

The Nationalist Chinese regime was involved in civil conflicts and war with Japan and thus did not find it possible to pursue a policy of expansion. But the ambition to extend the empire was never abandoned. Chiang Kai-shek stated his ambitions in his *China's Destiny*. That the Chinese Communists inherited this imperialist tradition was clear from the interest they showed in Tibet, Korea and Indo-China as soon as they were confident of becoming the rulers of China. The Chinese press in 1949 and 1950 was replete with discussions on these traditional spheres of China's

influence and hegemony. The decision to invade Tibet, intervene in Korea and to provide military assistance to the Communist-dominated Viet Minh and Pathet Laos in Indo-China should have left no scope for doubt that the imperialist tradition of China was by no means dead.

It was only legitimate that independent India should have taken note of the problem posed by the rise of the centralised Communist regime in China. Mr Nehru should not have taken ten long years to learn the historical truth that China showed tendencies towards expansionism whenever she was strong. In the past his own pronouncements tended to confuse the picture. He at once welcomed and dreaded the Chinese revolution. He welcomed it in the erroneous belief that it was a part of the nationalist anti-imperialist upsurge in all Asia though he feared that the revolutionary tide might inundate neighbouring lands thus endangering India's freedom and democracy. The fear was reinforced when in 1949 itself the Chinese Communists began to threaten that they would liberate Tibet. The new treaties with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were arranged as part of an effort to ensure that they were not included in the Communist Chinese sweep. But Mr Nehru's anxiety to play the mediatory role in the Korean war made it binding on the Government of India to win the confidence of the ever suspicious Chinese Communists. This introduced a false note in India's policy the consequences of which are now clear beyond doubt.

II

It was often claimed in support of the policy of friendship with Communist China that India and China have had friendly relations for over 2,000 years. Nothing could be farther from the truth if "friendship" is used in the positive sense. It is a meaningless statement if it denotes only the absence of armed conflict. Apart from anything else, geographical factors militated against an intimate relationship between the two countries. Then there were the differences of race, culture, religion and social and

political outlook and traditions. In fact, there had hardly been anything common between the two countries, except in modern times a superficially common tradition of an anti-Western imperialist struggle, which also took two different forms in China and India. In her rejection of the Western influence, China turned towards Communism. India's struggle against imperialism was born out of the acceptance by the intelligentsia of the values of Western liberalism. That is why India has chosen to be a democracy.

To take geographical factors, in the ancient times there were three routes between India and China. The first lay through Central Asia and the high passes of the Hindu Kush and Pamir mountains. The second from Assam lay through difficult river gorges of upper Burma into south China, which was not important from either cultural or economic points of view. In fact south China was inhabited by non-Han tribes whom the Hans subjugated. Finally, there was the sea route. They were all difficult and dangerous routes, which means that physically it was impossible that there could have been a high degree of cultural and commercial contacts between the two countries.

Of these routes, the Central Asian route, known as the Silk Road, because the silk trade flowed along it, was the most important. It was used for limited cultural and commercial contacts. Indian traders and monks moved along the caravan routes through Central Asia. Indian mathematics, astronomy and pharmacology spread to China to some extent. The period of closest cultural relations between these world's two populous countries was between AD 200 to 700. Then these relations declined, partly as a result of the rise of Islam in Central Asia but mainly as a result of the destruction by the Chinese rulers of Buddhist monasteries, which used to serve as resting places for pilgrims and traders. On the whole, the cultural impact of India on China was limited and that of China on India even more limited. In fact there is hardly any trace of Chinese influence on Indian cultural and social life.

Buddhism went to China from Central Asia through the intermediary of monks and merchants and not from India.

Buddhism spread after the fall of the Han dynasty. The fact that some Indian monks visited China and Chinese monks India and that the Chinese monks left interesting accounts of their journeys in India, which even today constitute important sources of information on the Indian history of that period, does not prove much. For one thing, the powerful Mandarin class of China was never converted to Buddhism. For instance, the spread of Buddhism in China grew Confucian reaction. For instance, Fu I, grand astrologer at the Yang Court, presented two sets of proposals for the suppression of Buddhism in AD 621 and 624. According to well-known authorities he objected to Buddhism on many grounds. He argued that it was a "barbarian" religion; that it taught absurd and disturbing ideas about heaven and hell; that it fostered social disintegration; that it had been responsible for the political collapse of China after the Han dynasty; that its monastic order formed a dangerous State within a State; that the Buddhist clergy was celibate and thus unproductive, and was always seeking tax exemptions. In 819 another official, Han Yu, presented the famous memorial in protest against honours being paid by the emperor to a relic of the Buddha. The memorial said: "Now the Buddha was of barbaric origin. His language differed from Chinese speech; his clothes were of a different cut; his mouth did not pronounce the prescribed words of the former kings, his body was not clad in the garments prescribed by the former kings. He did not recognise the relationship between prince and subject, nor the sentiments of father and son. Let us suppose him to be living today, and that he came to Court at the Capital as an emissary of his country. Your Majesty would receive him courteously. But only one interview in the audience chamber, one banquet in his honour, one gift of clothing, and he would be escorted under guard to the border that he might not mislead the masses."

