

TIBET

Proving Truth From Facts



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Note

At a time when the Tibetans and Chinese were in the process of initiating a fresh dialogue, the Chinese Government published a White Paper, *Tibet - Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation*, on September 22, 1992.

In April 1992 the Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi met Mr Gyalo Thondup, elder brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The Ambassador invited Mr Thondup to visit Beijing, stating that China's policy towards Tibetans in the past had been "conservative" and that if the Tibetans were prepared to adopt a "realistic" stand, the Chinese Government would be "flexible". His Holiness the Dalai Lama responded positively by approving the visit, which took place in June 1992.

Following this, His Holiness proposed to send a delegation to Beijing with a personal letter and a detailed memorandum to Chinese leaders Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. The delegation met with the Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi on September 17, 1992 to discuss their visit to Beijing. At the request of the Chinese Ambassador, copies of the letter and memorandum were given to him.

The Chinese Government's decision to publish the White Paper at a time like that caused widespread dismay and disappointment among the Tibetans, and it became necessary for the Tibetan Government-in-Exile to bring out in 1993 the first edition of this document, *Tibet: Proving Truth From Facts*, to explain the Tibetan position.

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Preface

As the international community takes an increasingly keen interest in the question of Tibet, the demand for information grows. The world is no longer obsessed with the political-ideological conflict between the two superpowers of the Cold War period, so that governments and non-governmental actors can, once again, turn to other burning problems, such as the situation in Tibet. Many governments are in the process of reviewing their foreign policy on many fronts. They should also thoroughly review their Tibet policy in line with the post-Cold War international reality.

Initiatives by parliaments and conferences in different parts of the world to address the human rights situation in Tibet and its underlying political cause, as well as moves by a growing number of countries to take up the issue again at the United Nations, have met with strong resistance from the Government of the People's Republic of China. One of the results has been a stream of propaganda booklets, following the Stalinist and Maoist tradition, intended to convince foreign readers of China's right to rule Tibet and the great benefits it has brought to the people of Tibet.

The present document, *Tibet: Proving Truth from Facts*, is intended to respond to the new demand for concise information on key points of the Tibetan question. At the same time, it serves as a response to Chinese propaganda, particularly the booklet issued in 1992 by the State Council under the title *Tibet - Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation*, published as a White Paper. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile does not have the resources to respond to each misrepresentation appearing in China's propaganda. But truth being on the side of the Tibetan people, we feel the need from time to time to restate the facts plainly, and trust that this will serve the cause of truth and justice.

This publication touches upon many areas of concern. It addresses the fundamental question of the status of Tibet, the invalidity of China's claim to "ownership" of Tibet, and the Tibetan people's right to self-determination; the "Seventeen-Point Agreement" and its effect on Tibet's status; the events surround-

ing the resistance to Chinese rule and the Dalai Lama's flight to India; the Tibetan social system before the Chinese occupation and democratic reforms initiated by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; human rights conditions in occupied Tibet; deprivation of religious freedom; the state of Tibet's environment; issues related to the militarization of Tibet; and the on-going initiatives to find a solution to the Question of Tibet.

One aspect of the Tibetan situation has been insufficiently highlighted in the past, even though it is fundamental to understanding the context of much of what is happening in Tibet today. This is the profoundly colonialist nature of Chinese rule in Tibet.

We tend to identify colonialism with European colonial expansion in the past two centuries. But, as the Malaysian, Irish and other governments pointed out during the United Nations General Assembly debates on the Question of Tibet, colonialism in all its manifestations must be brought to an end, whether perpetrated by countries in the West or in the East.

The Chinese themselves view Tibet in colonial terms: that is, not as a part of China proper, but as a non-Chinese territory which China has a right to own and exploit on the basis of a relationship that they claim existed seven hundred years ago, or, at best, two hundred years ago. This attitude is evident from the title of the Chinese Government's White Paper, which refers to the "ownership" by a country of which it is already a part. The very notion of "ownership" of Tibet by China is both colonialist and imperialist in nature.

Colonialism is characterized by a number of important elements, all of which are abundantly present in China's rule over Tibet. The most common characteristics of colonialism are:

- ⇒ Domination by an alien power
- ⇒ Acquisition of control through military force; unequal treaty
- ⇒ Frequent insistence that the colony is an integral part of the "mother" state
- ⇒ Maintenance of control through instruments of military or administrative and economic power in the hands of the colonial power
- ⇒ Active or passive rejection of alien domination by the colonized people

- ⇒ Suppression, by force if necessary, of persons opposing colonial rule
- ⇒ Chauvinism and discrimination
- ⇒ Imposition of alien cultural, social and ideological values claimed to be "civilizing"
- ⇒ Imposition of economic development programmes and the exploitation of natural resources of the colony, primarily for the benefit of the colonial power
- ⇒ Promotion of population transfer of citizens of the metropolitan state into the colony and other forms of demographic manipulation
- ⇒ Disregard for the natural environment of the colony and, in most cases,
- ⇒ An obsessive desire to hold on to the colony despite the political and economic cost

Most of these characteristics are discussed in this document. Some of these issues are also discussed in the Chinese White Paper on Tibet in a manner and style which only confirms the Chinese leadership's colonialist and imperialist view of Tibet.

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The Status of Tibet

AT the time of its invasion by troops of the People's Liberation Army of China in 1949, Tibet was an independent state in fact and at law. The military take-over constituted an aggression on a sovereign state and a violation of international law. Today's continued occupation of Tibet by China, with the help of several hundred thousand troops, represents an ongoing violation of international law and of the fundamental rights of the Tibetan people to independence.

The Chinese Communist government claims it has a right to "ownership" of Tibet. It does not claim this right on the basis of its military conquest in 1949, or its alleged effective control over Tibet since then, or since 1959. The Chinese Government also does not base its claim to "ownership" on the so-called "Seventeen-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" which it forced upon Tibet in 1951.

China's alleged legal claim is based on historical relationships — primarily of Mongol or Manchu rulers of China with Tibetan lamas and, to a lesser extent, of Chinese rulers and Tibetan lamas. The main events relied on by the Chinese Government occurred centuries ago: during the height of Mongol imperial expansion, when the Mongol emperors extended their political supremacy throughout most of Asia and large parts of Eastern Europe; and when Manchu emperors ruled China and expanded their influence throughout East and Central Asia, including Tibet, particularly in the eighteenth century.

It is not disputed that at different times in its long history Tibet came under various degrees of foreign influence: that of the Mongols, the Gorkhas of Nepal, the Manchu emperors of China and the British rulers of India. At other times in Tibet's history, it was Tibet which exercised power and influence on its neighbours, including China. It would be hard to find any state in the world today that has not been subjected to foreign domination or influence at some era in its history. In Tibet's case the degree and length of foreign influence and interference was quite limited. Moreover, the relationship with Mongol, Chinese and Manchu rulers, to the extent they had political significance,

was personal in nature and did not at any time imply a union or integration of the Tibetan state with, or into, a Chinese state.

However fascinating Tibet's ancient history may be, its status at the time of the Chinese invasion must, of course, be judged on the basis of its position in modern history, especially its relationship with China since 1911 when the Chinese overthrew foreign Manchu rule and became the masters of their own country. Every country can go back to some period in history to justify territorial claims on neighbouring states. That is unacceptable in international law and practice.

The reader of China's White Paper, *Tibet — Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation*, will be struck by the scant attention its authors pay to Tibet's modern history in the decades before 1949. This is because, from 1911 to the completion of the Chinese occupation in 1951, there is no evidence of Chinese authority or influence in Tibet to support China's claim. In fact, the preponderance of evidence shows precisely the opposite: that Tibet was to all intents and purposes a sovereign state, independent of China. This conclusion is supported by most legal scholars and experts on the subject.

The International Commission of Jurists' Legal Enquiry Committee on Tibet reported in its study on Tibet's legal status: "Tibet demonstrated from 1913 to 1950 the conditions of statehood as generally accepted under international law. In 1950 there was a people and a territory, and a government which functioned in that territory, conducting its own domestic affairs free from any outside authority. From 1913-1950 foreign relations of Tibet were conducted exclusively by the Government of Tibet, and countries with whom Tibet had foreign relations are shown by official documents to have treated Tibet in practice as an independent State." [*Tibet and Chinese People's Republic*, Geneva, 1960, p. 5,6.]

Forty years of independence is clearly sufficient time for a country to be regarded as such by the international community. Many members of the United Nations today have enjoyed a similar, or even shorter, period of independence. But in Tibet's case, even its ancient history has been selectively re-written by the Chinese Government's propaganda machine to serve the purpose of defending its claim to "ownership". Thus, even if it

is not necessary to discuss Tibet's early history in order to understand its status on the eve of China's military invasion, we believe it is useful to review it briefly, just to set the record straight.

The status of Tibet: 1911-1951

There can be little argument that on the eve of China's military invasion, which started at the close of 1949, Tibet possessed all the attributes of independent statehood recognized under international law: a defined territory, a population inhabiting that territory, a government, and the ability to enter into international relations.

The **territory** of Tibet largely corresponds to the geological plateau of Tibet, which consists of 2.5 million square kilometres. At different times in history wars were fought and treaties signed concerning the precise location of boundaries.

The **population** of Tibet at the time of the Chinese invasion was approximately six million. That population constituted the Tibetan people, a distinct people with a long history, rich culture and spiritual tradition. Tibetans are a people distinct from the Chinese and other neighbouring peoples. Not only have the Tibetans never considered themselves to be Chinese, the Chinese have also not regarded the Tibetans to be Chinese (hence, for example, the references to "barbarians" in Chinese historical annals).

The **government** of Tibet was headquartered in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet. It consisted of a Head of State (the Dalai Lama), a Cabinet of Ministers (the Kashag), a National Assembly (the Tsongdu), and an extensive bureaucracy to administer the vast territory of Tibet. The judicial system was based on that developed by Emperor Songtsen Gampo (seventh century), Lama Changchub Gyaltzen (fourteenth century), the Fifth Dalai Lama (seventeenth century) and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (twentieth century), and was administered by magistrates appointed by the Government.

The Government of Tibet levied taxes, minted its own currency, ran the country's postal system and issued postage stamps, commanded Tibet's small army, and generally conducted all af-

fairs of government. It was an ancient form of government which had served the needs of Tibet well in the past, but was in need of reform for the country to keep pace with the great political, social and economic changes that were taking place in the world. The Tibetan form of government was highly de-centralized, with many districts and principalities of Tibet enjoying a large degree of self-government. This was, to a large extent, inevitable due to the vastness of the territory and the lack of modern communication systems.

The **international relations** of Tibet were focused on the country's neighbours. Tibet maintained diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with countries in the region such as Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Mongolia, China, British India, and, to a limited extent, with Russia and Japan.

Tibet's independent foreign policy is perhaps most obviously demonstrated by the country's neutrality during World War II. Despite strong pressure from Britain, the U.S.A. and China to allow the passage of military supplies through Tibet to China when Japan blocked the strategically vital "Burma Road", Tibet held fast to its declared neutrality. The Allies were constrained to respect this.

China today claims that "no country ever recognized Tibet". In international law, recognition can be obtained by an explicit act of recognition or by implicit acts or behaviour. The conclusion of treaties, even the conduct of negotiations, and certainly the maintenance of diplomatic relations are forms of recognition. Mongolia and Tibet concluded a formal treaty of recognition in 1913; Nepal not only concluded peace treaties with Tibet and maintained an Ambassador in Lhasa, but also formally stated to the United Nations in 1949, as part of its application for UN membership, that it maintained independent diplomatic relations with Tibet as it did with several other countries including the United Kingdom, the United States, India and Burma.

Nepal, Bhutan, Britain, China and India maintained diplomatic missions in Tibet's capital, Lhasa. Although China claims in its propaganda that its mission in Tibet was a branch office of the so-called Commission of Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs of the Guomindang Government, the Tibetan Government only recognized this as a diplomatic mission. Its status was no higher

than the Nepalese Embassy (Nepal had a full Ambassador or “Vakil” in Lhasa) or the British Mission.

The Tibetan Foreign Office also conducted limited relations with the United States when President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent emissaries to Lhasa to request assistance for the Allied war effort against Japan during the Second World War. Also, during the four UN General Assembly debates on Tibet in 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1965, many countries expressly referred to Tibet as an independent country illegally occupied by China.

Relations with Nationalist China

China’s position was ambiguous during this period (1911-49). On the one hand, the Nationalist Government unilaterally announced in its constitution and in communications to other countries that Tibet was a province of the Republic of China (one of the “five races” of the Republic). On the other hand, it recognized that Tibet was not part of the Republic of China in its official communications with the Government of Tibet. Thus, China’s President repeatedly sent letters and envoys to the Dalai Lama and to the Tibetan Government asking that Tibet “join” the Republic of China. Similar messages were sent by China to the Government of Nepal. Both Tibet and Nepal consistently refused to join China.

In response to the first letter of Chinese President Yuan Shikai, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama rejected the invitation to join the Republic, explaining courteously but firmly that Tibetans did “not approve” of the Chinese Government due to past injustices and stated:

“The Republic has only just been proclaimed and the national foundations are far from strong. It behooves the President to exert his energies towards the maintenance of order. As for Thibet, the Thibetans are quite capable of preserving their existence intact and there is no occasion for the President to worry himself at this distance or to be discomposd.”[*Guomin Gongbao*, January 6, 1913]

In China’s White Paper, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama is quoted as having told the “envoy” sent by “Beijing” in 1919 that, “It is not my true intention to be on intimate terms with the British...

I swear to be loyal to our country and jointly work for the happiness of the five races.”

In that year an *unofficial* Chinese delegation went to Lhasa, ostensibly to present religious offerings to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, but in reality to urge the Tibetan leader to negotiate an agreement with China. However, the Dalai Lama rejected the overture outright and, instead, called for tripartite negotiations in Lhasa.

Liu Manqing, a woman of mixed Tibetan and Chinese parentage, did arrive in Lhasa in 1930. But her visit was described as personal. However, during a purportedly personal visit, she tried to approach the Tibetan Government with communications from the Chinese President, but the Tibetans gave her no encouragement.

In China's White Paper, it is stated that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, in his communications through her, expressed his belief that Tibet is a part of China. The Dalai Lama is quoted as having said, “My greatest wish is for the real peace and unification of China”, etc. There is no historical record of the Dalai Lama having made such a statement in 1930. On the contrary, the official record of the Dalai Lama's reply to the Chinese President in 1930 contradicts this statement. The record refers to a list of eight questions submitted to the Dalai Lama on behalf of the Chinese President and contains each of the Dalai Lama's responses.

On relations with China and Chinese influence in Tibet, the Dalai Lama said: “For the stability of Tibet's religio-political order and the happiness of its subjects, it may be better to hold negotiations and conclude treaties as this will result in dependable arrangements.”

On Tibet's independence and the border territories Tibet wanted returned from China, the Dalai Lama said: “Under the priest-patron relationship that prevailed so far, Tibet has enjoyed wide independence. We wish to preserve this. We feel that there will be long-term stability if the territories we have lost to outsiders are returned to us.” [*Record of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's communication*, dated 15th day of the 4th Tibetan Month, Iron Horse Year, 1930].

Other Chinese envoys to Tibet, such as General Huang

Musung (1934), and Wu Zhongxin (1940), were also told in no uncertain terms by the Tibetan Government that Tibet was, and wished to remain, independent. It may be stated here that neither the Chinese Government, nor its “special envoy” (Huang Musung), had any role, as claimed in the White Paper, in the appointment of Reting Rinpoche as the regent after the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933.

Huang Musung was the first Chinese to be permitted to enter Tibet in an official capacity since 1911. The Tibetans did not refuse him permission, because he purportedly came to offer religious tribute and condolences for the late Dalai Lama, an act for which Tibetans hardly refused permission to anyone.

Huang Musung arrived in Lhasa in April 1934, three months after Reting Rinpoche became Regent. The Tsongdu (National Assembly) had nominated three candidates for the regency; Reting Rinpoche, Gaden Tripa Yeshe Wangdhen and Phurchok Rinpoche. Out of them, Reting Rinpoche was selected through a dough-ball rotating ceremony conducted in front of the statue of Avalokitesvara in the Potala. [Thupten Tenthar Lawutara in *Bhod ki Lo-rGyud Rig-gNes dPyed gShe rGyu-cha bDams BsGrigs*, Vol. 12, People’s Publishing House, Beijing, 1990]

In the White Paper, China claims that Tibetan Government officials were sent to participate in China’s National Assembly sessions in 1931 and 1946 in Nanjing.

In fact, in 1931, Khenpo Kunchok Jungne was appointed by the Dalai Lama to set up a temporary liaison office in Nanjing, China, and maintain contact with the Chinese Government. Likewise, in 1946 a Tibetan mission was sent to Delhi and Nanjing to congratulate Britain, the United States and China on the Allied victory in the Second World War. They had no instruction or authority to attend the Chinese National Assembly. Speaking about this to the International Commission of Jurists’ Legal Inquiry Committee on August 29, 1959, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama said, “They (Tibetan delegates in Nanjing) had no official part in the Assembly. When the propaganda came to the knowledge of our Government they were instructed by telegram not to attend.”

As for the establishment of the Commission for Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs by the Nationalist Guomindang Government,

that too served only to bolster a myth; to this day, the Guomindang Government in Taiwan maintains this Commission which, it claims, not only has jurisdiction over Tibet, but also over the whole of Mongolia, including Outer Mongolia, whose independence has been internationally recognized since 1924. In fact, this Commission was not recognized by the Tibetan Government and never had any authority with respect to Tibet.

United Nations Debates

When Chinese Communist armies started entering Tibet in 1949, the Tibetan Government sent an urgent appeal to the United Nations to help Tibet resist the aggression. The General Assembly was advised by Britain and India not to take any action for the time being in order not to provoke a full-scale attack by China. But, to most countries, China's attack on Tibet was aggression.

This became especially evident during the full debates on the issue in the United Nations General Assembly in 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1965, when many governments echoed the sentiments expressed by the Ambassador of the Philippines who referred to Tibet as an "independent nation" and added: "(I)t is clear that on the eve of the Chinese invasion in 1950, Tibet was not under the rule of any foreign country." He described China's occupation as "the worst type of imperialism, and colonialism past or present." The Nicaraguan representative condemned the Chinese invasion of Tibet and said: "The people of America, born in freedom, must obviously be repelled by an act of aggression ... and particularly when it is perpetrated by a large state against a small and weak one." The representative from Thailand reminded the Assembly that the majority of states "refute the contention that Tibet is part of China." Similarly the Government of the United States condemned and denounced Chinese "aggression" and their "invasion" of Tibet.

Irish Representative Frank Aiken stated: "For thousands of years, or for a couple of thousand years at any rate, (Tibet) was as free and as fully in control of its own affairs as any nation in this Assembly, and a thousand times more free to look after its

own affairs than many of the nations here.” [UN GA Docs A/PV 898 1960; A/PV 1394, 1401 1965]

In fact, during those debates, it was only the Communist bloc which openly sided with China on the issue. From the official statements made during those debates, it is clear that China’s assertion that no country ever recognized Tibet’s independence, or considered their military intervention to be aggression, is simply not true.

Conclusion

The Chinese Government cannot deny the fact that Tibet was independent between 1911 and 1951 without distorting history. Even China’s last Head of Mission in Lhasa, Shen Tsung-Lien, wrote after leaving the country in 1948 that “since 1911 Lhasa (i.e. the Tibetan Government in Lhasa) has to all practical purposes enjoyed full independence”. [*Tibet and the Tibetans*, Shen, T. and Liu, S., New York, 1973, p.62] Mao Zedong himself, when he passed through the border regions of Tibet during the Long March, and was given food and shelter by local Tibetans, remarked: “This is our only *foreign* debt, and some day we must pay the Mantzu (sic) and the Tibetans for the provisions we were obliged to take from them.” [*Red Star over China*, Edgar Snow, New York, 1961, p.214. Emphasis added, ed.]

The origin and position of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama

China’s White Paper states, “In 1653 and 1713, the Qing emperors granted honorific titles to the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Fifth Bainqen (Panchen) Lama, henceforth establishing the titles of the Dalai Lama and the Bainqen Erdini and their political and religious status in Tibet. The Dalai Lama ruled the bulk of areas from Lhasa while the Bainqen Erdini ruled the remaining area of Tibet from Xigatse (Shigatse).” This claim is absolutely baseless.

The Tibetan religious scholar and sage Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) founded the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. It became the fourth major school of Tibetan Buddhism, the others

being the Nyingma, the Sakya and the Kagyu. Panchen Gedun Drup was Tsongkhapa's principal disciple.

Panchen Gedun Drup's third incarnation, Sonam Gyatso, was invited to the Mongol Court of Altan Khan who first conferred the title of "Talai (Dalai) Lama" on him. The title was applied retrospectively to his two previous incarnations, making him the Third Dalai Lama. Thus began the line of the Dalai Lamas. It is thus not true, as Chinese propaganda claims, that the title "Dalai Lama" was first established by a Manchu emperor a century later.

The relationship established by the Third Dalai Lama with Altan Khan was a spiritual one, but it would have political repercussions two centuries later, in 1642, when the Mongol prince, Gushri Khan, helped the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) to become the supreme political and spiritual ruler of Tibet. The Fifth Dalai Lama, in his turn, conferred the title of "Choekyi Gyalpo" (Dharma Raja) to his Mongol patron. From that time on, successive Dalai Lamas ruled Tibet as sovereign heads of state. The political position of the Dalai Lamas was, therefore, not established by a Manchu emperor of the Qing Dynasty, as claimed in the White Paper, but by the Fifth Dalai Lama with the help of his Mongol patron, two years *before* the Qing Dynasty was even established.

Tashilhunpo Monastery was established in 1447 by Panchen Gedun Drup, retrospectively known as the First Dalai Lama. Successive abbots of Tashilhunpo monastery were given the title "Panchen" because of their scholarship. The Fifth Dalai Lama gave his teacher, Panchen Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen (1570-1662), the ownership of Tashilhunpo monastery and some additional estates. After that, the Panchen Lamas were selected on the basis of reincarnation, each successive Panchen Lama retaining ownership of the monastery and estates. This situation was common among many incarnate lamas, such as the Sakya, Phagpa-la, Dakyab Loden Sherab, etc., who had been given estates by the Tibetan Government. But this had absolutely no political significance.

Contrary to Chinese Communist propaganda, the Panchen Lamas and other high lamas exercised religious authority only and were not involved in the political administration of any part

of Tibet. In fact, the political authority of Shigatse and Tashilhunpo lay with the district governor appointed by Lhasa.

Thus, the Manchu emperor played no role in the establishment of the religious or political status of the Dalai Lama, and none with respect to the Panchen Lama's position either.

After the invasion of Tibet the Chinese Communist government consistently tried to use the late Panchen Lama to legitimize its position in Tibet. Beijing appointed him to political positions and urged him to denounce, and take the place of, the Dalai Lama on a number of occasions. But the Panchen Lama refused to do so, and suffered many years of imprisonment and maltreatment as a result.

The Chinese Government claims in the White Paper, as did past Guomindang governments, that it played a decisive role, through its envoy Wu Zhongxin, in the selection and installation of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1940 and states that "the simple reality that the installation of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama needed the approval of the (Chinese) national government is sufficient proof that Tibet did not possess any independent power during that period (1911-1949]."

In reality, the Dalai Lama was selected according to the age-old religious beliefs and traditions of the Tibetans and no approval of the Chinese Government was needed or sought. It was in 1939, one year prior to Wu's arrival in Lhasa, that Regent Reting announced the name of the present Dalai Lama to the Tibetan National Assembly. This unanimously confirmed the candidate.

When the enthronement ceremony took place on February 22, 1940, Wu, like envoys from Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and British India, had no special role. Sir Basil Gould, the British Political Officer who represented British India, explains that the official Chinese version of events was a fiction which had been prepared and published *before* the enthronement. That fictitious account by Wu Zhongxin, which China today relies on, reflected what the Chinese had *intended* to happen, but what did not in fact occur.

