

PEKING VERSUS DELHI



George N. Patterson



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‘Those who endeavour to gloss over offensive wars would say: “These states perished because they could not gather and employ their multitudes. I can gather and employ my multitudes and wage war with them; who then, dare to be unsubmitive?” ’

MOTSE.

(from *The Wisdom of China* by Lin Yutang.)

Introduction



The choice of the title *Peking Versus Delhi* is deliberate, implying as it does a limitation of purpose and scope. In this book it is not my intention to discuss or contrast the different policies of India and China on an international level but to attempt the much less ambitious task of presenting the recent history of the rivalry between the two countries in Asia, from the time of their emergence in 1947–49 up to the time of their estrangement in 1959–61. It is because of this limitation to Asia, and the particularly localized interplay of personalities and policies involved, that the title *Peking Versus Delhi* was chosen.

That the subject is important is beyond all question, for the final outcome of this battle of giants in Asia will determine the future course of world history. For whatever ideological differences there may be between Peking and Moscow in their interpretations of Leninism, both are agreed in this respect. Lenin is supposed to have said (although no one has ever discovered the source of this much used apocryphal quotation): 'The way to Paris lies through Peking and Calcutta.' And Mao Tse-tung has recently introduced his own revised version of this: 'The way to world conquest lies through Havana, Accra and Calcutta.' They are at least in agreement over Calcutta. To this Nehru has sombrely added that any further violation of India's territory will result in war with China—which could lead to a Third World War.

The Chinese invasion of Indian territory, following on their ruthless suppression of the revolt in Tibet in 1959, brought suddenly and harshly to an end the dream-world in which Indian policy-makers had persisted in living in Asia since 1949.

India, since achieving her own independence, had always been warmly disposed toward China, even during the Chiang Kai-shek régime, but the new Chinese Communist leaders had been distinctly

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cool, to put it mildly, in their responses to India's enthusiastic overtures of friendship. However, after the Indian Government had gone out of its way to accept, and even excuse, the Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet in 1950-51, and had thereby given an impressive demonstration of the lengths to which she was prepared to go to be friendly with the other new giant of Asia, a visible softening of the Chinese attitude was noticeable.

In the spring of 1952 an India-China Friendship Association was formed, and in April a Dr. Mohanlal Atal became the first unofficial Indian leader to visit China, going as the Indian delegate to the World Peace Council. This was followed by a six-week visit of a high-level, unofficial goodwill mission, led by the noted Gandhian, Pandit Sunderlal, consisting of a large number of intellectuals and strongly encouraged by the Indian Ambassador to China, Sardar Panikkar. In return a Chinese cultural delegation of fifteen scholars, artists and scientists, led by Ting Si-lin, Vice-Minister of Cultural Affairs, came to India. This was the first Chinese Communist delegation to visit a non-Communist country. These exchanges were followed by several other delegations, including one by Mme Pandit, Prime Minister Nehru's sister, and a sixty-member delegation to the Asian and Pacific Peace Conference.

On a rising tide of enthusiasm for all things Chinese Chou En-lai, the Chinese Prime Minister, visited India in 1954 to an adulatory reception, and this was followed by an equally tumultuous reception for Nehru on his visit to Peking the same year. 'Panch Sheela'—the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence'—first announced in the preamble to the Sino-Indian Trade Agreement over their relations with Tibet, or 'the Tibet region of China', was formally proclaimed as official policy by the leaders of both countries.

The climax to this friendly phase was reached at the Bandung Conference, in the spring of 1955, and in the events which followed the euphoric post-Bandung period. Numerous delegations visited China (although it is interesting to note how it was primarily a one-way flow of friendship; most of the overtures came from India, with China responding only sufficiently to keep the situation alive) representing almost every important aspect of Indian political and intellectual life.

In the meantime India had taken up China's cause at an international level, urging her entry into the United Nations, smoothing the way with unceasing diplomatic measures during the Korean War and Armistice, doing the same during the Indo-China conflict, and on almost every important international occasion virtually acting as China's champion.

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Then came the Tibetan revolt and its ruthless suppression, combined with a virulent propaganda attack by China on India at all levels and through all public channels, followed by the occupation of Ladakh and NEFA on India's north-eastern frontiers—and the ten years' courtship came to a sudden end.

The suddenness of the way in which the news of the Tibetan revolt was broken to the Indian public, coupled with the brutality of the Chinese methods in suppressing it, served to intensify the harsh and ominous realities of the new—or, rather, return to the old—Chinese policy in Asia.

Although it was obvious to informed observers of the political scene in Asia that trouble might be expected in Tibet—in fact, that there was, despite China's claims to have 'liberated' the country and be in full occupation of it, a growing body of rebels from 1952 onwards which was singularly successful in harassing the Chinese occupation forces and pinning them down to the chief cities and towns—yet the Indian Government either remained in complete ignorance of this state of affairs or, worse still, deliberately prevented all information from reaching the Indian public. In 1956 the situation, having previously consisted only of minor nuisance raids by fierce tribesmen or roving bandit-guerrilla groups, became, first, a 'revolt of the Khambas' (the inhabitants of Eastern Tibet) followed, in a rapidly spreading wave of savage oppression by the Chinese and equally ruthless counter-action by the Khambas, by a nation-wide rebellion of the Tibetans against the Chinese Government, culminating in the dramatic uprising in Lhasa and the spectacular escape of the Dalai Lama and his Government to India.

All this had been taking place over a period of three years, during which tens of thousands of Tibetans (90,000 was the figure given by the Dalai Lama), and as many if not more Chinese, were killed, yet the Indian Government deliberately went out of its way to deny that there was any action taking place in Tibet. Even *after* the revolt had taken place in Lhasa Mr. Nehru was still insisting that everything in Tibet was normal, that if anything was taking place it was 'a clash of wills and not of arms', and denouncing the Indian and foreign Press as 'alarmist and irresponsible' for suggesting otherwise.¹ This policy of deliberately suppressing, or blindly ignoring, all that was inimical to friendship with China had induced in the Indian people a condition of euphoria which did not prepare them for the sudden *volte-face* required in order to face up to all the dangers to the security of India itself inherent in the new situation. There was an immediate outcry against the Indian Government and leaders who

¹ See my *Tibet in Revolt*.

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had so misled the people, but, before the echoes had time to die away, the Chinese struck again by moving into and claiming almost fifty thousand square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh and NEFA on India's frontiers. This deliberate act of blatant aggression against India served notice on India, Asia and the world, that the period of 'Hindi-Chini-bhai-bhai' ('Indians and Chinese are brothers') was at an end, and that a new phase, particularly in relation to India, was about to begin. The chief aim of this new policy was what had been implicit in Chinese actions all the time—even during the 'friendship' period—but was now explicit, namely the removal of India as an equal, or even major, power in Asia and its eventual defeat and absorption into the Communist Empire in that continent.

The Chinese Communist leaders from the moment of assuming control in China had made it clear not only that there was room for only one Great Power in Asia, i.e. China, but that they anticipated India would be their chief rival. On the other hand, India's leaders, even before Independence, had shown that while they expected the East to play a major role in international affairs it would be as a result of a unity of the Asian peoples, and by China and India in particular. This concept of 'two-Great-Powers-in-Asia-policy' was evident in Japan's aspiration to a leading role in Asian affairs, and her assumption that a friendly union between India and China would effectively negate such a possibility. It was India's complete absorption in and pursuit of this policy that led to the shock, outrage and confusion—which still exists—following what they mistakenly took to be China's cynical betrayal of mutually held principles.

What the Indian leaders—and particularly Prime Minister Nehru—have either failed to understand, or if they understood, have failed to give due weight to, is the fact that China has inherited a political tradition which is diametrically opposed to their own: in other words, what is taking place in Asia is a counterpart and extension of the ideological clash in the West, differing not fundamentally but only in racial, cultural and religious overtones. Naturally, this—to the Western observer—obvious explanation is unwelcome to the Indian, who has come to accept that India's 'neutralist' policy is a peculiarly Eastern one, with its roots in Hindu religion and culture, and is, therefore, India's own contribution to solving the political ills of the world.

I analyse this widely-held belief in greater detail later, but here I want to outline simply the two streams of political tradition which, despite the national colouring or modifications which they have been given, are distinctly and definitely Western, with the same inimical ideological features which give rise to the conflicts in the West.

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It would be true to say that Confucianism, with its suffocating network of family and social obligations, together with Buddhism and Taoism with their radical anti-worldly bases, had paralysed the energies of China for centuries and brought the country to its twentieth-century condition of passivity, stagnation and impotence. Yet the fact remains that it was the continuing influence of Confucian habits of thought in Chinese life at all levels which prepared them for the wide acceptance of the Marxist-Leninist dogma that state power, 'in the proper hands', could lead man to the good society. This was in the direct line of inheritance of the traditional practice of authoritarian rule, from the nomadic dependence on the tribal leader, through the Byzantine emphasis and Mongol absolutism to the authoritarian bias of the political ideas of Eastern Europe and Russia.

India, on the other hand, was ripe for the liberal democratic principles, both in precept and practice, derived from the agricultural and trade-minded Greeks and perfected over centuries of trial-and-error experience in the West. As will be shown later this appealed to the Indian character, conditioned by history, religion and culture to tolerance and 'co-existence'—co-existence of conflicting religions, of conflicting ideologies, even of the perennially opposed good and evil—so that in rejecting the authoritarian imperialism of Britain, they enthusiastically embraced the principles and practices of British parliamentary democracy.

But just as the argument for Confucian authoritarianism in China has to be qualified, so has the argument for Indian liberalism. From the beginning of its history the chauvinism of China, expanding from the comparatively small 'central kingdom' to the vast imperial entity, was integrated into the national character by a recognized, if loosely held, unity of peoples, and an inherited and influential civil service. India never had these characteristics. There was no core of unity, no growing awareness of nationhood—any unity India had was always imposed from the *outside* by invaders—small, disparate states, and no civil service. These considerations apart, it might be argued that India would have gone the same way as China. But it is an historical fact that they did not go the same way, but in opposite directions, with consequences to themselves and the world, and for possible reasons, which are the subject of this book.

It is only the different ideological colorations and emphases of China and India, produced by their respective cultural and religious histories, which have obscured the great significance of the origins of their political inheritances. Instead of constituting a 'third force' between the two great power-blocs of Russia and the West, as each

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thinks itself, both are in actual fact simply a reflection or counterpart of that 'western' ideological conflict.

Except for the period of 'Peaceful Co-Existence' China's Communist leaders made it quite clear that they understood this significance of India's historical and political inheritance, even when India was most vocal in defending her non-alignment, 'neutralist', policy.

'Neutrality is a camouflage,' Mao Tse-tung stated categorically, in 1949, 'and a third road does not exist.'

Then one month later this was amplified in a diatribe, in the periodical *World Culture*:

'The India of Nehru attained "dominion status" only two years ago, and is not even formally independent in the fullest sense of the word. But Nehru, riding behind the imperialists whose stooge he is, actually considers himself the leader of the Asian peoples. . . . Under the long-standing influence of British imperialism, the bourgeoisie of India, of whom Nehru is the representative, have learned the ways of the imperialists . . . and he shamelessly holds himself as the pillar of the anti-Communist movement in Asia. . . .'

It was obvious, therefore, that Communist China had no use for India's 'two-Great-Powers-in-Asia' theory, and saw herself as the only Great Power in Asia—or even in the world. Certainly, even during the 'friendship' period with India, Chou En-lai is on record as stating blandly, 'When China speaks she speaks for Asia'; and during 1958 several official Chinese statements described China as an 'inspiration' to the Asian-African countries, and claimed that 'China's today is their tomorrow'. However, India refused to recognize China as her formal opponent until, as has been noted, it had been forcefully thrust upon her in the suppression of the revolt in Tibet and the invasion of her own strategic frontier areas in 1959-62.

The purpose of this book, then, is to describe and analyse the origins and cause of the conflict between China and India, beginning with the birth of the New China and birth of the New India, then going on from their emergence as powerful new nations on the Asian scene to deal with all the areas in which conflict either has arisen or is likely to arise.

Since I shall be restricting myself to Asia, perhaps it would be useful here to outline Russia's part in this developing power struggle in Asia. It had been obvious to Asian observers for some time before the officially recognized 'Sino-Soviet Dispute' that there were tensions between the two countries over each others' ambitions in Asia. Without going too far back or too deeply into the causes of these differences, there was, for instance, in the Stalin era, the difficult problem of the settlement in Manchuria, the conduct of the Korean War, and

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the situation of Mongolia. Later, there was Formosa and Indo-China, and then, more central to our subject, Sinkiang and Tibet.

While Manchuria, Korea, Mongolia, Formosa and Indo-China formed the perimeter of China's ambitions to acquire all her former imperial territories, Sinkiang and Tibet were the central, essential, areas to be acquired in her ambition to reach the Indian Ocean and 'liberate Asia—without, of course, neglecting the significance of Japan and the possibilities of economic advance there by holding out the carrot of a vast trading union, shipbuilding, etc.—or the internal disruption of other countries by Communist infiltration, and the big-stick policy of physical advance through South-East Asia. But after Russia's initial occupation of Sinkiang with Soviet troops and technicians, China sought to counteract this by introducing vast numbers of Chinese colonists in road and railway building, and so on. This was followed by a concentration of heavy industries in North-West China, then heavy military 'reinforcements' for, ostensibly, containing the sporadic outbreaks of revolt in Sinkiang, Mongolia and Tibet. The final move in consolidating herself as the dominant Power in High Asia was when China among other things initiated a direct link-up, militarily and administratively, with Sinkiang and Tibet, even at the risk of war with India and a breach with Russia.

Russia, defeated in the attempt to contain China within her pre-1949 frontiers, and in her own attempts to acquire dominance in High Asia and so be in a position to encircle India on the east and reach into South-East Asia, has sought to recover the initiative by pointedly cultivating India's friendship. Further, Russia's extensive programme of aid to Afghanistan implied that China would have to commit outright aggression against India and deliberately flout Russia if her ambitions in that area were not to be abandoned.

Of course, China has quickly countered this move by first of all precipitating the Laotian crisis, with all the importance which that gives to her in Western circles; deliberately sponsoring Albania as a counter-threat of interference in what was previously accepted as a Russian sphere of interest in Europe; launching the Indian and South Viet-Nam invasions as threats to counter Russian pre-eminence over Berlin, provocatively building up military forces opposite Sikkim and Bhutan on India's borders; increasing diplomatic activity in Burma and Nepal, and making Kashmir a border agreement with Pakistan. To off-set Russia's policy of friendship with India and aid to Afghanistan, China has intensified her efforts to isolate India in the minds of Asian countries by making agreements with and concessions to Burma, Indonesia and Nepal, by overtures to Bhutan and Sikkim, by cultivating friendly ties with

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Pakistan, and, latterly, by a proposal for a 'Confederation of Himalayan States'. This latest development is particularly significant and likely to be a very great embarrassment to India—which, of course, is China's chief reason for the move. For, in addition to the continuing disagreement over the border demarcation between India and 'the Tibet region of China', there is the possibility that the talks which have resulted in border and air agreements between Pakistan and China may end in once again raising the explosive Kashmir issue—but this time in a much more dangerous context of a China-supported Pakistan and a Russian-supported India.

If the two chief protagonists in Asia are coldly calculating the possibility of war with each other, what are the factors likely to precipitate such a conflict? What, too, are the factors which, in their few years of independence, have brought them to their present crisis? It is these questions which I attempt to answer; and, to forestall possible criticism that too much attention has been paid to historical detail in places such as Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, I would point out that I believe that it is in those very details of these countries that the possible precipitating factors of war between India and China lie.