Buddhism faced severe persecutions during the Wei dynasty (446), Chou dynasty (574), Tang dynasty (845), and the later Chou dynasty (955). The AD 845 persecution crippled Buddhism for good. The all-powerful bureaucracy in China

was hostile to Buddhism. Under its influence, emperor Wu Tsung, devotee of Taoism, issued a series of edicts from AD 842 to 845. These edicts resulted in the destruction of 46,000 Buddhist monasteries and the secularisation of monks and nuns. Buddhism came to be eclipsed in India as well about AD 1000. After that time, therefore, Buddhism could no longer act as a medium of religious and cultural contact between India and China.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a number of Indian merchants, mostly Sikhs and Parsees, set up business at Canton. The Chinese, who have always regarded all foreigners as barbarians, called them "black devils" to distinguish them from the "white devils" (the British and the Dutch) and the "red devils" (the Portuguese).

The first real attempt in modern times to establish contact between the two countries was made by Rabindranath Tagore. He wrote articles and poems in praise of China and set up a China Institute (Cheena Bhawan) at his Vishwa-Bharati (World University). In 1924 Tagore visited China. Whatever the Chinese authorities might say now in the interest of propaganda, the reception to Tagore was far from being cordial. The opposition came from intellectuals some of whom are today leading Communists.

Shen Yen-ping, better known as Mao Tun, Minister for Cultural Affairs since the Communists seized power in 1949, was among the first to attack Tagore. He wrote on April 12, 1927, that "the point where we cease to like him is where, in our presence, he exalts oriental civilisation, and when he speaks of his heaven in the soul. For it would be a misfortune for us if this man intoxicated our youth with his ideas. The only concept of Mr Tagore's which we like is his counsel to follow always the interior light...."²

On the same day, another writer poured ridicule on Tagore. He said: "Mr Tagore is certainly a clever sleight-of-hand artist. India, his country, is the land of dreamers. His father, who was of good birth and rich, spent his life meditating in the forest. His son spent his youth in leisure and dreaming. After his later conversion, he became the

² *Chine Moderne* by Rev Leon Wieger, Vol. 5, Shanghai.

superior person whom we know today, preaching union with the spirit. He now gets up at three o'clock every morning, begins to meditate, and spends two hours in spiritual communication with the Spirit.

"In Shanghai, after he had made his appearance and begun his act, he said, 'gentlemen, other people talk about vain appearances; I speak only of the true reality. Everything which one sees is a pure fantasy. When the whole human race has come to an end, when the entire universe has been destroyed, then in the true Nothingness the Being whom we call Brahma or Spirit will manifest himself.' At that point, the *claque* let loose a salvo of furious applause. Then Mr Tagore put down on the table in front of him his black cap, shut his eyes, put both his hands inside the cap, and cried, 'I feel it. I am holding it!' More applause from the *claque*. Certain sly rascals, having looked into the cap, ascertained that it was empty. 'You are fools,' said Mr Tagore. 'The eye cannot see the Spirit. The Spirit is everywhere, absolutely everywhere. It is the soul which perceives it. Now the soul is a part of our heart, and a part of the universal Spirit. This universal Spirit contains all souls, and in naming it one also names all of them.... You Chinese, your chief vice is the fear of death. This is because you do not know that death is life. When the flower falls, it is not dead....'"²

Still another article was published under the caption "Oppose Tagore." It said: "Some people are delighted that Mr Tagore has come to China to give us talks. To us, his coming is displeasing, and we are hostile to him. This is because we believe that the ideas which he professes are not suited to the China of today and would have a disastrous influence on our country if we adopted them.... It is clear that those who invited Mr Tagore to China wish to make dreamers of our students. Our warlords will be very grateful to them.... We advise them [the students] not to let themselves be Indianised, unless they want their coffins to rest one day in soil enslaved, like that of India, by the foreigner." Another anonymous article, published in Peking on May