Chinese propaganda has also used a Chinese news report featuring a photograph of the Dalai Lama with Wu Zhongxin, captioned as having been taken during the enthronement ceremony.

But according to Ngabo Ngawang Jigme, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, this photo was taken a few days after the ceremony, when Wu had a private audience with the Dalai Lama.

“Wu Zhongxin’s claim of having presided over the enthronement ceremony on the basis of this photograph is a blatant distortion of historical facts,” Ngabo said in *Tibet Daily* on August 31, 1989.

Early history

According to Tibetan annals, the first king of Tibet ruled from 127 BC, but it was only in the seventh century AD that Tibet emerged as a unified state and a mighty empire under Emperor Songtsen Gampo. With his rule, an era of political and military supremacy and territorial expansion started that lasted for three centuries. The King of Nepal and the Emperor of China offered their daughters to the Tibetan Emperor in marriage.

The marriages with the Nepalese and Chinese princesses were of particular importance, because they played vital roles in the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Chinese propaganda always refers to political implications of Songtsen Gampo’s wedding to the Chinese imperial princess Wen Cheng, conveniently ignoring the Tibetan ruler’s other consorts, particularly his Nepalese bride, whose influence was, if anything, greater than that of her Chinese counterpart.

Tibetan Emperor Trisong Detsen (reign: 755-797) expanded the Tibetan empire by conquering parts of China. In 763 China’s capital Chang’an (modern day Xian) was invaded and China had to pay an annual tribute to Tibet. In 783 a treaty was concluded which laid down the borders between Tibet and China. A pillar inscription at the foot of the Potala Palace in Lhasa bears witness to some of these conquests.

The peace treaty, concluded between Tibet and China in 821, is of particular importance in illustrating the nature of relations between these two great powers of Asia. The text of this treaty, both in Tibetan and Chinese, was inscribed on three stone pillars: one was erected in Gungu Meru to demarcate the borders between the two nations, the second in Lhasa where it still stands,

and the third in the Chinese capital of Chang'an. Passages quoted from the pillars in the White Paper are *inaccurate* and *out of context*, and aimed at creating the impression that some sort of "union" resulted from the treaty. Nothing is further from the truth, as is clear from the following principal passage of that treaty: "Tibet and China shall abide by the frontiers of which they are now in occupation. All to the east is the country of great China; and all to the west is, without question, the country of great Tibet. Henceforth, on neither side shall there be waging of war nor seizing of territory."

It is hard to see how China can, in its White Paper, interpret these events as showing that "the Tibetans and Hans (Chinese) had, through marriage between royal families and meetings leading to alliances, cemented political and kinship ties of unity and political friendship, and formed close economic and cultural relations, laying a solid foundation for the ultimate founding of a unified nation." In fact, the historical records, both Tibetan and Chinese, contradict such an interpretation and refer to separate and powerful empires.

In the mid-ninth century the Tibetan state fragmented into several principalities. Tibetan attention focused on India and Nepal from where a strong religious and cultural influence brought about a major spiritual and intellectual renaissance.

Relations with the Mongol Emperors (1240-1350)

The Mongol ruler Genghis Khan and his successors conquered vast territories in Asia and Europe creating one of the largest empires the world has ever known, stretching from the Pacific to eastern Europe. In 1207 the Tangut empire north of Tibet fell to the advancing Mongols and, in 1271, the Mongols announced the establishment of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty to rule the eastern part of the empire. By 1279 the Chinese Sung dynasty in southern China fell before the advancing armies and the Mongols completed their conquest of China. Today, China claims the Yuan Dynasty to be its own dynasty and, by doing so, it lays claim to all Mongol conquests, at least in the eastern half of the Mongol Empire.

Prince Goden, grandson of Genghis Khan, dispatched an

expedition to Tibet in 1240 and invited one of Tibet's leading religious hierarchs, Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182-1251), to his court, thus establishing an enduring Tibetan-Mongol relationship. Here began the unique *chö-yön* (priest-patron) relationship. Kublai Khan, who succeeded Goden Khan, embraced Tibetan Buddhism and adopted Drogon Choegyal Phagpa, nephew of Sakya Pandita, as his spiritual mentor.

This *chö-yön* relationship resulted in Kublai adopting Buddhism as his empire's state religion, and Phagpa became its highest spiritual authority. In gratitude, Kublai Khan offered his Tibetan lama political authority over all Tibet in 1254, conferring various titles on him.

These early *chö-yön* relationships were followed by many similar relationships between Mongol princes and Tibetan noble families and Tibetan lamas. This unique Central Asian relationship also formed the basis of later relations between Manchu emperors and successive Dalai Lamas. The *chö-yön* relationship itself was purely a personal one arising from the religious devotion of the patron for the priest and continued to exist even if the political status of the patron changed. This was evident in the Mongol-Tibetan relationship, which continued to exist even after the fall of the Yuan Dynasty.

An essential element of the *chö-yön* relationship was the protection that the patron provided his lama in return, not for the latter's allegiance, but for his religious teachings and blessings. Some *chö-yön* relationships acquired important political dimensions and the patron was expected to provide military support to protect the lama and his teaching or 'church'. Superiority of the protector was not implied, as Chinese propaganda suggests, since the lay patron was the student and worshipper of his lama.

When Buddhism became the state religion in the eastern part of the Mongol empire and the Sakya Lama (Phagpa) its highest spiritual authority, the Mongol-Tibetan relationship could be best described in terms of mutual interdependence. This concept provided for dual political and religious paramountcy of the worldly emperor and the spiritual leader on the basis of equality and interdependence. While the spiritual leader depended on the emperor for protection and for backing in ruling Tibet, the

conquering emperor depended on the lama to provide the legitimacy for his rule of the Mongol Empire.

It is undeniable that Mongol emperors spread their influence over Tibet. But, contrary to the assertion made in the Chinese White Paper that, “In the mid-thirteenth century Tibet was officially incorporated into the territory of China’s Yuan Dynasty”, none of the Mongol rulers ever made any attempt to administer Tibet directly: Tibet did not even pay taxes to the Mongol empire, and it certainly was never considered part of China by the Mongol emperors.

Tibet broke its political relationship with the Mongols in 1350 when the Tibetan king, Changchub Gyaltsen (reign: 1350-1364), replaced the Sakya lamas as the most powerful ruler of Tibet. Changchub Gyaltsen did away with Mongol influences in the Tibetan administrative system and introduced a new and distinctly Tibetan one. He also enacted a Code of Law (*Trimyig Shelchey Chonga*, 15-Article Code), for the administration of justice in the kingdom. The Chinese regained their independence from Mongol rule and established the Ming Dynasty eighteen years after that.

Relations with Chinese Emperors (1368-1644)

The White Paper claims that the Chinese Ming Dynasty “replaced the Yuan Dynasty in China and inherited the right to rule Tibet”. But there is no historical basis for this assertion. As shown above, the relationship between Mongol khans or emperors and Tibetan lamas predated the Mongol conquest of China. Similarly, Tibet broke with the Mongol emperors before China regained its independence from them. The Chinese Ming emperors inherited no relationship from the Mongols. On the other hand, Mongol Khans continued to maintain their intensive religious and cultural ties with Tibetans, often in the form of *chö-yön* relationship, for centuries afterwards.

Even if the Mongols did exercise influence in Tibet, it is still too presumptuous on the part of China to claim inheritance of Tibet through erstwhile Mongol rulers of China when an independent Outer Mongolia today exists as the only legitimate representative of the Mongolian people and nation.

Contacts between Tibet and Ming China were spasmodic and largely limited to visits by individual lamas of various, sometimes rival, monasteries to China, and the granting of honorific imperial titles or gifts by the Chinese Emperor to them. These visits are recorded in Tibetan histories of the fifteenth to seventeenth century, but there is no evidence whatsoever of political subordination of Tibet or its rulers to China or the Ming Emperors. In its White Paper, the Chinese Government alleges that these contacts with individual lamas demonstrate Ming authority in and over Tibet. But since Tibet was not ruled by any of those lamas, whatever the nature of their contacts with China, they could not affect the independent status of Tibet.

From 1350 Tibet was ruled by the princes of Phagmodru and then, from about 1481, by the Rimpung dynasty. In 1406 the ruling Phagmodru prince, Dakpa Gyaltsen, turned down the imperial invitation to him to visit China. This clearly shows the sovereign authority of Tibetan rulers at that time. From about 1565 until the rise to power of the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642 (two years before the fall of the Ming Dynasty), the kings of Tsang ruled Tibet. There are indications of sporadic diplomatic relations between some of these rulers and Ming emperors, but the latter exercised neither authority nor influence over them.

In 1644 the Chinese emperors were once again overthrown by foreign conquerors. The Manchus succeeded in establishing their own imperial dynasty, which ruled over a large empire, the most important part of which was China. They called it the Qing Dynasty.

Relations with the Manchus (1639-1911)

In 1642 the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, with the help of his Mongol patron Gushri Khan, became the supreme political and religious ruler of unified Tibet. Since then, Tibetans regarded him as their “Gongsa Chenpo” or “The Supreme Sovereign”. His prestige was recognized far beyond Tibet’s borders. The Fifth Dalai Lama not only maintained a close relationship with the Mongols but also developed intimate ties with the Manchu rulers.

In 1639, before the Dalai Lama acquired supreme political power and also before the Manchu conquest of China and the

establishment of the Qing Dynasty, Manchu Emperor Tai Tsung invited the Dalai Lama to his capital, Mukden (present-day Shenyang). Unable to accept the invitation personally, the Dalai Lama sent his envoy who was treated with great respect by the emperor. Thus the *chö-yön* relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu rulers was established.

As was true of the Tibetan relationship with the Mongol emperors, the links developed between Tibetans and the Manchu emperors did not involve China. As Owen Lattimore points out in reference to the Qing Dynasty, “what existed in fact was a Manchu Empire, of which China formed only one part.” [*Studies in Frontier History*].

Having conquered China and annexed it to the Manchu empire, Emperor Shunzi invited the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1653 for a state visit to the imperial capital. In an unprecedented sign of respect, the Manchu emperor made a four-day journey outside his capital (Peking) to receive the Tibetan sovereign and foremost spiritual leader of Central Asian Buddhists. Commenting on the Dalai Lama’s visit, W.W. Rockhill, an American scholar and diplomat in China, wrote: “(The Dalai Lama) had been treated with all the ceremony which could have been accorded to any independent sovereign, and nothing can be found in Chinese works to indicate that he was looked upon in any other light; at this period of China’s relations with Tibet, the temporal power of the Lama, backed by the arms of Gusri Khan and the devotion of all Mongolia, was not a thing for the Emperor of China to question.” [*The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations With Emperors of China, 1644-1908*, T’oung Pao 11, 1910, p.37]

On this occasion the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor bestowed unprecedented high complimentary titles *upon each other* and the *chö-yön* relationship was reaffirmed. In the White Paper, the Chinese Government refers only to the honorific title given by the Emperor to the Dalai Lama, but conveniently omits any mention of the similar honorific title granted by the Dalai Lama to the Emperor. Chinese propaganda infers that it was this deed by the Manchu Emperor which conferred the legal right to the Dalai Lama to rule Tibet. This interpretation intentionally misses the point of the event, namely that titles

were *exchanged* by two sovereign leaders. If the Dalai Lama was dependent on his imperial title for the exercise of his authority, then so was the Manchu Emperor dependent on the title granted by the Dalai Lama for the exercise of *his* authority.

Throughout the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) relations between Tibet and the Manchu Emperors remained formally based on the *chö-yön* relationship. The Manchu Emperor readily responded to the appeals for help to drive out invading Dzungar Mongols and escort the newly-discovered Seventh Dalai Lama to the Tibetan capital in 1720.

Manchu forces entered Tibet on three more occasions in the eighteenth century, once to protect Tibet against invading Gorkha forces from Nepal (1792), and twice to restore order after civil wars (1728 and 1751). Each time they came at the request of the Tibetans, and each time the *chö-yön* relationship was invoked.

The Manchus did succeed in establishing some degree of influence in Tibet during those crisis periods. But their influence declined rapidly afterwards, rendering them unable to play any role when Tibet fought wars against invaders from Jammu (1841-1842), Nepal (1855-1856), and British India (1903-1904). By the mid-nineteenth century the Manchu emperor's role (and the related role of the *amban*) was only nominal.

The White Paper devotes considerable attention to Emperor Qianlong's so-called twenty-nine-article edict, or regulations, of 1793 concerning Tibet, and to the appointment of *ambans* (ambassadors). It presents the "regulations" as if they were an imperial order proving extensive Manchu authority in Tibet. In reality, the twenty-nine points were suggestions made by the emperor for certain reforms of the Government of Tibet following its war with Nepal. The *ambans* were not viceroys or administrators, but were essentially ambassadors appointed to look after Manchu interests, and to protect the Dalai Lama on behalf of the emperor.

In 1792 the Gorkhas of Nepal invaded Tibet following a dispute between Tibet and Nepal and the Dalai Lama appealed to the Manchu emperor for help. The emperor sent a large army which helped Tibet drive out the Gorkhas, and mediated a treaty of peace between Tibet and Nepal. Since this was the fourth

time the emperor was asked to send troops to fight for the Tibetan Government, he wanted some say in Tibetan affairs in order to prevent Tibetans from becoming involved in conflicts which might again precipitate requests for the Manchu Court's military involvement.

The "regulations" were suggestions made in the context of the emperor's protector role, rather than an order from a ruler to his subjects. This emerges clearly from the statement made by the imperial envoy and commander of the Manchu army, General Fu K'ang-an, to the Eighth Dalai Lama, which goes thus:

"The Emperor issued detailed instructions to me, the Great General, to discuss all the points, one by one, in great length. This demonstrates the Emperor's concern that Tibetans come to no harm and that their welfare be ensured in perpetuity. There is no doubt that the Dalai Lama, acknowledging his gratitude to the Emperor, will accept these suggestions once all the points are discussed and agreed upon. However, if the Tibetans insist on clinging to their age-old habits, the Emperor will withdraw the Ambans and the garrison after the troops are pulled out. Moreover, if similar incidents occur in the future, the Emperor will have nothing to do with them. The Tibetans may, therefore, decide for themselves as to what is in their favour and what is not or what is heavy and what is light, and make a choice on their own." [Quoted from Ya Han Chang's *Biography of the Dalai Lama in Bhod ki Lo rGyus Rags Rims gYu Yi Phrengba*, Vol 2, Published by Tibet Institute of Social Science, Lhasa, 1991, p.316].

Rather than accepting or rejecting the Emperor's suggestion, Tibetans adopted some of the twenty-nine points which were perceived to be beneficial to them, and disregarded those they thought to be unsuitable. As Panchen Choekyi Nyima, the predecessor of the Late Panchen Lama, said: "Where Chinese policy was in accordance with their own views, the Tibetans were ready to accept the *amban's* advice; but ... if this advice ran counter in any respect to their national prejudices, the Chinese Emperor himself would be powerless to influence them." [Diary of Capt. O'Connor, September 4, 1903].

Among the important suggestions of this "twenty-nine-point

edict” was the emperor’s proposal for the selection of great incarnate lamas, including the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas, by drawing lots from a golden urn. This important task, however, remained the responsibility of the Tibetan Government and high lamas, who continued to select reincarnations according to religious traditions. Thus — even on the first occasion when the golden urn should have been employed for the selection of the Ninth Dalai Lama in 1808 — Tibetans disregarded it.

Another important point of this “edict” was the role of *ambans*. The *amban*’s role resembled that of an ambassador, at times, and that of a resident in a classical protectorate relationship, at other times. It is best defined in the explanation Amban Yu Tai gave in 1903 to Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary of the Government of India (as reported by him), “he was only a guest in Lhasa — not a master — and he could not put aside the real masters, and as such he had no force to speak of.” [*Sir Mortimer Durand: A Biography*, by Sir Percy Sykes, London 1926, p.166].

Similarly, two Lazarist missionaries, Huc and Gabet, who were in Lhasa in the mid-nineteenth century, described the position of the *ambans* as follows: “the Government of Tibet resembles that of the Pope and the position occupied by the Chinese Ambassadors was the same as that of the Austrian Ambassador at Rome.” [*Decouverte du Thibet, 1845-1846*, M. Huc, 1933, p.50]. The reference to “Chinese Ambassadors” is a common misnomer, because the Manchu Emperors were careful to appoint *not* Chinese *ambans* but Manchus or Mongolians, a fact which stressed that the appointment of the *amban* was an extension of the protector’s role in the *chö-yön* relationship, a relationship from which the Chinese were excluded.

The unprecedented invasion of Tibet by Manchu troops in 1908 was a turning point in relations between Tibet and the Manchu emperor. Previous imperial military expeditions had come to assist the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan Government at their invitation. But this time, the Manchu emperor attempted to establish his authority in Tibet by force, largely to remove increasing British influence in Tibet. In 1910 the Dalai Lama fled to neighbouring India, but the occupation of Tibet was short-lived. When the Manchu Emperor tried to “depose” the Dalai

Lama in 1910, the Dalai Lama declared the termination of the *chö-yön* relationship. The protector had attacked his lama and, thereby, violated the very foundation of their relationship.

Resistance to the invasion succeeded when the Manchu Empire collapsed in 1912 and Tibetans forced the occupation army to surrender. That summer Nepalese mediation between Tibet and China resulted in the conclusion of the “Three Point Agreement” providing for formal surrender and the expulsion of all remaining imperial troops. After returning to Lhasa, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama issued a proclamation reaffirming the independence of Tibet on February 14, 1913.

Relations with British India (1857-1911)

Since the end of the eighteenth century, Britain developed a keen interest in establishing trade with Tibet. Since all the Himalayan states which were closely linked to Lhasa had gradually been tied to British India by means of treaties and other agreements, Tibet feared it would also lose its independence if it did not resist British efforts to gain access to Tibet.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama steered Tibet on an independent course. This policy frustrated the British who feared, more than anything, that a Russian infiltration into Tibet would tip the balance of power in Central Asia. Unable to communicate effectively with Tibet, Britain approached the Manchu court for assistance in forcing Tibet to cooperate. The result was the conclusion, without Tibet’s participation or knowledge, of two treaties (1890 and 1893) between Britain and China which had provisions regarding Tibet. The Tibetan Government rejected these treaties as *ultra vires*, and this precipitated the British invasion of Tibet in 1903. The Manchu emperor did not then come to the assistance of Tibet and, as noted by Amban Yu Tai, disclaimed any responsibility for the action of the Tibetans. British troops left Lhasa within a year, after concluding a bilateral treaty, the Lhasa Convention, with the Tibetan Government.

The provisions of the Lhasa Convention necessarily pre-supposed the unrestricted sovereignty of Tibet in internal and external matters, otherwise Tibet could not legitimately have transferred to Britain the powers specified in the treaty. The Lhasa

Convention did not even acknowledge the existence of any special relationship between the Manchu Emperor and Tibet. The very act of concluding this Convention constituted an implicit recognition by Britain of Tibet as a state competent to conclude treaties on its own behalf without having to consult any external power.

In an effort to persuade China to cooperate, Britain convinced it to sign the Adhesion Agreement in 1906, once again, without the participation and knowledge of Tibet. That agreement and the 1907 agreement concluded between Britain and Russia, confirmed the existence of a sphere of British influence in Tibet and introduced the concept of Chinese “suzerainty” over Tibet — something neither Tibet nor the Manchu court accepted.

In 1908, during Tibet’s brief invasion by the Manchu army, Britain again signed a treaty concerning trade with Tibet with the Manchus, with no independent Tibetan participation.

Referring to the British concept of suzerainty, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, explained: “Chinese suzerainty over Tibet is a constitutional fiction — a political affectation which has only been maintained because of its convenience to both parties. ... As a matter of fact, the two Chinese (i.e. Manchu) Ambans at Lhasa are there not as Viceroys, but as Ambassadors.” [Papers CD 1920, No.66, GoI to IO, January 8, 1903. India Office Library].

Relations with India

When India became independent in 1947, it took over the British diplomatic Mission in Lhasa, and inherited the treaty relations of Britain with Tibet. Its recognition of Tibet was clear from the official communication the Indian Government sent to the Tibetan Foreign Office: “The Government of India would be glad to have an assurance that it is the intention of the Tibetan Government to continue relations on the existing basis until new arrangements are reached on matters that either party may wish to take up. This is the procedure adopted by all other countries with which India has inherited treaty relations from His Majesty’s Government.” [*Notes, Memoranda and Letters*

Self-determination

China's White Paper speaks about its alleged "ownership" of Tibet; it discusses broad issues relating to human rights, including social, economic and cultural rights, but does not address the fundamental question of the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination.

Under international law, populations which meet the criteria of "a people", possess the right to self-determination. Governments may not deny that right, and must act in accordance with it. In past decades, the right to self-determination has primarily been applied to colonial countries and peoples, but, particularly in recent years, the right is applied outside the context of decolonization also.

The Tibetan people clearly constitute a people under international law, as defined, among others, by the UNESCO International Meeting of Experts on Further Study of the Concept of the Rights of Peoples.

It is difficult to conceive of a better example of a distinct people, with all the characteristics fulfilled: commonalities in history, language, culture, ethnicity and other manifestations of shared identity and experience; numerousness, i.e., enough persons sharing common identity and experience to warrant recognition by the international community; the existence of institutions to give expression and effect to these commonalities; the will of a people to assert the right to self-determination.

The right to self-determination means the right of a people to "determine their own political status and to determine their economic, social and cultural development" free from outside interference. [*International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights*, Art. 1; and *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Art. 1;] Tibetans have been denied the exercise of this right since their country's invasion and occupation by China. Under international law, the PRC has the obligation to permit its exercise.

The implementation of the right to self-determination can

lead to integration with a state, association with a state or to independence, but the choice must be made by the people exercising their right to self-determination. This choice must be made freely, without any interference from outside that people. Thus, it is for the Tibetan people alone, without interference from China, to make the choice.

The Dalai Lama has, for many years, called on China to agree to the holding of an internationally-supervised plebiscite to determine the wishes of the Tibetan people. This is the most desirable approach, entirely in accordance with the requirements of international law and practice.

Recognition of Tibet's right to self-determination

In 1961 the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 1723 (XVI), in which it explicitly recognized the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination. The UN called on the PRC to cease "practices which deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, including their right to self-determination". Four years later, in 1965, the UNGA expressly reaffirmed this resolution in UNGA Res. 2079 (XX).

Earlier, in 1959, the first prime minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, expressed his strong support for the Tibetan people's right to self-determination. Addressing the Lok Sabha, the Lower House of the Indian Parliament, he said, "the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else".

Recently, on two separate occasions, experts on the question of rights of peoples and international law met to consider the question of Tibet's claim to self-determination.

The Permanent Tribunal of Peoples, which met in Strasbourg for a week to hear extensive testimony and arguments in November 1992, found that the Tibetans meet the generally accepted legal criteria of "a people" with the right to self-determination and "are therefore entitled to exercise the right to self-determination". The Tribunal concluded that "the presence of the Chinese administration on Tibetan territory must be considered as foreign domination of the Tibetan people". Finally, in its verdict, the Tribunal decided that, "the Tibetan people have from

1950 been, continuously, deprived of their right to self-determination.” [*Session on Tibet, Verdict*, Permanent Tribunal of Peoples, Strasbourg, November 20, 1992, p.15 and 23, resp.].

In an unrelated conference, several weeks later, thirty eminent international lawyers from many countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas — among them some of the world’s foremost authorities on self-determination — met in London for four days to consider issues relating to the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Tibetan people. After extensive consideration of evidence, including the Chinese Government’s White Paper, and after a lively legal debate, the conference participants concluded, in a written statement, that,

1. Under international law the Tibetan people are *entitled* to the right to self-determination, that this right “belongs to the Tibetan people” and that “(i)t is not for the state apparatus of the PRC, or any other nation or state, to deny the Tibetan people’s right to self-determination”.

