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TRUTH ABOUT McMAHON LINE

The spectacular advance of the Chinese in NEFA and Ladakh is only the second phase of Chinese expansionist design against the countries of South-East Asia. To be deceived by the Chinese offer of cease-fire would be a folly. It will not be surprising if aggression takes place in other sectors also in the near future. The massive attacks in NEFA and Ladakh were preceded by some astounding statements by Mr. Chou En-lai. On the 23rd of January, 1959 he wrote to Mr. Nehru:

“Historically no treaty or agreement on the Sino-Indian boundary has ever been concluded between the Chinese Central Government and the Indian Government.”

It is to be seen presently if there could have been any occasion for such a treaty. In the same letter Mr. Chou En-lai stated:

“McMahon Line was a product of the British policy of aggression and juridically too it cannot be considered legal.”

Yet two years prior to that he had given Mr. Nehru to understand that he was prepared to accept the McMahon Line as the boundary between Tibet and India. In his letter to Mr. Nehru of the 8th of

September, 1959 he made the further astonishing statement:

“McMahon Line has never been recognized by any Chinese Central Government and is therefore decidedly illegal.”

Pravda's comment on the Sino-Indian border dispute that “it is a legacy of those times when British colonizers were ruling on Indian territory” shows that the mendacious Chinese propaganda has also misled the Russians. Any one familiar with the technique and methods of the past or present Chinese Governments could not have been surprised or shocked at these developments. China has treated this subject with the customary communist frenzy and exaggeration. China is a communist country and Russia has some affinity with her on that account. But it is well for our Russian friends to remember that the Chinese are obdurate irredentists, have an infinite capacity for misrepresentation and that the Chinese authorities are in the habit from time to time of making statements which are deliberately untrue. For instance, when the Dalai Lama was in exile in India during 1910 to 1912, the Chinese Amban violated the Trade Regulations of 1908 by forbidding the Pan-chen Lama and his officials to communicate with the British Trade Agent at Gyantse. The Chinese denied that this had been done, but when the British Government obtained a photograph of the prohibitory order, the denials ceased. Many years after the Younghusband expedition had returned to India, false reports were frequently circulated by the Chinese that a fresh British army had invaded Tibet; every one of these reports

was completely untrue. China has a population of six hundred and seventy three million and the population is multiplying every year. There is great pressure on land. Russia has vast territories adjoining Sinkiang and Mongolia, very sparsely populated. Is there any guarantee that these Chinese irredentists will not turn towards the north at a suitable time? The past may not point to the future, but it should not be ignored. The lesson of Chinese history is that whenever she has been powerful she has indulged in an expansionist programme. With a view to removing the confusion which the Chinese have created by false propaganda, it is necessary to consider objectively the genesis of the McMahon Line and the truth or otherwise of the various statements and allegations made by Mr. Chou-En-lai.

McMAHON LINE

What is the 'McMahon Line'? It is that portion of the frontier between India and Tibet from the north-eastern corner of Bhutan to Isu Razi Pass in the north-east of India, a distance of eight hundred and fifty miles along the crest of the Himalayas. It might well have been called Lon-chen Shatra Line after the name of the Tibetan plenipotentiary. The north-eastern boundary of India extends to L. $96^{\circ}-5'$ East and Lat $29^{\circ}-28'$ North and thereafter runs in a southerly direction. North of this region is Tibet and *not* China and Tibet's south-eastern boundary with China is approximately at L. $99^{\circ}-20'$ East and Lat $29^{\circ}-28'$ North (Tibet lies between Lat 28° to 36° North). Therefore, it is quite clear that never in history until 1950 had India any frontier with China.

Naturally, therefore, there was no occasion for any treaty or agreement between the Government of India and the Chinese Government. This important fact should not be overlooked by those who wish to form an impartial opinion as to the border dispute. China never had any frontier with India either in the north-east or in the north-west of India. China had never set foot on these regions nor did she have any administrative control over these parts, which accounts for Chinese confusion over names of villages in these high regions.

The recent novel claim of China is founded on the historically incorrect assumption that Tibet was an integral part of China and that the Tibetan Government was not competent to enter into treaties with foreign powers. The validity of the Chinese claim depends on the correct answers to the two questions:

- (a) What has been the political status of Tibet?
- (b) What was the political boundary between Tibet and China until 1950?

STATUS OF TIBET

It was apparent to the British Indian Government towards the closing years of the 19th century and the beginning of the present century that Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was no more than a political fiction. All treaties or engagements to which Tibet was not a party were not recognized by the Tibetans who simply ignored them and China was not in a position to enforce the provisions of those treaties. In these circumstances, the then British Indian

Government decided that the only hope of a solution of Indo-Tibetan problem was to have direct communication with the Tibetans themselves. The Younghusband Mission in 1903 and 1904 was the result of this decision. Ultimately on the 7th September 1904 the Lhasa Convention was signed between Great Britain and Tibet. The principal clauses of the Lhasa Convention concerned the settlement of Sikkim-Tibet frontier and the opening of trade marts at Gyantse, Gartok and Yatung. Article I of the Convention is in the following terms :

“The Government of Tibet engages to respect the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and to recognize the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet, as defined in Article I of the said Convention, and to erect boundary pillars accordingly.”

The next important Article is Article IX :

“The Government of Tibet engages that, without the previous consent of the British Government,—

- (a) no portion of Tibetan territory shall be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise given for occupation, to any Foreign Power;
- (b) no such Power shall be permitted to intervene in Tibetan affairs;
- (c) no Representatives or Agents of any Foreign Power shall be admitted to Tibet;

- (d) no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights, shall be granted to any Foreign Power, or to the subject of any Foreign Power. In the event of consent to such concessions being granted, similar or equivalent concessions shall be granted to the British Government.”