² *Ibid.*

Day of 1924, also attacked traditional Chinese civilisation and denounced Tagore for advocating its restoration.⁴

But this did not sour Tagore. In 1937, he denounced Japanese invasion of China. The correspondence that took place between him and Yone Noguchi, a Japanese poet of repute, on this subject is well known. Noguchi was Tagore's personal friend and the latter took the great risk of ruining this friendship. The correspondence, when it was released, influenced the thinking of many in India and won their support for the cause of China. Similarly under Mr Nehru's guidance, the Indian National Congress lined itself behind China in her struggle against Japan. The All-India Congress Committee decided to boycott Japanese goods. In 1938, Dr Kotnis led a military mission to China. Dr Kotnis died there. Mr Nehru visited China as a gesture of goodwill. The Congress protested against the closing of the Burma Road by the British Government in 1940. In 1944, Dr S. Radhakrishnan went on a lecture tour of China.

It is true that Marshal and Madam Chiang Kai-shek reciprocated these gestures of goodwill and visited India in 1942. The Marshal lent support to India's demand for independence to the annoyance of Britain, his ally in the war against Japan. But even then he behaved in a condescending manner. And in 1947 at the first Asian Conference, the Chinese delegation acted as if it was resentful of India arriving on the Asian scene as an independent country and claiming her rightful place in the affairs of the region.

Thus neither in terms of the past nor in terms of the present was there any justification for India to be over-enthusiastic about friendship with China. The Chinese occupation of Tibet in utter disregard of India's interests, views and susceptibilities destroyed whatever basis there could have been for pursuing a policy of friendship between India and China.

In terms of foreign policy objectives and internal policies, there was nothing in common between Communist China and Democratic India. The Indian leaders worked for peace and elimination of colonial rule as ends desirable in

⁴ *Ibid.*

themselves. The Chinese protested faith in these two goals primarily to clear the decks for the spread of Communism. The Indian Government under the Prime Ministership of Mr. Nehru has been striving to establish a welfare State. The Chinese Communists have built a militarised totalitarian State in which there is no room for individual liberty of any description. Democratic socialism based on the sanctity of the individual and the desire to promote his development and well-being is the declared goal of the Indian Government. The Chinese Communists have made no secret of their contempt for democratic socialism, which they call revisionism. "Bolshevism was formed through long struggle against social democracy, which betrayed Marxism and which advocated social reform, opposed social revolution and co-operated with imperialism.... Bolshevism is entirely in contradiction to social democracy," Chien Po-ta, a leading Chinese Communist theoretician, said this in 1949 itself. Any measure of acquaintance with the writings of Lenin and Stalin should leave no scope for doubt that Communism and democratic socialism are irreconcilable and antagonistic political philosophies.

CHAPTER IX

Threat to India's Integrity

IMPERIAL China claimed suzerainty over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in extension of similar claims over Tibet. Bhutan and Sikkim were described as southern gateways to the celestial empire. The Chinese emperors granted seals of offices and patents of investiture to the rulers of Bhutan and Sikkim. But they never sent armies to annex these states on the southern slopes of the Himalayas even when their hold over Tibet was relatively firm. Chinese troops entered NEFA territory in pursuit of the Dalai Lama in 1911. But they retired soon afterwards. Thus by and large the Indo-Tibetan border remained a dead frontier for several centuries.

Earlier we have referred to the fact that as the Chinese Communists began to threaten to "liberate" Tibet, the Government of India entered into new agreements with the three Himalayan States. In 1952, Mr Nehru personally visited the NEFA area to ensure that steps were taken to secure the Indian frontier in that area. In subsequent years an attempt, though slow and halting, was made to reach the McMahon Line and establish checkposts there. Similarly, a programme of road construction was taken up in the sub-montane belt to open up the area and thus to strengthen its defence. The conclusion is, therefore, inescapable that there was an awareness in New Delhi of the potential threat from Communist China. Since this threat did not arise wholly from Chinese expansionism as such, it is legitimate to infer that New Delhi was aware, at least vaguely, that a new situation had arisen with the triumph of Communism in China and its extension to Tibet. This makes it even more

difficult to appreciate why the Government of India pursued an over-all policy, which lowered the resistance against Communism both at home and in the neighbouring countries, and also why it did not act energetically to secure the country's defence.

It must be said to the credit of the Chinese Communist rulers that they repeatedly provided clues to the understanding of their designs on the border areas. First, they did not withdraw the maps showing large parts of India, and Bhutanese and Nepalese territory within China's national boundaries. They evaded the issue by pretending that the maps had been drawn on the basis of the old Kuomintang maps. They never said that the maps were wrong. All they pleaded was that they had not had time to examine the issue.