2. “Since the military action of 1949-50, Tibet has been under the alien occupation and domination of the PRC and has been administered with the characteristics of an oppressive colonial administration.”

3. “In the particular case of Tibet and having regard to its long history of separate existence”, the Tibetan people’s *claim* to self-determination, including independence, is compatible with the principles of national unity and territorial integrity of states. [*International Lawyers’ Conference Statement on Tibet — London 1993*, London, January 10, 1993, p.6-8].

The international conference statement called on the United Nations and members of the international community to take urgent measures to promote an early implementation and realization of the Tibetan people’s right to self-determination.

In both discussions, that of the Peoples’ Tribunal and that of the International Lawyers’ Conference, the points of view of the Chinese Government, in particular as expressed in its White Paper, were discussed at length and fully considered.

The Chinese Government was invited to participate in both events, but declined to do so. It did, however, submit to the meetings for consideration the White Paper and numerous other publications stating its point of view and arguments.

Conclusion

The Tibetan people undoubtedly possess the right to self-determination, by virtue of which Tibetans have the right to determine their political status and their economic, social and cultural development. Even if self-determination is primarily applicable to peoples under colonial domination or occupation, Tibetans fully qualify. The time has come for the PRC to accept its international obligations, and to agree to the holding of a plebiscite in Tibet under international supervision.

The Invasion and Illegal Annexation of Tibet

TREATIES in international law are binding on the countries signing them, unless they are imposed by force or a country is coerced into signing the agreement by the threat of force. This is reflected in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which is regarded as a reflection of customary international law.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) feels strongly about this principle, particularly as it applies to treaties and other agreements China was pressured to sign by Western powers at a time when China was weak. The PRC is particularly adamant that such "unequal" treaties and other agreements cannot be valid, no matter who signed them or for what reasons.

After the military invasion of Tibet had started and the small Tibetan army was defeated, the PRC imposed a treaty on the Tibetan Government under the terms of which Tibet was declared to be a part of China, albeit enjoying a large degree of autonomy. In the White Paper, China claims this treaty was entered into entirely voluntarily by the Tibetan Government, and that the Dalai Lama, his Government and the Tibetan people as a whole welcomed it.

The facts show a very different story, leading to the conclusion that the so-called "Seventeen-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" was never validly concluded and was rejected by Tibetans.

The Dalai Lama writes that the Tibetan Prime Minister, Lukhangwa, told Chinese General Zhang Jinwu in 1952: "It was absurd to refer to the terms of the Seventeen-Point Agreement. Our people did not accept the agreement and the Chinese themselves had repeatedly broken the terms of it. Their army was still in occupation of eastern Tibet; the area had not been returned to the government of Tibet, as it should have been." [*My Land and My People*, Dalai Lama, New York, 1992, p.95].

Diplomatic activity and military threats

Soon after the Communist victory over the Guomindang and the founding of the PRC on October 1, 1949, Radio Beijing began to announce that “the People’s Liberation Army must liberate all Chinese territories, including Tibet, Xinjiang, Hainan and Taiwan”. Partly in response to this threat, and in order to resolve long-standing border disputes with China, the Foreign Office of the Tibetan Government, on November 2, 1949, wrote to Mao Zedong proposing negotiations to settle all territorial disputes. Copies of this letter were sent to the governments of India, Great Britain and the United States. Although these three governments considered the spread of Communism to be a threat to the stability of South Asia, they advised the Tibetan Government to enter into direct negotiations with the Chinese Government as any other course of action might provoke military retaliation.

The Tibetan Government decided to send two senior officials, Tsepon Shakabpa and Tsechag Thubten Gyalpo, to negotiate with representatives of the PRC in a third country, possibly the USSR, Singapore or Hong Kong. These officials were to take up with the Chinese Government the content of the Tibetan Foreign Office’s letter to Chairman Mao Zedong and the threatening Chinese radio announcements still being made about an imminent “liberation of Tibet”; they were to secure an assurance that the territorial integrity of Tibet would not be violated and to state that Tibet would not tolerate interference.

When the Tibetan delegates applied for visas to Hong Kong in Delhi, the Chinese told them that the new Chinese Ambassador to India was due to arrive in the capital shortly and that negotiations should be opened through him.

In the course of negotiations, the Chinese Ambassador, Yuan Zhong Xian, demanded that the Tibetan delegation accept a Two-point Proposal: i) Tibetan national defence will be handled by China; and ii) Tibet should be recognized as a part of China. They were then to proceed to China in confirmation of the agreement. On being informed of the Chinese demands, the Tibetan Government instructed its delegates to reject the proposal. So negotiations were suspended.

On October 7, 1950, 40,000 Chinese troops under Political Commissar, Wang Qiemi, attacked Eastern Tibet's provincial capital, Chamdo, from eight directions. The small Tibetan force, consisting of 8,000 troops and militia, was defeated. After two days, Chamdo was taken and Kalon (Minister) Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, the Regional Governor, was captured. Over 4,000 Tibetan fighters were killed.

The Chinese aggression came as a rude shock to India. In a sharp note to Beijing on October 26, 1950, the Indian Foreign Ministry wrote: "Now that the invasion of Tibet has been ordered by Chinese government, peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronized with it and there naturally will be fear on the part of Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress. In the present context of world events, invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and in the considered judgement of the Government of India, not in the interest of China or peace."

A number of countries, including the United States and Britain, expressed their support for the Indian position.

The Tibetan National Assembly convened an emergency session in November 1950 at which it requested the Dalai Lama, only fifteen at that time, to assume full authority as Head of State. The Dalai Lama was then requested to leave Lhasa for Dromo (Yatung), near the Indian border, so that he would be out of personal danger. At the same time the Tibetan Foreign Office issued the following statement: "Tibet is united as one man behind the Dalai Lama who has taken over full powers ... We have appealed to the world for peaceful intervention in (the face of this) clear case of unprovoked aggression."

The Tibetan Government also wrote to the Secretary General of the United Nations on November 7, 1950, appealing for the world body's intervention. The letter said, in part: "Tibet recognizes that it is in no position to resist the Chinese advance. It is thus that it agreed to negotiate on friendly terms with the Chinese Government... Though there is little hope that a nation dedicated to peace will be able to resist the brutal effort of men trained to war, we understand that the United Nations has decided to stop aggression wherever it takes place."

On November 17, 1950, El Salvador formally asked that the

aggression against Tibet be put on the General Assembly agenda. However, the issue was not discussed in the UN General Assembly at the suggestion of the Indian delegation which asserted that a peaceful solution which was mutually advantageous to Tibet, India and China could be reached between the parties concerned. A second letter by the Tibetan delegation to the United Nations on December 8, 1950 did not change the situation.

Faced with the military occupation of Eastern and Northern Tibet, the defeat and destruction of its small army, the advance of tens of thousands of more PLA troops towards Central Tibet, and the lack of active support from the international community, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government decided to send a delegation to Beijing for negotiations with the new Chinese leadership.

The “Seventeen-Point Agreement”

In April 1951 the Tibetan Government sent a five-member delegation to Beijing, led by Kalon Ngapo Ngawang Jigme. The Tibetan Government authorized its delegation to put forward the Tibetan stand and listen to the Chinese position. But, contrary to the claim made in the White Paper that the delegation had “full powers”, it was expressly not given the plenipotentiary authority to conclude an agreement. It was, instead, instructed to refer all important matters to the government.

On April 29 negotiations opened with the presentation of a draft “agreement” by the leader of the Chinese delegation. The Tibetan delegation rejected the Chinese proposal in toto, after which the Chinese tabled a modified draft that was equally unacceptable to the Tibetan delegation. At this point the Chinese delegates, Li Weihan and Zhang Jinwu, made it plain that the terms, as they now stood, were final and amounted to an ultimatum. The Tibetan delegation was addressed in harsh and insulting terms, threatened with physical violence, and members were virtually kept prisoners. No further discussion was permitted and, contrary to Chinese claims, the Tibetan delegation was prevented from contacting its government for instructions. It was given the onerous choice of either signing the “agree-

ment” on its own authority or accepting responsibility for an immediate military advance on Lhasa.

Under immense Chinese pressure the Tibetan delegation signed the “Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet” on May 23, 1951, without being able to inform the Tibetan Government. The delegation warned the Chinese that they were signing only in their personal capacity and had no authority to bind either the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan Government to the “agreement”. None of this deterred the Chinese Government from proceeding with a signing ceremony and announcing to the world that an “agreement” had been concluded for the “peaceful liberation of Tibet”. Even the seals affixed to the document were forged by the Chinese Government to give it the necessary semblance of authenticity.

The seventeen clauses of the “agreement”, among other things, authorized the entry into Tibet of Chinese forces and empowered the Chinese Government to handle Tibet’s external affairs. On the other hand, it guaranteed that China would not alter the existing political system in Tibet and not interfere with the established status, function, and powers of the Dalai Lama or the Panchen Lama. The Tibetan people were to have regional autonomy, and their religious beliefs and customs were to be respected. Internal reforms in Tibet would be effected after consultation with leading Tibetans and without compulsion.

The full text of what came to be known as the “Seventeen-Point Agreement” was broadcast by Radio Beijing on May 27, 1951. This was the first time the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government heard of the devastating document. The reaction in Dromo (where the Dalai Lama was staying at that time) and Lhasa was one of shock and disbelief.

A message was immediately sent to the delegates in Beijing, reprimanding them for signing the “agreement” without consulting the Government for instructions. The delegation was asked to send the text of the document it had signed, and wait in Beijing for further instructions. In the meantime, a telegraphic message was received from the delegation to say that the Chinese Government representative, General Zhang Jinwu, was already on his way to Dromo, via India. It added that some of

the delegation members were returning, via India, and the leader of the delegation was returning directly to Lhasa.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government withheld public repudiation of the “agreement”. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa on August 17, 1951 in the hope of renegotiating a more favourable treaty with the Chinese.

On September 9, 1951 around 3,000 Chinese troops marched into Lhasa, soon followed by some 20,000 more, from Eastern Tibet and from Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang) in the north. The PLA occupied the principal cities of Ruthok and Gartok, and then Gyangtse and Shigatse.

With the occupation of all the major cities of Tibet, including Lhasa, and a large concentration of troops throughout Eastern and Western Tibet, the military control of Tibet was virtually complete. From this position China refused to reopen negotiations and the Dalai Lama had effectively lost the ability to either accept or reject any Tibet-China “agreement”. However, on the first occasion he had to express himself freely again, which came on June 20, 1959 — after his flight to India — the Dalai Lama formally repudiated the “Seventeen-Point Agreement”, as having been “thrust upon Tibetan Government and people by the threat of arms”.

In assessing the “Seventeen-Point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet”, and the occupation of Tibet, two factors are crucial. First, the extent to which China was violating international law when the PLA marched into Tibet, and second, the effect of the signing of the “agreement”.

The law governing treaties is based on the universally recognized principle that the foundation of conventional obligations is the free and mutual consent of contracting parties and, conversely, that freedom of consent is essential to the validity of an agreement. Treaties brought about by the threat or the use of force lack legal validity, particularly if coercion is applied to the country and government in question rather than only on the negotiators themselves.

With China occupying large portions of Tibet and openly threatening a full-scale military advance on Lhasa unless the treaty was signed, the agreement was invalid *ab initio*, meaning that it could not even be validated by a later act of acquies-

cence by the Tibetan Government. Contrary to China's claim in its White Paper, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government did not act voluntarily in signing the "agreement".

In fact, Mao Zedong himself, in the Directive of the Central Committee of the CPC on *Policies for our Work in Tibet*, issued on April 6, 1952, admitted: "(N)ot only the two Silons (i.e. prime ministers) but also the Dalai and most of his clique were reluctant to accept the Agreement and are unwilling to carry it out. ... As yet we do not have a material base for fully implementing the agreement, nor do we have a base for this purpose in terms of support among the masses or in the upper stratum." [Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, Vol. 5, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1977, p.75]

The National Uprising

WHEN people are oppressed, they are likely to rise up against the oppressor. There was never a popular uprising in Tibet until the 1950s. The Tibetan resistance movement against the Chinese started right from the time of the invasion. By 1956 open fighting broke out in the Eastern Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo. Three years later the uprising took on national proportions, leading to the massive demonstrations in Lhasa in March 1959, and the flight of the Dalai Lama and some 80,000 refugees to neighbouring countries. Tens of thousands of Tibetans were slaughtered by the PLA.

Since then, Tibetan uprisings and demonstrations have continued. Between 1987 and the end of 1993 alone, there had been over two hundred demonstrations in Lhasa and other parts of Tibet, some small but others have been massive. Chinese troops have suppressed most of these demonstrations with brutal force. In March 1989 Tibet was put under Martial Law for the second time in its history: the first time was in 1959.

The Chinese Government tries to depict the popular resistance by Tibetans to its rule as the work of a few disgruntled aristocrats who wish to restore the old system of exploitation and oppression of the Tibetan masses.

It depicts ninety five percent of Tibetans as having been serfs, brutally oppressed by a small number of aristocrats and lamas. What China cannot explain is why these allegedly oppressed masses never rose up against their masters, despite the fact that Tibet did not have a national police force and for most of its history had no strong army.

Yet, these same Tibetans did rise up, and still do today, against the massive security apparatus and army of China, knowing the tremendous risk they take.

If we look at the social composition of the Tibetans involved in the successive uprisings and demonstrations, more than eighty percent of them are not aristocrats and high lamas. Furthermore, more than eighty five percent of Tibetans in exile belong to what the Chinese would call the “serf class”, and not the upper strata of society as China claims.

Events leading up to the 1959 uprising

Let us look briefly at the main causes of the Tibetan people's uprising against China in 1959. Following the entry of Chinese troops into Lhasa, every effort was made to undermine the sovereign authority of the Tibetan Government and impose Chinese authority. This was carried out in three ways: First, political and regional divisions were created among Tibetans under the policy of divide and rule. Secondly, certain social and economic reforms, calculated to change the fabric of Tibetan society, were instituted against the wishes of Tibetans. Thirdly, various organs of the Chinese Government, and new bodies under their authority, were set up alongside the existing Tibetan institutions.

- Between November 24, 1950 and October 19, 1953 China incorporated a large portion of Kham province into neighbouring Chinese Sichuan province. Kham was divided into two so-called Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and one Tibetan Autonomous District. On September 13, 1957 another portion of southern Kham was named the Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and put under Yunnan Province.
- The bulk of Amdo, together with a small area of Kham, was reduced to the status of a Chinese province, and named as Qinghai. One portion of Amdo was named Ngapa Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and merged with Sichuan Province. The remaining area of Amdo was subdivided into Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous District (May 6, 1950), and Ganlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (October 1, 1953), and incorporated into the Chinese province of Gansu.
- On September 9, 1965 China formally established the so-called Tibet Autonomous Regional Government, placing under its administration the whole of U-Tsang and areas of Kham.
- China stripped numerous ethnic Tibetans like the Sherpas, Monpas, Lhopas, Tengpas, Jangpas, etc. — who consider themselves to be Tibetan — of their Tibetan identity, reclassifying them as distinct Chinese minorities.

The appropriation by the People's Liberation Army of thousands of tons of barley and other foodstuffs pushed the Tibetans to the brink of famine for the first time in history and prompted protest meetings in Lhasa.

The first major popular resistance group, the Mimang Tsongdu (People's Assembly), banded together spontaneously and handed the Chinese Military Command a petition demanding the withdrawal of the PLA and an end to Chinese interference in Tibetan affairs. The Chinese reaction was swift; the two Tibetan Prime Ministers, Lukhangwa and Ven. Lobsang Tashi, who had made no secret of their opposition to Chinese rule and opposed the "Seventeen Point Agreement", were forced to resign and five Mimang Tsongdu leaders were jailed, driving the organization underground.

In 1954 the Dalai Lama visited Beijing at China's invitation. The "special" autonomous position of Tibet, embodied in the "Seventeen-Point Agreement," was formally abolished with the adoption of the new Constitution by the Chinese People's Congress. This was followed by the adoption of the "Resolution on the Establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART)", a measure designed to further integrate the administration of Tibet into that of the PRC. The Preparatory Committee was to function as the central administration of Tibet instead of the Tibetan Government. The Dalai Lama was made its Chairman, but without any authority.

As the Dalai Lama explains in his autobiography: "The Committee was powerless — a mere facade of Tibetan representation behind which all the effective power was exercised by the Chinese. In fact, all basic policy was decided by another body called the Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet, which had no Tibetan members." [Dalai Lama, *ibid*, p.133]

In 1956 the PCART was set up and the Tashilhunpo estate, and those regions under the jurisdiction of the Governor-General of Chamdo (a Tibetan Government appointee) in Eastern Tibet, were separated from the jurisdiction of the Tibetan Government in Lhasa and their administrative organs given equal status to the Tibetan Government, thereby reducing the authority of the Tibetan Government. Social, political, and agrarian reforms were imposed by the Chinese Government in Amdo

and Kham and, to a much lesser degree, in the rest of the country. Frequent attacks were launched on religious personages and monasteries. All of these led to increasingly violent reactions.

The “Seventeen-Point Agreement” guaranteed that no reforms would be forced on the Tibetans. But in Eastern Tibet they were introduced and enforced at once. Mounting impatience and belligerence of the Chinese administrators provoked violent reactions and rapidly culminated into armed conflicts in a widening spiral of resistance and military repression that engulfed the entire eastern Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo.

As the violence spilled over to other areas of Tibet, full-scale guerrilla warfare broke out in the summer of 1956. Refugees from eastern and northeastern Tibet began to arrive in Lhasa in large numbers. Within a year, the uprising had spread to Central Tibet, and in 1958 Tensung Dhanglang Magar, (the Voluntary Force for the Defence of the Faith), a union of the Mimang Tsongdu and Chushi Gangdruk (Four Rivers Six Ranges) organizations, was founded. By the autumn of that year this popular army, estimated at 80,000 men, was in control of most districts of Southern Tibet and parts of Eastern Tibet.

The Dalai Lama took pains to calm his people so as to prevent a worse bloodbath. Nevertheless, the situation in Tibet deteriorated rapidly while the Dalai Lama visited India in 1956 to take part in the Buddha Jayanti celebrations at the invitation of independent India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. In meetings with Nehru and Zhou Enlai in Delhi, the Dalai Lama expressed his deep concern at the explosive situation in his homeland and admitted he was contemplating seeking political asylum in India. Nehru advised the Dalai Lama against it.

To induce the Dalai Lama to return home, the Chinese Government promptly announced that the “socialist and democratic reforms” would be postponed in Tibet for the time being.

It was also agreed that a number of Chinese civil personnel would be withdrawn, and the PCART’s departments would be reduced by half. The subsequent events were to reveal these promises as false. In the years that followed, the Chinese intensified socialist campaigns and purges against Tibetans and sent considerable army reinforcements to Tibet, thus more than offsetting the earlier modest reduction of Chinese cadres.

National Uprising and flight of the Dalai Lama

The inevitable showdown occurred in March 1959. There was general fear that the Chinese were planning to abduct the Dalai Lama and take him away to Beijing. The Tibetan people already had bitter experiences in Kham and Amdo, where important lamas and local leaders disappeared mysteriously after being invited to Chinese cultural shows and other functions.

Fears for the safety of the Dalai Lama became acute when the Chinese Army Command invited the Tibetan leader to a theatrical show in the military barracks on March 10. Tibetans became even more suspicious when the Chinese instructed that the Dalai Lama should not be accompanied by bodyguards as was the tradition. The people in Lhasa would not allow the Dalai Lama to give in to this Chinese subterfuge.

On March 10, 1959 a massive demonstration was held and thousands of people surrounded the Dalai Lama's summer palace, the Norbulingka, to prevent him from attending the Chinese show. Mass meetings were held in Lhasa over the following days with the citizens demanding that the Chinese quit Tibet and restore the country's full independence.

The Dalai Lama, fearing the explosive consequences of these mass demonstrations, urged the large crowd around the Norbulingka to disperse and wrote three letters to the principal Chinese General, Tian Guansan, in an effort to placate the Chinese and stave off impending violence. Explaining the circumstances in which he wrote these letters, the Dalai Lama says in his autobiography: "I replied to all his letters to gain time — time for anger to cool on both sides and time for me to urge moderation of the Lhasa people... my most urgent moral duty at that moment was to prevent a totally disastrous clash between my unarmed people and the Chinese army." [Dalai Lama, *ibid*; p.187].

But, despite the Dalai Lama's efforts, open fighting broke out in Lhasa soon afterwards, with disastrous consequences to the Tibetans. Seeing that all efforts to prevent open confrontation and bloodshed had ultimately failed, and that cooperation with the Chinese authorities to minimise their oppression was no longer possible, the Dalai Lama decided to escape to India in

order to appeal for international help to save his people. He left Lhasa on the night of March 17.

On March 28, 1959 Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai issued an Order of State Council “dissolving” the Government of Tibet. The Dalai Lama and his ministers, while still en route to India, reacted promptly by declaring that the new Chinese administration in Lhasa would never be recognized by the people of Tibet. Upon his arrival in India, the Dalai Lama re-established the Tibetan Government in exile and publicly declared: “Wherever I am, accompanied by my government, the Tibetan people recognize us as the Government of Tibet.”

Within months around 80,000 Tibetans reached the borders of India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim after arduous escapes. Many more could not even make it to the border.

The Chinese Government’s White Paper tries to portray these events as the work of a handful of Tibetan reactionaries who, with the help of the CIA, created an armed “rebellion” which was “resolutely” opposed by the masses. The Dalai Lama was “carried away under duress” to India, the White Paper states. The resistance, they claim, amounted to no more than 7,000 “rebels,” and was put down easily in two days.

This view is hardly credible and has been contradicted even by the Chinese authorities themselves. Chinese army intelligence reports admit that the PLA killed 87,000 members of the Tibetan resistance in Lhasa and surrounding areas between March and October 1959 alone. [*Xizang Xingshi he Renwu Jiaoyu de Jiben Jiaocai*, PLA Military District’s Political Report, 1960]. The CIA’s half-hearted assistance to the Tibetan resistance started in earnest only after the uprising, and, though welcomed by Tibetans, amounted to little.

All the evidence shows that the uprising was massive, popular and widespread. The brutal repression which followed in all regions of Tibet only confirms this.

Traditional Society and the Democratic Framework for Future Tibet

CHINA has always justified its policy in Tibet by painting the darkest picture of traditional Tibetan society. The military invasion and occupation has been termed a “liberation” by China of Tibetan society from “medieval feudal serfdom” and “slavery”.

Today, this myth is repeatedly rehashed to justify China’s own violations of human and political rights in Tibet, and to counter all international pressure on Beijing to review its repressive policies in Tibet.

Traditional Tibetan society was by no means perfect and was in need of changes. The Dalai Lama and other Tibetan leaders have admitted as much. That is the reason why the Dalai Lama initiated far-reaching reforms in Tibet as soon as he assumed temporal authority. Traditional Tibetan society, however, was not nearly as bad as China would have us believe.

Whatever the case may be, for several reasons the Chinese justifications for “liberation” are invalid. First of all, international law does not accept justifications of this type. No country is allowed to invade, occupy, annex and colonize another country just because its social structure does not please it. Secondly, the PRC is responsible for bringing more suffering in the name of liberation. Thirdly, necessary reforms were initiated and Tibetans are quite capable of carrying them through.

In its 1960 report on Tibet, the International Commission of Jurists’ Legal Inquiry Committee stated that: “Chinese allegations that the Tibetans enjoyed no human rights before the entry of the Chinese were found to be based on distorted and exaggerated accounts of life in Tibet. Accusations against the Tibetan “rebels” of rape, plunder and torture were found to have been deliberately fabricated and in other cases unworthy of belief for this and other reasons.” [*Tibet and Chinese People’s Republic, Geneva, 1960*].

Traditional society

In terms of social mobility and wealth distribution, independent Tibet compared favourably with most Asian countries. The Dalai Lama, head of both the spiritual and secular administration, was found through a system of reincarnation that ensured that the rule of Tibet did not become hereditary. Most of the Dalai Lamas, including the Thirteenth and the Fourteenth, came from common, peasant families in remote parts of Tibet.