The treaty as signed was a clear acknowledgment of Tibet's direct power to make treaties and it contained nothing whatsoever to suggest the suzerainty of China or even any connection with China. If Tibet was really an integral part of China or China had suzerainty over Tibet, China certainly would have resisted the British expeditionary forces to Lhasa. She would also have protested against British action. At any rate, this was not the first time that Tibet entered into a treaty with a foreign power. In 1856 she entered into a treaty with Nepal after the second Gurkha invasion. Again, on this occasion China never protested or resisted the Gurkha invasion. Reference may also be made to the next treaty between Great Britain and China, signed at Peking on 27th of April 1906. The first Article of the Anglo-Chinese Convention is in the following terms :

“The Convention concluded on September 7, 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet, the texts of which in English and Chinese are attached to the present Convention as an annexe, is hereby confirmed, subject to the modification stated in the declaration appended thereto, and both of the High Contracting Parties engage to take at all times such steps as may

be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified therein.”

Therefore, China explicitly admitted the right of Tibet to enter into treaties. Article 2 is as follows:—

“The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet. The Government of China also undertakes not to permit any other foreign state to interfere with the territory or internal administration of Tibet.”

These provisions in Article 2 make it abundantly clear that the British Indian Government had no territorial ambition in Tibet and therefore it is ridiculous to suggest that the British Indian Government had aggressive designs on Tibet. On the contrary, by Article 3 of this Anglo-Chinese Convention, Great Britain abandoned the privileges she had secured by the Lhasa Convention and left Tibet at the mercy of China and bequeathed to India a legacy of serious trouble. Tibet was neither consulted nor informed about the new Anglo-Chinese Convention. The British troops withdrew from Tibet after the Convention was signed. In 1909, contrary to all assurances given to the Dalai Lama, General Chao Erh-feng invaded Tibet from the south-east and burst into Lhasa in February, 1910. Then began continuous Chinese intrigues in Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim and the British Indian Government was obliged to tell the Chinese that their claims on these states could not be recognized and that any attempt to put them into effect would be resisted. During Chao Erh-feng's march towards Tibet the Chinese

forces arrived at Rima in Tibet near the Mismi border and ordered a neighbouring Mismi chief to cut a track from Tibet to India. In December 1910 the British Minister in Peking informed the Chinese Government that Nepal and Bhutan were both independent of China. The Chinese occupation of Tibet was short-lived and when revolution broke out in China in 1911 the Chinese troops in Lhasa mutinied. The Tibetans fought and expelled them. Ultimately the Chinese were repatriated through India. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in 1912 and proclaimed Tibet's independence and since then, as in the past, till its illegal occupation by China in October 1950 Tibet had been an independent country.

BACKGROUND OF SIMLA CONFERENCE

Relations between Tibet and China continued on the footing of undeclared and desultory war. In the summer of 1912 the Government of the Szechuan Province despatched a force to Tibet. Great Britain thereupon addressed a memorandum to China to the effect that she would not recognize the right of China to intervene in the internal administration of Tibet. She also would not agree to the stationing of an unlimited number of troops in Tibet. A written agreement on the foregoing lines was asked for. China sent an equivocal reply. The British Government was not prepared to the upsetting of the peace of northern India by causing unease and disturbance along the Himalayan frontier and called a tripartite conference of Great Britain, China and Tibet to settle the Sino-Tibetan boundary dispute and the relationship between China and Tibet. After some months

of argument, the Chinese Government agreed to a tripartite conference at Simla. The Chinese plenipotentiary Mr. Ivan Chen arrived in Simla on the 6th of October 1913. Tibet was represented by Lon-chen Shatra, a leading Tibetan minister, and the British Government was represented by Sir Henry McMahon, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, each of whom was a properly accredited plenipotentiary, whose powers were accepted formally by the other participants in the Conference. It is important to bear in mind that all the three plenipotentiaries had equal status. Lon-chen Shatra was the plenipotentiary of an independent Government and not that of a vassal state. The Tibetan plenipotentiary submitted a statement asking for acknowledgment of the independence they had re-established by the eviction of Chinese troops and officials. They wanted the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 to be declared invalid and the Trade Regulations revised. They also pressed for the acceptance of a frontier with China from a line running from Tachienlu to Koko Nor. The Chinese, on the other hand, claimed sovereignty over Tibet, resting it on the conquest of Chingis Khan. They also claimed a frontier along a line running through Giamda, only sixty miles east of Lhasa. The Tibetans surprised both the other parties by the careful and voluminous documentation of their claims. They exhibited revenue records, list of houses, officials and headmen, charters, agreements and other materials relating to disputed districts. Against all that, the Chinese could produce little but verbal statements including the above mentioned allegation for which there was no historical foundation whatsoever. Sir Henry McMahon was, for much

of the negotiations, in the position of a mediator trying to find some common ground between two widely divergent claims. In order to reconcile the two irreconcilable claims Sir Henry McMahon suggested a division of Tibet into two zones, Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet. The former is the part nearer to India, including Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo. The latter part is nearer China, including Ba-tang, Li-tang and Tachienlu. At the suggestion of Sir Henry McMahon, the Tibetans were persuaded to accept nominal Chinese suzerainty over Tibet on condition that China engaged not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province and not to interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet. The British Government also suggested as a compromise the historic boundary running roughly along the upper waters of the Yangtse, which had existed at least since the time of Manchu dynasty. After negotiations lasting for six months the various proposals were embodied in a draft tripartite convention. The chief provisions of this Convention were as follows:—

- (1) Tibet was divided into two zones, Outer Tibet and Inner Tibet;
- (2) Nominal Chinese suzerainty was recognized. China engaged not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province;
- (3) Great Britain agreed not to annex any portion of Tibet;
- (4) China agreed to abstain from interfering in the administration of Tibet. She agreed also to abstain from sending troops to Tibet. She

promised not to establish Chinese colonies there;

- (5) By Article IX the proposed boundary between Tibet and China was drawn on a map which was initialled by all the three plenipotentiaries.