Secondly, following the signing of the Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet on April 28, 1954, they started pressing their claims to passes on the UP border. The correspondence on the issue contained in the first White Paper published by the Ministry of External Affairs in September 1959, shows clearly that in each case the Chinese attempted to seize control of the mountain passes so that they could command an unhampered access to the adjoining areas to the south and infiltrate among the people there.

Thirdly, they marched their armies into the Wa States in Burma in pursuance of territorial claims in 1956 thus putting India on notice that their professed adherence to "Panch Sheela" notwithstanding they would at a suitable opportunity not hesitate to adopt a similar procedure in respect of India. Simultaneously, as noted earlier, they took a continuing interest in the affairs of Nepal. Today, two of Nepal's former Prime Ministers are prominent leaders of the China lobby in Kathmandu.

Fourthly, in March 1956, they virtually annexed the Aksaichin part of Ladakh and began constructing a road linking Gartok in Western Tibet with Rudok in Sinkiang, which in turn was connected with Outer Mongolia and then Russia. There is evidence that Russian experts assisted the Chinese in this and other similar highways construction

programmes in Tibet. According to Mr Chou En-lai's letter to Mr Nehru of December 18, 1959, 3,000 labourers worked on this project for 18 months up to October 1957.

Fifthly, there were reliable indications that the Indian Communists were concentrating their efforts in the northern border regions. Such an effort on their part could not be just fortuitous or accidental, particularly in view of the CPI's known and open adherence to the concept of "proletarian internationalism."

Finally, as noted earlier, the Chinese rulers never gave up their view that India was essentially a colony, which was dominated by feudal lords and capitalists and that it was their duty to "liberate it." If they publicly extolled this country's contribution to world peace, that was in pursuance of the line of dividing the enemies that Lenin and Mao had laid down years ago. "The more powerful enemy can be conquered only by exerting the utmost effort, and by necessarily, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully taking advantage of every, even the smallest, rift among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, by taking advantage of every, even the smallest opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be only temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those, who do not understand this, do not understand a particle of Marxism or of scientific modern socialism in general," wrote Lenin in *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, 39 years ago.

Thus if the Government of India had paid attention to the nature of Communism, it would not have been taken by surprise by China's claims to its territories. It is indeed remarkable that the issue was not even raised by the Indian Government when it agreed to accept without reservation China's claim that she enjoyed sovereign rights over Tibet and to surrender its rights and privileges. In fact the Government of India advised the Nepalese authorities to follow in its footsteps and give up its extra-territorial rights in Tibet.

The issue was raised for the first time by Mr Nehru with Mr Chou En-lai during his visit to China in October–November 1954. He pointed out that Chinese maps were inaccurate and showed large parts of Indian territory within China's national boundary. Mr Chou En-lai took the plea that "current Chinese maps were based on old maps." Apparently Mr Nehru accepted this plea in good faith. But the "inaccurate" Chinese maps laying claim to over 60,000 sq. miles of Indian territory continued to be published and circulated. For instance, the July 1958 issue of the *China Pictorial* contained a map which showed the Chinese border to include: four of the five divisions of India's North-East Frontier Agency; some areas in north of the State of Uttar Pradesh; large areas in eastern Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir State); and the entire Tashigang area of eastern Bhutan and a considerable area of north-west Bhutan.¹

The Government of India drew the Chinese Government's attention to it in a note dated August 21, 1958. In its reply of November 3, 1958, the Chinese Government repeated the earlier plea, but made the significant qualification that the boundary in the Chinese maps was drawn according to the old maps because "the Chinese Government has not yet undertaken a survey of China's boundary, nor consulted with the countries concerned...." This clearly indicated that China regarded the whole issue as being open. This inevitably caused concern in India and on December 14, 1958, Mr Nehru addressed a personal letter to Mr Chou En-lai reminding him that during his visit to India towards the end of 1956, he had agreed to accept the McMahon Line as the Sino-Indian frontier. He quoted the minutes which he had prepared on the basis of their discussion. Mr Nehru had not obtained Mr Chou En-lai's endorsement of these minutes.