Every administrative post below the Dalai Lama was held by an equal number of monk and lay officials. Although lay officials hereditarily held posts (however, the posts themselves were not hereditary), those of monks were open to all. A large proportion of monk officials came from non-privileged backgrounds.

Tibet's monastic system provided unrestrained opportunities for social mobility. Admission to monastic institutions in Tibet was open to all and the large majority of monks, particularly those who rose through its ranks to the highest positions, came from humble backgrounds, often from far-flung villages in Kham and Amdo. This is because the monasteries offered equal opportunities to all to rise to any height through their own scholarship. A popular Tibetan aphorism says: "If the mother's son has knowledge, the golden throne of Gaden (the highest position in the hierarchy of the Gelugpa School of Tibetan Buddhism) has no ownership."

The peasants, whom the Chinese White Paper insists on calling "serfs", had a legal identity, often with documents stating their rights, and also had access to courts of law. Peasants had the right to sue their masters and carry their case in appeal to higher authorities.

Ms. Dhondup Chodon comes from a family that was among the poorest social strata in independent Tibet. Reminiscing about her life before the Chinese occupation in her book, *Life in the Red Flag People's Commune*, she said: "I belong to what the Chinese now term as serfs of Tibet... There were six of us in the family... My home was a double-storeyed building with a walled compound. On the ground floor we used to keep our animals. We had four yaks, 27 sheep and goats, two donkeys

and a land-holding of four and a half khel (0.37 hectares) ... We never had any difficulty earning our livelihood. There was not a single beggar in our area.”

Throughout Tibetan history, the maltreatment and suppression of peasants by estate-holders was forbidden by law as well as by social convention. From the time of the seventh century Tibetan Emperor Songtsen Gampo, many Tibetan rulers issued codes based on the Buddhist principle of “Ten Virtues of the Dharma”. The essence of this was that the rulers should act as parents to their subjects.

In 1909 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama issued a regulation conferring on all peasants the right to appeal directly to him in case of mistreatment by estate holders. As a matter of fact, the Tibetan society frowns upon unkind acts. The Tibetan Buddhist belief in compassion acts as a check on uncharitable deeds — not only against fellow human beings, but even against animals.

Capital punishment was banned in Tibet, and physical mutilation was a punishment that could be inflicted by the Central Government in Lhasa alone. In 1898, Tibet enacted a law abolishing such forms of punishment, except in cases of high treason or conspiracy against the state.

All land belonged to the state which granted estates to monasteries and to individuals who had rendered service to the state. The state, in turn, received revenues and service from estate holders. Lay estate holders either paid land revenues or provided one male member in each generation to work as a government official. Monasteries performed religious functions for the state and, most vitally, served as schools, universities and centres for Tibetan art, craft, medicine and culture. The role of monasteries as highly disciplined centres of Tibetan education was the key to the traditional Tibetan way of life. Monasteries bore all expenses for their students and provided them with free board and lodging. Some monasteries had large estates; some had endowments which they invested. But other monasteries had neither of these. They received personal gifts and donations from devotees and patrons. The revenue from these sources were often insufficient to provide the basic needs of large monk populations. To supplement their income, some monasteries engaged in trade and acted as money lenders.

The largest proportion of land in old Tibet was held by peasants who paid their revenue directly to the state, and this became the main source of the government food stocks which were distributed to monasteries, the army, and officials without estates. Some paid in labour, and some were required to provide transport services to government officials, and in some cases to monasteries. Land held by the peasant was heritable. He could lease it to others or mortgage it. He could be dispossessed of his land only if he failed to pay the dues of produce or labour, which were not excessive. In practice, he had the rights of a free-holder, and dues to the state were a form of land tax paid in kind rather than rent.

A small section of the Tibetan population, mostly in U-Tsang province, were tenants. They held their lands on the estates of aristocrats and monasteries, and paid rent to the estate-holders either in kind or they sent one member of the family to work as a domestic servant or an agricultural labourer. Some of these tenant farmers rose to the powerful position of estate secretary. (For this, they were labelled by the Chinese as “agents of feudal lords”). Other members of these families had complete freedom. They were entitled to engage in any business, follow any profession, join any monastery or work on their own lands. Although they were known as tenants, they could not be evicted from their lands at the whim of estate holders. Some tenant-farmers were quite wealthy.

The present Fourteenth Dalai Lama attempted to introduce far-reaching administrative and land reforms. He proposed that all large estate holdings of monasteries and individuals be acquired by the state for distribution amongst peasants. He created a special reform committee which reduced land taxes on peasants. The reform committee was authorized to hear and redress complaints by individuals against the district or local authorities. He approved the proposal for debt exemption submitted by this committee. Peasant debtors were categorized into three groups; those who could not pay either their accumulated interest or repay capital were freed from debt altogether; those who could not pay the interest out of their annual earnings, but had saved up enough to repay the capital, were ordered to make repayments in instalments and those who had

become wealthy over the course of years were made to pay both capital and interest in instalments. The Dalai Lama ordered that in future no transport service should be demanded without the special sanction of the government. He also increased the rates to be paid for transport services.

Famine and starvation were unheard of in independent Tibet. There were, of course, years of poor harvest and crop failures. But people could easily borrow from the buffer stock held by the district administrations, monasteries, aristocrats and rich farmers.

From 1950 onwards, the Chinese military and civilian personnel were fed on the state buffer stocks and, they forced the Tibetan populace to sell their personal holding of grains to them at nominal prices. "Liberation" was, in reality, the right to equal poverty for all.

Palden Gyatso, a monk who escaped from Tibet in 1992 after serving thirty three years in Chinese jails and labour camps, puts it succinctly: "The Chinese definitely succeeded in making the rich poor. But they did not help the poor. The poor became poorer and we were reduced to a nation of *tsampa* beggars."

In his book, *Tibet and its History*, Hugh Richardson wrote: "Even communist writers have had to admit there was no great difference between rich and poor in (pre-1949) Tibet." In fact, when Hu Yaobang, former Communist Party Secretary, saw the extent of the poverty in Central Tibet in 1980, he stated that the living standard should be brought up at least to the pre-1959 level.

Democratic reforms

In 1959 the Dalai Lama re-established his government in India, soon after his flight from Tibet, and a series of democratic changes were initiated. A popularly elected body of people's representatives, the parliament-in-exile, was constituted. In 1961 the Dalai Lama prepared a draft constitution for future Tibet and sought the opinion of Tibetans on this matter.

In 1963 a detailed draft constitution for future Tibet was promulgated. Despite strong opposition, the Dalai Lama insisted on the inclusion of a clause which states that the executive pow-

ers of the Dalai Lama shall be exercised by the Council of Regency when the National Assembly, by a majority of two-thirds of its total members in consultation with the Supreme Court, decides that this is in the highest interests of the State.

On March 10, 1969 the Dalai Lama announced that on the day Tibet regained its independence the Tibetan people must decide for themselves what system of government they want.

In 1990 further changes were introduced by increasing the strength of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies (ATPD) from twelve to forty six. It was given more constitutional powers such as the election of *kalons* (ministers), who were previously appointed directly by the Dalai Lama. The Supreme Justice Commission was set up to look into people's grievances against the Administration.

In February 1992, the Dalai Lama announced the *Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity and the Basic Features of its Constitution*, wherein he stated that he would not "play any role in the future government of Tibet, let alone seek the Dalai Lama's traditional political position". The future government of Tibet, the Dalai Lama said, would be elected by the people on the basis of adult franchise.

The Dalai Lama also announced that during the transition period, between withdrawal of the repressive Chinese troops from Tibet and the final promulgation of the Constitution, the administrative responsibilities of State will be entrusted to the Tibetan functionaries presently working in Tibet. During this transitional period, an interim president will be appointed to whom the Dalai Lama will delegate all his political powers. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile will *ipso facto* cease to exist.

The guidelines for Tibet's future polity also stated: "Future Tibet shall be a peace-loving nation, adhering to the principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence). It shall have a democratic system of government committed to preserving a clean, healthy and beautiful environment. Tibet shall be a completely demilitarized nation."

The Tibetan struggle is, thus, not for the resurrection of the traditional system as the Chinese claim. The relentless Chinese attempts at personalizing the Tibetan issue to make it hinge upon the Dalai Lama's own status is subterfuge to mask the main issue: The people's own enduring national struggle.

Human Rights

OVER 1.2 million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. Today, it is hard to come across a Tibetan family that has not had at least one member imprisoned or killed by the Chinese regime. According to Jigme Ngapo, son of Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, former Vice-Chairman of National People's Congress, "after the suppressions of 1959 and 1969, almost every family in Tibet has been affected in some way". These facts speak volumes about the "democratic reform" China claims to have brought to the "dark, feudal exploitative society" of Tibet.

Independent Tibet was certainly not an embodiment of a perfect human society. But it was by no means nearly as tyrannical as it is today under Chinese rule. Its two biggest prisons, located in Lhasa, had, at any one time, no more than thirty inmates each. But following the Chinese invasion, the whole of Tibet has been turned into a vast network of prisons and labour camps. There are reports that China has even resorted to the massacre of prisoners to keep the prison population within manageable limits.

However, China continues to claim that since its "liberation", the people of Tibet have enjoyed wide measures of liberty and freedom. Let us examine the facts.

1949-1979: Killing and destruction

According to one Chinese source, the PLA "exterminated" more than 5,700 Tibetan "soldiers", and imprisoned about 2,000 in various areas of Eastern Tibet between October 7 and 25, 1950. [*A Survey of Tibet Autonomous Region*, Tibet People's Publishing House, 1984].

Accounts of massacres, tortures and killings, bombardment of monasteries, and the extermination of whole nomad camps are well documented. Quite a number of these reports have also been documented by the International Commission of Jurists' 1960 report on Tibet.

According to a secret Chinese military document, the PLA

crushed 996 rebellions in Ganlho, Amdo, over the period 1952-58, killing over 10,000 Tibetans. [*Work Report of the 11th PLA Division, 1952-1958*]. Similarly, another Amdo area, Golok, had its population reduced from about 130,000 in 1956 to about 60,000 in 1963. [*China Spring*, June 1986].

Speaking about the same area, the Panchen Lama said: "If there was a film made on all the atrocities perpetrated in Qinghai Province, it would shock the viewers. In Golok area, many people were killed and their dead bodies rolled down the hill into a big ditch. The soldiers told the family members and relatives of the dead people that they should celebrate since the rebels had been wiped out. They were even forced to dance on the dead bodies. Soon after, they were also massacred with machine guns." [Speech by the Panchen Lama at a meeting of the Sub-Committee of the National People's Congress in Beijing on the situation in Tibet, March 28, 1987]

The Panchen Lama specifically pointed out in his speech: "In Amdo and Kham, people were subjected to unspeakable atrocities. They were shot in groups of ten or twenty. ...Such actions have left deep wounds in the minds of the people."

In a crackdown operation launched in the wake of the uprising of March 10, 1959 in Lhasa, 10,000 to 15,000 Tibetans were killed within three days. According to a secret 1960 PLA Tibet Military District Political Department report, between March 1959 and October 1960 87,000 Tibetans were killed in Central Tibet alone. [*Xizang Xingshi he Renwu Jiaoyu de Jiben Jiaocai*, 1960].

Custodial deaths

A compilation of figures based on testimonies of survivors of prisons and labour camps show that throughout Tibet about seventy percent of the inmates died. For example, in the wilderness of the northern Tibetan plains at Jhang Tsalakha more than 10,000 prisoners were kept in five prisons and forced to mine and transport borax. According to some of the survivors of these camps, every day ten to thirty inmates died from hunger, beating and overwork; in a year more than 8,000 had died. Likewise, in the construction of Lhasa Ngachen Hydro-electric

Power Station, now falsely claimed to have been built by the PLA, everyday at least three or four dead prisoners were seen being thrown into the nearby river or burnt.

To cite an example from Eastern Tibet, from 1960 to 1962, 12,019 inmates died at a lead mine in Dartsedo district, according to a former inmate, Mrs Adhi Tapé from Nyarong, Kham.

According to information compiled by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, over 1.2 million Tibetans died between 1949 and 1979 in the following manner:

MODE OF DEATH	U-TSANG	KHAM	AMDO	TOTAL
Tortured in prison	93,560	64,877	14,784	173,221
Executed	28,267	32,266	96,225	156,758
Killed in fighting	143,253	240,410	49,042	432,705
Starved to death	131,072	89,916	121,982	342,970
Suicide	3,375	3,952	1,675	9,002
“Struggled” to death	27,951	48,840	15,940	92,731
Total:-	427,478	480,261	299,648	1,207,387

Human rights in Tibet today

The death of Mao Zedong in September 1976 resulted in a change in Chinese policies. The signal tune of that change was economic liberalization and openness, and even some degree of leniency on political prisoners.

But liberalization and openness, as it turned out, did not signal a change of attitude towards political freedom in Tibet. In May 1982, 115 Tibetan political activists were arrested and branded as “delinquents” and “black marketeers”. More arrests and public executions followed. By the end of November 1983, 750 political activists had been jailed in Lhasa alone.

On September 27, 1987 more than 200 Tibetans staged a demonstration in Lhasa. In the clampdown on successive demonstrations — including the ones on October 1, 1987 and March 5, 1988 — Chinese police opened fire, killing and critically wounding many on the spot and imprisoning at least 2,500 unarmed demonstrators.

In July 1988, China’s security chief, Qiao Shi, while on a

tour of the “TAR”, announced “merciless repression” of all forms of protest against Chinese rule in Tibet. [*UPI*, July 20, 1988].

The policy was implemented at once. During the crackdown on the December 10, 1988 demonstration at the Jokhang, according to a Western journalist eyewitness, one officer was heard ordering his men to “kill the Tibetans”. The toll on that day was at least fifteen killed, over one hundred and fifty seriously wounded, and many others arrested.

However, for three days from March 5, 1989 Lhasa was again in turmoil, with demonstrators waving the Tibetan flag and shouting for independence. During the police crackdown, automatic weapons were fired even into some homes. Estimates of deaths varied from eighty to four hundred. The official Chinese figure was only eleven. According to Tang Daxian, a Chinese journalist who was in Lhasa at the time, some four hundred Tibetans were massacred, several thousand were injured and three thousand were imprisoned. [*Events in Lhasa, March 2nd-10th 1989*, Tang Daxian, London, TIN, June 15, 1990]. At midnight on March 7, 1989, Martial Law was formally imposed in Lhasa.

About a year later, on May 1, 1990, China announced the lifting of Martial Law. However, the first Australian Human Rights Delegation to China, permitted to visit Tibet in July 1991, observed: “Though Martial Law had indeed been lifted on May 1, 1990, it continues to exist in all but name”. Amnesty International, in its 1991 report, also confirmed this, adding, “the police and security forces retained extensive powers of arbitrary arrest and detention without trial”.

In the run up to China’s celebration of the fortieth anniversary of its annexation of Tibet, 146 “criminals” were arrested on April 10, 1991, and this was followed by more arrests announced at public sentencing rallies. On the day of the celebration the whole of Lhasa was put under curfew.

In a sudden clampdown, starting in February 1992, groups of ten Chinese personnel raided Tibetan houses in Lhasa and arrested anyone found in possession of anything deemed subversive; these included photographs, tapes and books containing speeches or teachings of the Dalai Lama. Over two hundred were arrested. Despite all measures of repression, dem-

onstrations continued throughout Tibet after 1987. Available reports confirm that between September 27, 1987 and end of 1993, there had been some two hundred demonstrations of various sizes throughout Tibet. And despite the memories of the bloody Chinese crackdown in March 1989, large numbers of Tibetans, once again, took to the streets on 24 May 1993. Eye-witnesses, including tourists, estimate there were over 10,000 demonstrators. The demonstration, which continued throughout the day, and the following day, was once again quelled with brutal force as the demonstrators were on their way home at dusk.

Over the last few years an increasing number of demonstrations have been reported from Tibet's countryside. Demonstrations and wall-poster campaigns are also reported to be escalating in Kham and Amdo. Many Tibetans from Karze, Ragya, Kirti, Tsawa Pomda, Chamdo, Rekong (Chinese: Tongren), Chabcha (Chinese: Gunghe), Zoege, etc, continue to be held in prisons and labour camps for involvement in demonstrations and wall poster campaigns.

Violation of human rights of concern to Amnesty International in Tibet include the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience and of other political prisoners after unfair trials, torture and ill-treatment of detainees, the use of the death penalty and extra judicial executions. Constitutional and legal provisions in Tibet restrict the exercise of basic freedoms and lack human rights safeguards consistent with international standards. [*People's Republic of China: Amnesty International's Concerns in Tibet*, Amnesty International, London, January 1992, ASA 17/02/92, summary page]

“All such manifestations (ie, demonstrations and political dissent) of dissatisfaction with Chinese rule — whether peacefully conducted or otherwise — are viewed by the authorities as constituting ‘illegal separatist activity’, and those who have led or participated in them have been punished with escalating force and severity. ‘Merciless repression’ remains, in Tibet, the order of the day.” [*Merciless Repression: Human Rights in Tibet*, Asia Watch, Washington, DC, May 1990, p.3]

And, in its 1993 Report, Amnesty International continued to state: “Arrests of Tibetan political activists continued. Over 200 political prisoners, including at least a hundred prisoners of con-

science, remained held in Tibet. They included Buddhist monks and nuns detained for peacefully advocating Tibetan independence, and lay Tibetans allegedly found in possession of Tibetan nationalist material. Some were serving prison terms imposed after unfair trials, others ‘terms of re-education through labour’ imposed without formal charge or trial.

Human rights violation in Tibet is all-pervasive. Available evidence suggests that China violates with impunity every norm of civilized conduct as laid down by international law, many of which it has undertaken to observe by affirmative acts of ratification, such as the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention Against Torture), and customary laws of nations such as the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions, disappearances and summary executions

Evidences of arbitrary arrests and incommunicado detentions often resulting in disappearances, and summary executions, are cited in the 1990 report of Amnesty International. It states that “over 1,000 people, including prisoners of conscience, were arrested after Martial Law was imposed in Lhasa in March” and that “some of them were summarily executed”. It also pointed out that “evidences of persistent human rights violations in Tibet continued to come to light in 1989, including reports of numerous arbitrary arrests, long-term detention without charge or trial, and torture”.

Under Chinese rule in Tibet, there is no question of informing prisoners of the grounds for their arrest and their right to legal remedies. Arrest warrants are rarely issued or produced.

Grounds for arrest and imprisonment seem to be found in any kind of activity: Tibetans have been arrested for speaking with foreigners, or singing patriotic songs, or putting up wall posters, or possessing copies of an autobiography of the Dalai Lama or some video or audio cassette, or for preparing a list of casualties during Chinese crackdowns on demonstrations, or for “plotting” and advising friends to wear the traditional Ti-

betan costume on Chinese national day. In many cases, however, Tibetans have been arrested for no apparent reasons.

Incommunicado detention is almost routine. Often it is left to the devices of the relatives of the arrested person to locate him or her. [*Defying the Dragon: China and Human Rights in Tibet*, LAWASIA and TIN, London, March 1991, p.33].

A person taken into custody is declared arrested only after a period ranging from several days to months, or even years. During the period of the initial detention there is no question of informing the family since he or she is “legally” not arrested.

The year 1993 saw large-scale arrests from all the three provinces of Tibet: U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. An increasing number of arrests were reported from the countryside. Figures compiled to date show that at least two hundred and forty Tibetans were arrested during the year, and the figure spirals as more reports are received. In the Tso-ngon (Chinese: Qinghai) region of Amdo alone, various sources have stated that some eighty Tibetans were arrested over the period July-September 1993.

In May 1993, the Chinese authorities admitted the arrest of only two, falsely claiming that the third was released. Most arrests were carried out late in the evening or during the night. Many were arrested while taking part in small, peaceful protest marches. Some were arrested soon after their return from visits to India.

Torture techniques: creative and cruel

In Tibet torture is the only known method of interrogating prisoners. China’s signing of the Convention Against Torture on December 12, 1986, and its presumed enforcement at the end of 1988, did not alter the reality.

Methods and instruments of torture and ill-treatment have been described by a number of former prisoners who had been subjected to them. These include indiscriminate beating with anything available at hand, including electric cattle-prods, kicking, punching, battering with rifle-butts, sticks, and even iron bars. In prison, cruel and degrading methods of torture are inflicted to extract confessions. These include mutilation, setting

guard dogs on prisoners, use of electric cattle prods (especially on women prisoners, in extremely perverted and degrading ways), cigarette burns, electric shocks, etc.

One recent refugee from Eastern Tibet, who was a member of the Chinese Public Security Bureau, described thirty three methods for torture of prisoners. New methods of torture are being constantly devised and this has been acknowledged in at least one internal party document in Tibet. [*To Control Others, First Control Yourself*, H'o Phan in TAR Internal Party Study Document, in Tibetan, issue No. 2, September 1989, p.21 ff.].

In a report of torture in May 1993, a pregnant detainee was forced to stand for more than twelve hours, and denied sleep, resulting in a miscarriage.

Prisoners are presumed guilty

In the Chinese legal system the most basic safeguard — the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty beyond reasonable doubt — does not exist.

Under Chinese law in Tibet, it is an exception rather than the rule that a person taken into custody is told the grounds for arrest. An arrest, once made, is never announced until a couple of days or so before a trial.

Sentences imposed on political prisoners are often out of all proportions to the degree of the alleged crime. Prisoners are often detained for an extended period without charges and are seldom brought before a court of law.

Administrative detention is imposed by police or local authorities without supervision by an independent judiciary. The police have wide powers to impose periods of administrative detention — varying from a few days to several years — without judicial review. Though China's Administrative Procedure Act provides for the right to appeal, it is made practically impossible to invoke.

There is no right to have adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence, or the right to be tried in an open court. Defence argument, when permitted, is restricted to appeal for mitigation of punishment, not for pleading innocence. The role of judges is restricted to passing sentences determined by the po-

litical authorities. It is not surprising, therefore, that Tibetans refer to the judges as “sentencing officers”.

No freedom of movement

In flagrant violation of Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, China has imposed a series of regulations restricting the free movement of Tibetans within their own country. People have to be registered at a particular place and are only entitled to reside and buy food rations there. Going from one place to another for any purpose, even for a short duration, requires official permission.

There had been many instances when Tibetans have been expelled from Lhasa to their native villages. It occurred when China was preparing to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of its annexation of Tibet on May 23, 1991. Following the crackdown on the demonstrations of March 5-7, 1989, 40,000 Tibetans were expelled from Lhasa to their native villages. In August 1992, the Chinese authorities expelled around 6,000 Tibetans, the homeless as well as pilgrims, from the ground behind eastern Lhasa’s hospital. The ground is now occupied by Chinese office buildings and shops.

International condemnation of violation of human rights

China’s claims that its PLA entered Tibet to “liberate” the country stand starkly exposed by the 1960 report of the International Commission of Jurists on Tibet. The report states that China committed systematic violations of human rights in Tibet, including acts of genocide [See 1960 ICJ Report]. Three UN resolutions in 1959 [UNGA Res.1353 (XIV)], 1961 [UNGA Res.1723 (XVI)] and 1965 [UNGA Res.2079 (XX)] calling on China to respect the human rights of Tibetans, including their right to self-determination, reinforced the findings of the Commission.

Government and parliamentary support

A number of countries have passed parliamentary resolutions and motions on Tibet calling on the Chinese Government to respect the human rights of the Tibetan people. Among them are the European Parliament (October 14, 1987, March 15, 1989 and April 25-26, 1990), West Germany (October 15, 1987), Italy (April 12, 1989), Australia (December 6, 1990, June 6, 1991), Belgium (March 29, 1994) and Canada (June 14, 1995).