In March 1914, before the draft of the tripartite Convention was completed, direct negotiations took place between British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries. The Chinese were not invited to take part in the discussions about the Indo-Tibetan frontier and their specific acceptance of it was not sought, but they were provided with information about it. The Chinese Government was not interested in the border between India and Tibet. The now well-known McMahon Line was fixed roughly along the crest of the Himalayas from the north-east corner of Bhutan to Isu Razi Pass in the north of Burma. It was drawn on a map in two sheets attached to the exchange of Notes and sealed by both plenipotentiaries. The McMahon Line was later embodied, on a reduced scale, in the maps showing the proposed boundaries between Tibet and China under Article IX of the draft Convention. The draft Convention was initialled by Chinese and Tibetan representatives. The Chinese Government, two days after, declined to accept the Convention. The sole reason given then, and to be repeated later, was the inacceptability of the provisions regarding the Sino-Tibetan frontier. Sir Henry McMahon informed the Chinese that if they would not sign the draft Convention, a direct agreement would have to be concluded with the Tibetans. The

Chinese reiterated that the frontier between Tibet and China was the only obstacle and asked for the continuation of Sir Henry McMahon's mediation. On the 3rd of July 1914, Sir Henry McMahon and Lon-chen Shatra signed the Convention. Both the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries also signed a very important declaration on the same day in the following terms:

“We the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Tibet hereby record the following declaration to the effect that we acknowledge the annexed Convention as initialled to be binding on the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet and we agree that so long as the Government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid Convention, she will be debarred from enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom, in token whereof we have signed and sealed this declaration, two copies in English and two in Tibetan. Simla, 3rd July 1914.”

The advantages which the Chinese were thus deprived of by not signing the Convention were:—

- (1) The operation in favour of China of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906.
- (2) The recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.

The result of the Simla Conference as affecting the three parties appears to be as follows:—

The Chinese Government gained nothing but the retention, which proved to be for a short time only, of a strip of territory between Salween and Mekong, formerly administered by the Tibetan Government but occupied by Chao Erh-feng in 1908/1909.

The Tibetans, by the failure of the Chinese to sign the Convention, were released from the offer, made under British persuasion, to accept nominal Chinese suzerainty in return for Chinese guarantee of their autonomy and their joint frontier. They also secured British recognition of their autonomy and the assurance that the British Government would not acknowledge China's suzerainty over Tibet unless the Chinese Government fulfilled their side of the bargain by signing the Convention. The Tibetans could also expect British diplomatic support and a modest supply of arms.

Therefore, the Chinese objection, on which the Conference eventually broke down, did not relate to that part of the frontier in which, since their eviction from Tibet, they had no practical interest, but was solely concerned with the proposed boundaries between China and Tibet northward from the Burmese border. In the Simla Conference Sir Charles Bell was appointed to assist Sir Henry McMahon on the Tibetan side of the case. Sir Charles Bell who had intimate knowledge of these negotiations has left a record in his book "TIBET PAST AND PRESENT" on this point, viz., that the negotiations with China broke down on one point only, namely, the frontier to be established between China and Tibet. He has further stated:

“In the end, Tibet proved willing to accept the British award in order to arrive at a settlement. China remained obdurate, but notified Britain, except as regards the boundary between Tibet and China, she was willing to accept the Convention in all respects.”

Sir Eric Teichman has also dealt with this matter in his book “TRAVELS OF A CONSULAR OFFICER IN EASTERN TIBET” as follows:

“Though no settlement had been arrived at, China formerly notified Great Britain that the only point in the draft Convention which she was unable to accept was that affecting the boundary and gave an assurance that the Chinese troops stationed on the frontier would not advance beyond the position they held, provided they were not attacked by the Tibetans, both sides awaiting a final settlement by diplomatic means.”

Subsequently, the question of boundary between Tibet and China came up for discussion, but at no stage did China take any exception to the Indo-Tibetan border known as the McMahon Line. It is relevant to set out below the Notes exchanged between Sir Henry McMahon and Lon-chen Shatra:

“India-Tibet Frontier 1914. Exchange of notes between the British and Tibetan Plenipotentiaries:

To

Lon-chen Shatra, Tibetan Plenipotentiary.

In February last you accepted the India-Tibet frontier from the Isu Razi Pass to the Bhutan frontier, as given in the map (two sheets), of which two copies are herewith attached, subject to the confirmation of your government and the following conditions:—

(a) The Tibetan ownership in private estates on the British side of the frontier will not be disturbed.

(b) If the sacred places of Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa fall within a day's march of the British side of the frontier, they will be included in Tibetan territory and the frontier modified accordingly.

I understand that your Government have now agreed to this frontier subject to the above two conditions. I shall be glad to learn definitely from you that this is the case.

You wished to know whether certain dues now collected by the Tibetan Government at Tsona Jong and in Kongbu and Kham from the Monpas and Lopas for articles sold may still be collected. Mr. Bell has informed you that such details will be settled in a friendly spirit, when you have furnished him the further information, which you have promised.

The final settlement of this India-Tibet frontier will help to prevent causes of future dispute and thus

cannot fail to be of great advantage to both Governments.

A. H. McMahon,
British Plenipotentiary.

Delhi, 24th March, 1914.

The map referred to in this and the succeeding note was published for the first time in an Atlas of the Northern Frontier of India, issued on 15 January 1960 by the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India.

To

Sir Henry McMahon,
British Plenipotentiary to the
China-Tibet Conference.

As it was feared that there might be friction in future unless the boundary between India and Tibet is clearly defined, I submitted the map, which you sent to me in February last, to the Tibetan Government at Lhasa for orders. I have now received orders from Lhasa, and I accordingly agree to the boundary as marked in red in the two copies of the maps signed by you subject to the condition mentioned in your letter, dated 24th March, sent to me through Mr. Bell. I have signed and sealed the two copies of the maps. I have kept one copy here and return herewith the other.

Sent on the 29th day of the 1st month of the Wood-Tiger year (25th March 1914) by Lon-chen Shatra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary.