The minutes said: "Premier Chou referred to the McMahon Line and again said that he had never heard of this before, though, of course, the then Chinese Government had dealt

¹ Notes, Memoranda and Letters exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China, 1954–59 (White Paper I), p. 46.

with this matter and not accepted that line. He had gone into this matter in connection with the border dispute with Burma. Although he thought that this line, established by the British imperialists, was not fair, nevertheless, because it was now an accomplished fact and because of the friendly relations which existed between China and the countries concerned, namely, India and Burma, the Chinese Government were of the opinion that they should give recognition to this McMahon Line. They had, however, not consulted the Tibetan authorities about it yet. They proposed to do so."² This last proviso regarding consultations with the Tibetan authorities was made by Mr Chou En-lai apparently to keep the way open for retreat from this position.

In his reply of January 23, 1959, Mr Chou En-lai administered a rude shock to Mr Nehru. He said: "The Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited. Historically no treaty or agreement has ever been concluded between the Chinese Central Government and the India Government." He then referred to the existing disputes, including the one regarding the eastern part of Ladakh, which had been subject of correspondence between New Delhi and Peking. He said that the border issue was not raised in 1954 because "conditions were not yet ripe for its settlement and the Chinese side, on its part, had had no time to study the question...."³

Regarding the McMahon Line, which delimits the Indo-Tibetan frontier over a stretch of 830 miles from the eastern tip of Bhutan to the tri-junction of the Indo-Tibetan-Burmese border, Mr Chou En-lai said that it was "the product of the British policy of aggression against the Tibet region of China... juridically, too, it cannot be considered legal." But in view of other factors, "the Chinese Government, on one hand, finds it necessary to take a more or less realistic attitude towards the McMahon Line and, on the other hand, cannot but act with prudence and needs time to deal with this matter."⁴ This position did not approximate to what Mr Chou En-lai had told Mr Nehru in 1956.

² *Ibid*, pp. 49-50.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 52-3.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 53.

The Government of India could not allow these statements to go unchallenged because they prepared the ground for exaggerated territorial claims by China. The outbreak of the rebellion in Tibet and the consequent uncertainty regarding future developments there made it imperative for the Government of India to secure an assurance regarding its frontiers. Mr Nehru addressed another communication to Mr Chou En-lai on March 22, 1959. The Indian Prime Minister pointed out that the traditional frontier followed the geographical principle of watershed on the crest of the high Himalayan range, "but apart from this, in most parts, it has the sanction of specific international agreements between the then Government of India and the Central Government of China." He drew attention to the following agreements:

1. The boundary of Sikkim, a protectorate of India, with the Tibet region of China was defined in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and jointly demarcated on the ground in 1895.

2. A treaty of 1842 between Kashmir on the one hand and the Emperor of China and the Lama Guru of Lhasa on the other, mentioned the India-China boundary in the Ladakh region. In 1847 the Chinese Government admitted that this boundary was sufficiently and distinctly fixed. The area, now claimed by China, had always been depicted as part of India on official maps. They had been surveyed by Indian officials and even a Chinese map of 1893 showed them as Indian territory.

3. The McMahon Line was drawn at a Tripartite Conference held at Simla in 1913-14 between the Plenipotentiaries of the Governments of China, Tibet and India. At the time of acceptance of the delineation of this frontier, Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary, in letters exchanged, stated explicitly that he had received orders from Lhasa to agree to the boundary as marked on the map appended to the Convention. The line was drawn after full discussion and was confirmed subsequently by formal exchange of letters; and there was nothing to

indicate that the Tibetan authorities were in any way dissatisfied with the agreed boundary. Moreover, although the Chinese Plenipotentiary at the Conference objected to the boundaries between Inner and Outer Tibet and between Tibet and China, there was no mention of any Chinese reservation in respect of the India-Tibet frontier either during the discussions or at the time of their initialing the Convention. This line had the incidental advantage of running along the crest of the High Himalayan range, which formed the natural dividing line between the Tibetan plateau in the north and the submontane region in the south.

Mr Nehru said that the remaining sector from the tri-junction of the Nepal, India and Tibet boundary up to Ladakh was also traditional and followed well-defined geographical features. Here, too, the boundary ran along well-defined watersheds between the river system in the south and the west on the one hand and north and east on the other. This delineation was confirmed by old revenue records and maps and by the exercise of Indian administrative authority up to the boundary line for decades.⁵

In a belated reply on September 8, 1959, the Chinese Prime Minister made the dramatic statement that his Government "absolutely does not recognise the so-called McMahon Line" as the Sino-Indian border. In fact he cast doubt on the validity of the whole of the Sino-Indian frontier from Ladakh to its junction with Burma. He accused Indian troops of invading Tibet in order to "shield armed Tibetan rebel bandits." He charged that the tense situation on the Sino-Indian border was "caused by trespassing and provocations by Indian troops and that for this the Indian side should be held fully responsible."⁶

These charges followed the forcible occupation of Longju outpost by China in August and repeated statements by Mr Nehru that the Chinese troops had committed acts of aggression on Indian soil. The categorical rejection of the McMahon Line in the context of a vituperative campaign

⁵ *Ibid* ⁶ *The Times of India*, New Delhi, September 10, 1959.

against India and border raids, marked an important stage in the deterioration of Sino-Indian relations. As Mr Nehru put it, it showed China's "low estimate" of India's friendship.