The United States' Senate and the House of Representatives together have passed more than ten resolutions calling on China to respect the political and human rights of the Tibetan people. On October 28, 1991 the US President, George Bush, signed into law a Congressional resolution declaring Tibet "an occupied country under established principles of international law, whose true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government as recognized by the Tibetan people". Similarly, many governments expressed their concern directly to the Chinese Government.

The British Parliament's Foreign Affairs Select Committee held a hearing on Tibet on December 8, 1993. On June 19, 1995, the Bundestag, the German Parliament, held a comprehensive hearing on the current situation in Tibet to which His Holiness the Dalai Lama was a special guest. These hearings have materialized in spite of strong opposition from China and China lobby groups.

Concern at the situation in occupied-Tibet was also raised by parliamentarian support groups of various countries, such as India (April 27, 1989), Austria (May 24, 1989), Australia (March 9, 1989), Switzerland (March 16, 1989), Norway (December 5, 1991), Lithuania (February 27, 1992), Poland (May 30, 1994), Latvia (September 8, 1994) and Estonia (September 27, 1994).

Tibet at the United Nations in recent years

In 1985 the human rights situation in Tibet was, once again, discussed at the United Nations. Various non-governmental organizations called on the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) to address the human rights situation in Tibet. Since

then Tibet figured prominently at various human rights fora of the UNO and at almost all the succeeding sessions of the UNCHR and its sub-commissions.

At the fifty first session of the UNCHR, held in Geneva from January 30 to March 10, 1995, NGOs and governments, including those from France (which headed the EU countries' delegates), the US, Ireland, the UK, Norway and Australia spoke on the critical nature of the human rights situation in Tibet in such areas as the denial of the right of the Tibetan people to self-determination, religious freedom and human rights of Tibetans arbitrarily arrested and held in incommunicado detention. NGOs' statements to this effect were published by the United Nations. A number of Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups, particularly those on religious freedom and arbitrary detention, made damning indictments of the Chinese policy and practices in Tibet.

Various other committees and organs of the UNO and sub-committees held detailed hearings on the human rights situation in Tibet and evasive Chinese responses were consistently criticized. These included the fourth session of the Committee Against Torture in April 1990 and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The issue of the situation of Tibetan children in Tibet was raised by a number of Tibetan and non-Tibetan NGOs and experts, who presented alternative reports at the pre-session Working Group of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The issue of the disappearance of the six-year-old reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, recognized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, figured prominently and will undoubtedly figure in the Committee's concluding observations.

On August 23, 1991 the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities passed the "Situation in Tibet" Resolution (1991/10), expressing concern at "continuing reports of violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms which threaten the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the Tibetan people".

Ironically, this seems to confirm Mao's dictum that a just cause always receives many supporters.

The myth of Tibetan self-rule

In its White Paper, China claims that under the “Democratic Reform in 1959” it “introduced the new political system of people’s democracy” and that the Tibetan people “have become masters of the country”. Nothing could be further from the truth. Though the “TAR” is claimed to be “autonomous”, Tibetans have little or no say in running their own affairs. Final decision-making power has always been held by the Chinese Communist Party through its “TAR Regional” Party’s First Secretary who has always been a Chinese. In 1959 it was Zhang Guhua; he was followed successively by Tseng Yun Ya, Ren Rong, Yin Fatang, Wu Jinhua, Hu Jintao and Chen Kuiyuan.

Even the highest Tibetan officials, like Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, cannot make any decisions without the consent of their Chinese “subordinates”. They are not even allowed to stay in Tibet: visits are made only to fulfil Chinese Government needs and purposes. Such restrictions were especially applied to the movement of the late Panchen Lama.

At all “democratic meetings”, pre-determined proposals of the concerned Chinese Communist Party body are tabled only to be praised and approved by a show of hands. Making criticisms, amendments or alternative suggestions are impermissible profanities. The pre-determined outcome of such a meeting is then declared to be the “democratic decision of the people”.

Whatever position a Tibetan occupies in the Chinese hierarchy in Tibet, he always has a “junior” Chinese official “under” him who exercises the real power. In most important offices, such as the so-called “TAR” Economic Planning Department and the Personnel Department, Chinese officials and clerical staff far outnumber Tibetans.

As regards the so-called elected deputies of the people, all candidates are pre-determined by the concerned Chinese leaders. After voting, the winners are again chosen by the same authorities who had selected the candidates.

And the population of about a half of Tibet, now merged into neighbouring Chinese provinces, have been completely deprived of their political identity and rendered an insignificant minority of electorates in their own land.

Socio-economic Conditions and Colonialism

“THE price Tibet paid for this development was higher than the gains.” This was the late Panchen Lama’s last verdict on three decades of Chinese rule in Tibet.

Year after year, the Chinese Government claims great economic advancement in Tibet; bumper crops, industrial growth, improvement of infrastructure and so forth. These claims were made even when Tibet was suffering its only famines in the nation’s recorded history (1961-1964 and 1968-1973). Later, the Chinese Government admitted the disastrous effects of certain economic and social policies forced upon the Tibetan people.

Given China’s record in Tibet, two things must be borne in mind when assessing social and economic developments in Tibet: the first is that the Chinese Government claims cannot be taken at face value. Even official statistics appear to be drawn up to prove a particular political point rather than to present an objective picture of the situation. Secondly, evidence shows that it is not the Tibetans who benefit from any economic development of Tibet. The primary beneficiaries of China’s new open economic policy are the Chinese settlers in Tibet, their Government and military, and their business enterprises.

One Chinese leader who had the honesty and courage to admit the failure of Chinese policies supposedly designed to bring improvement to the lives of Tibetans was Hu Yaobang, former Communist Party Secretary. During his visit to Tibet in June 1980, Hu publicly acknowledged that Tibetans had not benefited from the much-vaunted Chinese “assistance”. He visited Tibetan families in several communes, including one called the “Anti-Imperialist Commune”. Disgusted by the abject poverty of Tibetans, he called a meeting of top functionaries of the “TAR” and demanded to know if all the financial assistance earmarked for Tibet had been “thrown into the Yarlung river”. He complained that, contrary to Chinese propaganda claims, the living standards of Tibetans had gone down since 1959, and that the large Chinese presence in Tibet — particularly of gov-

ernment cadres — was an obstacle to development. He immediately announced that steps should be taken to raise the standard of living to pre-1959 levels in three years, and withdraw eighty-five percent of Chinese cadres. The “TAR” Party Secretary, Yin Fatang, summed up Hu’s impression of Tibet as a region steeped in “poverty and backwardness” [*Red Flag*, No. 8, 1983].

The hiatus between China’s claims and true conditions in Tibet is easier to understand if one realizes that Chinese rule in Tibet is essentially colonialist in nature. In colonial times it was quite common for the colonial power to make lofty claims about the economic and social progress it brought to its “backward” colonies. In many cases it was true that economic development did occur, but the native population contributed more to the realization of profits for the colonial power and its business entrepreneurs than it ever got in return.

One of the defining characteristics of colonialism is the exploitation of the colony for the primary benefit of the colonial power. That, today, is very much the case in Tibet.

Socio-economic reform from 1949 onwards

Soon after the invasion of Tibet, China imposed far-reaching collectivization programmes. Nomads, like farmers, had all their herds confiscated and were themselves divided into brigades and communes. The nomads tended their herds with no right to the product of their labour; the same case applied to farmers. They survived each year on an average rationed diet of five or six pounds of butter, ten pounds of meat and four or five *khel* (a *khel* is between twenty-five and thirty pounds) of *tsampa*.

In the periods 1961-1964 and 1968-1973 famine became widespread in Tibet’s pastoral areas. Thousands upon thousands of Tibetans had to survive on rodents, dogs, worms and whatever they could forage for survival. In 1979 the new Chinese leadership set in motion a policy of liberalization. This brought in its wake a programme of decollectivization which has improved the conditions in Tibet to some extent.

However, things are far from satisfactory even today. With an estimated per capita income of \$80 in 1990, an adult literacy

rate of 21.7 percent and an average life expectancy of forty years, “Tibet Autonomous Region” scores just 0.087 on the UNDP’s Human Development Index for 1991. This would theoretically place it between Chad and Djibouti at position 153 out of the world’s 160 nations.

The Chinese authorities are aware of these facts. Speaking in Beijing at the third meeting of the Seventh Session of the Chinese National People’s Congress in March 1990, the Chairman of the “TAR People’s Government”, Dorje Tsering, said that Tibet (Autonomous Region) was still a very poor region with a per capita income of only about 200 yuan. An increase in the number of beggars is a stark reminder of economic problems faced by Tibetans there. On the sacred fifteenth day of *sakadawa* (in fourth month of the Tibetan calendar) in 1992, when the father of Ms. Drokyi from Sok Dzong gave alms of five *fen* (100 *fen* = one *yuan*) to each beggar in Lhasa town, he handed out 500 yuan without covering half the number of beggars.

In its White Paper, the Chinese Government again claims that its rule has brought great prosperity and vast social, political and cultural benefits to the Tibetan people. It complains that its “civilizing” mission in Tibet is costing the Government and people of China large amounts in terms of subsidies to an under-developed region. According to official Chinese statistics, the level of annual subsidies to the “TAR” in the late 1980s was around one billion yuan or US\$270 million.

What the Chinese Government would not admit is that it has earned far more from Tibet than it has given. In monetary terms, the volume of Tibetan timber taken to China far exceeds the amount of financial assistance it claims to have given. And this does not even take into account the vast mineral resources such as uranium, gold, silver, iron, copper, borax, lithium, chromite, etc, as well as priceless art treasures, carted away to China.

In any case, the bulk of China’s financial subsidy goes towards the maintenance of Chinese personnel in Tibet. It also goes to pay incentives to Chinese settlers. The Tibetans benefit very little from it.

This becomes clear when one studies the deep urban-rural divide in subsidies. During the late 1970s and early 1980s an

average subsidy of \$128 was spent on every town-dweller, and only \$4.50 on each rural inhabitant. The urban areas of the “TAR” are dominated by Chinese settlers and personnel, who form overwhelming majorities in major towns like Lhasa, Nyingtri, Gyangtse, Nagchu, Ngari, Shigatse, Tsethang, Chamdo, etc. The Tibetan population, on the other hand, is concentrated mainly in rural areas. Therefore, in the ultimate analysis, the vast bulk of China’s subsidies is meant to support the majority urban-living Chinese population and their associated infrastructures.

Even the items subsidized are those that are consumed by the Chinese rather than Tibetans. The staple diet of Tibetans is barley (for *tsampa*), though urban or richer families add wheat and sometimes rice to their diet. However, it is only the price of rice and wheat which is subsidized. These form the staple diet of the majority Chinese settlers. By 1985, the price of barley was left to market forces and was 76 *fen* a kg. Rice, on the other hand, was sold at 40 *fen* a kg after being bought by the Government at 90 *fen* a kg; wheat sold at 44 to 48 *fen* a kg after being bought at 112 to 126 *fen* a kg (UNDP 1986). This pattern of subsidy makes living in the “TAR” more attractive to Chinese settlers while at the same time making it harder for poorer Tibetans to survive at a standard to which they were accustomed.

Timber and mining industries are other enterprises that not only receive large chunks of China’s “financial assistance”, but are also among the most important employers of Chinese immigrants in Tibet. The products of these industries are transported to China and other countries and benefit only the colonial power.

Tibetans, on the other hand, are marginalized and have little control over their own natural resource base. Take the case of road construction. The primary objective of constructing roads in Tibet is to deploy occupying forces like the PLA, along with defence materials, and the immigration of Chinese, as well as to exploit the natural resources of Tibet like forests and minerals, which reach China overland. Roads may run through most Tibetan villages, but a public transport system is almost non-existent in the majority of rural Tibet. China’s modern transport system does not benefit the majority of Tibetans. In some vil-

lages, buses do carry people once a week. But the passengers are all cadres. Tibetans in most regions continue to use horses, mules, yaks, donkeys and sheep as modes of transportation. Trucks, plying goods for the Chinese Government, have become a necessary means of mobility for many Tibetans.

Therefore, the Chinese pattern of development in Tibet is intended to control the Tibetan economy rather than stimulate initiative, enterprise and production. It works by creating a vicious circle in which local demand for goods is served by State-owned enterprises in China. Profits from these enterprises are then ploughed back as subsidies, serving to create conditions for the further extraction of natural resources needed by China's own industrial enterprises.

In the light of these experiences, we cannot but view the recent opening of Tibet's economy to foreign investment as a move to accelerate the transfer of Chinese citizens to Tibet and to further exploit Tibet's natural resources for the sole benefit of the colonial power.

In any case — in the ultimate analysis — the moot point is not who is able to build more factories or effect a higher GNP. The point is that, however efficient or modern, no foreign power has the right to impose its rule on another nation.

Health discrimination

The health service is not only urban-biased, but serves the rich better than the poor. Only ten percent of the financial outlay for health goes to rural areas: ninety percent goes to urban centres where Chinese settlers are concentrated and where most of the hospitals are located.

Even when available, medical facilities are prohibitively expensive for most Tibetans. For admission to hospital as an inpatient, one has to make an initial deposit of 300 to 500 yuan (US\$ 80 to 133), an enormous sum in a country where the average per capita income is 200 yuan. Likewise, surgery and blood transfusions are reserved only for those who can pay. The average Tibetan is substantially poorer than the Chinese.

The Chinese claim that there are 3,700 doctors and health personnel in the "TAR". Let us examine this claim. Most of the

doctors are unqualified — having failed or performed poorly in their examinations in China — and have little prospect of finding employment in China. Some have been trained for three years in the “TAR” itself at primary health training centres. In the district clinics, staffed by bare-foot doctors, personnel are trained for about one-and-a-half years mainly to provide employment for family members and children of Chinese officials.

There have been numerous reports of Chinese doctors and health personnel using Tibetan patients as guinea pigs to practise their skills. It is commonplace that Chinese medical graduates sent to Tibet for internship are given sole charge of Tibetan patients whom they are free to treat in any way they wish. Allegations are widespread that ordinary Tibetan patients are being subjected to examinations for diseases other than those they complained of. Especially, operations are being carried out without any obvious or actual need.

We cite some examples: In August 1978, Kelsang (from Markham) with his wife Youdon took their 21-year-old daughter, who was three months pregnant, to the “TAR Hospital No. 2” (then known as “Worker’s Hospital”) for a physical examination. The Chinese doctor carried out an apparently unnecessary operation on her. She died two hours later, crying in great physical agony.

Again, around the same period, when a worker named Migmar of the Lhasa Electric Power Station took his 25-year-old wife to Lhasa city hospital for delivery, both the mother and child died after a failed attempt at caesarian delivery. When the mother was dismembered at her “sky burial” a pair of scissors was discovered in her body.

In prisons such medical deaths are legion. In Sangyip Prison, a tutor of the late Panchen Lama, Ngulchu Rinpoche, and a man named Tethong Chi-Jigme, died after being injected with an unknown substance. In Drapchi, a prisoner named Sonam Bhagdro, though perfectly healthy, was given an injection after severe torture. He died as a result. More recently, after 1987, Tibetans like Lhakpa Tsering, Tsamla, Metok Choezed, etc, have died in similar circumstances after “medical treatment”.

The consequences of the poor health service for Tibetans and the bad state of public hygiene are higher mortality rates

for Tibetans. In 1981 crude death rates per thousand were 7.48 in the “TAR” and 9.92 in Amdo, as against an average of 6.6 in China, according to the report of the World Bank in 1984 and of the UNDP in 1991. Child mortality rates are also high: a hundred and fifty per thousand against forty three for China. The TB morbidity rate, according to the World Bank, is 120.2 per 1,000 in the “TAR” and 647 per 1,000 in Amdo.

Statistics for life expectancy in Tibet are not reliable and vary widely. World Bank data suggests an average of around sixty one years for both the “TAR” and Amdo as against a figure of seventy years for China in 1990, up from forty seven years in 1960, according to UNDP 1991. However, an independent source, based on admissions made by the Chinese themselves, estimates an average Tibetan life expectancy of around forty years only.

Discrimination in education

The PRC’s education policy in Tibet over the last three decades can be summed up in the following words of the late Panchen Lama. Speaking at the first meeting of China’s Institute of Tibetology in 1988, he said: “The land which managed itself well for 1,300 years, from the seventh century, lost its language after it was liberated. Whether we remained backward or made mistakes, we managed our life on the world’s highest plateau by using only Tibetan. We had everything written in our own language, be it Buddhism, crafts, astronomy, astrology, poems, logic. All administrative works were also done in Tibetan. When the Institute of Tibetology was founded, I spoke in the People’s Palace and said that the Tibetan studies should be based on the foundation of Tibet’s own religion and culture. So far we have underestimated these subjects.

“It may not be the deliberate goal of the Party to let Tibetan culture die, but I wonder whether the Tibetan language will survive or be eradicated.”

In independent Tibet, over six thousand monasteries and nunneries served as schools and universities, fulfilling Tibet’s educational needs. In addition, Tibet had many lay schools run by the Government as well as by individuals. For the Chinese

Government, these traditional learning centres were fountain-heads of “blind faith” and nurturing grounds for “feudal oppression”. In the place of Tibetan monasteries, China forced the Tibetans in rural and nomadic areas to found independently-funded “People’s Schools”. Not a single cent of Chinese Government grants was spent on these schools.

These schools served to create impressive statistics for China’s propaganda purposes. Most of the statistics regarding education are deceptive. China claims that it has opened around 2,500 primary schools in the “TAR”. However, the majority of them cannot be regarded as schools in any sense of the word. Most of the teachers are not capable of teaching even rudimentary Tibetan language. Children were naturally not interested in going to these schools. For all practical purposes, the bulk of these People’s Schools have ceased to exist.

In the Chinese official publication, *Tibet Review* (No. 2, 1986) three Chinese sociologists admitted: “There are only 58 middle-level schools (in the “TAR”). Out of them only 13 are real middle schools. Altogether, there are 2,450 primary schools in Tibet. Out of them only 451 are funded by the Government. Over two thousand of these schools are funded by the people. These schools do not have a sound foundation and are not properly equipped. The level of education is either completely nil or extremely low. Therefore, the question of scientific skills can be ruled out among them. At present 90 percent of farmers and herders do not receive lower middle-level education. In view of this, talking about upper-middle class and university education is like asking people to eat well when there are no food grains available. Only 45 percent of the children of school-going age go to primary schools. From them 10.6 percent manage to graduate to the lower-middle school. In other words, 55 percent of the children do not even get primary-level education. In the whole of the “TAR”, there are over 9,000 teachers of various levels, far fewer than the actual number required. 50 percent of these teachers are not qualified enough. Equality among nationalities will come about only if this is reformed and improved.”

Between 1959 and 1966 the Chinese Government launched numerous “thought control” campaigns to consolidate its hold over Tibet. Learned and capable Tibetans, like lamas, abbots,

geshes, lay scholars were sent to jails or labour camps. So while qualified teachers were languishing in jail, each school was run with one or two unqualified teachers.

Members of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile's third fact-finding delegation investigating education were told by the Chinese Government that there were 2,511 schools in Tibet. Mrs. Jetsun Pema, leader of the delegation, says: "Wherever we went it was extremely difficult to arrange a visit to a school. 'The school is closed for summer vacation, the headmaster is away, the children have gone for lunch' (at 10:00 am!), were some of the excuses. After one such excuse, the delegation looked into the classrooms and found them stacked from floor to ceiling with timber. Another time, on being shown a rural tent classroom, the delegates lifted the groundsheet and found the grass still green underneath."

John Billington, director of studies at Repton School in England, travelled extensively through Tibet in 1988 and reported the following: "In rural areas especially, a large number of children can be seen working in the fields, cutting grass, herding sheep, collecting yak dung and working at stalls. Enquiry reveals that they do not go to school, in most cases because no schools exist. It was sad to hear older people say that there had been schools in the past attached to a monastery, but that when the monasteries were destroyed the little rural schools have not been replaced. Well off the beaten track, I met elderly nomads who could read and write; it was too often a brutal reminder of Chinese neglect that their grandchildren could not."

An important question is about the beneficiaries of the educational facilities in Tibet. In its White Paper, the Chinese Government claims that it has invested 1.1 billion yuan to develop education in Tibet.

Whatever the veracity of this claim, one thing is clear: Chinese students residing in Tibet are the chief beneficiaries of this grant. From thirty to fifty percent of the educational outlay for the "TAR" goes to the Tibetan Nationality University in the Chinese city of Shenyang. This university offers the best facilities among all the schools meant for Tibetans. Most of the Chinese teachers and staff of the university are former members of the 18th Army which invaded Tibet. Likewise, most of the

students are the children and relatives of Chinese officials in Tibet and elsewhere.

In Tibet, the best schools are in Lhasa, Shigatse, Gyantse, Chamdo, Silling, Kyigudo, Dartsedo and Dechen. But these schools are meant primarily for the children of Chinese cadres. In these Chinese Government-funded urban schools, there are separate classes for Chinese and Tibetan students, with the best teachers assigned to Chinese classes. They also have two different messes, known as the “*tsampa*-eaters’ mess” and “rice-eaters’ mess”. The food at the Chinese “rice-eaters’ mess” is far superior.

Every year a certain number of university seats are officially reserved for Tibetan students and their expenses form part of the budget for Tibetan education. However, most of these seats go to Chinese students. To go to university, the student must pass a competitive examination after graduating from upper-middle school. Since the examinations are conducted in Chinese, Tibetan students are disadvantaged and lose places to Chinese students. The growing trend is that Chinese students who have failed to make it to universities in their homeland go to Tibet to resit their examination. Because the general standard of education in Tibet is much lower than in China, these students fare well against Tibetans, and thus take Tibetan places in universities.

The first Australian Human Rights Delegation to Tibet and China in 1991 also stated in its report: “Though the delegation noted an official determination to raise educational standards for Tibetans, many Tibetan children appear to still go without formal education. Tibetan children in the Lhasa area seemingly have access to a very limited syllabus at both primary and secondary levels. Some testified to never having been at school, or having to leave for economic reasons as early as ten years old.”

In a petition, dated February 20, 1986, submitted to the Chinese authorities, Tashi Tsering, an English teacher at Lhasa’s Tibet University, stated: “In 1979 six hundred students from the Tibet Autonomous Region were pursuing university education in Tibet and China. Of them, only sixty were Tibetans. In 1984 Tibet’s three big schools had 1,984 students on their rolls, out of which only 666 were Tibetans. In the same year 250 students

from Tibet may have been sent to universities in the Mainland. But only sixty to seventy of them were Tibetans.... Most of the government outlay meant for Tibetan education is used on Chinese students. Even today, seventy per cent of Tibetans are illiterate.

“Out of twenty eight classes in Lhasa’s Middle School No.1, twelve are for Tibetans.... Out of 1,451 students, 933 are Tibetans and 518 Chinese. Not only are the Chinese students not learning Tibetan, 387 of the Tibetan students are not learning Tibetan either. Only 546 Tibetans are learning their language. Of the 111 teachers, only thirty are Tibetans and seven teach Tibetan. I have heard that the best qualified teachers are assigned to teach the Chinese classes whereas unqualified teachers teach the Tibetan classes.

“In Lhasa’s Primary School No. 1, there are thirty four classes with the Tibetans and Chinese sharing the same number of classes. One thousand students are Tibetans and nine hundred Chinese. Two hundred Tibetans do not learn Tibetan. Of the 136 teachers, only eighteen teach Tibetan... Many rural schools have closed after decollectivisation of farm lands and animals; either there are no students or no teachers.

“In Lhasa’s Tibet University, there are 413 Tibetan students and 258 Chinese. Two hundred fifty-one Tibetans are in the Tibetan Language and Literature Stream and twenty seven in the Tibetan Medical Studies Stream. Only 135 Tibetan students get to study modern subjects... The Tibetan departments are generally known as the ‘Departments of Political Manipulation’. This is because, while the authorities have fixed sixty percent of seats for Tibetan students and forty per cent for Chinese students, most of the Tibetan students are absorbed into these two Tibetan departments, leaving the majority of the seats in modern education streams to the Chinese... The English Department of this university has two Tibetan students and fourteen Chinese.”