The book is intended for the intelligent student of world events rather than for the scholar, and for this reason I have not included footnotes but have included several appendices for those who are interested in a more detailed reading of relevant treaties and events. However, I do acknowledge my indebtedness to a wide variety of authors living and dead, and these may be found in the bibliography at the end of the book. But I would like to single out Guy Wint for special acknowledgment and thanks. He is the natural and far more qualified person to write such a book, but, despite poor health and a wearying, painful convalescence he yet found time and patience to read and criticize and advise me on the manuscript. I myself, of course, am responsible for the conclusions reached.

Finally, to all those who directly contributed to this book—the people, officials and rulers (in that order) of the countries concerned—I give my warm and sincere thanks for an unparalleled experience by any standards during this period of history. I would have liked to return to China to round off by direct contact my knowledge of the area and events, but I found the new rulers in Peking unco-operative—or, rather, I found their representative in Delhi unco-operative, for the Ambassador returned my letter unopened, I was kept waiting two-and-a-half hours seeing nine different, obscure, lesser officials before I was even allowed to talk to the Press or Publicity Officer (he never did say what his status was), and then I was rudely seen off the

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premises without even a pamphlet on China's development. If there is any objection, therefore, that not enough has been said from the Chinese point of view—although, even without Peking's co-operation, I have studied a mass of information—then they have only themselves to blame.

In Delhi, on the other hand, I found every Indian most co-operative—the School of International Studies, the Press, the Ministry of External Affairs, and even the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who, at a busy time, still found time to see me to discuss India's policies in Asia, even though it was known that I had not always agreed with India's policies in my writings. To them particularly I extend my gratitude and thanks.

GEORGE N. PATTERSON

Cape Wrath,
September 1963.

PART ONE

The Contestants

1. CHINA

CHAPTER 1

Birth of the New China



CHINA, 1949

The most confused, chaotic, corrupt, exploited, starved and ravaged country in the world. For even Germany and Japan were beginning to emerge from the numbness of defeat and atomic devastation to begin the slow process of recovery. But China was disintegrating from within. The Communist Army had conquered the territory north of the Yangtze, but had not yet brought it under their control; and south of the Yangtze the Kuomintang Government was but a name, no longer interested in control but in ways of escape.

Millions of homeless, foodless and moneyless refugees poured into the large cities looking for food and shelter, only to add to the confusion, starvation and misery which already existed there. Trucks plied the streets of the cities every night loading up with the dead bodies lying on the open pavements and ditches. Millions of defeated, leaderless soldiers roamed the countryside, plundering and robbing. All central control had broken down, all trade was grinding to a halt, mails were rarely delivered, transport—rail, plane, bus or truck—was uncertain, perilous and extortionate. In, over and through the chaos, making everything worse confounded, was the soaring, fantastic, uncontrolled inflation. Three times the value of the Chinese dollar soared into infinity in the three post-war years. I watched Chinese children playing with 10,000 dollar notes as if they were cast-off bus tickets. I had to carry a large suitcase full of 10,000 dollar notes to make an ordinary purchase in the market. Rates of exchange were altered three times and more each day. Banks ceased to do business. Money sent by plane from Shanghai to Chungking, by special messenger, had no value when it reached there.

It was the death throes of a nation, the end of an epoch. Or it was the shrugging off of a useless chrysalis, the beginning of a new era. It

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depended on whether one was north or south of the Yangtze River, East or West in one's ideological loyalties, left or right in one's political bias. For to the north of the Yangtze River a new force in Chinese affairs was gathering, a new ideology was taking shape, a new China was emerging, the creation of persons and policies of China's first Communist Government.

The Chinese Communist Party was formally founded in China in 1921, and about the same time in France amongst Chinese students there, but had, in fact, been in the throes of emerging for two years prior to this. The actual founders of the Communist Party were none of the famous names now dominating the party—Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Liu Shao-chi—but two Chinese intellectuals, Ch'en Tu-hsiu and Li Ta-chao, comparatively unknown except to scholars. These two were the sponsors of Marxist-Leninism in China. So western-orientated were they that Ch'en Tu-hsiu had in the years preceding 1919 committed himself to a philosophy of 'democracy and science' and a total rejection of traditional Chinese culture in all its manifestations—Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian. These had merely induced passivity, stagnation and impotence in China in the face of the challenge from the West, and the answer to this challenge, he argued, could only come from the West itself in two Western concepts which the East lacked—democracy and science.

Li Ta-chao was of fundamentally different character and approach. A professor of history and an enthusiastic believer in 'progressive evolution' he developed a bias in favour of impersonal historic forces as opposed to the rule of the individual. Traditional Chinese thought and Hegel, therefore, both conditioned him to accept this aspect of Marxism. To this was added, however, Li's own fervent preoccupation with China's immediate plight and his equally fervent rebuttal of the charge that China was a decadent and even dead civilization. 'What we must prove to the world is not that the old China is not dead,' he stated passionately, 'but that a new youthful China is in the process of being born.'

Li Ta-chao and Ch'en Tu-hsiu formed the Society for the Study of Marxism at Peking University in 1918, from which sprang the Communist Party a few years later, and its members were made up primarily of students. Among them was Mao Tse-tung, who was then a library assistant in the Peking National University of China. Another, Chou En-lai, son of a mandarin from an old official family, was in the Paris group in France. Their arch-enemy was the party of Sun Yat-sen which the Kuomintang claimed to be the party of nationalism. It was at first also a revolutionary party. The Communists joined the Kuomintang hoping to be able to take over the

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key posts of power later. Chou En-lai himself became the political head of the Kuomintang's powerful Whampoa Military Academy, whose commander was Chiang Kai-shek.

These developments followed on a meeting in 1921 between Sun Yat-sen and the Russian, Joffe, in Shanghai, at which it was agreed that Communism was not suitable to China and that the 'Kuomintang', or 'Nationalist', Party should accept the aid of Russia and the alliance of the infant Chinese Communist Party. The Kuomintang was then reorganized on the lines of the Russian Communist Party, with political commissars, mass propaganda organs and strict discipline, and claimed a 'military tutelage' until the people had enough knowledge of democracy and political skill to govern themselves.

Actually, it could be argued that the linking-up of the Communists with the Kuomintang was more a natural development than a deliberate act of policy at that time, for it was only when Ch'en Tu-hsui left Peking for Shanghai and became a focus of the intellectual life there—comprised of Anarchists and anti-Confucianists as well as Marxists and Kuomintang—that there is any evidence of an important link. The intellectual followers of Sun Yat-sen, Tai Chi-t'ao and Hu Han-min, who had been attracted to Leninism as early as 1919 by the nationalist implications of his theories and his insistence on an authoritarian, highly disciplined *élite*, once again renewed the acquaintanceship and endorsed the collaboration with the 'Socialist Youth Corps' with Ch'en.

Later Sun Yat-sen was to deny indignantly the charge of the Kuomintang right-wing that 'the political programme of the Kuomintang was devised *in toto* by Ch'en Tu-hsiu's Communist Party', by claiming that 'the draft was drawn up by Wang Ching-wei and myself. I doubt whether Ch'en ever heard of it.' But Wang Ching-wei stated categorically that 'the reorganization of our party was carried out in January 1924, at the suggestion of Borodin.' Even the idea of starting the Whampoa Academy, the military training college which produced China's best-known generals—both Kuomintang and Communist—was also carried out over the head of the Chinese Communist Party by Chiang Kai-shek and the Russian Borodin.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the Manifesto of the Third Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in June 1923, criticized the Kuomintang for its past defects and its limited policies and sharply outlined its own relationship to and within the Kuomintang in the following words:

'Since this is a struggle which must advance from the stage of a Chinese national revolution to the stage of a world social revolution,

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the proletariat must, by all means, maintain its class consciousness and unity and must be aware of its own inevitable goal. It is the duty of the Chinese Communist Party and the Comintern to bring about this awareness and unity. . . .”

When Sun Yat-sen, and later Chiang Kai-shek, decided to follow a right-wing, nationalist policy, therefore, the Communists considered it a betrayal of the principles of the revolution and considered that they alone remained as the true guardians and proponents of the original revolutionary principles. The Communist attitude, henceforth, was that the Kuomintang period should be considered a temporary political digression to be replaced inevitably by the Communist Party.

When the Kuomintang armies under Chiang Kai-shek in 1926 successfully united the country south of the Yangtze and arrived on the outskirts of Shanghai, Chiang was faced with the possibility of a war with the West, who controlled vast interests in and through Shanghai. It was also a time of crisis for Chiang with the Communist elements in the Kuomintang, who were strongly entrenched in the unions and other organizations in Shanghai. Chiang finally resolved the crisis by deciding that he would league with the Shanghai bankers and also attempt an alliance with the Western powers at the expense of the Communists, and, striking quickly, he expelled the Communists from the Kuomintang and ordered the Communist leaders to be shot. Chou En-lai was among the Communists captured in Shanghai and condemned to death, but he miraculously escaped.

However, enough of the Communist leaders escaped from the Kuomintang purge, and units of the Kuomintang Army in Hunan and Kiangsi mutinied and declared for the Communists. They retired at first to the mountains and were joined by a rapidly increasing number of landless and desperate peasants, and they took possession of the inaccessible border lands of the provinces of Kiangsi and Fukien where they set up the first Chinese Soviet Government.

When Chiang Kai-shek entered Peking in 1928 the process of unifying the country, apart from the Communist pocket, was virtually complete. The major domestic challenge had come from the Communists and they seemed in the process of elimination. Distinct progress was being made towards creating a democratic structure of the type familiar in the West and towards freeing the country from the humiliating bonds imposed by the foreign powers in Manchu times.

Then in 1931 the Japanese interfered, first by trying to annex Manchuria and a large part of Mongolia as a puppet state then, later, in 1937, with a full-scale invasion of the whole of China. In 1930 Russia invaded North Manchuria to hold the Chinese Eastern Railway and her possessions there.

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In spite of their imbroglios with foreign governments the Kuomintang continued to consolidate their hold over the country and introduced many new significant projects. New railways were built, buses introduced, automobiles appeared and airlines were established. Factories multiplied, machinery was imported, kerosene became popular and cotton textiles were in great demand.

In the intellectual realm there was also spectacular progress. Mission schools and Government schools proliferated, and students became interested in both national and international politics. Movements to promote the literacy of the masses continued and the two language systems of *pai hua* and *kuo yü* overcame the regional dialect difficulties and helped further to unite the country. Newspapers, magazines and books, most of them pirated from the West, increased in numbers.

In the meantime Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh and other Communist leaders were attempting, in the rural areas of Kiangsi, to build up a Soviet régime based upon armed forces and the confiscation of the lands of the landlords and rich peasants. In November 1931, the 'Chinese Soviet Republic' was established, with headquarters in Kiangsi, with Mao Tse-tung as Chairman and Chu Teh as Commander-in-Chief of its armies.

Several large-scale attempts by the Kuomintang to crush the Kiangsi Soviet and its off-shoots in Hunan, Hupeh and Kwang-tung were made between 1930 and 1934. Some of the extremist Communist areas were overrun, but against the main centre every effort failed. However, the persistent blockade and the gradual nibbling away and compression of the Communist area began to make inroads into the Communist-controlled territory and in the autumn of 1934 the Communist forces began the evacuation of Kiangsi and started on the memorable 'Long March' of 6,000 miles which brought the leaders and the remnants to Yen-an, in the province of Shensi in the north-west of China. That epic trek took tremendous toll of the Communists, only about 20,000 surviving the march across rugged mountains and swift rivers, but it left a nucleus of hardened, fearless, fanatical Party members.

When Japan saw that China looked like consolidating herself at last she launched an all-out war against her in 1937. Quickly over-running the country against the poorly equipped Kuomintang armies the Japanese captured Shanghai, and then Nanking, before the end of the year. Chiang and his Government moved from Nanking to Hankow, then, as the Japanese continued to advance, fell back on Chungking, in Szechuan, in the west. Here the Japanese navy could not penetrate the swift currents of the Yangtze Gorges,

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and the absence of roads and railways presented formidable obstacles to the movement of troops and heavy equipment. By October 1940, the Japanese were in possession of all the major Chinese cities in the east and south, and had reached the lower end of the Yangtze Gorges, at I-chang, and were within striking distance of Chungking.

When Pearl Harbour brought Britain and the United States into the war against Japan, the latter was in possession of most of the coast of China, and on Christmas Day, 1941, had captured Hong Kong and in February 1942, Singapore; by the close of 1944 it looked as though Japan might succeed in crushing the Kuomintang Government and with it the major Chinese resistance.

More deadly to the Kuomintang than the Japanese advance were the wartime tactics of the Communists. They presented Communism and not the Kuomintang as the best custodian of the national interests and subtly spread the impression that the Kuomintang was engaged in a 'phoney' war against Japan while the Communists fought it in earnest. They had set about the infiltration and organization of the so-called occupied areas by sending in their trained forces in small units, collecting and reorganizing the scattered bands of former soldiers, and installing themselves in the inaccessible hill regions. They set up a civil administration, collected taxes, reduced rents, and associated all classes of the population in these 'liberated' areas.

At the end of the war the Kuomintang was physically exhausted and morally bankrupt. The régime became corrupt and inefficient beyond belief, and did not even bother to produce a policy of any kind. The United States became disturbed at the deteriorating conditions and sent several representatives to head off the possibility of another civil war developing between their protégé Kuomintang Government and the increasingly powerful Communists. But Chiang was convinced that the Communists were only manœuvring at the talks in order to obtain full control of the Government; the Communists were equally convinced that the Kuomintang was determined to have its own way and make no concessions.

It is claimed that the membership of the Chinese Communist Party rose from 100,000 in 1937 to 1,200,000 in 1945: certainly, by 1945 it was the largest Communist Party outside Russia. In contrast with the exhausted Kuomintang its tightly knit, disciplined membership was inured to hardships, equipped with armed forces indoctrinated with Communist convictions, with a philosophy of history and political programme held with unshakeable conviction and missionary fervour.

During the next few years the Communists struck successfully time after time at Kuomintang-held areas in the north, isolating them by

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cutting communications and destroying the administration. By 1948 the last strongholds of the Kuomintang in North China and Manchuria had been swept away, the great offensive towards the Yangtze and the South began and they were within shooting distance of Nanking.

The successful advance of the Communists was not due to any off-the-cuff exploitation of China's post-war difficulties, but to cleverly conceived and calculatedly executed policies. As early as October 1937, the Chairman of the Communist Party, Mao Tse-tung, had issued a directive to the political workers of the Eighth Army which read:

'The Sino-Japanese War affords our policy an excellent opportunity for expansion. Our fixed policy should be seventy per cent expansion, twenty per cent dealing with the Kuomintang, and ten per cent resisting Japan. There are three stages in carrying out this fixed policy. The First is a compromising stage, in which self-sacrifice should be made to show our obedience to the Central Government and adherence to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's "Three Principles of the People", but in reality this will serve as camouflage for the existence and development of our Party.

'The Second is a contending stage in which two or three years should be spent in laying the foundations of our Party's political and military powers, and developing these until we can match and break the Kuomintang and eliminate the latter north of the Yellow River. While waiting for an unusual turn of events, we should give the Japanese invaders certain concessions.

'The Third is an offensive stage, in which our forces should penetrate deeply into Central China, sever the communications of the Central Government troops in various sectors, isolate and disperse them until we are ready for the counter-offensive and wrest the leadership from the hands of the Kuomintang.'

By 12th January 1949 the Chinese People's Liberation Army had captured most of North China and put 1,012,000 Kuomintang troops out of action there. In February, Peking fell. In April Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh ordered the Communist Army to advance into South and North-West China to liberate the rest of China. On April 23rd Nanking fell, and throughout the remainder of 1949, one after another of the leading cities, including Taiyuan, Hangchow, Sian, Hankow, Shanghai, Lanchow, Canton, Kweiyang, Kweilin, Chungking and Chengtu.