Mr Chou En-lai's reply caused grave alarm in India because it made it well nigh impossible to hope for a peaceful and negotiated settlement. He charged that the Indian Government had taken up an unreasonable attitude because it demanded that "the Chinese Government give formal recognition to the conditions created by the application of the British policy of aggression against China's Tibet region as the foundation for the settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question. What is more serious, the Indian Government has applied all sorts of pressures on the Chinese Government, not even scrupling the use of force to support this demand. At this the Chinese Government cannot but feel a deep regret."

The letter said: "The Chinese Government has consistently held that an overall settlement of the boundary question should be sought by both sides, taking into account the historical background and existing actualities and adhering to the Five Principles, through friendly negotiations conducted in a well-prepared way step by step. Pending this, as a provisional measure, the two sides should maintain the long-existing *status quo* on the border, and not seek to change it by unilateral action, even less by force; as to some of the disputes, provisional agreements concerning isolated places could be reached through negotiations to ensure the tranquillity of the border areas and uphold the friendship of the two countries."

Mr Chou En-lai charged that Mr Nehru's approach as outlined in his letter of March 22, 1959, was completely opposed to this peaceful approach. In a detailed reply, he said that though a peace treaty was concluded between the local authorities of China's Tibet and the Kashmir authorities in 1842, the then Chinese Central Government did not send anybody to participate in the negotiations and it did not ratify the treaty afterwards. Moreover, the treaty only mentioned in general terms that Ladakh and Tibet would

each abide by its borders, and did not make any specific provisions or explanation regarding the location of this section of the boundary.

As to the Chinese Government official's statement made in 1847 to the British representative that this section of the boundary was clear, it could only show that the then Chinese Government had its own clear view regarding this section of the boundary and could not be taken as a proof that the boundary between the two sides had already been formally delimited, the Chinese Prime Minister said.

Mr Chou En-lai referred to the section of the boundary between the Ari area of Tibet and India and said that this section of the boundary had not been formally delimited by the two countries. Not only so, there had in fact been historical disputes between the two sides over the right to many places in this area. "For example, the area of Sang and Tsungsha, south-west of Tsaparang Dzong in Tibet, which had always belonged to China, was 30 to 40 years back gradually invaded and occupied by the British. The local authorities of China's Tibet took up this matter several times with Britain, without any results. It has thus become an outstanding issue left over by history."

He asserted that the McMahon Line was never discussed at the Simla Conference, but was determined by the British representative and the representative of the Tibet local authorities behind the back of the representative of the Chinese Central Government through an exchange of secret notes at Delhi on March 24, 1914, that is, prior to the signing of the Simla treaty. The Tibet local authorities themselves later also expressed their dissatisfaction with this line. The disputed territory corresponded in size to the Chekiang province of China and was as big as 90,000 square kilometres. "Mr Prime Minister, how could China agree to accept under coercion such an illegal line which would have it relinquish its rights and disgrace itself by selling out its territory—and such a large piece of territory as that?" he asked.

The Chinese Prime Minister charged that some people in India were raising an uproar about the maps published

in China, attempting to create a pressure of public opinion to force China to accept India's unilateral claims concerning the Sino-Indian boundary. He claimed that in spite of repeated incursions by India, China had acted with restraint in the interest of Sino-Indian friendship. He added that since the outbreak of the rebellion "the border situation has become increasingly tense owing to reasons for which the Chinese side cannot be held responsible. Immediately after the fleeing of a large number of Tibetan rebels into India, Indian troops started pressing forward steadily across the eastern section of the Sino-Indian boundary...." He added: "Indian troops invaded and occupied Longju, intruded into Yasher, and are still in occupation of Shatze, Khinzemane and Tamaden—all of which are Chinese territory—shielding armed Tibetan rebel bandits in this area. Indian aircraft have also time and again violated China's air space near the Sino-Indian border. What is especially regrettable is that, not long ago, the Indian troops unlawfully occupying Longju, launched armed attacks on the Chinese frontier guards stationed at Migyitun leaving no room for the Chinese frontier guards but to fire back in self-defence.... Nevertheless, the Indian Government has directed all sorts of groundless charges against the Chinese Government, clamouring that China has committed aggression against India and describing the Chinese frontier guards' act of self-defence in the Migyitun area as armed provocation...."