From 1966 onwards complete sinicization became the watchword. Tibetan was labelled as the language of religion and its teaching was forbidden. Some time in the 1960s monk and nun teachers as well as qualified lay Tibetan teachers were all ordered to leave their teaching jobs. Tibetan language and gram-

mar books were labelled “books of blind faith” and thus discouraged from being taught. In their place, books of Mao Zedong’s thoughts and newspapers were put on the school syllabus. Children were taught that the Tibetan religion was blind faith, Tibetan customs and habits “old green thinking”, Tibetan was a “useless, backward language”, old Tibetan society was “extremely backward, savage, and oppressive”. Those who agreed with the Chinese were considered progressive whereas those who disagreed were termed variously as counter-revolutionaries, reactionaries or class enemies. Naturally, a whole generation of Tibetan children grew up completely ignorant of their own culture, history and way of life.

Chinese names with Marxist connotations replaced Tibetan names for houses, streets and places. Many Tibetans had to change their names into Chinese. Norbulingka (the jewel park), the summer palace of the Dalai Lamas, was given a Chinese name meaning “people’s common park”. The Tibetan language was deliberately bastardized with Chinese words and phrases.

In a book entitled *Special Compilation on Tibetan Nationalities: 1965-1985*, a Chinese official in the “TAR”, made a critical observation on the Chinese policy of discouraging the use and learning of the Tibetan language in Tibet. He observed: “Tibetan teachers and those able to translate in Tibetan have become very rare. As a result, it has become very difficult to teach or issue official documents in both the Tibetan and Chinese languages. A good number of Tibetan officials cannot read and write properly in Tibetan. Neither can they announce the Party policy to the masses in Tibetan.”

In a publication of China’s Institute of Tibetology (1991), Sangay, a junior lecturer of Qinghai Nationalities University, wrote: “There is one group of people who hold the view that the use of the Tibetan language will work as obstacles on the way to economic development... The local authorities have decided that only the Chinese language should be taught and used... This policy has been implemented for many years. Final result: People could write neither in Tibetan nor in Chinese. But economic stagnation has continued.”

The Chinese authorities are averse to improving educational infrastructures in Tibet. From 1985, some efforts have been

made to provide higher education to Tibetans. But this has been achieved by increasing the number of students sent to universities and schools in China, rather than by improving the educational infrastructure within Tibet.

Tibetan children with intellectual aptitude are plucked from schools in Tibet and sent to schools in China. Tibetans rightfully resent this as a policy aimed at undermining their own culture. The late Panchen Lama said that sending Tibetan children to China would only have the effect of alienating them from their cultural roots.

Catriona Bass, author of *Inside the Treasure House* and English teacher in Lhasa in 1985, said: “Four thousand Tibetan children were studying in China at this time. Undoubtedly these children benefited academically. Given the still very basic resources in Tibet, it might be an effective way of educating Tibetans, in the short term. But this policy dates from the 1950s. Now instead of reducing the number of children sent to China, and investing more in improving facilities in Tibet, the Government has announced plans to send as many as ten thousand children by 1993.

“For many Tibetans we met, this policy posed the most serious threat to Tibetan cultural identity. With more and more young adults returning to Tibet, ignorant or scornful of Tibetan traditions, some people saw the policy as a conspiracy on the part of the Government to erode cultural values from within.”

Achievements of exile Tibetans

China insists that the Chinese presence in Tibet is justified because of the help that is offered to develop and civilize the culturally and economically backward Tibetan people. Left to themselves, Tibetans are quite capable of managing their own affairs. The thriving exile community is the best evidence of this.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, the host Indian Government, and international aid agencies have invested upwards of Indian Rupees 1.5 billion in educating Tibetans in exile since 1959. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile allocates sixty five percent of its annual budget to the education of its children. This does not include the amount invested in monastic education.

Today, in the newly-established Tibetan monasteries and nunneries in India, Nepal and Bhutan, there are about 11,000 monks and nuns. Many specialized institutions have been established in India to preserve the now-endangered Tibetan culture. The Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, provides traditional and modern education to Tibetans and to students from Himalayan Buddhist regions, many of whom now serve in various Tibetan schools and centres of higher education. Some of them work in the more than seven hundred Tibetan religious and cultural centres established around the world today. Tibet's native religion, Bön, has re-established its headquarters in Himachal Pradesh state, India.

The Tibetan Medical and Astro. Institute in Dharamsala provides traditional Tibetan medical services to patients all over the world. It also educates students in Tibetan medicine and astro-science. Graduates of the institute now serve as doctors in various Tibetan settlements in Nepal, India, Bhutan as well as in other parts of the world.

The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) in Dharamsala, and Tibet House in New Delhi, serve as facilities to educate foreign students in Tibetan history, language and culture. The LTWA is the premier internationally-recognized centre for studies in Tibetology. Up to 1992 it had assisted more than five thousand research students from over thirty countries.

The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) in Dharamsala has preserved traditional Tibetan opera, dance, songs and music, and has performed with outstanding success around the world. Many of the performing arts teachers in the various Tibetan schools in India, Nepal and Bhutan have been trained here.

The Tibetan Cultural Printing Press in Dharamsala, and other Tibetan publishing centres, preserve the culture by printing the Buddhist canon, the *Kagyur* and *Tengyur*, along with thousands of other traditional Tibetan publications and scriptures.

Today there are eighty four Tibetan schools in India, Nepal and Bhutan with an enrolment of over 26,000 students at primary, middle and secondary levels. Of these, seventeen are residential and seven more have hostel facilities. In addition, there are fifty five pre-primary schools. According to statistics

compiled by the Planning Council of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile in Dharamsala, altogether about ninety two percent of Tibetan children in exile, aged six to seventeen, are attending schools, with about eighty four percent of them enrolled in Tibetan schools. In these schools there are a total of 1,280 teachers with an average teacher-student ratio of 1:20. School education is available free for all Tibetan children. Meritorious students are granted scholarships for degree and professional courses, while others are given vocational training. Up to 1992, three thousand students in exile had completed their university education. Every year four hundred to five hundred students finish their senior secondary school education. Of these, two hundred to two hundred and fifty graduates join universities for further studies in India and abroad.

Today, education in exile has produced Tibetan medical doctors, administrators, Ph.Ds, M.Phils, engineers, post-graduate teachers, journalists, social workers, lawyers, computer programmers, etc. The students, after completing higher education, serve in the Government-in-Exile and other institutions. Ninety nine percent of the officials in the Tibetan Government-in-Exile today have received their education in exile in India.

Conclusion

Over the years thousands of young Tibetans have undertaken hazardous, heart-breaking journeys over the Himalayas to come to India where they and their parents see the only hope for meaningful and free education. The first Australian Human Rights Delegation to China and Tibet also stated in its report: “Young people, while speaking of their desire for education, saw their only choice being to attempt to reach the Tibetan communities in India where, they said, at least education was freely available irrespective of all the other hardships.”

Since 1979, over five thousand monks and nuns have fled to India to pursue religious studies. In addition, over three thousand new refugees in the age group of five to fourteen, and over one thousand in the age group of fifteen to twenty five have been admitted to various Tibetan schools in India.

If China's claim on education were true, there would be no

need for these young Tibetans to leave their homeland and parents to flee to India. Noticing that such a large number of Tibetans studying in schools set up by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was a damning indictment of the pathetic educational scenario in Tibet, the Chinese authorities in 1995 ordered Tibetan parents to recall their children from schools in India within a specified time upon pain of punishments. But as expected, the Tibetans largely ignored the Chinese order.

Not only do the Chinese authorities refrain from making a whole-hearted attempt to improve educational opportunity and facilities for Tibetans in Tibet but it also prohibits Tibetans from seeking better educational opportunities outside the country by imposing deterrents.

Religion and National Identity

TIBET'S earliest religion is Bön, founded by Shenrab Miwo of Shangshung in Western Tibet. With the advent of Buddhism, the Bön religion diminished in influence, but it continues to thrive today with an active community of Tibetan refugees still practising their faith in India and Nepal. Tashi Menri, Yungdrungling, and Kharna were some of the major Bön monasteries in Tibet. The Bön religion has imbibed many characteristics of Buddhism over the course of its historical development. Tibetan Buddhism, in turn, has also taken much from Bön.

Buddhism flourished in Tibet in the seventh century. Receiving royal patronage, it spread throughout Tibet. With the assumption of power by the Dalai Lamas from 1642 onwards, the era of "harmonious blend of religion and politics" was established in Tibet. Since then, for three-and-a-half centuries, ten successive Dalai Lamas have been the spiritual and temporal rulers of Tibet.

The cumulative effect of Buddhism's long patronage by successive kings of Tibet, and the country being later ruled by successive religious heads, has been immense, both to Tibet as a nation and to its people. Buddhism has not been a mere system of belief to the Tibetans; it encompasses the entirety of their culture and civilization and constitutes the very essence of their lives. Buddhism permeated the daily lives of the Tibetan people and formed the social fabric connecting them to the land. Of all the bonds which defined Tibetans as a people and as a nation, religion was undoubtedly the strongest.

Through the centuries, highly qualified Tibetans studied, practised, expounded, preserved, and taught the meaning of this religion and its social and spiritual relevance to peoples throughout the Asian regions sharing the Tibetan cultural tradition, including Mongolia.

In the words of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Buddhism thus caused the "metamorphosis that changed the entire course of Tibet's history. Generations of Tibetan intellectuals studied and developed a profound culture that closely accorded with the original principles and philosophy of the dharma. Down through

the centuries their dedicated services brought about extraordinary developments which are unique among the literary and cultural achievements of the nations of the world.”

Monasteries, temples, and hermitages were founded in every village and town throughout Tibet, together with resident monks and nuns. Huge monasteries, which were more like monastic cities, such as Drepung, Sera, and Gaden in Lhasa, Tashilhunpo in Shigatse, Sakya Monastery in Sakya, Tsurphu in Central Tibet, Mindroling in Central Tibet, Labrang Tashi-kyil in Amdo, Gaden Jampaling in Chamdo, Lithang Gonchen, etc, became high seats of learning. Every Tibetan Buddhist home had its altar.

By 1959 there were at least 6,259 monasteries with about 592,558 resident monks and nuns. These religious centres also housed tens of thousands of statues, religious artifacts made of gold, silver and other metals — studded with jewels. Similarly, tens of thousands of *chorten* (stupas) were built out of precious metal. Besides texts on Buddhism, these monasteries were storehouses of works on literature, medicine, astrology, art, politics, etc, and thus were the real “treasure houses” of the Tibetan people.

Tibetan national identity became indistinguishable from its religion. Buddhist folklore and teachings regulated the people’s lives, festivals, holidays, work ethics, family chores as well as national issues. Tibet remained a proud and independent Buddhist nation until its occupation by China.

Tibet also had a compact community of Muslims who had their own mosques. These, too, suffered damage at the hands of the Chinese. In addition, there were a small numbers of followers of Hinduism and Christianity. They were all tolerated and given equal rights.

Violation of religious freedom: 1949-1979

The Chinese Government initially proclaimed that while complete consolidation of its annexation of Tibet was underway, no restrictions would be imposed on the practice of religion. Its formal pledge to protect and respect Tibet’s religious tradition was stated even in the “Seventeen-Point Agreement” of 1951.

This “agreement” explicitly stated that the traditional status, functions and powers of the Dalai Lama would not be altered and that “the policy of freedom of religious beliefs laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference will be protected”.

However, the Chinese soon began to undermine the traditional social system and religion of Tibet. People were told that “Religion is the enemy of our materialist ideology and believing in religion is blind faith. Therefore, you should not only not have faith in religion but should also condemn it.” While the Chinese constitution and initial assurances made to the Tibetans purported to allow a semblance of religious freedom, their resolve to undermine Tibetan religion was absolute from the very beginning.

The Chinese Government pronounced: “The Chinese Communist Party considers that its ideology and that of religion are two forces that cannot co-exist and occupy the same spot at the same time...the differences between the two [ie, science and religion] can be likened to those between light and darkness, between truth and falsehood. There is absolutely no possibility to reconcile the mutually-opposed world views of science and religion.”

This Communist Chinese view was all-pervasive. In Mao Zedong’s own words, “... but of course, religion is poison. It has two great defects: It undermines the race...[and] retards the progress of the country. Tibet and Mongolia have both been poisoned by it.”

By the middle of the 1950s, the Chinese authorities realized that religion was the principal obstacle to their control of Tibet. Therefore, from the beginning of 1956 the so-called “Democratic Reform” was carried out, first in Kham and Amdo, and later (from 1959) in Central Tibet. Monasteries, temples, and cultural centres were systematically looted of all articles of value and then dismantled.

First, special teams of mineralogists visited religious buildings to locate and extract all the precious stones. Next came the metallurgists who marked all metal objects which were subsequently carted away in trucks requisitioned from army headquarters. Monastery walls were then dynamited and all the

wooden beams and pillars taken away. Clay images were destroyed in the expectation of finding precious metals inside. Finally, whatever remained — bits of wood and stone — were removed. Literally, hundreds of tons of valuable religious statues, *thangkas* (scroll paintings), metal artifacts, and other treasures were shipped to China either to be sold in international antique markets or to be melted down.

When a team of Tibetans visited China in 1982-83 to retrieve Tibetan artifacts, a Chinese man in Beijing told them that “(m)ost of the Tibetan cultural artifacts carted to China were destroyed. The statues and ritual objects of pure gold and silver were never seen again. Those of gilded copper, bell-metal, red copper, brass, etc, were ferried to Luyun, from where they were eventually sold to foundries in Shanghai, Sichuan, Tai Yun, Beijing, Tianjin, etc. The foundry called Xi-you Qing-shu Tie (precious metal foundry) situated about five kilometers to the east of Beijing city, alone purchased about 600 tons of Tibetan crafted metals.” The team found out that almost all artifacts taken by other foundries had already been melted down.

This physical desecration and destruction was accompanied by public condemnation of religion, and humiliation and ridicule of religious persons. Religious texts were burnt and mixed with field manure; the sacred *mani* stones (stones or slates with prayers engraved) were used for making toilets and pavements; monks and nuns were forced to copulate in public and taunted to perform “miracles”; ruined monasteries and temples were turned into pigsties; starving monks and nuns in Chinese prisons were told to get “food from the Buddha”.

Destruction before the Cultural Revolution

Contrary to official Chinese assertions, much of Tibet’s culture and religion was destroyed between 1955 and 1961, and not solely during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This was confirmed by Bhuchung, the then Vice President of the so-called TAR People’s Government, at a press conference on July 17, 1987, when he stated that what little remained to be destroyed was obliterated during the Cultural Revolution under the slogan “Smash the Four Olds”.

Out of Tibet's total of 6,259 monasteries and nunneries only about eight remained by 1976. Among those destroyed were the seventh century Samye, the first monastery in Tibet; Gaden, the earliest and holiest monastic university of the Gelugpas; Sakya, the main seat of the Sakyas; Tsurphu, one of the holiest monasteries of the Kagyuds; Mindroling, one of the most famous monasteries of the Nyingmapas; Menri, the earliest and most sacred Bon monastery, etc. Out of 592,558 monks, nuns, *rinpoches* (reincarnates) and *ngagpas* (tantric practitioners), over 110,000 were tortured and put to death, and over 250,000 were forcibly disrobed.

The extent of religious destruction in Tibet was referred to by the late Panchen Lama in 1988 in Beijing during the first General Meeting of China's Institute of Tibetology. He said: "The destruction suffered by monasteries in the Tibetan inhabited areas was total and a hundred percent. About 99 percent suffered total destruction. Those seven or eight which remained also did not escape damage. The condition of the Potala Palace was the best among those which remained. But it too suffered damage. Therefore, I say that the destruction caused was a hundred percent."

1979-1994: Religious freedom, a ritualistic facade

Since 1979, a much-heralded programme of "liberalization" began in Tibet under which some superficial facade of religious freedom was allowed. This includes limited and selective renovation of places of worship, and allowing people a degree of ritual practices — such as making prostrations, circumambulating places of worship, offering butter lamps, reciting mantras, turning prayer wheels, burning incense, putting up prayer flags, etc. These are only external acts of worship. But propagation of the teachings of the Buddha is either banned or, when permitted, strictly controlled.

The essence of Buddhism lies in mental and spiritual development achieved through intensive study with qualified lamas, understanding and practice. But the Chinese discourage this in their campaign to misrepresent the Tibetan religion as nothing more than practices in superstition and blind faith rather than

what it really is: a functional and scientific philosophy. The Dalai Lama, in his March 10, 1987 statement, said: “The so-called religious freedom in Tibet today amounts to permitting our people to worship and practice religion in a merely ritualistic and devotional way. There are both direct and indirect restrictions on the teaching and study of Buddhist philosophy. Buddhism, thus, is being reduced to blind faith which is exactly how the Communist Chinese view and define religion.”

Today’s Chinese policy is aimed at bringing about a gradual and natural death of Tibetan culture and religion, thus reducing the Tibetans to an uncultured, superstitious nation, fit only to be ruled and reformed by them. In this way they hope to validate their “liberation” of — and claim to — Tibet.

Reconstruction and renovation

Almost all Chinese state-sponsored reconstruction of Tibetan monuments has been highly selective, intended only to serve their political and economic aims. These serve as museums to attract tourists rather than living cultural and religious institutions. Also, contrary to the Chinese claim, most of the rebuilt or renovated monasteries, including the “state-sponsored” ones, came through the initiative of Tibetans who contributed their labour and finances.

The aid sanctioned by the Chinese Government forms only a very small fraction of the total expenses incurred. On the other hand, China confiscates the income of the monasteries from entry fees (imposed by the Chinese) and offerings made by pilgrims.

Reconstruction and renovation of monasteries can be done only after receiving permission from the Chinese Bureau of Religious Affairs. Such permission is given with great reluctance following a long period of bureaucratic red tape during which Tibetans have to make repeated appeals and listen, in return, to constant lectures about the negative influences of religion to “national interests”. The limited number of monks allowed to join these monasteries serve more as showpieces for tourists and, in most cases, caretakers rather than true religious students and practitioners.

In independent Tibet, the major Tibetan monastic universities served as cultural and learning centres for large numbers of students from Inner Asia. These institutions each had from three to ten thousand students and the rigorous curriculum began around the age of eighteen and culminated around the age of forty five. The basic units of Tibet's monastic universities were its colleges, each university having at least two. These had their own administration, faculty and textbooks. For centuries, the monastic colleges functioned to promote critical and creative spiritual thought.

Chinese Government control over religious institutions

China today refuses to let the colleges — the functioning units of the monastic universities — to continue in the traditional way. It has also placed a ceiling on the number of monks allowed in each university. Before the Chinese invasion, Sera had 7,997 monks on its rolls; it is now permitted to have only about three hundred; Drepung, which used to have ten thousand monks, is now permitted only four hundred; and Gaden which numbered 5,600 monks is now permitted only one hundred and fifty.

In addition, the daily functions of the monasteries are regimented through a maze of state bureaucracies, such as the United Front Work Department, Religious Affairs Bureau, Tibetan Buddhist Association, Democratic Management Committee, Political Education and Investigation Work Inspection Teams, security organs, etc.

China has, in part, laid down the following criteria for admission to a monastery: The candidate should be at least eighteen years old; should “love” the country and the Communist Party; should have the consent of parents; should obtain formal approval from the monasteries' Democratic Management Committee; should have the consent of local authorities; should have the consent of county or provincial authorities; should obtain clearance from the Public Security Bureau; the candidate and the candidate's parents should have a “good political background”; should have been raised in a certain geographical area

(eg, Tibetans from Kham and Amdo may not be admitted to monasteries in Central Tibet); should study Marxism; should be aware that materialism and spirituality are contradictory, etc.

Admit only the “politically correct”

China’s guiding principle behind admission to monasteries and nunneries is that “We must foster a large number of fervent patriots in every religion who accept the leadership of the Party and government, firmly support the Socialist path, and safeguard national and ethnic unity”, and that “seminaries should hold entrance examinations and admit upright, patriotic young people ... who have reached a certain level of cultural development.” These principles are clearly laid down in the Chinese “Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During Our Country’s Socialist Period,” and “Rules for Democratic Management of Temples,” etc. Yet another organ known as the Tibetan Buddhism Guidance Committee is being set up to “oversee the practice of Buddhism in Tibet (TAR), Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan (Amdo and Kham areas of Tibet incorporated into Chinese provinces). Foremost among its tasks will be the implementation of government policies, education of monks and nuns in the patriotic mould, and supervision over monastery management.”

In addition to the above, there are other subtle and insidious methods of undermining religion which are not easily discerned by the uninformed. These include persistent anti-religious publications and theatrical performances, restricting religious teachings, educating Tibetan youths along Marxist lines with heavy anti-religious overtones, lack of a regular curriculum in the monasteries, lack of textbooks and teachers, forcing monks to perform for tourists, keeping police and para-military forces at the monasteries, arresting and torturing those suspected of having independent thoughts, planting informers in monasteries, conducting political education and investigation in the monasteries by Work Inspection Teams and a ban on even apolitical prayers composed by the Dalai Lama.

On account of such restrictions, the Panchen Lama, on September 28, 1988, called for the eradication of Chinese “admin-

istrative interference in the religious activities in Tibet (read TAR) and other Tibetan-inhabited regions and increased Tibetan regulation of religious affairs”.

Conclusion

Though China no longer bombs or sends Red Guards to destroy Tibet’s monasteries, its aim still remains the same as before: total elimination of Tibetan religion and culture.

This is clear from an official document, *Policy on Religious Freedom*, prepared by Ganze (Karze) Prefectural Propaganda Committee and dated February 1990, which states: “With the development of our socialist system, the social system for the natural extinction of religion was established.” Yet, another official document entitled *Policy on Nationalities and Religion* brought out in 1991, states: “We should oppose all those who work to split the motherland in the name of nationality and religion. There should be no hesitation in taking harsh decisions to deal with any political disturbance carried out in the name of nationality and religion, and in doing so the state’s political, judicial, and even military powers should be used.”

In carrying out its unremitting persecution of Tibetan religion, China continues to violate not only the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights but also all the clauses of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief.

In its reports of 1959 and 1960, the Legal Inquiry Committee of the International Commission of Jurists said: “The Committee found that acts of Genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group, and that such acts are acts of genocide independent of any conventional obligation.”

Population Transfer and Control

THE transfer of civilians by an occupying power into the territory it occupies is a violation of international law, according to the IVth Geneva Convention of 1949. However, it is a practice which many occupying powers, colonial administrations and totalitarian rulers have used and still use to break resistance to their rule and consolidate control over a particular territory. Hitler developed large-scale population transfer plans and Stalin carried out many such plans with the tragic results we are seeing today in the former Soviet Union.

Today, China is implementing the same policy in Tibet. Begun as early as 1949, when China started the invasion of Tibet, this policy poses the greatest threat to the survival of the Tibetan nation and people. Besides inundating the country with millions of settlers from China, the Chinese Government is also employing various coercive birth-control measures to stem the growth of the Tibetan population.

The aim of this twin demographic policy is to ensure that the Tibetans are reduced to an insignificant minority in their own country so as to render any resistance against China's rule ineffective. It is exactly for this reason that some observers have termed this policy as China's "Final Solution".

Population transfer as an explicit official policy

China's "White Paper" states, "Another lie is the claim that a large number of Hans have migrated to Tibet, turning the ethnic Tibetans into a minority."

However, ample evidence confirms that the contrary is true. The first public indication of Chinese population transfer to Tibet came in 1952, in the "Directive of the Central Committee of the CPC on Policies for Work in Tibet", issued by Mao Zedong himself. Proposing a five-fold increase in the population of the western half of Tibet, later to be named as the "Tibet Autono-

mous Region”, Mao said, “Tibet covers a large area but is thinly populated. Its population should be increased from the present two or three million to five or six million, and then to over ten million.” [*Renmin Ribao*, November 22, 1952].