Seal of Lon-chen Shatra.

Mr. Nehru pointed out in his letter to Chou-En-lai dated 26th of September, 1959, that before the negotiations between Tibet and India "the area was extensively surveyed in 1911-13. The Lohit area was surveyed by the Mishmi Mission in 1911-12, the Dibhang Valley was surveyed in 1912-13, and the Abor area in 1913." Capt. F. M. Bailey and Capt. H. T. Morshead carried out extensive surveys of the southern limits of the Tibetan jurisdiction in the whole area in 1913 and 1914. It was on the basis of this detailed information that the boundary was settled between India and Tibet in 1914 from north-east of Bhutan to Isu Razi Pass. It is manifest, therefore, that the McMahon Line was not an arbitrary imposition on Tibet by the Government of India. It formalized the natural, traditional, ethnic and administrative boundary in that area. It represents correctly the customary and the traditional boundary in this area. The water parting formed by the crest of the Himalayas is the natural frontier which was accepted for centuries as the boundary by the peoples of both sides. It must not be overlooked that Tibet was an independent country and a sovereign State and entered into a solemn agreement with the British Government. Next, the Chinese Central Government were fully aware that such a treaty had been entered into between Tibet and Great Britain. China at no time questioned the competency of the Tibetan Government to enter into such a treaty and after fifty years now they suggest that the McMahon Line was a product of the British policy of aggression and that juridically too it cannot be considered legal. The legal validity of this treaty cannot be questioned by China on any ground. The

validity of McMahon Line does not depend on the recognition by any Chinese Central Government nor are they competent to question its legality. The Tibetans have a profound respect for treaties and never questioned the validity of the frontier to which they had agreed in 1914.

These then are the true facts concerning the McMahon Line. The proceedings of the Simla Conference and the records of the negotiations between Sir Henry McMahon and Mr. Lon-chen Shatra are in existence for the world to see and to judge whether the aspersions cast by China on the British Indian Government that the McMahon Line was the product of British aggression on Tibet is true or not. These proceedings were printed in Aitchison's Treaties as far back as 1929 and the McMahon Line was shown in the official maps. These maps were circulated widely but neither then nor subsequently was any objection raised by the Chinese authorities. The Chinese Central Government were fully aware of the negotiation between the British Government and the Tibetan Government and they never took any exception to it because they knew they had no right, title or interest in Tibet.

FALSE MAPS

It appears from Mr. Nehru's letter to Mr. Chou-En-lai dated 14th of December 1958 that he was under the impression that there were no border disputes between India and China. In fact he thought that the Sino-Indian agreement of 1954 had settled all outstanding problems between the two countries.

Some time later, his attention was drawn to some map of China which included Indian territory. During his visit to China in October 1954, Mr. Nehru mentioned this matter to Mr. Chou-En-lai when he was told that the maps were reproductions of old pre-liberation maps and that the Chinese Government had had no time to revise them. Thereafter in 1958 the Prime Minister's attention was again drawn to a map of China published in the magazine "China Pictorial" wherein a large part of North-Eastern Frontier Agency of India as well as some other parts of the country were shown to be parts of Chinese territory. The attention of the Chinese Government was drawn to the last-mentioned map and a Chinese Note sent to the Government of India stated that the Chinese Government had not yet undertaken a survey of China's boundary or consulted the other countries concerned. Mr. Nehru was puzzled at this reply. This attitude on the part of the Chinese Government should not have surprised or puzzled the Prime Minister if he had only been aware or been informed of the old technique of China of making false maps to grab other people's territories. This technique of fabricating false maps had been employed for over two centuries as will be borne out by recorded history. In 1708 the Chinese Emperor K'ang Hsi commissioned two Peking-educated Lamas (not surveyors) to prepare a map of the Celestial Empire. These two personages in due course produced a map which included quite a number of Tibetan districts. A copy of this map was sent by the Chinese to the King of France. D'Anville prepared his atlas in 1733 on the basis of this map prepared by those two Lamas, which held the field until the second quarter

of the 19th century. The Tibetans who had been the victims of this cartographical aggression of China on numerous occasions can throw a flood of light on the subject. Notwithstanding the change of political set-up, this habit of the Chinese of making false maps has not changed at all. The boundary of Tibet in 1717 in the south-east extended to L. $99^{\circ}-20'$ east. Then it ran along a line to the north to Tsaka Lho; thereafter it ran east to a point L. 103° east and from Tachienlu it ran in a north-westerly direction to Donkyr, approximately to L. $100^{\circ}-3'$ East. Thereafter it went through Koko Nor region. This was the eastern boundary of Tibet and the western boundary of China. In 1718 K'ang Hsi found an excuse that the Mongals and the Tibetans might combine against China and in pretended anticipation despatched an army in 1718 to occupy the districts shown in the false map. By 1727 the Chinese succeeded in occupying some of the eastern districts of Tibet shown in the Lamas' map and pushed the boundary to the west from a line running from L. $99^{\circ}-20'$ East, going north-westwards and this remained the boundary of Tibet and China between 1727 and 1910, thereby wrongfully occupying Batang, De-ge, Gomchen and Reyu, which had been Tibetan territories. In 1909-10, Chao Erh-feng known as Butcher Chao for his atrocity in Tibet invaded Tibet and wanted to create a new province called Sikang which was to include parts of Szechuan and considerable areas of Tibet extending to Giamda, almost sixty miles east of Lhasa. This proposal never received the assent of the Chinese Central Government. Nevertheless, the frontier according to Chao's blue print may be seen in Chinese maps published in the present century and