"The fact that India does not recognise the undelimited state of the Sino-Indian boundary and steps up bringing pressure to bear on China, militarily, diplomatically and through public opinion, cannot but make one suspect that it is the attempt of India to impose upon China its one-sided claims on the boundary question. It must be pointed out that this attempt will never succeed and such action cannot possibly yield any results other than impairing the friendship of the two countries, further complicating the boundary question and making it more difficult to settle."

This letter should be read with the statement made by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Marshal Chen Yi, and the resolution

adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on September 13, 1959, and the official statement issued by Peking to define its claims on September 11, 1959, which accused India of: (1) drawing its maps in such a way as to cut 38,000 square kilometres deep into Chinese territory along the Sinkiang-Tibet-Ladakh section; (2) "invading" Parigas, Chuva, Chuje, Shipki Pass, Puling, Sumdo, Sangoha and Lapthal which are claimed to be Chinese territory along the Tibet-Punjab-Uttar Pradesh frontier; and (3) annexing 90,000 square kilometres of Chinese territory along the Assam-Tibet frontier.

Mr Chen Yi said: "The fact that the entire Sino-Indian boundary has not been delimited must first of all be affirmed. Premier Chou En-lai pointed out this fact to Prime Minister Nehru as early as in 1954 when he visited China. But Prime Minister Nehru has held the view that there is no boundary question between China and India. Now India has made the charge that China kept its view regarding the entire boundary at the back of its mind and only brought it up later, and therefore was not playing straight and fair. This charge is obviously without any grounds. It seems that even the Indian Government is now unable to maintain the assertion that the Sino-Indian boundary has long been entirely delimited. Nevertheless, the Indian Government has so far still failed to proceed from the fact that the entire Sino-Indian boundary has not been delimited and to indicate, like the Chinese Government, the desire to strive for an over-all settlement of the boundary question through friendly negotiations.

"The Sino-Indian boundary question is inherited from history and New China cannot be blamed for this. It is extremely complicated because of the historical background of British aggression against China. The Chinese Government has consistently held that an over-all settlement of the boundary question should be sought by both sides through negotiations taking into account the historical background and existing actualities and adopting a reasonable, conciliatory and friendly attitude. But the Indian side has not only been unwilling to take into account the historical

background of British aggression against China, but even attempted to impose upon New China the illegal McMahon line which British imperialism, in the past, never succeeded in forcing the Chinese Government to accept. *Does this show that India has a full understanding and full recognition of the Chinese revolution? Does this show that India has given the slightest consideration to the national pride and self-respect of the Chinese people?* [Italics mine]

"Since the Sino-Indian boundary question is a complicated one, it takes time and adequate prior preparations for its over-all settlement. The Chinese Government, while actively seeking a solution fair and reasonable to both sides, has adopted a realistic attitude and stands for the maintenance of the long-existing *status quo* of the boundary by both sides. China has never recognised and will never recognise the illegal McMahon line. But, for the sake of maintaining the long-existing *status quo* of the border between the two countries pending an over-all settlement of the question, Chinese troops have never crossed that line. Premier Chou En-lai made this point quite clear to Prime Minister Nehru at the end of 1956. We regret that Prime Minister Nehru should have interpreted Premier Chou En-lai's words as meaning that China recognised or was prepared to recognise the McMahon line, and accordingly has charged that China has now changed its attitude towards the McMahon line, giving rise to a feeling of lack of mutual confidence. It is our view that a feeling of mutual confidence must come from correct mutual understanding....

"How can the attempt to impose on China the product of the British imperialist policy of aggression, seizure of Chinese territory by force and the whipping up of a frantic anti-Chinese campaign be described as fair-play toward China and not coercion against China? As a matter of fact, for more than six months since the outbreak of the rebellion in Tibet, activities unfriendly to China have continued in India. Here, I would like to point out particularly that, although the Indian Government repeatedly stated that it has only granted asylum in India to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan rebels, but does not recognise the presence in

India of a Tibetan Government led by the Dalai Lama, nor allows the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan rebels to engage in political activities against China, nor favours the submission by them of the so-called Tibet question to the United Nations, yet, under the instigation of the Tibetan rebels, the Dalai Lama has all along been engaged in political activities against China and has raised the so-called Tibet question in the United Nations in the name of the so-called Government of Tibet, thus exceeding by far what is allowed under the international practice of asylum.