In the meantime, on the 1st July, Mao Tse-tung had made his famous speech declaring firmly that New China 'leaned to one side'; that it aligned itself with the Soviet Union. Following this statement

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the American Ambassador left China and the French Ambassador prepared to leave as well. The British still made no overt move, waiting no doubt to see if the Chinese Communists would detain the British destroyer *Amethyst* then stationed on the Yangtze. When the *Amethyst* ran under the Communist guns and escaped in a brilliant and daring manœuvre, the British Ambassador began discussions with other diplomatic representatives as to which course of action they should pursue in the New China.

In Peking the Communist leaders had convened a Conference of all parties to discuss a common programme on the basis of which the new Government of China was to be proclaimed. This was not only a shrewd political move on the part of the Communists but also a necessity forced upon them by the unexpectedly sudden collapse of the whole country and the administration's disintegration, which caught even their far-sighted leaders unprepared. At the Conference General Li Chi-shen, leader of the Kuomintang Revolutionaries, Chang Lang, leader of the Democratic League, Huang Wen-pai, the radical leader, Madame Sun Yat-sen and Kuo Mo-jo, historian and writer, co-operated with the Communists in working out the principles of a coalition and a programme of political action.

On 1st October 1949 the Central Government of the People's Republic of China was proclaimed from the Square of the Tien An-men, or 'Gate of Heavenly Peace', with Mao Tse-tung as Chairman and Chou En-lai Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

The first action of Chou En-lai on assuming office was to summon all foreign representatives in Peking and hand over to them a communication inviting the establishment of diplomatic relations with the New Chinese Government.

The Indian Ambassador to China at that time was Sardar K. M. Panikkar and in his book, *In Two Chinas*, he records the event:

'Letters addressed by name were sent to the Head of the Foreign Personnel Bureau at Nanking, Huang Huai, to be handed over to the representatives of powers stationed there. The next day Huang Huai summoned the heads of Missions (those who had no Consuls in Peking) to his office. Most of them agreed to go, but I sent word that if Mr. Chou En-lai had sent a communication to me it might be sent on to my residence and that I would not personally attend at the Bureau at Huang's call. The Foreign Personnel Bureau received my reply very well and suggested that I might send a secretary to receive the communication. I sent Dr. Kumar, my third secretary, and the communication was handed over to him. My interim reply, promising to forward the communication to Delhi and addressed to "General Chou En-lai, Peking", was sent the same day to Mr. Huang

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for transmission to Peking. Prime Minister Nehru's reply, which arrived two days later, was couched in very friendly terms, indicating that there would be early recognition and exchange of representatives. . . .'

'The decision that Mr. Nehru took was therefore to convey our recognition when the Kuomintang Government moved into the island of Formosa, which at the time was still juridically a part of the Japanese Empire since the treaty transferring it to the Allies had not been signed. Britain also agreed with this view and it was decided that the Indian Government's recognition of the new Government of China should be conveyed to Peking by the end of the year. For some reason Burma was anxious that it should be the first state outside the Soviet Bloc to recognize the New China and we were approached with a request to wait for a few days in order to give Burma the start. In due course, Burma announced its recognition and we followed in a few days. Britain, Pakistan and Indonesia also announced their recognition.'¹

Thus by the first week of January 1950, the Peking Government had received the recognition of the major Asian States.

¹ *In Two Chinas*: K. M. Panikkar, pp. 61, 68, 69.

CHAPTER 2

New Régime, New Friends, New Faces, New Methods



It was not only a new government which was in power in China, but a new era which was about to begin. A new creed, a new spirit, a new orthodoxy, new alignments, new methods, a new vision of Chinese world empire, were the themes of all political conversations and they caught the imagination of the long-tormented and frustrated Chinese people with their magic and promise.

The Communist Party had established itself as the largest single force in mobilizing, developing and directing a large section of the Chinese people as instruments of change for better conditions, and had proved indisputably that they were fitted to do the same with the nascent energies of the new age. Nor were they merely successful exponents of a comparatively new Western ideology in a corrupt and effete Eastern environment, tied slavishly to the dogma, dicta and example of the first prototype, Russia. They had hammered out their own creed through years of practical experiment, in the face of often bitter opposition from Stalin and fundamental differences of opinion with the theories of Lenin.

This attitude may have been due in the early years to the teaching of the Bolshevik, Borodin, who had a great influence over the Chinese Communist leaders in the most formative years of their lives, and who influenced them greatly as a professional revolutionary proving the success of his theories. He himself was no desk-bound theoretician or second-generation initiator of theories, but one who applied himself to working out Communism in the lives of the people around him. Among the fundamental concepts advanced by Borodin during the early revolutionary years were those advocating a radical government based on peasant and labour unions, the maintenance of close relations with Moscow, subversion from within the Kuomintang, and ultimate seizure of power.

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It was this policy which the young Chinese Communists had successfully followed despite the lack of encouragement from Moscow and in opposition to the accepted Leninist doctrine that 'the city inevitably leads the village. The village inevitably follows the city. The only question is, which of the urban classes will the village follow.' The Stalinist interpretation and advice to the Chinese Communists had been that China must first pass through a *bourgeois* phase before it could become Communist. But their background, training and experiences had made the Chinese leaders iconoclasts, and while they were willing to follow their Russian teachers in most things they did not do so blindly, but only after a continuous process of dissent, counter-dissent, trial and error. The policy that emerged from their pragmatic approach, and which brought them eventual success, became known then and afterwards as 'the correct line'.

At this early stage of the Communist struggle (1925-35) there were several leaders of the Communist Party, and Mao Tse-tung was only a junior member. However, it was in 1927 that Mao produced his programme for agrarian revolution and against strong opposition from his party colleagues fought for its adoption as the guiding strategy of the Communist Party for the following ten years. This was only one of a series of battles in revolutionary doctrine waged by Mao during this period. The phenomenal success of Mao's theories, forged in the difficult school of argument and practice among many gifted Communist colleagues, ultimately led to his being accepted as indisputable leader of the Party.

In 1931 he was made Chairman of the Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic, an occasion which he used to announce a policy of significance to both China and India which he later repudiated strikingly:

'The Soviet Government of China recognizes the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans and others living on the territory of China shall enjoy the full right to self-determination, i.e. they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviets or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer.'

This policy appealed to the Chinese Communist Party in the first flush of revolutionary fervour, but on second thoughts was much less attractive, for, by 1939, Mao had altered this restricted ideal to the much more militant ambition:

'In defeating China in war the imperialist powers have taken away many Chinese dependent states and a part of her territories. Japan took Korea, Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands, the Pescadores Islands, Port

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Arthur; England seized Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and Hong Kong; France occupied Annam and even an insignificant country like Portugal . . . took Macao.'

The peasant's son—admittedly a fairly rich peasant's son, not the 'son of the soil' which is the picture Communist propaganda likes to present—was already beginning to look beyond the boundaries and problems of interior China to the vision of the old Chinese Empire restored; or, even further, to a Chinese World Empire. Once again China would have its true place in the world, the 'middle kingdom' around which all others would revolve, and to this Utopia the Communist Party would lead the way, with Mao as the new prophet in his generation. But to accomplish this an instrument greater than the party would be required: the whole nation must become aware of its new destiny, its new direction, and become an integrated instrument in the liberating of the world from the 'accursed imperialist yoke'.

Having from the start committed themselves to a programme of organizing the peasant masses, and having been so singularly successful, the Communist Party extended their activities among the peasants beyond their use as effective weapons of revolt. From their inception in Hunan in 1927 till the completion of the land reform programme in 1951–52 the whole application of Communist strategy was bound to this formula of mass organization. The new vision accorded them, and the dramatic successes,—even in the face of the occasional early set-backs—caught the imagination of the peasants as they saw a new social order emerging before their eyes and under their own efforts.

An unbiased newspaper correspondent who had spent many years in China, and visited the Communist-administered areas in North-West China in 1950, wrote:

'I could feel the new joy of the peasant in the little bit of land he possessed, his intense pride, and his faith in the Communist Party, which had made this change possible. He now walked with his back unbent and his eyes sparkled as he looked straight at you. His wife and daughter had shared in the glory. They were no longer shut up in the home cowering to hide their bodies from the lustful eyes of the village lord. There was no incense burning in the temples before the inscrutable Buddha attended by saffron-robed priests. New China had emerged and new men were in charge of her destiny.'

In the general enthusiasm it was easy for the party cadres to organize self-government, as well as self-defence and partisan guerrilla-groups. Labour teams, production co-operatives, supply auxiliaries and an intelligence network contributed further to the integration and expanding administration of the Communist areas.

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For the Army, the Communist leaders did not have to resort to compulsory measures with no-pay recruits, the chief weakness in the Kuomintang and earlier warlord armies; and, consequently, the morale of their armies was higher than any Chinese army had ever been. Further, there was a spirit of equality and comradeship in the sense of mission and destiny, and the officers and men shared the same sense of equality. In this way it became a formidable fighting force, either in small or large campaigns, and led eventually to the formation of the famous Mao strategy of 'the war of manoeuvre':

'A quick decision requires: thorough preparation, correct timing, concentration of a preponderant force, the tactic of encircling and outflanking, favourable positions. . . . A battle is not basically decisive that ends only in routing the enemy. . . . To wound all ten fingers of a man is not so effective as to chop one of them off; to rout ten of the enemy's divisions is not so effective as to isolate one of them.'

Two thousand five hundred years before, the Chinese Sun-tzu had enunciated his classical guerrilla philosophy, now effectively copied by Mao:

'Enemy advances: We retreat.
Enemy escapes: We harass.
Enemy retreats: We pursue.
Enemy tires: We attack.'

The same uncompromising attitude was carried into the economic and political fields. All 'feudal' or 'semi-feudal' elements in Chinese society, by Communist interpretation, were outlawed as enemies of the people, and all programmes were designed not just to isolate them but to eliminate them for good. The definition of the 'Chinese people' set forth by the Communists after their victory in 1949 included labour, the peasantry, the petty *bourgeoisie* and the national *bourgeoisie* as the only component parts of the 'people'; while the landlords, the bureaucratic capitalists and the Kuomintang workers were outlawed as 'reactionaries', and as such subject to the required penalties.

It was with this attitude of mind that the Communist Party, riding on the crest of the revolutionary tide in 1949, called a National Convention known as the Chinese People's Political Committee in September of that year, to translate their vision of a Chinese Utopia into reality and to forge the Chinese people into a weapon for Chinese World Empire. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (or CPPCC) was attended by 662 delegates representing various parties and organizations of workers, peasants, servicemen, youths, women, national minorities, overseas Chinese, industrial and

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commercial leaders, and other 'patriotic elements'. About fourteen political parties and sixteen 'people's organizations' participated in the Conference charged with the task of installing a new government and giving it a constitutional framework. A number of non-Communist political parties, groups and eminent individuals were associated with the new régime. This coalition and support of eminent individuals and intellectuals went a long way in consolidating the new régime with a minimum of force and violence, and their presence gave to the government and nation a unity and coherence in those early difficult days which would otherwise have been difficult to obtain in the widespread breakdown and general chaos. It was the CPPCC which drafted the common programme and elected and installed the Central People's Government, with Mao Tse-tung as President.

The nature of the new state power was expressly stated in the preamble of the Common Programme, which laid down that 'the Chinese People's Democratic Dictatorship is the state power of the people's democratic united front composed of the Chinese working class, the peasantry, the petty *bourgeoisie*, the national *bourgeoisie* and other patriotic elements, based on the alliance of workers and peasants *and led by the working classes*' (author's italics). The clear-cut stipulation of classes in the preamble made it obvious that the New China was not to be patterned after Western-style liberal democratic states. State power was entrusted to the heads of an alliance of four classes, chief of which was 'the working class'. Since the Communist Party regarded itself as the vanguard of the working class, the state power was exercised through the leadership of the Communist Party. The Common Programme laid down the form of governmental structures and outlined New China's economic, foreign, educational and cultural policy. It was regarded as the interim Constitution of China and held sacrosanct: all political activity had to be carried on within the framework of the Common Programme.

The CPPCC then elected a Central People's Government Council, with a Chairman, six vice-Chairmen and fifty Council members, which represented the People's Republic in international relations and enacted and interpreted laws, supervised their execution and appointed or removed government personnel. The Government Council in turn elected a Government Administration Council, headed by a Premier and composed of four vice-Premiers and sixteen Council members, which functioned as the executive body for state administration. A National Committee of the CPPCC, and a Standing Committee of the former body, maintained the liaison between

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the CPPCC and the Government Council and supervised the latter's work. There was no separation of power, for the CPPCC exercised state power when it was in session but the Government Council wielded it when it was not in session. Both could legislate and lay down policies of administration as long as the decisions of the Government were not in opposition to or disagreeable to those of the CPPCC or its National Committee. The key ruling body was the seven-man 'inner-Politburo' of the Standing Committee.

Thus a highly centralized, unified New China rose up in place of the weak old China ridden by civil war. There was no sharp division of powers between the central and local jurisdictions, and the Common Programme merely provided that the Central People's Government Council should make a division 'both to national unification and to local expediency'. While cultural freedom was granted to national minorities, and regional autonomy was to be assured in areas in which national minorities mainly resided, the overall direction of the Central Government was maintained. The country was divided into six Administrative Areas, the Central Government exercising close supervision and direction through an administrative Committee appointed by it in each area. The entire country functioned on a principle of 'democratic centralism', with the lower organs obeying, and being closely supervised by, the higher, and at all levels the minority abiding by the decisions of the majority.

The economy of the New China, like its political structure, was envisaged as a mixed one, but again under the leadership of the State. It was composed of five categories: state-owned, co-operative, individual peasant and handicraft, private capitalist and state capitalist. The public or state sector was to control 'the commanding heights' and to occupy a key position. The new government took over enterprises run by the Kuomintang or owned by its high officials—bureaucratic capital as they called it—and in this way the state sector came to own and operate a major portion of heavy industry and some portion of consumer industry. The chief concern of the new régime in the economic field was the urgent rehabilitation of the economy and the expansion of production. 'Heavy industry' was to be given priority while textiles and other light industries were to be restored and expanded to get the country moving again.

For the release and development of 'the productive forces' the new régime set the greatest store by land reforms for which it initiated a vast but carefully planned countrywide movement, unfolded in stages from area to area, which was inaugurated by the passing of the Agrarian Reforms Law in July 1950. This was simply a projection on a national scale of the earlier Peasants' Associations. All surplus

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land and property of the landlords was confiscated without compensation and distributed among poor and landless peasants. By the end of 1952 land reforms were accomplished in most parts of the country, and in this way a vast class of individual small-scale proprietors was created throughout the nation, a class which had a personal stake in the new régime and therefore were loyal supporters of the Communist Party.

Thus the formation and character of the New Central People's Government satisfied the Chinese people's historical need of a strong unified central government. For the first time in history a central government with authority over the whole of China—from Siberia to Indo-China and from the Pacific to the Pamirs—had come into being, with little or no opposition expected in the near future and a mighty popular following throughout the country at the 'grass-roots' level. And in addition to the authority exercised by earlier imperialist rulers this new Communist Government had the unifying advantages of all modern communications media—air, rail, and road, wireless and telegraph, newspaper and radio.

The achievement of peace and unification meant that the new government could begin its work from a position of strength. For the first time in centuries the people were provided with a vision of hope and a new dedication of their lives to creating a better social order. The danger of foreign intervention no longer existed. Japan was no longer a threat. The Western imperialist powers had been removed from the Chinese scene as the result of World War II and the new historical forces.

While the Communist ideology and régime was something new on the Chinese historical scene the idea of a strong, centralized government had been part of Chinese belief for centuries. Under the Hans, T'angs, Mings and Manchus exercise of imperial authority was based on the 'mystique' of the 'Son of Heaven' with a divine mandate exercising control over China through his self-appointed viceroys—'superior men' educated and trained to govern. It was no concern of the other classes what form the government took or how it was exercised.