many British maps accepting the fictions of Chinese cartography without scrutiny showed a similar line. This can be seen from an atlas published by Odhams Press Ltd., London, W.C. 2 in 1938. After the breakdown of the Simla conference on the question of Sino-Tibetan border, the Chinese recognized their own claim and published their map for the whole world to see. China had diplomatic relations with other nations of the world. Tibet had not. The Chinese map was followed by map makers in other countries including Britain. Towards the end of 1917, General P'eng, breaking the truce which had existed since the Simla conference, advanced with his army into Tibet. This time Kalon Lama, the Commander-in-Chief of Tibet, with comparatively modern arms and trained troops defeated the Chinese and drove them beyond Chamdo and would have occupied Tachienlu but for the intervention of Sir Erich Teichman. The Chinese were driven east of Drechu River and this remained the boundary between Tibet and China until 1950. Yet, the Chinese maps showed these areas recovered by Tibet as Chinese territory. Robert Ford, who was a Radio Operator in Chamdo at the time of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 has an interesting story to tell in his book "CAPTURED IN TIBET". In connection with a radio contest called "Worked All Zones", the whole of Tibet was classed as Zone 23. Ford's assertion that he was in Chamdo and therefore in Tibet was often challenged on the authority that Chamdo had been shown in maps as being in China. Ford sent a message to the Radio Society of Great Britain and the Radio Relay League in America pointing out that the atlases were wrong. "What is your authority for saying Chamdo is in

Tibet?" one contact asked him. "I am in Chamdo, and I am employed by the Tibetan Government. I am the first European to stay here after over thirty years. The last was Sir Eric Teichman, and the boundary-lines on his maps are still pretty well right. Yours were always wrong." "Who put them in, then?" The answer was: "The Chinese."

***SINO—TIBETAN RELATIONS**

I—A STUDY OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chinese aggression on the frontiers of India demonstrates forcefully that peace bought at the sacrifice of a principle and the surrender or abandonment of a small or weak country cannot bring lasting peace. The troubles on India's frontiers are the inevitable consequences of acquiescence in Chinese aggression against Tibet in October 1950.

Strictly speaking, India's north-eastern boundary does not meet Chinese territory at any point. A cursory glance at any map of Tibet and India will show that the north-eastern boundary of India ends a considerable distance away to the west of Chamdo in Kham Province of Tibet. In Ladakh the international boundary was confirmed as far back as 1842 by a treaty to which China was a signatory. For more than a century 2,500 miles of India's borders have been peaceful. The reasons for this tranquility are the forbidding mountainous terrain of the Himalayas and the existence of an independent peace-loving Tibet. Owing to the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950, this natural line of defence is no longer impregnable.

Since the establishment of a Communist regime on the mainland of China, the Chinese have put forward some astounding claims, for example: (a) Tibet is an integral part of China, (b) the Chinese People's Liberation Army must liberate Tibet from British and American imperialist influence and defend the frontiers of China.

THE INVASION

On October 7, 1950, the Chinese invaded Tibet. On October 26, 1950, the Government of India, in a Note, deplored that notwithstanding repeated Chinese assurances to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means and negotiations, a People's Army unit had been ordered to advance in Tibet. Back came an insolent reply on October 30, 1950, in which the Chinese reiterated that Tibet was entirely a domestic problem of China and stated that the Government of India's attitude was affected by foreign influences hostile to China. Chinese armed forces occupied Tibet, completely subjugated the country, and forced the Tibetan Government to sign a 17-point agreement on May 23, 1951.

In the incredibly short period of four years, the Chinese Army built a number of military roads from Chengtu to Lhasa, from Sining to Lhasa and from Taklakot to Yehcheng. These roads were subsequently pushed on further south, coming within a few miles of the borders of India and Nepal. The last road passes through 100 miles of Indian territory in Ladakh. Mr. Alan Winnington, who travelled on the Chengtu-Lhasa road and then further south to

Yatung, has mentioned in his book, "TIBET", that "the road is wide enough to take two lorries passing at any point and work was still going on widening and reducing the curves. Convoys of lorries were constantly passing in both directions."

Tibet's volume of trade or commerce and exploitation of her natural resources do not warrant the construction of such roads, meant only for the heaviest trucks, which are in this part of the world available only to armed forces. A heavy concentration of Chinese troops, far in excess of what is required for the internal security of Tibet, synchronized with road-building and the construction of a number of air bases.

FOREIGNERS

Only a very naive person would accept the ridiculous Chinese pretext for annexing Tibet. History cannot be distorted so easily. In August 1947, the British left India and subsequently withdrew from Burma, Malaya and Ceylon. There were no Americans anywhere in Tibet at the time. In August 1949 Mr. Lowell Thomas, the well-known radio commentator, and his son paid a short visit to Lhasa. This visit had no political significance. There were only five foreigners in Tibet. Two were British—a young wireless operator by the name of Ford, who was in charge of the Tibetan wireless station at Chamdo, in the province of Kham, as an employee of the Tibetan Government; and Mr. Richardson the British representative in Lhasa, who was awaiting the arrival of his Indian counterpart.

There were two Austrians, Harrar and Aufschnaiter, who were prisoners of war in Dehra Dun during the last war; they escaped from an internment camp, went on foot across the Himalayas to Lhasa, and were employed by the Tibetan Government on an irrigation scheme. Geoffrey Bull, a Christian missionary, was travelling through Eastern Tibet. Yet Peking Radio frequently broadcast that the task of the Chinese Red Army in 1950 would be to liberate the Tibetans from imperialism.

The Tibetans did not invite the Chinese to liberate them. In this context the Chinese allegation is preposterous.

FAULTY ASSUMPTIONS

The Chinese claim on large tracts of Indian territory is based on two erroneous assumptions—that Tibet is an integral part of China, and that the former Tibetan Government entered into unequal treaties and abandoned territories which legitimately belonged to Tibet. These contentions are not tenable.

To appreciate the absurdity of the Chinese claims, it is necessary to bear in mind the political history of Tibet, the Chinese aggression in Tibet in 1950 and the nature of the Sino-Tibetan relationship during the last 200 years.

There seems to be a great deal of misconception amongst Western and American writers with regard to the political status of Tibet. Tibet's boundary with China has varied from time to time, not her political status.