In a statement to the Legal Inquiry Committee of the International Commission of Jurists on August 29, 1959, the Dalai Lama said: “In 1955 just before returning to Lhasa we had been to see Liu Shao-chi. He mentioned to the Panchen Lama that Tibet was a big country and unoccupied and that China had a big population which can be settled there.”

In 1960, in the aftermath of the Chinese occupation of Tibet, Premier Zhou Enlai said, “The Chinese are greater in number and more developed in economy and culture but in the regions they inhabit there is not much arable land left and underground resources are not as abundant as in the regions inhabited by fraternal nationalities.”

In February 1985 the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi announced its Government’s intention to “change both the ecological imbalance and the population lack” not just in Tibet but also in other “sparsely populated outlying regions”. Chinese “migration should be welcomed by the local population, and should result in a population increase of sixty million over the next thirty years in those regions”. The announcement went on to say, “This is a very conservative estimate. As a matter of fact, the increase might swell to a hundred million in less than thirty years.” [*Movement Westward*, Reference Material No. 2, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, New Delhi, February 4, 1985].

Two years later, in June 1987, Deng Xiaoping admitted that the Chinese were being encouraged to move to Tibet because, according to him, the local population “needs Han immigrants as the (Autonomous) Region’s population of about two million is inadequate to develop its resources”. [Deng Xiaoping, during his meeting with ex-US President Jimmy Carter, June 29, 1987; Reuters’ report, Beijing, June 30, 1987].

Chinese population in the “TAR”

From 1983 there has been a sharp increase in the transfer of Chinese settlers to Central Tibet. In May 1984 *Radio Beijing* reported that: “Over 60,000 workers, representing the vanguard groups to help in the construction work in the TAR are arriving in Tibet *daily* (number of days not specified) and have started their preliminary work. They will be helping in the electricity department, schools, hotels, cultural institutions and construction of mills and factories.” [*Radio Beijing*, 1700 hrs, May 14, 1984].

Another 60,000 Chinese “workers”, mainly from Sichuan province, arrived in the “Tibet Autonomous Region” in the summer of 1985. [*China’s Population*, Beijing, 1988]. In 1991 China announced that “technicians from all over China have come to work at various construction sites and about 300,000 workers are prepared to join in the project”. [*Beijing Review*, January 21-27, 1991]

The *Times of India* (New Delhi) of September 27, 1988 quoted Mao Rubai, the then Vice-Chairman of the TAR Government, as saying that there were one million Chinese settlers (excluding military personnel) in the region.

In 1985, in Lhasa alone, there were 50,000 to 60,000 Chinese civilian residents. From 1985 to 1988 a further influx of Chinese immigrants doubled the population of Lhasa. That this migration created problems for the Tibetan population was also recognized by the “TAR” Government. In March 1989 Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, a Vice-President of the Chinese National People’s Congress, said that “today, because of so many Chinese shopkeepers and settler coming into Tibet (some 100,000 of them being in Lhasa alone) great disturbance has been caused to public security”.

Chinese population in Kham and Amdo

Tibetan areas outside the “Tibet Autonomous Region” include the whole of present-day Qinghai Province and the portions of Kham and Amdo merged with the Chinese provinces of Sichuan,

Gansu and Yunnan. It is in these eastern Tibetan regions where the concentration of Chinese population is highest. Chinese settlement in these regions followed close on the heels of the invading PLA troops in 1949. By 1959, when China installed its own government in the Tibetan capital, the Chinese population in this eastern half of Tibet had already reached an alarming figure. The influx escalated from 1962 onwards when thousands upon thousands of additional Chinese settlers began to be sent into these areas as “builders, workers, and technicians”.

As there was no apparent need for them, Tibetans considered them only to be a drain on the economy and interpreted the policy as an insidious attempt to complete the sinification of their country. According to the late Panchen Lama: “The expense of keeping one Chinese in Tibet is equal to that of four in China. Why should Tibet spend its money to feed them? ... Tibet has suffered greatly because of the policy of sending a large number of useless people. The Chinese population in Tibet started with a few thousand and today it has multiplied manifold.”[Speech on the situation in Tibet by the Panchen Lama at a meeting of the Sub-Committee of the National People’s Congress in Beijing, March 28, 1987].

China’s fourth population census in 1990 put the Chinese population (including a small number of Mongols) in these non-“TAR” Tibetan regions at 4,927,369. However, it is said that there is at least one non-registered Chinese against every two who are registered. This means the actual Chinese population, both registered and unregistered, in the non-“TAR” Tibetan regions of Kham and Amdo is estimated to be about 7.4 million.

Incentives for Chinese to move to Tibet

To encourage Chinese settlement in Tibet, the Beijing Government offers an array of benefits to its employees and the whole of the Chinese civilian population.

The following statement is typical of China’s rationale for providing conditions and services which are significantly better than those available to Tibetans: “The personnel brought in from developed regions (China) cannot be expected to live on the local fare of *tsampa* (roasted barley flour) and raw meat. They

need good housing, hospitals, cinemas and schools for their children.” [*The Poverty of Plenty*, Wang and Bai, London, p.148].

Housing, health care, leave to China, cultural and educational facilities are all part of an enormously expensive undertaking to provide incentives for the Chinese to work in Tibet. Other costly subsidies include a high-altitude allowance, and transporting wheat and rice by truck to Tibet.

Annual wages for Chinese migrants are eighty seven percent higher in Tibet than in China. The longer the stay in Tibet, the higher the benefits. Vacations for Chinese personnel in Tibet are far longer than those in China. For every eighteen months of work in Tibet, they receive a three-month leave back to China with all the expenses paid by the Government.

Chinese entrepreneurs receive special tax exemptions and loans at low interests rates in Tibet, whereas for Tibetans starting an enterprise in their own homeland, even obtaining a licence is difficult.

“TAR” opened to bolster population transfer

In late 1992 China announced the opening up of Tibet’s economy to “foreign investments”. In reality, this economic open-door policy is designed only to encourage the settlement of more Chinese in Tibet. This fact has been borne out by the recent Chinese demographic policy in Tibet. The Chinese Government is already persuading its massive drifting population to make a home in the “TAR”.

Hectic activities to build new Chinese townships and villages have been reported from many areas of the “TAR”; these include Dromo (Yatung), Emagang, Phenpo, Tsethang, Toelung, Nyemo, Kongpo Nyingtri and Maldro Gyama. It is believed that a large proportion of Chinese displaced by the “Three-Gorges” hydro-electricity project in China will be relocated in these areas.

Birth control, forced abortion and sterilization

From 1984 China imposed its policy allowing Tibetan couples to have only two children. It was announced that only twelve per-

cent of the population in the “TAR” fell within the ambit of this policy. This was because in the countryside and pastoral areas, Tibetans were supposed to be exempt from such restrictions. But in reality orders were issued for fines ranging from 1,500 to 3,000 yuan (US\$ 400 to 800) for the birth of a third child. Extra children were denied ration cards and workers violating the rule had their pay cut by upto fifty percent, or in some cases withheld altogether for three to six months.

Such coercive measures were — and still are — employed in a number of ingenious ways. On November 5, 1987, the head of the “TAR” Family Planning Department, Tsering Dolkar, stated at a meeting: “There are 104,024 women of child-bearing age, of whom 76,220 are married. Of them 22,634 have already undergone birth control operations, constituting thirty percent of women in the TAR of child-bearing age. In 1985, after the science of family planning was announced in the countryside and pastoral areas, there has been a perceptible change in the mental outlook and birth rates in these areas. In 1986, nineteen percent of women in Nyingtri, Lhokha and Shigatse were sterilized.”

According to the Civil Affairs Department of Shigatse, in July 1990 a team from Shigatse Child and Maternity Hospital visited a remote and poor area of Bhuchung district to carry out examinations. It was found that 387 women in this small area had been sterilized. The team had gone to ten districts to propagate family planning, resulting in the sterilization of 1,092 women out of 2,419.

In Gyatsa district of Lhokha, Tsering Youdon, a doctor working at the child and maternity clinic, stated that in her district there were more than four thousand women of child-bearing age of whom over one thousand took birth control measures and seven hundred of whom were sterilized.

In Kham and Amdo, an even more repressive policy is being enforced. For example, in “Gansu Parig Tibetan Autonomous District” 2,415 women were sterilized in 1983, of whom eighty two percent were Tibetans. In 1987, 764 women of child-bearing age were sterilized in Zachu district in “Ganze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture”: 660 were Tibetans. Mobile birth control teams roam the countryside and pastoral areas where they round

up women for abortion and sterilization. Even women well advanced in their pregnancy are forced to undergo abortion followed by sterilization.

As a rule, the enforcement of birth control measures in Tibet is highly erratic, differing from place to place and time to time, and depends largely on the zeal of individual local officials who are given *carte blanche* to implement this policy.

The “White Paper” says on this subject: “Only twelve percent of the people in Tibet are covered by the family planning policy. In the process of carrying out family planning the Government always persists in the principle of ‘mainly publicity, volunteering and service’ and prohibits any form of forced abortion.”

These words are entirely at odds with strong evidence that the contrary is true.

Tibetan population

China often ridicules the Tibetan claim that their population is six million. “Where did the six million come from? Did they drop from the sky?”, Yang Houdi, director of Policy and Legislation Department of the State Nationalities Affairs Commission, said. Although there is no independent census report of the Tibetan population in Tibet today, historical Tibetan sources show that the population before the Chinese invasion was at least six million. The Chinese say that the total Tibetan population is only slightly more than four million. However, a look at statistics provided by the Chinese themselves suggest that it was over six million in 1959.

According to China’s State Statistical Bureau, the western half of Tibet (later named as the “TAR”) had 1,273,969 people in November 1959. The eastern part of Kham, then named Xikang by China, had 3,381,064 Tibetans. In Qinghai and other Tibetan areas incorporated into Gansu, Tibetans were reported to number 1,675,534. [*People’s Daily*, Beijing, November 10, 1959]. If these three figures are totalled, the Tibetan population then stood at 6,330,567.

In February 1988, Huan Xiang, director of the Centre for International Studies under the State Council in Beijing, stated

that “of the present population of six million Tibetans only two million are living in Tibet (read TAR) while the remaining four million are in other provinces of China”. [*Beijing Review*, Vol. 31, No. 7 and 8].

Conclusion

As a result of Chinese population transfer, Tibetans find themselves marginalized in economic, political, educational and social spheres. In the early 1980s the Tibetan Government-in-Exile estimated the Chinese population in the whole of Tibet at 7.5 million. The figure today may be well in excess of this.

In Kham and Amdo, most of the fertile land in the valleys has been given to Chinese settlers, driving the Tibetans to more and more barren terrain. Almost all key administrative positions in Tibet are held by Chinese. Furthermore, Chinese settlers are given preference over Tibetans in jobs created by forestry and mineral exploitation in Tibet.

The general economic impact of privileged Chinese settlers on Tibetans may be gauged from the following statistics: Of the 12,227 shops and restaurants in Lhasa city (excluding the Barkhor), in 1992, only three hundred were owned by Tibetans. In Tsawa Pasho, southern Kham, in 1992, the Chinese owned one hundred and thirty three business enterprises whereas the Tibetans owned only fifteen. The ownership ratio in the same year was similar in other Tibetan towns: 748 to 92 in Chamdo, 229 to three in Powo Tramo. The situation is far worse in the urban centres of Amdo, where, according to one British journalist, Tibetans are reduced to “tourist curios”.

The State of Tibet's Environment

TIBET is the prime source of Asia's great rivers. It also has the earth's loftiest mountains as well as the world's most extensive and highest plateau, ancient forests, and many deep valleys untouched by human disturbances.

Traditional Tibetan economic and religious value systems led to the evolution of successful environmental protection practices. Their belief in the Buddhist teaching of Right Livelihood leads to understanding the importance of "contentment", and discourages over-consumption. It also frowns upon over-exploitation of the earth's natural resources as this is perceived to harm other living beings and their habitat. As early as 1642, the Fifth Dalai Lama issued a *Decree for the Protection of Animals and the Environment*. Since then, such decrees have been issued annually.

With the colonization of Tibet by Communist China, Tibet's traditional environmental protection system has given way to an "ecocide" of appalling proportions. The effects of this are especially notable on the grassland areas, the cropland areas, the forests, the water resources and the wildlife.

Grassland, cropland and Chinese agricultural policies

Tibet is seventy percent grassland. Grasslands form the backbone of the country's animal husbandry-dominated agrarian economy. The domestic animal population is as big as seventy million and supports nearly a million herdsman. Tibet's nomads have traditionally adapted themselves well to the needs of their fragile grasslands. Annual records of pasture use, systematic migrations of their herds of *dri* and yak, sheep and goats, and responsibility for sustainable use at the individual and community levels are traditional habits.

Over the last four decades there has been widespread degradation of these vital pastures. The conversion of marginal lands to agriculture for Chinese settlers has become the greatest threat to Tibet's grasslands. This has led to extensive desertification, rendering the land unusable for agriculture or grazing. This problem has especially devastated the vast grasslands in Amdo.

The situation is made worse by the fencing of grasslands which has restricted Tibetan nomads to ever smaller areas and disrupted their traditional migration practice. In Machu district of Amdo alone, one-third of the total area of over 10,000 square kilometres has been fenced for the horses, sheep and cattle of the Chinese army. Similarly, most of the better pasture lands in Ngapa, Golok and "Qinghai" have been reserved for the Chinese.

Traditionally, the principal croplands are arable niches along the river valleys of Kham, the Tsangpo valley in U-Tsang, and the Machu valley in Amdo. The staple crop is barley, grown with other cereals and legumes. The traditional agricultural system has organic principles, crop rotation, mixed crops, and periodic failures which are sustainable and appropriate to a fragile mountain environment. Grain yields in Tibet average 2,000 kg/ha in U-Tsang and higher still in the lower valleys of Amdo and Kham. This exceeds yields in comparable climates such as in Russia (1,700 kg/ha) and Canada (1,800 kg/ha).

The need to feed the ever-increasing number of Chinese military and civil personnel and settlers, and the export of agricultural produce, has led to the extension of farmland onto steep and marginal terrain, an increase in the area under wheat (which the Chinese prefer to the Tibetan staple, barley) and the introduction of hybrid seeds, pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Disease has been regularly attacking new wheat varieties, and in 1979 destroyed the entire wheat crop. Prior to the influx of millions of Chinese settlers, Tibetans had no need to increase production so drastically.

Forests and deforestation

In 1949 Tibet's ancient forests covered 221,800 square kilometres. By 1985 they stood at 134,000 square kilometres —

almost half. Most forests grow on steep, isolated slopes in the river valleys of Tibet's low-lying southeastern region. The principal types are tropical montane and subtropical montane coniferous forest, with spruce, fir, pine, larch, cypress, birch, and oak among the main species. The tree line varies from 3,800 metres in the region's moist south to 4,300 metres in the semi-dry north.

Tibet's forests are primarily old growth, with trees over two hundred years old predominating. The average stock density is 272 cubic metres/ha, but U-Tsang's old growth areas reach 2,300 cubic metres/ha — the world's highest stock density for conifers.

As new roads penetrate remote areas of Tibet the rate of deforestation increases. All roads, it should be noted, are built or aided by People's Liberation Army or China's Forestry Ministry teams of engineers and their costs are counted as expenditure to "develop" Tibet. Once roads open up, and pristine forest areas are reached, the most common method of cutting is clear felling, which has led to the denudation of vast hillsides. Timber extraction up to 1985 totalled 2,442 million cubic metres, or forty percent of the 1949 forest stock; this is worth US\$54 billion.

Deforestation is a major employer in Tibet; in the fertile Kongpo area of the "TAR" alone, over 20,000 Chinese soldiers and Tibetan prisoners are involved in tree felling and transportation of timber.

In 1949 Ngapa, Amdo, had 2.20 million hectares of land under forest cover. Its timber reserve then stood at 340 million cubic metres. In the 1980s it was reduced to 1.17 million hectares, with a timber reserve of only 180 million cubic metres. [*Ngapa Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture*, Sichuan Publishing House, 1985, p.149-154]. Similarly, during thirty years till 1985, China extracted 6.44 million cubic metres of timber from "Ganlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture". Cut into logs measuring thirty centimetres wide and three metres long, and layed from end to end, this would encircle the globe twice. [*Ganlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture*, Gansu People's Publishing House, 1987, p.145].

The growing degradation and desertification of the Tibetan

Plateau — unique on earth and the planet's most extensive high land form — is continuing. This area influences atmospheric circulation and jet stream wind patterns over Asia and, according to scientists, may be related to the destabilization of weather patterns over the northern hemisphere.

Regeneration and afforestation have been minimal due to the extreme degree of land slope, soil and moisture, including high diurnal temperature variations and high soil surface temperatures. With such natural conditions, the destructive effects of clear-felling are irreversible.

Water resources and hydropower

Tibet is Asia's principal watershed and the source of its major rivers. A substantial proportion of river flows in Tibet are stable or base flows coming from ground water and glacial sources. This is in marked contrast to river flows in most neighbouring countries, which are determined by seasonal rainfall patterns.

Ninety percent of Tibet's river run off flows down across its borders, internal use accounting for less than one percent of total river run off. Today Tibet's rivers have developed extremely high sediment rates: the Machu (Huang Ho, or Yellow River), the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra), the Driчу (Yangtze), and the Senge Khabab (Indus) are among the five most heavily-silted rivers in the world. The total area irrigated by these rivers, from the Machu basin in the east to the Senge Khabab in the west, supports forty seven per cent of the earth's human population. Tibet also has over two thousand natural lakes — some of which are sacred or otherwise play a special role in the people's culture — with a combined area of more than 35,000 square kilometres.

Steep slopes and abundant river flows give Tibet an exploitable hydropower potential of 250,000 megawatts, the highest of any country in the world. The "TAR" alone has a potential of 200,000 megawatts.

Tibet possesses the world's highest solar energy potential per unit after the Sahara, an estimated annual average of 200 kilocalorie/cm, as well as significant geothermal resources.

Despite such abundant potential from small, environmentally-benign sources, the Chinese have built huge dams, such as

Longyang Xia, and are continuing to do so, such as the hydro-power station at Yamdrok Yutso.

Many of these projects are designed to tap Tibet's hydro potential to provide power and other benefits to the Chinese population and industries both in Tibet and China. But the environmental, human and cultural toll of these hydro-electricity projects will be borne only by Tibetans. While the Tibetans are displaced from their homes and lands, tens of thousands of Chinese workers are brought in from China to construct and maintain these dams.

These dams have very little benefit for local Tibetans who have no say over them. Take the case of Yamdrok Yutso hydro-power project. The Chinese claim that this project will greatly benefit Tibetans.

Tibetan people in general, and particularly the late Panchen Lama and Ngapo Ngawang Jigme, opposed and effectively delayed its construction for several years. The Chinese, nevertheless, went ahead with the construction and today more than one thousand five hundred PLA troops are guarding the construction area and no civilians are allowed near it.

Minerals and mining

According to official Chinese sources, Tibet has proven deposits of a hundred and twenty six minerals, with a significant share of the world's reserves of uranium, lithium, chromite, copper, borax, and iron. Amdo's oil fields produce over one million tons of crude oil per year.

The network of roads and communications built by the Chinese in Tibet mirrors the locations of forests and mineral reserves indiscriminately exploited by the Chinese Government. With seven of China's fifteen key minerals due to run out within this decade, and major non-ferrous minerals virtually exhausted, the rate of mineral extraction from Tibet is rapidly increasing. It is believed that China plans to shift its major mining operations into Tibet by the end of this century.

Environmental safeguards are virtually non-existent in Tibet's mines. Particularly in fragile terrain, this is leading to slope desta-

bilization, land degradation, and hazards to human health and life.

Wildlife

Many wild animals and birds have vanished through destruction of their habitat or have been slaughtered by indiscriminate hunting for sport and to furbish China's illicit trade in wildlife products. There have been numerous and continuing reports of Chinese soldiers using automatic weapons to wipe out herds of wild yak and wild asses for sport.

Unrestricted hunting of wildlife continues to take place. Hunting "tours" organized for wealthy foreign clients — for trophies of endangered species — appear in the official Chinese news media regularly. For instance, "hunting tours" are being organized for wealthy sportsmen from the United States of America and Western Europe. These "hunters" can bag trophies of endangered species such as the Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsoni*) and the Argali sheep (*Ovis ammon hodgsoni*), species supposedly accorded the highest level of official protection. The hunts cost up to US\$35,000 for a Tibetan antelope, \$23,000 for an Argali, \$13,000 for a white-lipped deer (*Cervus albirostris*), \$7,900 for a blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*), and \$3,500 for a red deer (*Cervus elaphus*).

The present scenario is likely to result in the irrevocable loss of countless Tibetan species even before they have been discovered and studied. Also, it constitutes a known threat to the very survival of species treasured in Tibetan culture and of immeasurable value to the world.

China's White Paper does admit that a number of animals are "on the verge of extinction". In confirmation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's 1990 Red List of Endangered Animal Species mentions thirty Tibetan animals.

Chinese conservation measures for Tibet, except for areas now merged into Chinese provinces, were initiated long after similar efforts in China itself. Declared protected areas were said to cover 310,000 sq.km. or approximately twelve percent of Tibet by 1991 end. The effectiveness of protection cannot be measured because of China's strictly limited access, plus secrecy concerning actual data.

Nuclear and other toxic wastes

China is reported to have stationed approximately ninety nuclear warheads in Tibet. The Ninth Academy, China's North-west Nuclear Weapons Research and Design Academy in Tibet's north-eastern area of Amdo, is reported to have dumped an unknown quantity of radioactive waste on the Tibetan plateau.

According to a report released by International Campaign for Tibet, a Washington, DC-based organization: "Waste disposal methods were reported to be casual in the extreme. Initially, waste was put in shallow, unlined landfills ... The nature and quantity of radioactive waste generated by the Ninth Academy is still unknown... During the 1960s and 1970s, nuclear waste from the facility was disposed of in a roughshod and haphazard manner. Nuclear waste from the Academy would have taken a variety of forms — liquid slurry, as well as solid and gaseous waste. Liquid or solid waste would have been in adjacent land or water sites." [*Nuclear Tibet*, Washington, DC, p.18].

Official Chinese pronouncements have confirmed the existence in Tibet of the biggest uranium reserves in the world. Reports say that uranium is processed in Tibet itself and that many local Tibetans died after drinking contaminated water near a uranium mine in Ngapa, Amdo. The local Tibetans have also reported the birth of deformed humans and animals.

In 1991 Greenpeace exposed plans to ship toxic municipal sludge from the USA to China for use as "fertilizer" in Tibet. The use of similar toxic waste as fertilizer in the USA has been linked to outbreaks of diseases.

Conclusion

Tibet's complex environmental problems cannot be addressed by cosmetic changes like designating swathes of land as nature reserves or making laws for the people when the real perpetrator of environmental damage is the government itself. There should be political will on the part of the Chinese leadership to restore rights over the environment to the Tibetan people and

allow them to follow their traditional conservationist practices.

In keeping with the vision of the Dalai Lama, all of Tibet should be transformed into a zone of peace where humans and nature can dwell in harmonious coexistence. Such a Tibet, as the Dalai Lama said, should be completely demilitarized and must have a democratic form of government and an economic system that ensures the sustainable use of the country's natural resources to provide a decent standard of living for its people.

Ultimately, this is in the long-term interests of all the neighbouring countries as environmental conditions in Tibet have major transboundary effects, notably in India, China, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Nearly half of the global population, particularly in these four countries, depend on the rivers of Tibet for their sustenance. Some of the major floods in these countries during the last decade have been attributed to deforestation-related siltation of Tibet's rivers. The destructive potential of these rivers increases each year as China continues its deforestation and uranium-related activities on the Roof of the World.

Unless urgent action is taken now to stop this, the rivers of Tibet — which traditionally brought joy and sustenance — may one day bring death and destruction.