The leaders of the Communist Party in China were intellectuals steeped in the history and classics of China; in the peculiar circumstances of evolution of Communism in China, as has been noted, it was inevitable that their background should influence their theories in practice. Thus the Chinese form of Communism right from the beginning was different from the Russian, although in the direct line of descent. It was compounded from a curious amalgam of Chinese religion and culture, imperialism and nationalism, atheism

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and a debased Christianity. The latter had formed the basis of the Taiping rebellion and had educated the Chinese leaders of the early revolution. Thus, while the Chinese Communist leaders were cool towards Stalin for his lack of help to them and his identification with Chiang Kai-shek, they approved of the Stalinist concept of autocratic government, an attitude which was to have greater significance a decade later when the more pacific Khrushchev was in power.

The curious amalgam just mentioned has given other peculiar colorations to the Chinese form of Communism. In addition to the desire for, and emphasis on, a strong leader and centralized government, the former Confucian ideal of totalitarian rule by a sage-King was changed by the nineteenth-century Christianity to a forward-looking philosophy of a better future for all the people but by possibly new methods. Confucianism preached obedience to the ideal of a distant past. Buddhism had promised Nirvana to the individual believer but saw the world as 'illusory' and evil. Christianity (although rejected by the educated Chinese for its belief in the supernatural and some other dogmas), by its indifference to the present world, made an impact with its ideal of the possibility of a changed world in the future, through changes in the individual and forms of government. It is significant in this context to note that the father of Chinese Communism, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, conceived of 'democracy' as the socially motivated individualism of Manchester liberalism, with its roots in Christian teaching, and paralleled in Chinese thought by the Confucian teaching that the individual must justify himself by his service to his social order.

So the Communism, or the New Democracy, of New China preaches the necessity of change with the evangelistic fervour of Tolpuddle Martyrs. But because of their imperialistic history they use coercion not persuasion, and because of their chauvinistic history they have a missionary vision to carry the Chinese dogmas to the farthest bounds of the old Celestial Empire—and then to the whole world beyond. The present New Democracy must be transformed into Socialism immediately and then into Communism in the far-off future. The authority of heaven which the ancient emperors claimed, and by which they ruled the people, has been replaced by the authority of the people—which equally seems to justify the retention of power by those who claimed to rule on the people's behalf. It was a messianic vision which the Communists carried to the people of China and to which the people so enthusiastically responded—the highly moral religious strain, the certainty of 'correctness', the undeviating belief in certain dogmas, the assumption that virtue was

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inherent in the working class and their Communist representatives, the new doctrine of the elect, the future reward.

Within less than two years of the inauguration of the new Government they accomplished a remarkable restoration of the nation's economy from the legacy of Kuomintang corruption and inefficiency. With new and swift measures they restored the railway communications that ensured the free movement of food and goods between city and countryside, thereby ending the supply dislocations of the last days of Kuomintang rule. They also brought inflation under effective control, thus eliminating one of the basic causes of corruption. The rapid stabilization of prices, plus the ruthless and immediate application of penalties against the black-marketeers, discouraged speculation and hoarding.

In the general recovery of confidence and normal conditions the numbers of the aimless and unemployed were greatly reduced. In the field of public finance Peking moved quickly to abolish all abuses in taxation, centralized the finances of the civil government as well as the armed forces, and virtually balanced the budget. The result of these developments was to put the economy of the new régime on a sound footing, something the Russian Communists had not achieved upon their accession to power in Russia.

But all these results were not accomplished without a considerable amount of suffering, and even terror. In 1952, a 'Five-Anti' movement was initiated, theoretically to punish those guilty of bribery, tax-evasion, stealing state property, theft of state economic secrets, and embezzlement in carrying out government contracts. In actual fact this was a campaign intended to cripple the money power of the merchants and manufacturers and coerce them to submit to the new order. In a loudly publicized campaign over a few months, it struck terror into the hearts of millions because of its ruthlessness and severity.

Even more terrorizing was the campaign against 'counter-revolutionaries' in 1951, during which at least scores of thousands were put to death as the enemies of the State, while hundreds of thousands of others were sentenced to forced labour. This campaign was intended to instil fear of authority of Peking into the people as a whole. It was a deliberate move by Peking to demonstrate the power of the new government, to give the public a sample of what was in store for those who would not conform to the new measures.

There was another significant lesson which the leaders of the new régime had absorbed from Chinese history and which they had no intention of following. In the rise of the earlier dynasties to power the new rulers had had to enlist the services of the landlord-scholar class,

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who were responsible for the actual administration, such as it was, and in time these various rulers found that power eventually passed into the hands of the landlord-scholars. The present rulers of the Communist Party have avoided this possibility by concentrating power in the top level of the Communist leadership. The new leaders of China in Peking were determined to keep power in the hands of their own group, and refused to enlist the services of other classes of people to the real sources of power, whatever other positions they magnanimously bestowed. New men were indeed in charge of New China's destiny and a new era had begun.

CHAPTER 3

Chou En-lai and China's Foreign Policy



In the previous chapter it was noted that one of the chief characteristics of the new Chinese Communist Government in Peking was its intense nationalism. To the inbred historical arrogance of the Chinese people had been added a century of humiliating treatment by foreign occupation powers and this contributed to the militant nationalism in the attitude of the new régime. Internally, it served to forge the people into the new unity which was a feature of the New China, and externally it was a fundamental factor in New China's attitude to international affairs.

On 1st July, 1950, Mao Tse-tung made his famous speech declaring firmly that New China 'leaned to one side'; that it aligned itself with the Soviet Union. The Common Programme had stated that the new régime 'shall examine the treaties and agreements concluded between the Kuomintang and foreign powers and shall recognize, abrogate, revise, or renegotiate them according to their respective contents.' The Central People's Government was authorized to establish diplomatic relations with other foreign governments 'on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty.'

The militant nationalism of Peking was made evident right from the beginning in the 'lean to one side' statement of Mao before the Central People's Government was officially proclaimed on October 1st, but even more by the new procedure which they adopted for establishing diplomatic relations with foreign governments. Instead of straightaway accepting recognition conferred by other countries the new Peking Government asked for negotiations preparatory to the establishment of diplomatic relations in order to satisfy itself that these relations were on a basis of perfect equality and that the Power concerned had made a complete break with the Kuomintang Government in Formosa.

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This hypersensitive attitude to any patronizing approach by foreign countries, particularly to any suggestion of inequality with the Western Powers, was shown by the policy of the new régime towards Britain and America. Britain was among the first to recognize the new Government in Peking but the Chinese Government rebuffed the British overtures, and in addition treated the British as satellites of America. They refused to implement the British recognition by exchanging ambassadors and appointing a Chinese diplomatic mission to proceed to London, giving three grievances as their reason. One, that the British had failed to support Communist China's candidature for the seat on the U.N. and had continued to accept the Kuomintang representative as the legal delegate of China: two, that the British still had consular offices in Formosa and thus had dealings with the Kuomintang régime there: three, that Chinese aircraft in Hong Kong had not been handed over to the Communist authorities. While all of those were legitimate grievances in some sense none of them were of sufficient importance to warrant the deliberately contemptuous treatment handed out by Peking to Britain except in the context of a militant nationalism determined on punishing the Western imperialists and redressing past wrongs.

America, of course, refused to recognize the new régime, and became the prime target of China's bitter hatred. The new régime was opposed to America because of its past support of the Kuomintang in China and its continuing support of the Kuomintang in the U.N. But, further, to Communism America was the enemy—particularly to the messianic, Chinese brand of Communism because she was capitalism and imperialism personified, and as such must always be the enemy because she represented the class conflict based on unchanging material factors, wealth and poverty, exploitation and slavery, and so an obstacle to the ultimate vision of the Chinese world Utopia.

As if to compensate for the ineptitude and indifference of the previous century, the nationalism of the new Government in Peking had forged a passionate determination not only to restore greatness to New China but to make it the leading power in Asia. The leaders in Peking were freed from the bugbear of the power of Japan which had been a constant factor for the previous fifty years. Japan had gone down in defeat. They therefore saw themselves as the undisputed leaders of a government and movement which would alter the balance of power in the world and ultimately bring the rest of the world to Peking. As a first step to accomplishing this vision her foreign policy had to be directed towards exerting an increasing pressure for con-

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crete acknowledgment of her strength and supremacy in Asia. Hence her prompt recognition of Soviet Russia, as a sign of her new independence and direction and her repudiation of all her former links with America.

But, as I have already stated, I am not here concerned with the whole of China's foreign policy but only that which was directed towards, or of significance in, Asia, particularly in relation to India. India had decided to recognize the Peking régime as the new Government of China when the Kuomintang Government moved into the island of Formosa. For reasons of her own Burma was anxious that it should be the first non-Communist country to recognize New China and the Indian Government agreed to her request for a few days' start. India announced its recognition on 31st December 1949 and by the first week of January was followed by the other major Asian States, and by the end of 1950 twenty-five countries had recognized New China.

In his book, *In Two Chinas*, Sardar K. M. Panikkar writes of the recognition:

'Peking's reaction was rather unexpected. As a preliminary step it suggested that envoys should be sent to Peking to discuss the details of the exchange of diplomatic representatives. . . . We, as well as other nations, including Britain, had assumed that diplomatic relations would automatically follow recognition of the new Government, and that the previous embassies would therefore be automatically received without discussion or argument. That, however, was not the Chinese point of view. They held that diplomatic relations had to be settled separately by negotiations. Rather hastily, the recognizing powers agreed to send their representatives to Peking. Looking back at it, it would clearly have been more advantageous to ask the Power which requested recognition to send its representatives, or, as is normal in such circumstances, to take up the negotiations in neutral capitals where both parties were represented. . . . Soon afterwards the Chinese Government also communicated their agreement to my nomination to the post. . . .'

While the chief explanation for their departure from normal diplomatic custom was dictated by their highly sensitive nationalism, a not inconsiderable reason was probably their own weakness in this *métier*. For of all the Communist leaders only one had anything like internationally accepted status in negotiation, and that was Chou En-lai. Even he had had little experience. However, in the 1946 talks to explore the possibilities of a coalition government following on the war, General George Marshall was impressed by Chou as a shrewd negotiator and classed him a statesman of international calibre.

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But, Chou apart, there were few others with a knowledge of foreign affairs and on the first anniversary of the Chinese People's Republic, on 1st October 1950, the Peking Government had only eleven ambassadors abroad, and eight of these were accredited to Communist bloc nations. The Communist Party had been confined to the hinterland of China for upwards of twenty years, involved in local government and agricultural problems arising from their peasant-based revolution, and had no time to prepare themselves for anything outside China.

However, the Peking Government took immediate steps to remedy this situation on assuming power, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given top priority for obtaining the best linguists. Short-term schools were established to train diplomats and their wives, with instructions even including such details as Western table manners.

The Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs was established to conduct research in foreign policy. Other Institutes such as the Peking Foreign Languages College, the Russian Language School, the Institute of Diplomacy, and the Institute of International Relations of the Academy of Sciences, were subsequently established.

Constitutionally, the Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic was officially responsible to 'represent China in its relations with foreign States,' and the State Council to 'direct the conduct of external affairs'. However, foreign *policy* as such was the prerogative of the inner core of the Politburo alone and, subject to the approval of Mao Tse-tung in particular and Liu Shao-chi to a lesser degree, Chou En-lai was the chief architect of that policy. To understand something of China's foreign policy, therefore, it is necessary to look at the man who conceived and embodied it.

Chou En-lai, unlike most of his colleagues, was born into an upper middle-class family in 1898, the year his father passed the State examination making him eligible for high official rank. To mark this auspicious occasion the father named his son 'En-lai' meaning 'the advent of grace'. The father, however, was never appointed to an official position and died an embittered man.

Right from his student days Chou was interested in left-wing literature, and after graduation and further studies in Japan he was arrested for taking part in student demonstrations against Japan, and spent six months in prison. Shortly after his release he obtained a scholarship to go to France on a work-and-study basis, and it was while he was in Paris that he joined the Communist Party. With Li Li-san, Chao Shih-yen and Wang Jo-fei he organized the Chinese Communist Youth League.

Chou returned from Europe in 1924 and formally joined the Com-

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munist Party just begun in China. It was a tribute to his already manifest skill and the reputation he had acquired as an organizer that almost immediately on his return he was appointed Secretary of the Kwangtung Provincial Party headquarters.

This was the period of Kuomintang and Communist co-operation and Chou was appointed to the important position of Head of the Political Department of the Whampoa Military Academy, at that time commanded by Chiang Kai-shek. He was, therefore, in a position to organize a strong Communist cell at the military academy itself.

About 1925 Chiang sent Chou to Shanghai to organize agitation in preparation for an attack on Shanghai. In 1927, just before the Kuomintang occupied Shanghai, Chiang decided that the time had come for a break with the Communists. Instead of the alliance with the Communist elements in Shanghai which Chou had gone to organize, therefore, Chiang made a fresh alliance with the businessmen, and launched an attack on the Communists in his party, in the army and in Shanghai.

Some of the future leaders of the Communist Government had miraculous escapes, and Chou En-lai himself was captured and ordered to be shot. By a strange coincidence the officer who was to be responsible for his execution was a former pupil of Chou's at the Military Academy and he helped him to escape.

In the next few years he was Secretary, successively, of the Political Bureau sub-bureaus in Szechuan, Shensi, and Kansu. Chou took part in the 'Long March', and in December, 1939, he represented the Communists in the negotiations that followed on the Sian Incident. In 1939 he and Chu Teh went to Moscow to attend the Supreme Soviet as observers.

Chou spent most of the 'United Front' period in Chungking, and by any standards this assignment was difficult. But again it is a tribute to the man's abilities that he made himself so acceptable to the Kuomintang leaders that they elected him to the Party's Praesidium. Later, he was appointed Deputy Minister of the Political Training Board which virtually ruled China.

This period of co-operation between the Communists and Kuomintang was soon over, and Chou gave up the Ministerial office. From 1941 to 1944, the two sides made war on each other, while they talked peace, but Chou stayed on in Chungking successfully wooing and convincing foreigners and Chinese intellectuals alike that the Communists were reasonable men interested only in the prosecution of the war against Japan, and agricultural reform.

In October, 1949, when the Communists established their régime

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in Peking, Chou was given the top posts of Premier of the Government Administration Council and Foreign Minister, member of the Central People's Government Council, Vice-Chairman of the People's Revolutionary Council and made an honorary President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs. In other words he was one of the 'triumvirate' who ruled China, with Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh.

A close friend of Chou for many years, Chang Kuo-tao, has given an enlightening assessment of Chou's character.

'Chou En-lai', he wrote, 'is a man of such tremendous energy that idleness throws him completely off balance. He is efficient, meticulous, and adept at dealing with manifold tasks; he has a good knowledge of modern affairs; he is endowed with a sharply analytical mind, a strong memory and ability to express himself lucidly, he has good looks, a robust physique and works best under pressure.

'Moreover, he is an artful diplomat who is skilled in shifting ground; and an actor who can weep, shout or simulate modesty as occasion warrants. . . .

'Chou is also a master of the technique of introducing exorbitant demands and then offering to 'compromise' at a level beyond what he wanted in the first place. But he does not compromise easily. He argues for every point, no matter what it is, and while he may seem reasonable on "principles", he does not yield easily on concrete, substantive matters. He knows the art of stalling, too, and the many ways to stall.'