The Tibetans are not Chinese. They are related to the people of the steppes and deserts further to the north. Tibet has never been an integral part of China. China had no suzerainty over Tibet. Except for a brief period (1910-12) Tibet has always been an independent country and was so as late as 1950. In February 1910 a Chinese army marched into Lhasa on the pretext that their sole object was the policing of the main roads and trade marts. The Amban at Lhasa assured the Tibetan Government that fewer than 1,000 Chinese troops were entering Tibet for that purpose. In spite of this assurance, more than 2,000 troops appeared and proceeded to subvert completely the Government of the country. Wen Tsung-Yao, the junior Amban, resigned over this breach of faith.

The Chinese Government in Peking, in defence of its aggression, pointed out that troops had been sent to observe treaty obligations, and assured the British Government that under no circumstances would the political situation and status of Tibet be altered in any way. European writers and European Governments, owing to their ignorance of the nature of the relationship which existed between the Dalai Lamas and the Manchu Emperors, assumed that China had suzerainty over Tibet. This is historically incorrect. Even Chinese historians admit that before 1720 Tibet was clearly independent.

LAY KINGS

Tibet was ruled by lay kings from the seventh to the thirteenth century. Its authentic history may be

said to have begun with the reign of King Son-tsen-Gam Po in 620. Tibet was then one of the great military Powers in Asia. King Son-tsen Gam Po compelled the Chinese Emperor to give Princess Wen Chen in marriage to him. This king also married Bhrikuti Debi, daughter of the King of Nepal. These two princesses were devout Buddhists, and under their influence the King made Buddhism the State religion of Tibet. From the seventh to the ninth century Tibet and China were constantly at war. In the middle of the eighth century another famous Tibetan King, Ti-song De-tsen, ruled Tibet. He introduced civil and criminal justice.

In the latter half of the ninth century, Tibet was ruled by King Ral-pa-chen, who introduced standard weights and measures. Twenty years later a Tibetan army overran China and a treaty was concluded which fixed Kokonor Lake as the north-eastern boundary of Tibet. The long line of Tibetan kings came to an end with the assassination of King Langderma. That during this period Tibet was an independent country is not disputed, even by the Chinese.

After the cessation of the rule of lay kings, the Sakya religious hierarchy ruled over Tibet for 75 years (1270-1345). Tibet was also then independent. The Ming Emperors ruled over China (1368-1644). Chinese historians admit that they never exercised any political control over Tibet.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the religious pontiffs of Tibet came to assume unquestioned political power and replaced the Royal

house and feudal lords, and Tibetan politics centred round the Dalai Lama. Including the present Dalai Lama, there have been fourteen in that line. Tibet's modern history commenced with the rule of Lobe-Sang-Gyatso, an epoch-making figure in the history of Tibet, known as the Great Fifth.

It is necessary to point out that the Dalai Lama is the head of the Lamaist Church and is the high priest of the Lamaist world. The Mongols and the Manchus embraced this Lamaist form of Buddhism. The Manchu Emperors looked upon the Dalai Lama in the same way as the Christian monarchs looked upon the Pope. The Dalai Lama was the spiritual guide and the Manchu Emperors his lay supporters. It was the duty of lay followers to help the priests in all ways possible, but the priests did not on that account become the servants of the laymen. Whatever help the Manchus might have rendered was rendered in that capacity, which did not in any sense make Tibet a vassal State of China.

NOT A VASSAL

The lay followers of the high priest performed many services for the head of the Church. This might include helping the high priest in all crises, which might take various forms. Such a relationship did not make the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet a vassal of the Chinese Emperors. There were many other independent princes in the surrounding countries who paid homage to the Dalai Lama. The relationship was between the Manchus and the Dalai Lama, not between China and

Tibet. It was a personal relationship between the high priest and the disciple. In 1652 the fifth Dalai Lama, one of the greatest in that line, visited Peking at the invitation of the then Manchu Emperor. The Emperor with his Court made a four-day march from the capital to receive the spiritual head of the Lamaist world. The Dalai Lama was received as an independent sovereign and shown the respect due to the head of an independent State.

Tucci in his TIBETAN PAINTED SCROLLS says :

“The Emperor showed the greatest respect and confidence for the Imperial Master. The Empresses and all the princesses took the vows and used to salute the Imperial Master, kneeling to receive his blessing. In the Court gatherings, when different officials took the place allotted to their ranks, the Imperial Master sat next to the Emperor. Each Emperor on ascending the throne publicly addressed a message of praise and protection to the Imperial Master, and was bound to order the office of the Imperial treasury to present him at the same time with pearls arranged to form a design as of words. In such a fashion he showed his respect for the Imperial Master.

“When the Imperial Master was about to arrive (in the capital of China) the Emperor ordered the Prime Minister and other officials to go forth to meet him with hundreds of persons on horseback. In the places through which the Imperial Master passed (on his journey to China) the local Government of each

region received him with great festivities on his arrival, offering him generous hospitality besides the expenses of his journey and honoured him on his departure. When he reached the capital, the Emperor ordered the Governor to prepare half of the Guard of Honour pertaining to the Emperor to accompany him and ordered the officials of the various Ministries and public administrations to offer him ermine robes, to do him honour."

PRIEST'S REPORT

Reference may also be made to another record left by Fr. Huc, a Lazarist, who stayed in Lhasa in 1846. In Huc's **TRAVELS IN TARTARY**, published in 1852, the following passage describing the relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperors occurs:

"The Tartar-Manchu dynasty, as we have already remarked elsewhere, saw from the commencement of their elevation the great importance of conciliating the friendship of the Dalai Lama, whose influence is all-powerful over the Mongol tribes; consequently they have never failed to retain at the Court of Lhasa two Grand Mandarins invested with the title of Kin-Tchais, which signifies Ambassador, or Envoy-Extraordinary. The ostensible mission of these individuals is to present, under certain fixed circumstances, the homage of the Chinese Emperor to the Dalai Lama, and to lend him the aid of China in any difficulties he may have with his neighbours. Such, to all appearance, is the purport of his permanent Embassy, but in reality they are only in atten-

dance to flatter the religious belief of the Mongols, and to bind them to the reigning dynasty, by making them believe that the government of Peking has great veneration for the divinity of Buddha-La."