Militarization and Regional Peace

IN 1949 the first vanguard of the People's Liberation Army entered Tibet. In the spring of 1950 China's 18th Army entered Tibet through Dartsedo (Chinese: Dajianlu) in the east, and through Amdo in the northeast. The 14th Division entered through Dechen in the southeast of Tibet. After occupying Kham and Amdo, the advance party of the 18th Army entered Lhasa on September 9, 1951, followed by the unit's main force on October 26, 1951. This was only the start of a vast programme of military build up in Tibet.

Military expansion on the Tibetan plateau

Until 1986 areas under Communist Chinese rule were divided into eleven military regions, and Tibet was put under the control of three regions. In 1986, when the total number of military regions was reduced to seven, the whole of Tibet was put under two military regions: Southwest Military Region with its headquarters at Chengdu and the Lanzhou Military Region with its headquarters at Lanzhou.

Today the "TAR", "Ganze (Karze) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", "Aba (Ngapa) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", "Dechen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture", and "Mili Tibetan Autonomous District" fall under the Southwest Military Region; while Qinghai Province, "Ganlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" and "Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous District", fall under Lanzhou Military Region.

The Chinese military presence in the whole of Tibet is today conservatively estimated to number around 500,000 uniformed personnel. The Chinese official figure of 40,394 PLA personnel in the "TAR" is misinformation. According to our information, the strength of armed forces in the region is around 250,000. This does not include the local militia establishment which was set up in 1963.

There are six sub-military districts in the “Tibet Autonomous Region”, having two independent infantry divisions, six border defence regiments, five independent border defence battalions, three artillery regiments, three engineers’ regiments, one main signal station and two signal regiments, three transport regiments and three independent transport battalions, four air force bases, two radar regiments, two divisions and a regiment of para-military forces (referred to as Di-fang Jun or “local army”), one independent division and six independent regiments of People’s Armed Police. In addition, there are twelve units of what is known as the “second artillery (or missile) division”. Out of the many air bases built, currently only four are in active use. The People’s Armed Police are regular PLA troops, redesignated as such recently.

The frontline PLA troop concentrations in the “TAR” are stationed at Ruthok, Gyamuk (Chinese: Siqenho), Drongpa, Saga, Drangso (Dhingri), Gampa-la, Dromo, Tsona, Lhuntse Dzong, Zayul, etc. The second line of defence stations are concentrated at Shigatse, Lhasa, Nagchukha, Tsethang, Nangartse district, Gyamdha, Nyingtri, Miling, Powo Tramo, Tsawa Pomdha, Chamdo, etc. In addition, China regularly deploys the Sichuan-based 149 Airborne Division in the “TAR”, as it did in the wake of the Tibetan demonstrations in Lhasa in 1987 and thereafter.

China has also shifted the headquarters of the Tibet Military District from Chengdu to a site located to the south-west of Lhasa, along the highway to Gongkar airport. Reports say that the Lhasa PLA headquarters — stretching for more than a kilometre in length — may also see a “part of China’s South-Western command headquarters (the Chengdu military region) ... moving to Lhasa”. The new complex, under construction, includes about forty three-storey buildings, each containing about forty rooms, and capable of accommodating up to 15,000 men.

The largest military bases in Amdo are in Xinning (Silling), Chabcha, and Golmud (Karmu). All three locations also have air force bases.

The once-deserted wasteland of Karmu has now been turned into a major military base. Located strategically to cover both Tibet and Eastern Turkestan, this region is connected by road, rail and air.

The Chinese military build-up in Kham and Ngapa regions is concentrated on Lithang, Karze, Tawu, Dartsedo, etc, in Kham, and Barkham in Ngapa. However, there are radar stations and dormant air strips at various strategic locations in Kham.

Nuclear bases

The existence of nuclear bases and nuclear weapons manufacturing centres in Tibet have been reported from time to time. China is believed to have nuclear manufacturing centres at Dhashu (Chinese: Haiyan) which is in the “Haibei Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture” and Tongkhor (Chinese: Huangyuan) in Amdo.

China’s primary weapons research and design facility in Dhashu was constructed in the early sixties. According to *Nuclear Tibet*, the facility is based near Lake Kokonor. It is known as the Northwest Nuclear Weapons Research and Design Academy, or the “Ninth Academy”, because it was under the jurisdiction of the Ninth Bureau.

The facility is the most secret organization in China’s entire nuclear programme and remains today an important and high security military weapons plant. It was responsible for designing all of China’s nuclear bombs through the mid-seventies. It also served as a research centre for detonation development, radio-chemistry and many other nuclear weapons-related activities. It also assembled components of nuclear weapons.

Missile bases are located to the south of Lake Kokonor in Amdo, and to the northwest of Nagchukha.

According to *Nuclear Tibet*, the first nuclear weapon was brought onto the Tibetan plateau in 1971 and stationed in the Tsaidam basin, in northern Amdo. China currently has approximately three hundred to four hundred nuclear warheads, of which several dozen are believed to be in Tibet. As China’s ground-based nuclear missiles can be transported and fired from trailers, efforts to locate and count missiles in certain areas remain difficult.

To the west of Dhashu, China established a nuclear missile deployment and launch site for DF-4 missiles (China’s first inter-continental ballistic missile) in the Tsaidam basin in the early

seventies. The report mentions that the Larger Tsaidam site has two missiles stored horizontally in tunnels near the launch pad. Fuel and oxidiser is stored in separate tunnels with lines to the launch pad. The Smaller Tsaidam site is presumed to be organized similarly to the Larger Tsaidam deployment and launch site.

Another nuclear missile site in Tibet is located at Delingha, about two hundred km southeast of Larger Tsaidam. It also houses DF-4s, and is the missile regimental headquarters for Amdo containing four associated launch sites. A new nuclear division has also been established in Amdo. Four CSS-4 missiles are reported to be based there, which have a range of 8,000 miles (12,874 km), capable of striking the United States, Europe and all of Asia.

In 1988 China carried out in Tibet what the *Jiefangjun Bao* of September 16, 1988 called “chemical defence manoeuvres in the high altitude zone to test newly-developed equipment”. According to a *TASS* report of July 3, 1982, “China has been conducting nuclear tests in several areas of Tibet in order to determine the radiation levels among the people living in those parts”.

Conclusion

Nuclear weapons are the very antithesis of the Tibetan cultural tradition and spirit. Free Tibet will have no place for such armaments of mass destruction. It is in view of this fact that the Dalai Lama said in his Strasbourg Proposal of June 15, 1988:

“My country’s unique history and profound spiritual heritage render it ideally suited for fulfilling the role of a sanctuary of peace at the heart of Asia. Its historic status as a neutral buffer state, contributing to the stability of the entire continent, can be restored. Peace and security for Asia as well as for the world at large can be enhanced. In the future, Tibet need no longer be an occupied land, oppressed by force, unproductive and scarred by suffering. It can become a free haven where humanity and nature live in harmonious balance; a creative model for the resolution of tensions afflicting many areas throughout the world.”

The Quest for a Solution

FROM 1959 until 1979 the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and the Chinese Government had no contact. However, throughout this period the Dalai Lama retained his hope of finding a peaceful solution to the problem of Tibet through contact and dialogue with the Chinese Government. Soon after coming to India, the Dalai Lama issued a press statement in Mussoorie on June 20, 1959, wherein he said:

“Although recent actions and policies of the Chinese authorities in Tibet have created strong feelings of bitterness and resentment against the Government of China, we, Tibetans, lay and monk alike, do not cherish any feelings of enmity and hatred against the great Chinese people. ... We must also insist on the creation of a favourable climate by the immediate adoption of the essential measures as a condition precedent to negotiations for a peaceful settlement.”

In the light of political changes in China, the Dalai Lama, in his March 10, statement to the Tibetan people in 1978, said:

“(T)he Chinese should allow the Tibetans in Tibet to visit their parents and relatives now in exile... Similar opportunity should be given to the Tibetans in exile. Under such an arrangement we can be confident of knowing the true situation inside Tibet.”

Towards the end of 1978, Mr Gyalo Thondup (an elder brother of the Dalai Lama) was contacted through a common friend, by Mr Li Juisin, director of Xinhua News Agency, in Hong Kong. A meeting was arranged in January 1979 during which Mr Li extended Mr Deng Xiaoping’s invitation to Mr Thondup to visit Beijing to discuss the Tibet problem. With the approval of the Dalai Lama, Mr Thondup made a private visit to Beijing in late February 1979.

Mr Thondup met with leading Chinese officials in Beijing. They told him that under the “Gang of Four” China had suffered great instability, affecting its development in the fields of industry and agriculture. Tibet also suffered as a result of this, they said, and added that the 1959 uprising in Tibet was inspired by a number of factors for which the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people could not be blamed.

Mr Deng Xiaoping said during his meeting with Mr Thondup that as it is better to see things once with one's own eyes than to hear a hundred times, he would invite exile Tibetans of all ages to visit Tibet and see the actual situation for themselves. Mr Deng went on to say that China was willing to discuss and resolve with Tibetans all issues other than the complete independence of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government responded by sending three fact-finding delegations to Tibet in 1979 and 1980. The fourth delegation, consisting of sixteen members representing various Tibetan Buddhist schools and people from other walks of life, was also arranged. However, on August 6, 1980 China expressed its inability to receive this delegation on the grounds that it would not be able to accord the delegates a proper reception as "the weather in Tibet is going to be cold, and also because some development work is in progress". So, this visit did not materialize.

After repeated reminders to the Chinese Government of Deng Xiaoping's invitation, the fourth delegation, led by former Kalon (Minister) W.G. Kundeling, was allowed to visit only the north-eastern region of Tibet in July 1985. At the end of the visit, the delegation told the Chinese Government about the problems they had observed in Tibet and asked for them to be rectified. Since then no delegation has been allowed to visit Tibet.

However, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile continued to make sincere efforts to develop closer contact and a better understanding with the Chinese Government. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government took several confidence-building steps and other initiatives.

On July 21, 1980 it was suggested that travel restrictions on Tibetans wishing to visit their relatives in and outside Tibet should be eased. This was rejected by Beijing. The background of Tibetans wishing to visit their relatives outside Tibet is thoroughly scrutinized, and in most cases, they are also required to leave members of their families behind as hostages. Similarly, exile Tibetans wishing to visit Tibet are required to travel on Chinese-issued documents describing them as "Overseas Chinese".

In September 1980 the exile government offered to send about fifty trained Tibetan teachers to help in Tibet. In response,

China first stalled the matter by stating that since these Tibetan youths were brought up and educated in India with good facilities, they would face difficulties in adjusting to the poor living conditions in Tibet. Instead, they proposed that the teachers should first be sent to work in various Nationalities Schools within China. The exile Tibetan government replied that the Tibetan volunteers were fully aware of the poor facilities in Tibet. Left with no valid reasons to deny permission, the Chinese Government put forward unacceptable pre-conditions by suggesting that the Tibetan teachers must first accept Chinese nationality.

Around the same time the Tibetan suggestion to open a liaison office in Beijing to foster closer contacts was also turned down.

On December 14, 1980 the Government-in-Exile asked the Chinese authorities to allow eleven Tibetan scholars, living in Tibet, to attend a conference of Tibetologists. This met with an outright rejection.

On March 13, 1981 the Dalai Lama wrote a letter to Deng Xiaoping, in which, amongst other things, he stated:

“The time has come to apply our common wisdom in a spirit of tolerance and broad-mindedness to achieve genuine happiness for the Tibetan people with renewed urgency. On my part, I remain committed to contribute to the welfare of all human beings and, in particular, the poor and weak, to the best of my ability, without making any discrimination based on nationalities. I hope you will let me know your views on the foregoing points.”

There was no reply to this letter. Instead, on July 28, 1981 General-Secretary Hu Yaobang gave Mr Gyalo Thondup a document, entitled “Five-point Policy Towards the Dalai Lama”, which reduced the issue of Tibet’s occupation to the personal status of the Dalai Lama.

Since the only real issue is the future well-being of the Tibetan people, in April 1982 the Dalai Lama sent a three-member, high-level delegation to Beijing to have exploratory talks with the Chinese leadership. This delegation put forward a number of broad proposals for consideration by the Chinese leaders.

In February 1983 the Dalai Lama expressed his desire to visit Tibet around 1985. In the meantime, under the so-called

Anti-pollution Campaign, a new phase of political repression was unleashed in Tibet, leading to the arrest and imprisonment of a number of persons.

In October 1984 another three-member, high-level delegation was sent to Beijing to ask the Chinese Government to end its latest political repression in Tibet, discuss arrangements for the possible visit of the Dalai Lama, and to explore possibilities for further talks. The Chinese responses to all these overtures were negative. Contrary to the understanding to keep these bi-lateral discussions confidential, the Chinese Government chose to make its rejection public through its media.

It is clear from the above facts that the Dalai Lama and his Government did try to initiate meaningful, direct, bi-lateral dialogues with the Chinese Government. When all these attempts failed the Dalai Lama was left with no alternative, but to make his position public and appeal for international support.

Addressing the United States Congress' Human Rights Caucus on September 21, 1987, the Dalai Lama proposed a Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet. The five points are:

- ◆ Transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace;
- ◆ Abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people;
- ◆ Respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms;
- ◆ Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste;
- ◆ Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

Rejecting this proposal on October 17, 1987, the Chinese leadership accused the Dalai Lama of widening the gulf between himself and their Government. Despite the uncivil response, the Dalai Lama made an earnest effort to clarify the Tibetan position in a detailed fourteen-point note, conveyed to the Chinese Government on December 17, 1987.

On June 15, 1988, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the Dalai Lama made another detailed proposal which elaborated on the last point of the Five Point Peace Plan regarding negotiations.

An advance copy of the text of this speech was given to the Chinese Government through its Embassy in New Delhi. Subsequently, the Dalai Lama's Representative in New Delhi met the Chinese Charge d'Affaires in New Delhi on August 22 and 29 to clarify some of the misgivings the Chinese Government had raised through various press statements. Amongst other things, the Representative emphasized that the Strasbourg Proposal was very much within the parameters of Deng Xiaoping's statement to Gyalo Thondup in 1979, when he said that everything, except the question of complete independence, could be discussed. In the Strasbourg Proposal, the Dalai Lama had put forward the notion of association with China rather than separation from it.

On September 21, 1988 the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi informed a senior official of the Dalai Lama that its Government was willing to have talks with the representative of the Dalai Lama at the venue and time of the latter's choice.

Welcoming the Chinese announcement, the Kashag (Cabinet), on September 23, 1988, said: "We hope this positive response to our suggestion is an indication that the Chinese sincerely wish to deal with the issue this time."

On October 25, 1988 the Chinese Government was informed through its New Delhi Embassy that the venue for talks should be Geneva which is the most convenient and neutral place, and that the talks should begin in January 1989.

In early November 1988 Mr Yang Minfu, head of China's United Front Work Department, told Mr Gyalo Thondup that although they differed in thinking over some points of the Strasbourg Proposal, these could be discussed and resolved.

However, on November 18, 1988 the Chinese Government, through its New Delhi Embassy, put forward the following pre-conditions for the talks:

- ◆ The Chinese Government disapproves of the way the venue and date for the proposed talks were publicly announced. The most suitable venue for talks is Beijing.

- ◆ The six-member negotiating team appointed by the Dalai Lama is not acceptable as all of them have always engaged in splittist activities. Neither is the Dutch lawyer acceptable as this talk deals with internal matters only.
- ◆ The Chinese Government would like to have direct talks with the Dalai Lama. However, it is also willing to accept a trusted representative of the Dalai Lama, like Gyalo Thondup.
- ◆ The Strasbourg Proposal cannot be the basis for talks. The pre-conditions for holding the talks is to accept and support the unity of the “Motherland”.

The Tibetan Government was naturally disappointed by this communication as it was inconsistent with the earlier public statements and official communications received from Beijing.

On December 5, 1988 the Tibetan Government responded to the Chinese communication and said:

- ◆ Since the Chinese Government left the choice of venue and date for talks to the Dalai Lama, he responded in good faith by proposing Geneva as the venue and January 1989 as the date for starting the negotiations.
- ◆ On numerous occasions, the Chinese Government stated publicly, as well as through messages conveyed to the Tibetan Government, that it was willing to meet and negotiate with any persons appointed by the Dalai Lama. The Tibetan Government, therefore, fails to understand the Chinese refusal to accept the delegation appointed by the Dalai Lama. It should be the prerogative of the Dalai Lama to appoint whomsoever he chooses to negotiate on his behalf. Dr Michael van Walt van Praag is not a member of the negotiating team. He is only a legal advisor.
- ◆ As suggested by the Chinese Government, Mr Gyalo Thondup will be associated with the talks as an advisor of the Tibetan team.
- ◆ Fair and meaningful negotiations on the future of Tibet can only take place without the imposition of

pre-conditions by either side. The proposals contained in the Strasbourg statement provide the most reasonable and realistic basis for such discussions.

In January 1989, when the Panchen Lama passed away in Tibet, the Dalai Lama proposed to send a ten-member Tibetan religious delegation to Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse and other areas in Tibet, such as Lhasa, Kumbum and Labrang Tashikyil for the purpose of offering prayers and performing a Kalachakra ceremony for the late Panchen Lama. China rejected the request and stated that there was no precedence for prayers of this scale and that it could not accept two leaders of the delegation who, they said, were officials of the Kashag. The Tibetan Government agreed to withdraw them and approached the Chinese Government once again.

On March 17, 1989 the reply came through the Chinese Embassy. China agreed to receive only two or three lamas as representatives of the Dalai Lama. But the lamas must go only to Tashilhunpo, that too via Beijing, and must return to India immediately after offering the prayers. In the same message, the Chinese Government accused the Tibetan Government-in-Exile of having plotted the “troubles” in Lhasa, and criticized the Dalai Lama for appealing to world leaders for help in getting Martial Law in Tibet lifted.

On March 23, 1989 the Tibetan Government gave the following reply to the Chinese Embassy: “Refusal to allow the proposed religious delegation to visit Tibet to make religious offerings and perform a special Kalachakra Prayer Ceremony for the late Panchen Rinpoche, even after we agreed to make some changes in the members of the delegation and explained the requirement of the minimum number of monks we had suggested for performing the Kalachakra Prayer Ceremony, is yet another disappointing experience for us. Obviously there is no point in sending two or three monks.

“We wish to deny categorically, once again, the allegation that we were behind the recent troubles in Tibet and that we are engaging in some kind of terrorist activities by smuggling into Tibet trained persons and arms. We would like the Government to produce substantive evidence to support these serious allegations and also allow an independent international commis-

sion to visit Tibet to determine the real causes of the trouble in Tibet.

“It is within the right of any person to appeal for help when faced with a desperate situation. In order to avoid further bloodshed and repression, His Holiness the Dalai Lama appealed to various world leaders, including Chairman Deng Xiaoping. His Holiness’ consistent effort for direct dialogue and peaceful resolution of the problem is well known.

“We, once again, urge the Government of the PRC to commence the proposed negotiations soon. Any attempt to delay it on one excuse or the other will not be helpful. His Holiness made the proposal last June and suggested the commencement of the talks in January this year. Since December 5, 1988 we had both in writing and messages through the Embassy in New Delhi conveyed our sincere clarifications to the doubts and objections raised by the Government. The latest accusation against us for spoiling the atmosphere and blaming us for the delay in starting talks is unfair.

“Judging by our experience so far, we feel that the Government of the PRC still has not given up its authoritarian attitude and bullying tactics. If this continues there will be the need of the presence of a third party in our proposed negotiations to ensure that there are no further accusations and intimidations.”

Even after the imposition of Martial Law in Tibet in 1988, the Dalai Lama offered to send some representatives to Hong Kong to have preparatory meetings with the representatives of the Chinese Government. In order to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue, the Dalai Lama requested an early end to Martial Law.

In a reply, received through the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi on May 17, 1989, the Chinese Government justified the imposition of Martial Law “to deal with a handful of criminals indulging in beating, robbery and banditry”, and stated that appealing for its end was tantamount to supporting the criminals. The reply further stated that the Dalai Lama’s proposal for turning the whole of Tibet into a Zone of Peace would never be accepted by the Chinese Government. It did not respond to the Tibetan proposal for preliminary talks in Hong Kong.

The Dalai Lama waited for two years for a positive response

from the Chinese side to his proposal for negotiations. Then, in 1991, during his March 10 statement, the Dalai Lama warned that unless the Chinese Government responded positively to his proposal without further delays, he would consider himself free from any obligations to abide by the concessions he had made in the Strasbourg Proposal.

On March 25, 1991 the Chinese Government was informed through its New Delhi Embassy that the Dalai Lama wished to assist in the search for the authentic reincarnation of the late Panchen Lama. To facilitate this, the Chinese Government was informed that the Dalai Lama wished to send a delegation of high lamas and abbots to Lhamoi Lhatso, the sacred lake near Lhasa, to pray and observe prophetic visions in the lake which would guide them to the genuine reincarnation. After more than three months, the Chinese Government replied that there was no need for outside interference in this matter and that the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama would be found by the officials responsible at Tashilhunpo Monastery.

Notwithstanding these frustrating and disappointing experiences, the Dalai Lama did not want the situation to remain at a stalemate. In his address to Yale University in October 1991, the Dalai Lama made a fresh overture to the Chinese Government by suggesting a personal visit to Tibet, accompanied by some senior Chinese leaders, to make an on-the-spot assessment of the actual situation in Tibet.

In the same spirit, the Dalai Lama sought a meeting with the Chinese Premier, Li Peng, during the latter's visit to India in December 1991. These positive and constructive initiatives were also rejected.

In view of these facts, the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, on January 23, 1992, passed a resolution stating that the Tibetan exile government should not initiate any new move for negotiations with China unless there was a positive change in the attitude of the Chinese leadership. The resolution, however, noted that the Tibetan Government would have no objection to negotiations if the overture came from the Chinese Government, either directly or through a third party.

In April 1992 the Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi called on Mr Gyalo Thondup and told him that the Chinese

Government's position in the past had been "conservative", but that it was willing to be "flexible" if the Tibetans were prepared to be "realistic". He invited Mr Thondup to visit China. In June Mr Thondup went to Beijing with the approval of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

On his return, he reported to the Dalai Lama and the Kashag of his meetings with Chinese officials. The report was discussed by the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies during its third session. Contrary to what the Chinese Ambassador had told Mr Thondup, there was no indication of flexibility in the Chinese Government's attitude. As a matter of fact, very serious accusations were made against the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.

The Tibetan Government-in-Exile, therefore, sent a two-member delegation to China in June 1993 to explain and clarify its views on the points raised by the Chinese Government. The delegation carried a personal letter and a detailed memorandum from the Dalai Lama to Chinese leaders Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin.

In the memorandum, the Dalai Lama stated: "If China wants Tibet to stay with China, then it must create the necessary conditions for this. The time has come now for the Chinese to show the way for Tibet and China to live together in friendship. A detailed step by step outline regarding Tibet's basic status should be spelled out. If such a clear outline is given, regardless of the possibility and non-possibility of an agreement, we Tibetans can then make a decision whether to live with China or not. If we Tibetans obtain our basic rights to our satisfaction, then we are not incapable of seeing the possible advantages of living with the Chinese."

This suggestion was also ignored. Instead, China continued to impose unacceptable preconditions and narrow down the issue for negotiations to the return of the Dalai Lama.

Faced with such an intransigent position on the part of the Chinese leadership, the Dalai Lama said in his March 10 statement of 1994: "I must now recognize that my approach has failed to produce any progress either for substantive negotiations or in contributing to the overall improvement of the situation in Tibet. Moreover, I am conscious of the fact that a grow-

ing number of Tibetans, both inside as well as outside Tibet, have been disheartened by my conciliatory stand not to demand complete independence for Tibet.”

The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government firmly believe that the only way to start negotiations for the peaceful solution of the Tibet problem is without pre-conditions from either side. It is encouraging to find that an increasing number of governments and world leaders are supporting this very reasonable proposition.