But there is another side to Chou which is not so well-known as the charming, brilliant, even 'moderate', exterior which he uses to win friends and influence people. In 1931, Kao Chen-chang, a member of the Communist Central Committee and Chief of the Communist secret police, broke with the Communists and informed on underground organizations. While Kao was giving detailed information to the police in Hankow, a group of men led by Chou himself murdered the whole family, including the servants and babies, by strangulation.¹

There was no doubt in the minds of the 'inner-Politburo' which directed New China's affairs as to which bloc they belonged to—Mao's 'lean to one side' statement immediately on taking over control in Peking had made that abundantly clear, followed almost immediately by his trip to Moscow to sign agreements there. The 'neutralism' of India was not only suspect in Peking's eyes, it was positively hypocritical. India had inherited all Britain's privileges acquired by imperialist practices, India was favourably disposed toward Britain, and Nehru's 1950 visit to the U.S. showed that India was

¹ Documents concerning this incident were published in *Life* magazine, in June, 1954.

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friendly with China's bitterest enemy. To make matters worse Nehru had been an admirer of Chiang Kai-shek, and—worst crime of all—had assumed India's and his own birthright to the 'leadership of Asia'.

In the early days of the Communist movement in China, Mao, Chou and the other intellectuals could write altruistically into the Constitution of the Kiangsi Soviet Republic, as has been noted already, but which bears repeating:

'The Soviet Government of China recognizes the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans and others living on the mainland of China shall enjoy the full right to self-determination, i.e. they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviets or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer.'

But when nearing power new political realities took over and new ambitions began to take shape among the leaders. In 1939 Chou En-lai and Chu Teh paid a visit to Moscow, and Mao Tse-tung served notice to the foreign Powers:

'In defeating China in war the imperialists have taken away many Chinese dependent states and a part of her territories. Japan took Korea, Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands, the Pescadores Islands, Port Arthur; England seized Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and Hong Kong; France occupied Annam, and even an insignificant country like Portugal . . . took Macao.'

Taiwan, Tibet, Korea, Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, Hong Kong, Annam. China's foreign policy was already clearly stated—the 'liberation' of former Chinese territories, no matter who held them. To make the position more explicit Chu Teh, addressing a mammoth gathering in Peking in 1950, stated that 'the great People's Liberation Army would march to further victories until the liberation of all Asia was completed.'

There was no doubt that this included India as well, for Mao Tse-tung in a letter to the Communist Party of India, published in *The Communist*, Bombay, in January 1950, expressed the hope that 'relying on the brave Communist Party of India and the unity and struggle of all Indian patriots, India certainly will not remain long under the yoke of imperialism and emerge in the socialist and People's Democratic family. *That day will end the imperialist reactionary era in the history of mankind*'. [Italics mine.]

It will be necessary, therefore, at this point to turn to that other emerging Great Power in Asia, India.

The Contestants

2. INDIA

CHAPTER 4

India: Independence and After



INDIA, 1947

Just before midnight on 14th August 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India, addressed a crowded, expectant Parliament in Delhi, waiting for midnight and the announcement of India's independence.

'Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny,' Nehru began sombrely, 'and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially.' And he ended on a note of challenge. 'To the people of India whose representatives we are, we make appeal to join us with faith and confidence in this great adventure. This is no time for petty or destructive criticism, no time for ill-will or blaming others. We have to build the noble mansion of free India where all her children may dwell.'

This theme of destiny, and his almost mystic absorption with it, goes a long way to explain the many alleged contradictions in the policies of the Prime Minister of India. His vision for the future, not only with regard to India but for Asia and the whole world, is always associated with this concept of India's historically destined role and her contribution to the development of human progress.

Again, only a few months after Independence, Nehru returned to this messianic concept. 'India', he said, 'is a country of destiny. Whether we are men or women of destiny or not, India is a country of destiny, and so far as we represent this great country with a great destiny stretching out in front of her, we also have to act as men and women of destiny, viewing all our problems in that long perspective of destiny and of the world and of Asia.'

This vision of India's destiny in Asian and world affairs is the key to Nehru's striving to make his policies bridge contending forces, both inside and outside the country, and is based on an amalgam of Hinduism, Indian character and history, and fortuitous modern political developments.

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The immediate catastrophic response to his lofty appeal would have broken most men, whether visionaries or not. Hardly had he taken over power and responsibility when a savage communal war between Hindus and Muslims broke out in which half a million people died and millions more were uprooted from their ancestral homes. Independence for India meant partition with Pakistan. A few months later both were at war over Kashmir. And five months after Independence Mahatma Gandhi, the father of Indian Independence, was assassinated. Thus India's entrance into independence was accompanied by the treble crises of national division, war, and the end of the Gandhian era.

Before Gandhi, the Indian Congress Party had been almost exclusively a middle-class party, content merely to register their protest against the British Government's sins of omission and commission. It was Gandhi who introduced the revolutionary emphasis that a wrong should not only provoke a protest but resistance. But Gandhi gave the revolutionary action the peculiarly Indian emphasis of 'non-violent non-co-operation' derived from ancient Hindu beliefs. This two-fold emphasis converted Congress from being an obvious Western political institution dominated by Westernized Indians into a national organization with deep indigenous roots and drawing its membership from the millions of peasants and workers.

But with the rise of Nehru, and later Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress Party began to move away from the Gandhian influence, not so much in spiritual principles as in professional political directions, and particularly in their visions of India's future. When Gandhi was in the ascendant during the early years of Congress his homespun political philosophies, with their strong bias against modern civilization and culture and the simultaneous stress on the need for political independence, his political appeal was largely religious and mainly Hindu. It was this outlook which, while not commending him to the educated Indian leaders of the movement, gave him his appeal to the Hindu masses.

The Western-educated idealist, Nehru, and the Western-oriented pragmatist, Patel, found this homespun quality in Gandhi's teachings exasperating and unrealistic; Nehru, because through such philosophy India could never become what he envisaged as her place in history; and Patel, because it ignored the ruthless realities of modern power politics. Thus in Gandhi's lifetime there were the three groups in Indian politics continually striving for pre-eminence; one, the anti-Western Hindu-centred, who either had strong reservations about the changes taking place or were in outright opposition; two, the Western-oriented, who in principle accepted

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the goals of modernization—industrialization programmes to change the Hindu social structure, and a unified national state—but who individually, or as part of a group, had been unsuccessful in achieving economic, social or political status or a combination of these; and, three, those who followed westernized leadership in government itself, which worked for modernization but which had some reservations about the extent to which the goals of democratic political institutions were compatible with their modernization programme.

Both Nehru and Patel were firmly committed to the third group. The long terms he spent in prison had given Nehru time to study and analyse the Indian scene, and assess the developments in the country from the detached standpoint of the observer. As early as 1936 Nehru affirmed his belief in the need for industrialization, and while recognizing that *khadi* and village industries had a place in India's economy he contended that they were temporary expedients of a transition period rather than solutions of the country's vital problems. Also, his travels abroad had strengthened his faith in Socialism, and convinced him more than ever that India should see herself in an international context, divorce from which was unrealistic. On one occasion, exasperated by Nehru's adoption and propagation of these policies, Gandhi was even alleged to have said, 'My life work is being ruined by Jawaharlal's utterances.'

With Gandhi's death the Indian political arena was open for the rapid modernization policies of his declared heir, the socialist visionary, Nehru. He was a Socialist, but with the reservation that he respected the individual as opposed to the 'mass' man; the State, he affirmed, must step in to protect the underprivileged, but it must do so within a democratic framework where the individual was not submerged by the leviathan of an omnipotent government. 'The people,' he said, again and again, 'will go as far as you can take them. It is only vested interests which block the path of progress. These and confused, selfish thinking.'

Nehru was also a Socialist whose thinking was coloured to a significant extent by Marxism. In his autobiography he admits, 'I incline more and more towards a Communist philosophy', but at the same time he refused to accept Marxism as a dogma which could not be varied, quoting Lenin in support.¹ Like Engels, Nehru would

¹ 'We think that it is especially necessary for Russian Socialists to undertake an independent study of the Marxist theory, for that theory gives only general guiding ideas which can be applied differently in England, for instance, from in France, differently in France from in Germany, differently in Germany from in Russia.'

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probably say, 'Thank God Marx was not a Marxist.' Marx, Nehru insists, did not preach or create class conflict, because this had been endemic in human society long before Marx wrote a line. In independent India Nehru contended that an economic and social revolution, built on the utilitarian principle of the greatest good of the greatest number, was possible without violence or class conflict. It was this outlook which made Nehru unique. He was a Marxist theorist committed to democratic practices.

India has persuaded itself that, historically, it has an ancient democratic tradition of government, exercised either by the people directly or through elected representatives, at village, district and national level. The oldest literature of India is alleged to show from the earliest times a record of political activity emerging with distinctive characteristics. One such elective body was the *Samiti*, which literally means 'meeting together', and one account of its functions is given as: 'The *Samiti* was the national assembly of all the people, for we find the people or the *Samiti*, in the alternative, electing or re-electing the *rajan* or king. All the people were supposed to be present in the Assembly.' Other records go to show that in describing the functions of the *Samiti* reference is also made to 'a common policy of State, a common aim and a common mind.'

Thus, while the history of India was a record of conquest and reconquest by different people, the national ethos was a belief in the desire for democratically elected leaders of village, town, state and country. Further evidence of this is seen in the record of representative government in India in both B.C. and A.D. centuries, when forms of democratic institutions, either civilian or military in character, flourished. With the growth of greater and perpetually warring principalities, power became concentrated in the hands of a privileged few and was ultimately personified in a king or emperor, and for several centuries the earlier democratic institutions decayed and feudal oppression was rampant. Ironically, it was another conquest, and a foreign one, the British, which brought to India the education and the revolutionary ideas of liberty and equality of such as Locke, Burke and Mill. Educated Indians imbibed the spirit of the British Constitution and made it their ideal and their goal, and during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Indian constitutional development was made under the direct supervision of the 'mother of Parliaments' with certain modifications as a result of national psychology, geography and economics.

By the close of the nineteenth century a system of indirect elections had been introduced. Franchise hardly mattered as members were nominated both to the Central and Provincial Councils. Problems up

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to this time had been comparatively simple, but with the dawn of the twentieth century a new awareness developed in the country. The growth of education and the newspapers, coupled with the political consciousness created by the Indian National Congress (founded in 1885, incidentally, by a Scotsman, A. O. Hume) led the intelligentsia to examine critically all measures and to demand responsible government. Events in Europe had their repercussion in India, and the partition of Bengal in 1905 further inflamed public opinion.

On 20th August 1917 a limited measure of representation was conceded, with the first formal acknowledgment of self-government as a goal in India.

‘The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India is in complete accord,’ the Declaration ran, ‘is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to progressive realization of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.’

The Government of India Act, 1935, provided for a Federation of India under the Crown. The Act sought to establish a bicameral legislature. A general election was held under the new Act in 1936–37 and the Congress Party swept the polls in six of the eleven Provinces. Popular Ministries were not formed, however, for some time because of controversy over the ‘Special powers’ conferred on Governors by the Act. The controversy raged for some time, but interim Ministries were formed, and when the deadlock was resolved in June 1937 the Congress formed Ministries in various Provinces. These Ministries continued to function till November 1939, when they resigned in protest at the lack of consultation over the war. The members of the Central legislature, however, carried on. Interest by then had shifted from the national claim of Provincial Government to Central Government, and the politics of this phase were an attempt to make good this claim. The already deteriorating political situation was further complicated by the demand of the Muslim League for Pakistan, a separate homeland for Muslims in India.

When World War II ended and the Labour Party came into power in Britain, the new Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethwick Lawrence, announced that elections both at the Centre and in the Provinces would soon be held. The Executive Council of the Governor-General was expanded and an Interim Government, consisting of representatives of both the Congress and the Muslim League, was formed to act in the intervening period; that is, during the period before the division of the country into two dominions and the passage of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. For the

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first time in the history of India legislative supremacy was officially vested in the legislature. It had full powers to frame its own constitution, and such a constitution required no formal sanction of the British Parliament, on which it had been modelled.

This, then, was the India which Jawaharlal Nehru, its first Prime Minister, was authorized to lead from Delhi to its appointed destiny in the twentieth century.

Economically, the country was a curious mixture of ancient and modern. Historically, the Indian family had been an extended 'joint' family with many relatives of different generations and degrees of relatedness all living in the same compound, or at least owning business property in common. While the use of the legal form of joint-property ownership had begun to decline under the impact of modern innovations much of the spirit of the joint family system still lived on and provided jobs and security for relatives beyond the immediate family circle. Thus the family was the basic unit not only in small enterprises but in large ones as well.

Much, if not most, of India's modern industry was in the hands of a few influential business families whose operations extended over several areas. The Tatas concentrated in textiles, electric power, and heavy industry, especially steel and locomotives. The Birlas on textiles, jute, textile machinery and consumer goods such as bicycles. Other famous families, such as Walchands, Dalmias, Jalans, Goenkas, ran a miscellany of enterprises, some on funds raised from the public; the Tatas, as public corporation.

This tendency to concentration, helped by the process of acquiring 'managing agencies' and additional operating companies, not only reflected the prevalence and power of the established pattern of family and managing agency control over industry, but also was an indication of how much more difficult it was to do business in India than in the West. It meant more difficulty in developing a well-trained labour force, in assuring an adequate flow of raw materials and parts, in obtaining electric power and sufficient capital and in developing new markets.

Nehru's vision of a Socialist India based on Marxist theories, therefore, had some formidable hurdles to overcome before becoming acceptable to his own countrymen, let alone providing the prototype for a resurgent Asia. To make matters even more complicated, Indian business interests had given valuable assistance in financing the Independence movement, and its leaders were personal friends of the political leaders of India. But while before Independence Indian business had been a minor partner in a united front of several groups organized to oust the British, after Independence

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there were few political representatives from among big business interests and their viewpoint carried no great weight beyond their own ranks.

The increasing pressures of modern economics had created differences within business itself and produced three approaches to the question of economic development—that of the businessman, that of intellectuals influenced more or less by Fabian Socialism, and that of the followers of Gandhi. The three divergent conceptions, together with the history of mutual dependence, led to an uneasy compromise—the so-called ‘socialist pattern of society’. This policy, unlike outright socialism, presupposes a continuing mixed economy, part private- and part public-enterprise, with considerable flexibility of operation and emphasis on the goals of the Welfare State rather than any given ideology for ideology’s sake. This pragmatic and undefined approach, while admirably suited to the Hindu ethic and susceptible of many interpretations, carried an inherent weakness which has bedevilled India’s economy from the start in that business was never sure where it stood in Government’s eyes and consequently was chary about investment and development.

The ambivalence in the political and economic spheres was fortunately not carried over into the Press or Army. Both of these institutions, like the former two, were inherited from the British occupation, and with a few exceptions were characterized by most of its virtues and little of its vices.

The growth of the Indian Press actually began on 29th January 1780, when James Augustus Hicky started the *Bengal Gazette* in Calcutta, the first newspaper in India. In the same year, in the month of November, the *Indian Gazette* was established. In 1884 India’s first Hindi daily was published in Calcutta, and in 1861 the *Bombay Times* became the *Times of India*. This was followed in 1875 by the *Statesman* of Calcutta, and the *Hindu* of Madras, which, with the *Times of India*, were to become India’s leading newspapers. By 1959, according to the report of the Press Registrar, there were 7,651 newspapers and periodicals being published in India. Though ‘Freedom of the Press’ is not expressly mentioned in the Indian Constitution it is implied in two provisions dealing with the Rights of freedom in the Constitution. The relevant provisions state that ‘all citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression’, and, ‘to practise any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business.’ It is generally supposed that it is the British newspapers which are the cheapest in the world, but this is not so, for in India the newspapers, and the responsible ones at that, are cheaper than in Britain. It was the rise of the Press in conjunction with the expanding

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of roads and railways, the development of transport and communication, which created the concept of a unified India, and as the British principles of responsibility in reporting news were carried over into the new nation it is to the Indian Press that praise is due for the present remarkably amicable relations which exist between Britain and India.