II—TRIPARTITE CONVENTION OF 1914 RECALLED

The conferment of an honorary degree or a title on a visiting dignitary does not make the recipient a "vassal" of the donor. Delhi University, during President Eisenhower's recent visit, conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D. Surely the acceptance by the President of an honorary degree of Delhi University does not confer on India suzerainty over America!

In the past, the Pope used to receive presents from European monarchs. Could it be said that the Pope became a "vassal" by accepting these?

Thanks to Lord Curzon, Viceroy in 1903-04, and Sir Charles Bell, a personal friend of the 13th Dalai Lama and a great authority on Tibet, European and American writers became aware of the nature of the relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchus. Tibet having no contact with the outside world except her immediate neighbours, the Chinese spread the canard that China had suzerainty over Tibet, and that Tibet was an integral part of China.

As a result of the visit of the fifth Dalai Lama to Peking in 1652, a new relationship—that of chaplain and disciple—was established between the Dalai

Lama and the Manchu Emperors. That this is the true position will be manifest from the statement of the 13th Dalai Lama: "I went because the Manchu Emperor had an agreement to help each other in the way of priest and layman. There is no subordination in such relationship".

1907 CONVENTION

Owing to ignorance of the nature of the relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperors, the British and Russian Governments for the first time (in 1907) at St. Petersburg Convention acknowledged the suzerainty of China over Tibet. The relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperors could not be described as "suzerainty" under international law. According to Oppenheim, suzerainty is a term which was originally used for the relationship between a feudal lord and his vassal. The lord was to be the suzerain of the vassal. With the disappearance of the feudal system, suzerainty of this kind likewise disappeared. Modern suzerainty involves only a few rights of the suzerain State over the vassal State, which may be called "constitutional rights." The rights of suzerain States over vassal States are principally international rights.

Suzerainty is by no means sovereignty. It is a kind of international guardianship, since the vassal State is either absolutely or mainly represented internationally by the suzerain State. Thus all international treaties concluded by suzerain States are *ipso facto* concluded for the vassal State; thus again, a war of the suzerain State is an *ipso facto* war

of the vassal State; and thus, thirdly, the suzerain bears, within certain limits, responsibility for the action of the vassal State. Therefore, applying this test to the nature of the relationship between Tibet and China, Tibet does not come within the category of a vassal State. Tibet signed treaties with Nepal, Kashmir, the Mongols and the British Government.

That China never had suzerainty is proved by the fact that Tibet refused to be bound by the Anglo-Chinese Convention, and the Chinese failed to prevent Tibetans from raiding Bhutan in 1888. The war against Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu in 1840-41, the war against Nepal in 1855-56, the war against Britain in 1888 and 1904, and the ancient wars between Tibet and Bhutan were all settled by the Tibetans themselves without assistance or intervention by China. Tibet had a separate mint, coinage of her own and her own paper currency. She had an army of her own as well as ammunition factories. She had her own postal system and used to issue passports for entry into, and exit from, Tibet. Again, Tibet paid no tribute or taxes to China. The Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperors used to exchange presents. With the fall of the Manchus this relationship between priest and disciple came to an end.

RETURN TO LHASA

In 1912 the 13th Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa in state. The Chinese troops and the Amban were expelled from Tibet and, through the good offices of the British Government, were repatriated to China

through India. It may be pertinent to point out that in 1855-56, when the Nepalese invaded Tibet, the Chinese did not declare war against Nepal, which China would have done had Tibet been an integral part of China. Similarly in 1903-04, when the Younghusband Mission occupied Lhasa, the Chinese did not protest.

After the withdrawal of the British from India, China in 1950 annexed Tibet. After completely subjugating Tibet and converting it into a military base, China published maps showing large tracts of Indian territory as within China, and started a "cartographical war" on India. When the Indian Prime Minister pointed this out, he was assured by Mr Chou En-lai that these maps were published by former Governments of China and that the present regime was too busy to revise them, but promised to do so in due course.

Since then clashes have occurred between Chinese military personnel and Indian police at two places: (a) at Longju, on the north-eastern border, two miles south of the international boundary, which is known as the McMahon Line. Longju is in Indian territory, and the Chinese attacked the Indian police outpost and occupied it; and (b) in the Ladakh area, the Chinese occupied a considerable portion of Indian territory which is sparsely populated.

In recent months the Chinese have repeatedly asserted that the border disputes with India are legacies of British imperialism in Tibet. This is false. Communists have a weakness for the word "imperial-

ism". In the light of known facts it cannot be disputed that the British Government had no territorial ambitions in Tibet. This is confirmed in several treaties. A few Articles from some of the treaties are set out to illustrate this:

Article I of St. Petersburg Convention of 1907 states: "The two High Contracting Parties engage to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and to abstain from all interference in the internal administration."

Article II of the Convention between Britain, China and Tibet in 1914 is in these terms: "The Government of Great Britain and China engage to respect the territorial integrity of the country (Tibet) and to abstain from interference in the administration of Tibet."

"The Government of China engages not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibet or any portion of it."

NO TROOPS

Article III.—"Recognizing the special interest of Great Britain in virtue of the geographical position of Tibet, in the existence of an effective Tibetan Government and in the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of India and adjoining States, the Government of China engages, except as provided in Article 4 of this Convention, not to send troops into outer Tibet, nor to station civil or military officers, nor to establish

Chinese colonies in the country. Should any such troops or officials remain in outer Tibet at the date of signature of this Convention, they shall be withdrawn within a period not exceeding three months.

“The Government of Great Britain engages not to station military or civil officers in Tibet (except as provided in the Convention of September 7, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet) nor troops (except the Agent’s escorts), nor to establish colonies in that country.”