"Prime Minister Nehru said that the Indian Government always tried to steer a middle course. As a matter of fact, to put it more frankly the Indian Government has always used two-faced tactics. It is indeed extraordinary to adopt such tactics toward a friendly country."[†] (Italics mine)

The resolution of the Standing Committee said: "The Chinese Government has consistently held that an over-all settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question should be sought by both sides, taking into account the historical background and existing actualities and adhering to the Five Principles, through friendly negotiations conducted in a well-prepared way and step by step. Pending this, as a provisional measure, the two sides should maintain the long-existing *status quo*, and not seek to change it by unilateral action, still less by force; as to some of the disputes, provisional agreements concerning individual places could be reached through negotiations to ensure the tranquility of the border areas and uphold the friendship of the two countries. This stand and policy represent the strong will of the people throughout the country to defend the sacred territory of their motherland and their sincere desire to preserve Sino-Indian friendship.

"The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress expresses regret at the series of intrusions by Indian troops into Chinese territory and the anti-Chinese campaign recently fanned up by some right-wing politicians in India and expresses the hope that the Indian side would swiftly withdraw from the places into which it has intruded,

[†] *China Today*, No. 39, New Delhi, 1959.

stop the anti-Chinese agitation and start friendly negotiations with China for a peaceful settlement of the boundary question.

"The western imperialist forces and their agents in India are trying to take advantage of the Sino-Indian border incidents to disrupt the great friendship between China and India and change India's foreign policy of peace and neutrality. The Chinese people fervently hope that the Indian people will frustrate their vicious schemes, so that the common interests of the people of India, China and the other countries of Asia may be safeguarded."⁸

This proved conclusively that China had no intention to vacate her aggression against India and give up territories which she had occupied. She did not accept any general principle for fixing the boundary between India and Tibet. The primary intention was to throw the whole of the Indian frontier in doubt and start interminable discussions in which the Chinese are past masters. In the process of the long drawn talks, they could alter the *status quo* to suit their convenience and hold the Indian Government to ransom as it were. Mr Nehru was apparently aware of the risk involved in opening the whole issue of the Sino-Indian frontier and thus getting bogged down in endless discussions.

In his reply of September 26, the Indian Prime Minister asserted that the whole northern boundary had been settled for centuries by history, geography, customs and tradition. Expressing willingness to discuss minor border rectifications in some places, Mr Nehru said that any such discussions should be on the basis that the frontier was on the whole well-known and beyond dispute. "The Government of India cannot discuss the Chinese claim to nearly 40,000 square miles of what has been for many decades and in some places for centuries an integral part of Indian territory," he said.

Reiterating the need for maintenance of the *status quo* pending discussions on the border alignment in a particular sector, Mr Nehru said that both sides should respect the traditional frontier. So far as the Government of India were concerned at no place had they any personnel on the

⁸ *Ibid*

Tibetan side of the traditional frontier. On the other hand, Chinese personnel were now found to be at various places in eastern Ladakh and at Longju in NEFA. The Government of India had withdrawn its outpost at Tamaden when it discovered that it was slightly to the north of the McMahon line. China had not reciprocated this gesture and vacated Longju and part of Ladakh which she had illegally occupied.

The Prime Minister rejected Mr Chou En-lai's suggestion that the tense situation on the border had been caused by India's trespassing and provocation. It was the Chinese troops, he said, who had trespassed into Indian territory across the traditional border at a number of places in recent years. Mr Nehru said in contrast to the restraint and moderation exercised by India despite the regrettable happenings, Chinese forces assumed "a threatening attitude at a number of places and at others they actually came into our territory." Such incidents concerning the integrity of India were very serious, but in her anxiety not to create feelings against the Chinese Government, India deliberately avoided giving publicity to them.

Mr Nehru's reply refuted in detail the assertions made in Mr Chou En-lai's letter regarding various sectors of the Sino-Indian boundary. Concerning the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet, he asserted that it was incorrect to say that the then Chinese Central Government did not send anybody to participate in the conclusion of the treaty between Kashmir and Tibet in 1842. The treaty was signed by the representatives of both the Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China. If the treaty referred merely to the "old established frontiers," this was because these frontiers were well-known and did not require any formal delimitation.

The Chinese Government had never before suggested that this treaty was invalid or imprecise. The traditional frontier in this area was the main water-parting; and in course of time as this area was better surveyed, maps began to show the frontier in accordance with the line now shown in Indian maps rather than that claimed by China. Even official Chinese maps of the late nineteenth century, and a non-official Chinese atlas of the twentieth century, showed the