But while all of these inherited institutions were excellent in themselves, and showed ever greater promise for the future, it was the Army which provided the backbone of the country and held the other institutions together. Trained by British officers, in British traditions, it was the Army which remained steadfast, when crisis after crisis racked the country following Independence—the Hindu-Muslim riots, the murder of Gandhi, Kashmir, and so on.

Before World War II the armed forces in India had a limited role which included internal security, frontier defence—particularly against the warlike tribes inhabiting these regions—containing an invasion from the north-west pending the arrival of Imperial forces, and the supply of a fixed force for garrisoning the 'external defences' to the west and to the east, which were important in the British imperial interests.

The British obsession with security in the Himalayas, particularly from the time of Curzon, had coloured all her military as well as political thinking. India was the brightest jewel in the imperial crown but was threatened to the north-east, north and north-west by a restless, ambitious Russia, and each move—and even each supposed move—had been followed by a move and counter-move from London and Delhi. With the entrance of Italian imperialist ambition in the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East in the 1930's, and Japan's interest in China and South-East Asia about the same time, the Army in India began to look like an embattled garrison on the frontiers of the Empire. For their restricted tasks the Indian armed forces had no need to be large or equipped with the latest weapons, for their adversaries did not include any first-class Powers, to fight whom was the responsibility of the British Government. Indian public opinion also, while keen to maintain an efficient force which would ensure protection to the homeland, was opposed to any increase in defence expenditure on the apprehensive grounds that Indians might be used to fight imperialist wars. The Indian armed forces, then, were in the nature of an occupation force whose expansion nationalist politicians did nothing to encourage. The British Government also did not favour the enlargement of this force, or its possession of the most modern weapons, for several political reasons. Hence the slow pace of the enrolment of Indian officers to limit the

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strength of the army and to prevent the infection of patriotism affecting the troops.

On 1st October 1939, therefore, shortly after the war had begun in Europe, the total land strength of the Indian land forces was only 352,213 in India and overseas. This included regular troops of the Indian Army, 205,035; British troops, 63,469; and miscellaneous troops, including Indian States Forces, etc., 83,706. In addition, the Royal Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force consisted, all told, of a meagre strength of 2,012 and 1,628 respectively.

But when the war ended, the Indian Army had made an honourable contribution, and in 1945 over two million men had been drawn into the army by voluntary recruitment, and the army stood at the figure of 2,647,017; the Royal Indian Navy had borne a strength of 27,651 men who manned 6 modern sloops, 4 corvettes, 21 minesweepers, and numerous auxiliary vessels; and the Royal Indian Air Force had nine squadrons with aircraft, 13,225 officers and 118,682 other ranks.

During the war Indianization made great progress in all three services. In the Army the number of Indian officers increased from one-tenth of the number of British officers to one-fourth. In the Indian Air Force, to which no non-Indian had been commissioned earlier, there was a similar dramatic rise. The Indian Navy, similarly, started the war with three European officers for every one Indian in the commissioned ranks, but had about an equal number of European and Indian officers at the end of the war.

Thus, on 15th August 1947, Mr. Nehru in Parliament in Delhi, Prime Minister of 400 million subjects, was faced with some formidable obstacles to his vision of India's destiny and future greatness, but he was also possessed of the knowledge that in the institutions which had been left to him by the departing British he had instruments fit to forge that country into all that he had ever dreamed and hoped. And if India could realize that vision then the other countries of Asia and Africa, also emerging from colonization, would have an example to follow, and with India to lead their many millions a new era in international relations would begin.

CHAPTER 5

The Indian Parliament and Recognition of Communist China



In his autobiography, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote of his feelings for China at that time:

‘The situation in Europe in August 1939 was threatening and I did not want to leave India at a moment of crisis. But the desire to visit China, even for a short while, was strong. So I flew to China and within two days of my leaving India, I was in Chungking. Very soon I had to rush back to India as war had at last descended upon Europe. I spent less than two weeks in free China but these two weeks were memorable ones both personally for me and for the future relations of India and China. I found to my joy, that my desire that China and India should draw closer to each other was fully reciprocated by China’s leaders, and more especially by that great man who has become the symbol of China’s unity and her determination to be free.’

‘The great man’ was Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek; and that Nehru’s personality and vision of a free united Asia had impressed Chiang was evident from his attitude towards India during World War II. When the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang visited India in 1942, Churchill said of the visit, in Volume IV of his War Memoirs:

‘The object of their journey was to rally Indian opinion against Japan and to emphasize the importance for Asia as a whole, and for India and China in particular, of Japanese defeat. The Indian party leaders used the occasion to bring pressure upon the British Government, through the Generalissimo, to yield to the demands of Congress.’

‘The War Cabinet could not agree to the head of a foreign state intervening as a kind of impartial arbiter between representatives of the King-Emperor and Messrs. Gandhi and Nehru.’

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However, when, in 1948, Sardar K. M. Panikkar was accredited as Indian Ambassador to China he discovered that 'the Kuomintang attitude towards India, while genuinely friendly was inclined to be a little patronizing. It was the attitude of the elder brother who was considerably older and well-established in the world, prepared to give his advice to a younger brother struggling to make his way. . . . It was [in the Foreign Office] that this doctrine was most firmly held. . . .'

It is an interesting speculation just how much this 'patronizing attitude', and its effects on the susceptible Sardar Panikkar, contributed to the course of political developments in Asia over the next ten years or so, culminating in India's break with China in 1960. From his own book, *In Two Chinas*, several instances of 'touchiness' on the political and diplomatic level are evident. For instance, regarding the request for recognition of the new Central Government of the People's Republic of China, after its inception on 1st October 1949 Sardar Panikkar writes:

'Chou En-lai was Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and the first thing he did on the proclamation of the People's Republic was to summon the foreign representatives in Peking and hand over to them a communication inviting the establishment of diplomatic relations. Letters addressed by name were sent to the Head of the Foreign Personnel Bureau at Nanking, Huang Huai, to be handed over to the representatives of powers stationed there. The next day Huang Huai summoned the heads of Missions (those who had no Consuls in Peking) to his office. Most of them agreed to go, but I sent word that if Mr. Chou En-lai had sent a communication to me it might be sent on to my residence, and that I would not personally attend at the Bureau at Huang's call. . . .'

And later:

'When I came to Peking I had imagined my mission to be nothing more than that of witnessing the development of a revolution and of working for a better understanding between China and India. I knew, like everyone else, that with a Communist China cordial and intimate relations were out of the question, but I was fairly optimistic about working out an area of co-operation by eliminating causes of misunderstanding, rivalry, etc. The only area where our interests overlapped was in Tibet and . . . I had, even before I started for Peking, come to the conclusion that the British policy (which we were supposed to have inherited) of looking on Tibet as an area in which we had special political interests could not be maintained. . . . These pleasant expectations suffered a rude shock when one day in the last week of June 1950 the Chinese newspapers announced that the

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South Koreans had crossed the frontier, that war had as a result broken out between the two Koreas.' (p. 102.)

And again:

'To add to my troubles, by the middle of the month, rumours of a Chinese invasion of Tibet began to circulate. Visits and representations to the Foreign Office brought no results. The Wai Chiaopu [Foreign Office] officials were polite but silent. . . . There was also some support in the External Affairs Ministry (India) for the view that India should act vigorously to protect Tibet. Even Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, felt called upon to make an unfriendly speech. . . . I was nervous that the Government might take some hasty step. My own prestige with the Government was at a low ebb and I was being attacked for having misled the Prime Minister about China's intervention in Korea. . . .' (p. 112.)

I have quoted Sardar Panikkar at some length because I am convinced that many of India's later troubles with China would never have arisen, or certainly not in this generation, had someone with more balanced judgment and less liability to erratic enthusiasm been sent as Indian Ambassador to China at this critical period. Later developments will show the extent of the repercussions his miscalculations and over-simplified analyses provided.

However, to return to Delhi's attitude towards the new régime in Peking. Here once more, probably the best source of information is Sardar Panikkar himself. Following on the Communist Party's assumption of power in Peking the Indian Government recalled its Ambassador to Kuomintang China for discussions and decisions in the light of the new developments. Of these Sardar Panikkar writes:

'While there was no difference of opinion as to the necessity of recognizing the new China, there was a difference of opinion among the leaders about its timing. The more conservative members of the Congress leadership, including Rajagopalachari, who was then the Governor-General, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, wanted us to go slow in the matter. They were supported in this attitude by a powerful section of the Civil Service, including, I suspect, some of the senior officials of the Foreign Office. My own view, to which I gave free expression, was that we should recognize the new régime when the Kuomintang authority on the mainland of China ceased to function. Chiang Kai Shek's fugitive régime was then in Chungking. Many people believed that, as at the time of the Japanese war, the Kuomintang could control Yunnan, Szechuan, Sikang and the outer provinces, covering what was generally claimed to be the areas controlled by the Muslim war-lords which extended to Sinkiang and the Soviet border, then American strategic requirements would be

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satisfied. Large aerodromes had been constructed in this interior line during the anti-Japanese war, and some American military leaders assured me that with bases in Indo-China and Siam this line could be effectively defended and converted into a vital area for American defence purposes. . . .

'The agitation of a few Republican leaders, popularly associated with the China Lobby, had not had much effect at this time [November–December 1949] and it was clear that without active American support the Kuomintang régime at Chungking could not hold out. The decision that Mr. Nehru took was therefore to convey our recognition when the Kuomintang Government moved into the island of Formosa, which at the time was still juridically a part of the Japanese Empire since the treaty transferring it to the Allies had not been signed. Britain also agreed with this view and it was decided that the Indian Government's recognition of the new Government of China should be conveyed to Peking by the end of the year [1949].'

While India was quick to recognize the new Government of China, Mr. Nehru's former expectations of an Asia unified by the friendship and co-operation of its two major countries, and through this unity, influencing the rest of the world, had already begun to diminish. Giving his reasons for recognizing the Peking régime in a BBC broadcast he said:

'China has taken a new shape and a new form but whether we like that shape and form or not, we have to recognize that a great nation has been reborn and is conscious of her new strength. China, in her new-found strength, has acted sometimes in a manner which I deeply regret. But we have to remember the background of China as of other Asian countries, the long period of struggle and frustration, the insolent treatment that they received from imperialist powers and the latter's refusal to deal with them on terms of equality. It is neither right nor practical to ignore the feelings of hundreds of millions of people. It is no longer safe to do so. We, in India, have had two thousand years of friendship with China. We have differences of opinion and even small conflicts, but when we hearken back to that long past something of the wisdom of that past helps us to understand each other. And so we endeavour to maintain friendly relations with the great neighbour of ours, *for the peace of Asia depends upon these relations.*' (Italics mine.)

Having looked at the two chief figures involved in their Governments' immediate recognition of the new Government of China, with the reasons which prompted them, we must also look at the administration in Delhi which supported them, or, as was the case with some, opposed such a policy.

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An interesting point in Sardar Panikkar's account is the use of the phrase, 'The decision that Mr. Nehru took was, therefore, to convey our recognition.' Not 'the Government', or 'the Cabinet', but 'Mr. Nehru'. Thus, two years after Independence there is a natural acceptance in the new Indian Republic that the Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, should dominate, and even decide on, major acts of policy.

When on 15th August, 1947, India's 'tryst with destiny' arrived, it was not Gandhi, the father of Indian independence, who was the man of the hour, but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. By this time Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel were the leading figures in India's Congress Party.

The struggle for pre-eminence between the idealistic Pandit Nehru and the pragmatic Sardar Patel continued after Independence over several issues, and from 1947 to 1950 India was in fact ruled by a 'duumvirate'. It was a strange alliance, but without doubt good for India as a whole, for both were so diametrically opposite in so many ways. Nehru was a triple aristocrat—a Brahmin by birth, a gentleman by up-bringing and education, and the son of a Westernized lawyer of All-India reputation. Patel, on the other hand, was of peasant and orthodox Hindu stock, who had also studied for the Bar but had come to politics late and won through to prominence, not by the patronage of Congress leaders like Nehru, but by sheer drive and ability. Nehru was charming, mild, courteous, generous to a fault, sensitive, impulsive and emotional. Patel was dour and ruthless, unimaginative and practical, blunt in speech and action, cool and calculating. Nehru was the voice of Congress, disliking the political intrigues, lobbying and manipulations. Patel was the organizer of Congress, a master of machine politics who revelled in political manoeuvres. To the world at large Nehru was, with Gandhi, the symbol of India's struggle for freedom. Patel never attained anything like their prominence, even in India, and made no attempt to win popularity or prestige by speech-making or countryside tours. Nehru commanded the loyalty of the radicals and Patel the loyalty of the conservatives. Nehru was the idol of the working-class, the majority of the Westernized intelligentsia, the youth and the minorities. Patel was the leader of the business interests, the orthodox Hindus, senior civil servants and most of the party functionaries. Nehru had a passionate concern for other Asian nationalist movements and a constant pre-occupation with international politics. Patel was utterly indifferent both to nationalist movements and world affairs except in so far as he could relate them to the immediate national interests of India. Gandhi summed up the contrast between his two principal lieutenants when he said: 'Jawaharlal is a thinker: Sardar is a doer.'

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But between them, these two carried the heavy burden of rescuing India from the dangers of internal chaos following on Independence.

From 1947 to 1950 every decision of consequence, as well as many trivial ones, was made by Nehru and/or Patel. Colleagues and leading members of Government have described the working arrangement as a sort of 'super-Cabinet' in which Nehru and Patel discussed all matters first and then presented a joint 'recommendation' to the Cabinet as a whole. Though the procedures of Cabinet Government were followed, and ministers were at liberty to discuss, or even oppose, proposals of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, their special positions dominated the proceedings. It was the same in Parliament, the Congress and country at large.

In organization, functioning, and place in the political system, the Parliament in India is almost a replica of the 'mother of Parliaments'. The Lok Sabha, or House of the People, as in most bi-cameral legislatures, is the most influential House. The Rajya Sabha, or Council of States, has an indeterminate status and future.

India's first Parliament was an overwhelmingly Congress house, with 364 out of the total of 489 elected members contesting the election as Congressmen. With such a one-sided House, the organization of any form of opposition was difficult. To be recognized as an official party in opposition such a party must have 10 per cent of the total membership in the House of the People, all of them elected on the party ticket. But no party in either the first or second Parliament had the fifty members to be so recognized. The Communists had the most cohesive group in Parliament, consisting of the sixteen official Communist members, plus generally at least six of the seven members of the People's Democratic Front and seven or eight Independents who received Communist support. Occasional support from other left-wing parties sometimes brought the total of this group to thirty-five. The groups in opposition totalled only about one-fourth of the House and were internally split into so many factions that they had no possible opportunity of influencing any decision-making.

The great decisions were usually made within the Congress Party, and the members of Congress in Parliament probably do more to shape those decisions as party members than as members of the central legislature. Almost all of the leading Congress M.P.s hold some important post or posts in the hierarchy, including membership in the All India Congress Committee and perhaps on the Congress Working Committee as well, the highest executive authority of the Congress. M.P.s who are on the executive committee of the Congress Parliamentary Party are also associate members of the AICC, unless they are regular members. The Working Committee also set up a

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Parliamentary Board but this board devotes far more time to liaison with and between Congress members of State Assemblies than to affairs in Parliament.

There is a great deal of interlocking and close liaison between the leaders and main organs of the Congress Party and the Congress Parliamentary Party. The whole question of parliamentary decision-making in India is complicated by the lack of clear lines of division between the party organization within and without Parliament. It was this vague parliamentary situation which prompted the *Hindustan Times* to demand how Congress would 'relish a situation in which the Government will take its orders not from the Sovereign Parliament of the country but a party clique who may dictate to the Government what it should and what it should not do?'

The executive power of the Indian Union, according to constitutional specification, is vested in the President and is exercised by him either directly or through appropriate subordinate officers within the Government, and all executive action of the Government is taken in the name of the President.