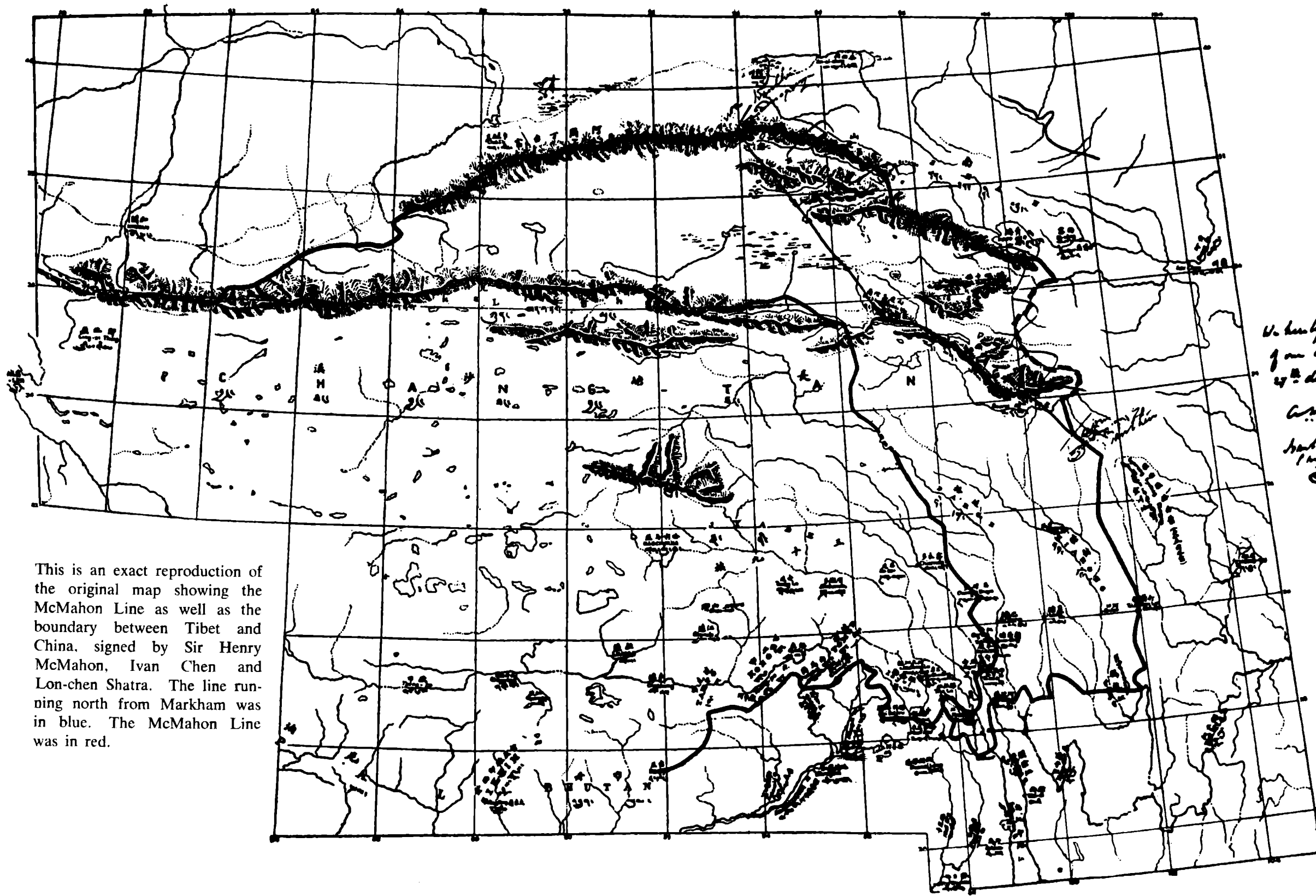
Anglo-Chinese Convention—Article II (1906).—
“The Government of Great Britain engages not to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet. The Government of China also undertakes not to permit any other foreign State to interfere with the territory or internal administration of Tibet.”

The above treaties can leave no doubt that the British Government were anxious to have an independent Tibet. Their sole object was to have a peaceful Tibet, to prevent Chinese or Russian intrigue, which might endanger the safety of the north-eastern frontier of India. With this end in view and to ensure the security of the north-eastern frontier of India, the British Government entered into several treaties with China and Russia. These treaties, however, through errors arising out of misunderstanding of the nature of the Sino-Tibetan relationship, gave China a free hand in Tibet and during the last 200 years she has been trying to annex Tibet.

Had the British Government wanted, they could have had the whole of Tibet for the asking. The 13th Dalai Lama, when he was in Darjeeling in 1910, repeatedly asked Sir Charles Bell to induce the British Government to take Tibet under British protection and place Tibet in the same relationship as Indian princely States. The British Government, however, declined to accede to this request. Therefore, for China to allege now that the border disputes with India are a legacy of British imperialism is grotesque. The spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama, and his Cabinet are in India now. They have never asserted or alleged that any portion of their territory was taken by the British Government under pressure. In this context the Chinese claims are untenable.

There are no known instances where the British Government have repudiated solemn treaties. India should never unilaterally resile from treaty obligations. The Chinese Government, however, has unilaterally repudiated treaties and occupied Tibet, has stationed troops there and is colonizing the place.

Public opinion in the world is yet nebulous as to the historical consequences of what has happened in Tibet. The strategic potentiality of the Roof of the world has not been appreciated. Any strong Power based on the "Chang-tang" would control the heart of Asia. The destiny of South-East Asia is inextricably bound up with the fortunes of Tibet.



*McMahon's initial in the
of an expedition, this
27th day of April 1914*

*As per
British Plenipotentiary
Ivan Chen
Lon-chen Shatra*

This is an exact reproduction of the original map showing the McMahon Line as well as the boundary between Tibet and China, signed by Sir Henry McMahon, Ivan Chen and Lon-chen Shatra. The line running north from Markham was in blue. The McMahon Line was in red.