To 'aid and advise the President in the exercise of his functions', the Constitution provided for a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at its head. The President appoints the Prime Minister and—with the advice of the latter—the other ministers. Individual ministers hold office during the pleasure of the President, but the Council is held collectively responsible to the House of the People. Theoretically the ministers are collectively responsible for the policy and acts of the Cabinet, and no minister is expected publicly to dissent from Cabinet policy; if his disagreement proves to be fundamental he resigns.

Members of the Council of Ministers were an imposingly well-educated group. Of the Cabinet members 97·3 per cent attended institutions of higher education as compared, for instance, with 76·4 per cent of the British Cabinet members for the period 1886–1950.

In theory, then, the Indian Parliament was clearly equipped to make a worthy addition to Parliamentary democracy on acquiring independence in 1947, and to be the major agency for decision-making. But it is equally clear that it did not function in this way. The more caustic critics stated that Parliament was becoming 'no more than Pandit Nehru's *darbar*', while some even went the length of accusations of 'dictatorship'. While more moderate critics would demur at this, few observers would admit that Parliament in India in 1950—or in 1963—was the main decision-making agency, except perhaps in a theoretical sense. The consensus on this subject would probably be that Jawaharlal Nehru—aided on occasions, perhaps, by

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a handful of confidants—really makes policy, or that the major decisions are made in the Working Committee of the Congress Party, almost without exception on the initiative of the Prime Minister and in his presence, and rarely, if ever, without major consideration of his wishes. To the extent that Parliament plays a role in these decisions, according to this approach, it does so largely as a rubber-stamp.

It can be seen from this, therefore, how every decision of consequence from 1947 to 1950—and until Sardar Patel's death in 1952—was made by Nehru and Patel. It was a subtle, complex relationship at the apex of Indian political power. Patel held the important portfolios of State, Home Affairs, and Information and Broadcasting, which, along with the party machine, gave him control of the principal lever of power in domestic affairs. Nehru held only the portfolio of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. But this division meant that Nehru held sway in international affairs and Patel in the internal. But while the two men were administratively 'sovereign' in different spheres policy matters were a joint prerogative—except in foreign affairs, where Nehru's word was rarely, if ever, challenged.

It is in this context that India's recognition of the People's Republic of China must be taken, and Sardar Panikkar's account of 'a difference of opinion among the leaders about its timing', his remarks that 'the more conservative members of the Congress leadership, C. Rajagopalachari and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, wanted to go slow in the matter'; and, finally, the statement 'however, the decision that Mr. Nehru took was therefore to convey our recognition when the Kuomintang Government moved into the island of Formosa . . . so by the first week in January, 1950, the Peking Government had received the recognition of the major Asian States.'

At the same time Delhi was facing an internal crisis in India ominously similar to China's before the Communists came to power. India in 1949–50 was at the economic cross-roads and an analogy with China—which informed observers of the Asian political scene were beginning to accept—in the last days of the Kuomintang régime did not seem too far-fetched. There was danger that the prevailing policy of drift, laced with undercurrents of frustrated student and intelligentsia unrest, would eventually explode from apathy into some form of revolutionary movement which could lead to years of struggle—as in China. The choice appeared to be between a continued *laissez-faire* with increased tensions, and a co-ordinated mobilization of reserves to meet the challenge—as in China.

When Hiren Mukherjee, the Communist M.P., suggested that the way to solve India's problems was to emulate China the Prime Minister replied:

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‘China is a country for which I have the greatest admiration. There have been big changes there. The hon. member Mr. Hiren Mukherjee suggested we emulate China. I will be glad to do so as far as I can but I would like to remind Mr. Hiren Mukherjee that till only a year ago, China was looked upon as a country where corruption, black-marketing and every kind of evil prevailed. Six months ago, the Government of China said that they were shocked and amazed at the amount of corruption in China. They started a great movement, in which the biggest people were involved, and effective steps were taken to end corruption. My point is that the situation in China is not quite what it was a year ago. Perhaps the People’s Government is more effective than we are; let us by all means try to emulate them in this respect.’

But for all the circumlocution, various people close to the Prime Minister sought to impress upon him the increasingly sombre developments throughout the country. Among the people who sought to persuade the Prime Minister of approaching dangers was Dr. Solomon Trone, an American engineer, whose wide experience covered under-developed areas before and during World War I when he was lent to the Czarist Government, who stayed on after the Revolution, and who later acted as industrial adviser to Japan and Kuomintang China. He served as Nehru’s personal adviser from the autumn of 1949 to the summer of 1950.

In his book *Nehru: A Political Biography*, Michael Brecher writes of Dr. Trone:

‘Arriving in India as the Communists swept to power in China, he conducted an investigation into various aspects of the Indian economy and concluded that conditions were alarmingly similar to those of China at the end of the Second World War. Drastic action was required without delay, he argued, the first step being the formation of a central agency to evolve a unified national plan. He was unsparing in his criticism of the existing Secretariat in Delhi.

‘“His report to the Prime Minister was not made public,” Mr. Nehru said at a Press Conference, “simply because it deals rather frankly with some particular industries (and) we feel it might embarrass them.” However, the essence of his proposals was known: the formation of a small expert body which should have authority to prepare and execute a five-year plan under the Prime Minister’s supervision, with an array of regional and functional groups scattered throughout the country. . . . Although Trone’s proposals were not accepted immediately, they were to appear in subsequent deliberations over the First and, more particularly, the Second Five Year

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Plans. And he strengthened Nehru's determination to create a planning agency at once. . . .' (pp. 515, 516.)

Thus began Delhi's 'democratic experiment' to solve India's economic problems in opposition to the 'Communist methods' propounded by Peking—with both countries vying with each other to win adherents from the rest of uncommitted Asia.

It was at this time, in one of those obscure ways which history often provides in the quixotry of a nation's life, that I made a personal contribution to India's problems, infinitesimal and barely noticed at the time, but to have major significance in the history of the two countries nine years later. I had spent three years in the mountains of East Tibet and while there had become acquainted with the leading Tibetans there. They had been planning a revolution against the Tibetan Central Government in Lhasa, but the sudden take-over by the Communists in China had caused them to postpone their plans. In the meantime the Communists approached them with the suggestion that the Tibetan leaders continue with their plans for revolt against the Central Government in Lhasa, but instead of a partisan attempt at overthrow to declare it 'a popular uprising of the Tibetan people against a feudal, reactionary régime.' If the East Tibetans agreed to this the Peking Government would give them every support. There was no alternative to acceptance, for, the ultimatum from Peking went on, it was the intention of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to 'liberate' Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal and eventually India. (See *Tragic Destiny*.)

The East Tibetan leaders were in a quandary and it was finally decided that I should attempt a quick journey to India to inform the Indian Government of these plans of the Chinese Communists, and to ask for advice and help to enable them to fight before the Communists attacked in six months' time. This was in January, 1950, and I arrived in India in March by a hitherto unexplored route through Tibet. While in Calcutta having talks with officials of the Indian, British and American Governments, I lunched one day with the D.I.G. of Indian Security and the daughter and son-in-law—incidentally, a Communist—of Sardar Panikkar on their way to join her father in Peking.

But my attempts to persuade Delhi of Peking's intentions *vis-à-vis* India and Asia were unsuccessful due to the much greater weight of authority carried by Panikkar from Peking. His assessment was that any movements of Chinese troops on Tibet's border were due to Peking's desire to 'safeguard their western borders against aggression'—(against whom?)—and that the Chinese Government had enough internal problems to occupy their attention for another

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twenty years. There is no doubt that Panikkar was personally sympathetic towards the Chinese revolution, but his blind acceptance of what he was told by the Peking régime was inexcusable in his position as Ambassador representing India's interests, and did incalculable harm both at the time and later. This conclusion was also arrived at by the respected Chinese elder statesman, Dr. Carsun Chang, leader of the Democratic-Socialist Party, who in 1947 drafted the new Constitution of China. In his book, *Third Force in China*, written in 1951, he said:

‘There is no doubt that Sardar Panikkar’s attitude is deliberately in favour of Communist China. Whether he is talking merely as a diplomat, in order to win the friendship of Communist China, or whether he was speaking from conviction, as a man who believes that the Communist régime is for the good of China, is of course another question. However that may be, India and China, thanks to Mr. Panikkar’s efforts, today enjoy the best of relations, which may some day be put to the test by the liberation of Tibet. The fact that Panikkar’s recommendations have influenced India’s foreign policy is fully attested by the Indian Government’s attitude towards the Korean War and the Japanese Peace Treaty. . . .’ (p. 299).

CHAPTER 6

Jawaharlal Nehru and India's Foreign Policy



As I have outlined in the Introduction, a detailed account of India's foreign policy does not lie within the scope of this book. However, for a true appreciation of India's attitudes to certain questions, and to Asia and China in particular, a knowledge of Indian foreign policy, and Nehru who administers it, is a necessity. And to understand Indian foreign policy a knowledge of Indian religion and philosophy is a necessity, hence what may appear a digression.

Pantheistic Hinduism teaches that in each individual there is a spark of the divine. No individual, no nation, is ever beyond repair or some revolutionary change. Therefore, the rule of reason, or moral appeal, is never without hope in human affairs. On the other hand, the philosophy of violence envisages a time when an individual or nation crosses the rubicon of reason and morality and thus requires physical elimination in order that the rule of reason and morality may be re-established. However, those who believe in non-violence do not admit that such a possibility can ever arise. Therefore no person or nation should be eliminated, for a patient appeal to reason and moral sense is certain to evoke the good to overcome the evil.

This philosophical abhorrence of absolutes, of seeing everything in terms of black-and-white, runs through all Indian culture. The Indian inclination is towards philosophical relativity, towards intellectual equivocation, towards seeing many shades of black and white, and towards an almost infinite faith in patience—to the point even of equating patience with the best way of making events evolve. Co-existence of conflicting religions, of conflicting ideologies, even of the perennially opposed good and evil, is inherent in the Indian mental and spiritual make-up. Not only is life itself a compromise, but it is composed of a series of compromises.

What this means in terms of political action one leading Indian intellectual, Professor Appodarai, has aptly summarized: 'To keep

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the peace, try peaceful means—negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation and arbitration; listen to the viewpoints of both parties to a dispute expressed by their duly constituted representatives, hesitate to condemn either party as an aggressor, until facts proved by international enquiry indisputably testify to aggression: believe the *bona fides* of both until proof to the contrary; and explore fully the possibilities of negotiations and at least localize war—this is India's view.'

It is this attitude which has led some critics of Indian policy to charge India with letting others 'do the dirty work' of maintaining power balances while she sits on the side-lines and moralizes, but this is not strictly correct. Rather what India, theoretically at least, attempts is to keep her mediatory hands clean for the benefit of the world, and by so doing be in a position to aid the West in its ultimate objectives—e.g. while the West arms to negotiate from strength, India by virtue of her policy can help the West to keep its word. Mr. Nehru's concept of strength is illuminating. 'Asian strength . . .' he says, 'in the negative sense of resisting; not of attacking, but of creating conditions which may make things very difficult for the other country.'

Even the most severe critics of Nehru's policy of 'non-alignment' are agreed on one point: from India's own national point of view it has brought dividends to the country. By becoming a 'folding bridge', or an 'intermittent middleman' between the two power blocs, India has achieved a prominence far in excess of her military strength or industrial importance.

The foreign policy of India has developed a long way from its policy—which was then, of course, British foreign policy—during the nineteenth century. That was directed to preserving a far-flung Empire and safeguarding world-wide economic interests. These objectives Britain tried to obtain by a three-fold strategy. One was to safeguard the routes to her imperial possessions. For this purpose she had to keep a strong navy equal to the combined navies of any two countries on the Continent. The centre of the Empire was India. Therefore, the route to India was dotted with military bases in the Mediterranean—Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus. Britain also dominated Egypt, the Suez Canal, the Arab countries, and the Persian Gulf in the greater interests of this policy. As the threat to Britain's Imperial possessions could only come from the industrially advanced countries of Europe, Britain had another major concern in foreign policy: to keep the balance of power in Europe.

But Russia was both a European and Asiatic power, with expansionist designs in Asia. Therefore, the third plank of British foreign policy was to contain Russia within her Asiatic borders. The moves

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and counter-moves of these two great powers in Asia gave rise to the expression of 'the Great Game', popularized by Kipling.

After India won her independence she had to evolve a foreign policy of her own, devoted to her own interests. It would be wrong, however, to suppose that before this India had no foreign policy aims of her own apart from those of Imperial Britain. The Indian National Congress, from the time the Independence Movement gained strength under Gandhi's leadership, developed its own foreign policy and this was generally accepted by the country. Naturally, at that stage it had little to do with what is known as international diplomacy, carried on through representatives accredited for that purpose, of whom India had none. Indian foreign policy before Independence was confined to the enunciation of basic principles which would guide the country's diplomacy after Independence. These principles were based on non-violence and truth as enunciated by Gandhi and Nehru. These are moral principles, but translated into political terms they mean disarmament and open diplomacy. India stood for the freedom of all nations and peoples and against all colonial or racial domination of one people over another; therefore she sympathized with all national struggles against imperialism.

Indian foreign policy arises from a combination of emphases; anti-colonialism (the result of resentment at British dominance), anti-racialism (British imperialism had racial superiority overtones), an awareness of 'Asianism' (Asian Nationalistic movements have a common bond—strong feelings against the arrogance of the West), and sympathy for divided countries because of her own partition.

As a legacy from the West, India recognized the value of the dignity of the individual; sanctity of civil liberties, including a free Press; democratic political institutions; English language, and through it European literature; legal philosophy; importance of religion even in a secular state; respect for the scientific approach and modern technology. But India was repelled by what it considered the West's 'hysteria' about Communism, leading to military 'pactomania'.

India appreciated in the East the latter's stand against colonialism, against racialism, the stand in favour of China and also 'Asia-mindedness', the desire for state control by the masses because of their history of exploitation by the wealthy. India was repelled by the suppression of the individual by the State, by the technique of *coup d'état*, and the outside guidance of national Communist parties; and by the 'new colonialism'.

India developed the policy of 'non-alignment', it is argued, because of certain features in both the great powers which did not appeal to India. It had ideological disagreements with both powers; on

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the one hand, the economic system of the U.S. was considered unsuitable for India, while the political methods of the U.S.S.R. were also rejected both for their militant character and because the Communists were causing trouble in India. Further, the 'cold war' which developed in the post-war years was interpreted as a Western affair out of which Asia had nothing to gain and much to lose; keeping Asia out of the cold war, and non-Asian interests out of Asia, became the natural continuation of the anti-imperialist struggle since all Western policies in Asia were viewed as still afflicted with overtones of an inveterate imperialism. Finally, there was a genuine conviction in India that, even though an independent policy would primarily serve India's interests, such a policy might effectively also allow India to make her greatest contribution to peace.

The policy of 'non-alignment' is, therefore, more than just a policy of withdrawal or isolation. It is, as Indians sometimes term it, a 'dynamic' form of neutralism which is held forth as being a third possibility in a world of bipolar power distribution. But this is not true in the sense that this policy offers a fundamentally different course of action from that pursued by the great powers. India is still not powerful enough to accomplish this. The alternative which India offers is strictly limited, shuttling between the two policies of the Soviet Union and the United States. Its chief, or even only, contribution is to show the smaller nations the possibility of refusing to be entirely attached to events set in motion by the activities of the two major powers.

In the Korean war India played a major role as an intermediary, though her commitments under the U.N. Charter demanded a fuller participation than she was willing to concede. In the Formosa crisis India's appeals to both sides to use common-sense and recognize realities were those of a mediator. In Indo-China in 1954 Nehru's settlement formula, and Krishna Menon's advocacy of it at Geneva, provided a constructive contribution. During the Suez crisis of 1956-1957 India's services, though admittedly often only as a messenger, were regarded as helpful in many ways.

On the Asian scene, much less academic as far as India is concerned, Indian foreign policy has tended towards equivocation—to put it conservatively. In regard to Tibet there was a deliberate and sustained effort to suppress all information of popular revolt against the Chinese Communists there, although when the Chinese suppression of the revolt looked like endangering India's security, the Chinese invasion was sharply criticized by the Indian Government. On Malayan independence, India had long been ambivalent. As late as the middle of 1954 Mr. Nehru was still making sweeping statements

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condemning the West, such as: 'The crisis of the time in Asia is colonialism versus anti-colonialism. Let us be quite clear about it.' At the same time he was pointedly ignoring the Communist colonialism on his own door-step in Tibet, Outer Mongolia, North Korea and Indo-China—as well as the agitation in Nepal and Sikkim against Indian colonialism in those countries.

As a critic India's contribution is more complex, and also more dubious and difficult. Her limited power—both military and economic—her inability to reconcile her own much compromised policies with her own much-vaunted standards, the suspiciously blinkered difficulty which she seemed to experience in applying her criticism equally to all nations, reduced her early potential as an effective critic. Besides, no standard—generally stated as it so often was in Mr. Nehru's well-known rambling perorations—would ever be accepted in the same form in any given situation by two opposed parties, or power blocs.

Despite this India has chosen this course as a measure of foreign policy, and has tried to define it as 'willingness to compromise for the sake of peace, the use of humane methods directed to similar goals, and "Panch Sheela"', of which more later. This choice, like the practice of moral judgment itself, fits into India's ideological background and experience. It is, also, significantly, a peculiar reflection of the man who is its genius, Pandit Nehru himself.

Nehru did not become the guardian of this peculiarly Indian policy on his accession as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, but, what is not generally recognized, he was its author and architect long before Independence. Before Mahatma Gandhi began to call him 'my successor' he used to call Nehru 'my foreign Minister'. All the foreign policy resolutions of the Congress Party before India became free were drafted by Nehru. It was Nehru who maintained contacts, on behalf of the Congress, with freedom movements in other countries. It was Nehru who travelled abroad and studied conditions and policies of other countries. And when he enunciated 'neutralism', which later became 'dynamic neutralism' and eventually 'non-alignment', he was simply repeating as Foreign Minister what he had said many times before as the leader of the Congress Party.

For instance, on 7th September, 1946, just six days after he and his colleagues had formed the interim National Government, Nehru made his first official announcement on foreign policy over All-India Radio. These were the post-war days in which few could perceive the portents of what later was to develop into the cold war. The Indo-American honeymoon was still on and the diplomatic representative in Delhi was Nehru's most trusted confidant. Russia was remote

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from India's consciousness as no longer being a major protagonist in the 'Great Game' in Central Asia, and Mao Tse-tung was still an obscure rebel in the mountains of China. Yet Nehru said in that broadcast:

'We propose as far as possible to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may lead again to disasters on an even vaster scale. . . . The world, in spite of its rivalries and hatreds and inner conflicts, moves inevitably towards closer co-operation and the building up of a world commonwealth. It is for this one world that free India will work. . . .'

In *Nehru: A Political Biography*, Michael Brecher writes: 'In no other State does one man dominate foreign policy as does Nehru.' Take the last three months of 1960 as an example. Throughout this period India had been actively involved in the boundary dispute with China, and the crisis in Congo; Mr. Nehru went to Pakistan for important policy talks in September and immediately thereafter to New York for the historic U.N. session; then there was the internal crisis over the cession of Berubari district to Pakistan. One would have thought that any or all three subjects were important enough to deserve a discussion in the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, but while the Prime Minister made a statement or two before Parliament, as was only right and proper, and he also briefly reviewed the situation before the full Cabinet, the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, which should have had the responsibility of advising Mr. Nehru on outstanding issues of international policy, did not have the opportunity either of a discussion or of receiving from the Prime Minister an intimate report of India's difficulties and obligations. In fact, throughout this period the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee did not meet at all. It is this attitude of the Prime Minister's which calls forth from his critics the accusation that Parliament is 'no more than Pandit Nehru's *Durbar*'. He has also been called at various times an autocrat, a communist, a dictator, a fascist, a convinced democrat and a liberal humanist.

The characteristics which led Gandhi in 1929 to select the youthful Jawaharlal Nehru as Congress President were 'unsurpassed bravery and love of country', the 'dash and rashness of a warrior' combined with the 'prudence of a statesman', and the proven capacity to submit to irksome discipline. As to his character Gandhi testified: 'He is pure as crystal, he is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight *sans peur, sans reproche*. The nation is safe in his hands.' Nehru himself has confessed to 'dictatorial' tendencies in his own make-up. In an anonymous article which he wrote in 1937, concerning himself he said: 'He

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calls himself a democrat and a socialist, and no doubt he does so in all earnestness . . . but a little twist and he might turn into a dictator . . . Jawaharlal cannot become a fascist. . . . He is too much an aristocrat for the crudity and vulgarity of fascism. His very face and voice tell us that. . . . And yet, he has all the makings of a dictator in him—vast popularity, a strong will, energy, pride . . . and with all his love of the crowd, an intolerance of others and a certain contempt for the weak and inefficient. His flashes of temper are well-known. His overwhelming desire to get things done, to sweep away what he dislikes and build anew, will hardly brook for long the slow processes of democracy. . . . His conceit is already formidable. It must be checked. We want no Caesars.’

The purpose of this critique, I understand, was to dissuade the Indian National Congress from electing Nehru as President for a third successive term, but it is only fair to add that when I asked him at a private meeting recently if twenty-three years—thirteen years of independence—later he still felt those tendencies within himself he laughed quite spontaneously and said:

‘Oh no. I wrote that article for fun. No, not even to “fly a kite”, as you term it, for that would imply an intention to provoke a reaction which was certainly not my purpose. No, I simply wrote it for fun to tease my friends. As I get older I become more convinced about democracy, that is, democracy at a “grass-roots” level. The top is not important. There will always be those who fight for position, and prestige and power, and who will pay lip-service to democracy while pursuing personal ends. I know this sounds conceited but I have no need to go out seeking for votes—I feel this *rapport* with the crowd. And it is for this reason that I get impatient with them. No, not as a father with his children, but as a schoolmaster with his students. There is a term, rather cumbersome, but which I think expresses it rather well, “democratic decentralization”¹ and as I get older I am very much in favour of a greater amount of decentralization and this means that a greater responsibility has to be developed through the country at a “grass-roots” level. It is for this reason that I lecture the crowds as I do—not because I wish to lead them as a dictator. If I really had dictatorial tendencies,’ he added, with his rare, and wholly charming, smile, ‘I could never have written the article.’

Yet for all that it still remains true that Mr. Nehru is very reluctant to initiate the decentralization of which he speaks. In terms of transfer of authority and responsibility to the people, yes: but in terms of

¹ It is significant that he used this particular expression in view of the Chinese Communists’ fondness for its opposite, ‘democratic centralism’.

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delegating authority and responsibility to colleagues, no—with one possible exception, V. K. Krishna Menon, who emerged as Nehru's right hand in foreign affairs to a remarkable degree.

Krishna Menon's rise to prominence was meteoric. After many years as head of the India League in London, with no direct involvement in India's struggle for independence, he was appointed the first High Commissioner in London of Independent India. His major achievement of the period (1947–52) was to assist in the negotiations leading to India's membership of the Commonwealth as a Sovereign Democratic Republic. It was not until 1953—when, significantly Sardar Panikkar's influence began sharply to decline into an oblivion from which it has still not recovered—that he achieved an international reputation as the controversial—some have said, 'diabolical'—tempestuous voice of India before the United Nations. From that time he led India's delegation to the annual sessions of the world organization and served as Nehru's personal ambassador to many international conferences. After a brief spell as Minister without Portfolio in the Indian Cabinet he became Minister of Defence towards the end of 1956.

There is no doubt that, if anyone, it was Krishna Menon who occupied the position of chief foreign policy adviser to Nehru, and, for the few years until his resignation in 1962, was a sort of additional, or 'adjunct', Minister of External Affairs. But he had Nehru alone to thank for his advance and eminence in Indian affairs, for he had never had a personal political following except for a small coterie of left-wing admirers; he was actively disliked by the Press, and the majority of Congress leaders viewed him as an ambitious, irascible, vindictive opponent.

In *Nehru: A Political Biography*, Michael Brecher writes: 'The basis of Menon's influence is his personal relationship with the Prime Minister—which dates to the early thirties when Menon identified himself with the Nehru ideology in the Congress. He accompanied Nehru on his European tour in 1938 and the friendship blossomed. . . . But the reason for his influence is more than friendship. Menon has the capacity to echo his leader's foreign policies, the ability to grasp Nehru's thoughts and objectives and to convey them accurately, always pungently, to the outside world. Sometimes he exceeds the bounds, as in his pro-Soviet vote over Hungary at the United Nations in 1956. But these are exceptions which prove the rule. Menon is the carrier of Nehru's views the world over. . . . Menon is consulted on all issues of foreign policy by the Prime Minister. And his views carry considerable weight, because of Nehru's respect for his intellectual ability and his knowledge of men and affairs. To what extent Menon

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shapes policy is a subject of widespread conjecture. . . . It would be a grave error, however, to exaggerate Menon's influence on the fundamental character and direction of India's foreign policy.' (pp. 573-5).

Menon's chief contribution to Indian affairs has been his ability to act as 'trouble-shooter', a negotiator with wide latitude, and a mediator between contending parties (often where Indian interests were not directly involved, and not always welcomed, either). Outstanding among his efforts were the Korean armistice, the Geneva Convention on Indo-China in 1954, and the Suez crisis in 1956-57. But while Menon's influence should not be over-estimated it should not be under-estimated either, for constant discussion results in a fusion of ideas and, Menon being a close confidant of Nehru, his suggestions are often taken up by the Prime Minister and probably unconsciously adopted as his own. Nehru has said openly concerning his foreign policy that it may be defined as one of 'enlightened self-interest'.

'Whatever policy you may lay down,' he has said, 'the art of conducting foreign affairs lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say. But in the ultimate analysis a government functions for the good of the country it governs and no government dare do anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of that country. Therefore, whether a country is imperialist or socialist or communist its Foreign Minister thinks primarily of the interests of that country.'

Although he has always discountenanced talk of India as the leader of Asia in so many words, Nehru is intensely conscious of the fact that geography has given India a pivotal place in the continent. For instance, he has pointed out that there might not be very much in common between the Chinese and the people of the Middle East—or West Asia, as India now calls it—and there are also cultural, historical and other differences between the lands of the Far East, of Arabia, Iran and South-East Asia, but whichever region is taken India inevitably, in some way, dominates the picture.

The problems of South-East Asia impinge on India, as do those of the Far East. While the Middle East may not be directly concerned with South-East Asia both are connected with India. So, also, India's foreign policy must be viewed in terms of her relations with Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, Burma, Sikkim, Bhutan, Malaya, Indonesia, Ceylon—and China.

'Friendship with China has been an axiom of India's foreign policy during the past decade,' Brecher has stated categorically in his biography of Nehru, and no one who has studied developments in Asia

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'Friendship with China has been an axiom of India's foreign policy during the past decade,' Brecher has stated categorically in his biography of Nehru, and no one who has studied developments in Asia

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would contest this conclusion. But whether the policy has been wise, or successful, or carried to unnecessary extremes is another matter, and one which convulses the country at the end of the decade when Indian borders have been invaded by China and Nehru himself has talked sombrely of the 'imminent dangers of war' between the two countries unless some *modus vivendi* is found.

PART TWO

The Arena

CHAPTER 7

South-East Asia after the War



With the granting of independence to India it was obvious that new alignments must emerge which would radically alter the post-war balance of power. It was the official Indian belief that Communism could not be defeated by force, did not spread by force, and thus needed no military counteraction. And as a corollary, therefore, it was India's ambition to construct an 'area of peace', first of all in Asia, then, when consolidated there, to use the Indian and Asian influence for peace in world affairs.

During the nineteenth century, we have seen, the foreign policy of Britain was directed to preserving her empire and safeguarding her world-wide economic interests, with the Middle East and India key areas in the policy but only as extensions of the mother country. When Czar Alexander and Napoleon after the Peace of Tilsit began to concert measures for a joint invasion of India, through Persia, the strategic moves of the two European nations dominant in Asia, Russia and Britain, gave rise to Kipling's term the 'Great Game'. By the close of the nineteenth century the two nations were face to face along a line stretching from the Chinese frontier down the Oxus to the frontiers of Persia.

At the end of World War II the situation was radically changed. India was independent. Russia was fully involved in Europe. Nationalist China was steadily deteriorating. Japan had been crushingly defeated and was apparently eliminated. Other South-East Asian countries had emerged. India became a key centre of policy instead of just an extension, and the 'Great Game', like imperialism itself, was suddenly obsolete.

In the first flush of independence the new leaders in Delhi were well-disposed to Nationalist China who had so outspokenly supported India's demands for freedom, but as corruption, nepotism and dis-

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integration increased in that country, Delhi felt it politic to remain silent. The moral fervour of New India could not afford to be associated in the eyes of the new nations of Asia with a corrupt and obviously dying régime like the Kuomintang in China.

The development of the war had made it impossible for the Japanese effectually to implant and organize their conception of regionalism in Greater East Asia. The overall effect of the Japanese occupation of the European colonies in South-East Asia was both to deepen and widen the channels of nationalism and anti-colonialism. While this was not fully appreciated during the war the colonial powers, nevertheless, in varying degree, had shown some awareness of the fact that the *status quo ante* 1941 would have to be modified toward self-government, autonomy, or independence.

Indo-China was the only colonial territory from which the Japanese did not immediately displace completely the authority of the colonial power. This collaboration of the French authorities with the Japanese, while it enabled the fiction of French rule to be maintained, lowered French prestige in the colony, and gave pointed significance to a new era in the relations of East and West, with the West taking orders from the East. At the end of the war Japan had transferred authority to Indo-Chinese Governments. France had produced a programme which fell far short of independence. But a long period in time elapsed between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of Allied forces, enabling the proclaimed Viet Nam Republic to establish itself. The stage was set for another guerrilla war and demands for complete independence.

The same circumstances, and rapidity of the Japanese conquest of Burma, lowered British prestige there, so much so that it was impossible for Britain to return to her pre-war position. Also, by the end of the war a new leadership had emerged in Burma which had gained experience and assurance and a feeling of power through organization and operation of an anti-Japanese movement within Burma. But whereas in other countries of South-East Asia it was the Chinese and Europeans, in the role of capitalist exploiters, who insured the hostility of the native peoples, in Burma it was the Indians who played that role and whose unpopularity gave impetus to the nationalism there.

When the British returned there was a vast difference in the country. In the three years the country had been invaded twice, both the British and Japanese armies had fought bitterly throughout the length and breadth of the land, and each in turn had scorched the earth to cover its retreat. Mines, oilfields, and plantations had been wrecked; management and technicians, mostly foreign, had fled to

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India; agriculture was almost non-existent; and the youth of the country had been initiated to the excitement and rewards of guerrilla warfare.

On 20th December 1946 Burmese leaders were promised by Britain that Burma would be granted Commonwealth status or independence, as it desired, 'by the quickest and most convenient means possible'. A new Constitution was adopted in September 1947 and by the Treaty with Britain of October 17th, in force from January 1948, the independence of Burma was recognized.

But, unlike India, Burma opted to be a republic and remain outside the British Commonwealth. They gave several reasons for this—that they had never looked on Britain as a mother country, the Japanese invasion had proved that being part of the British Empire was no guarantee of safety, they were resentful of the capital charge preferred against the popular Burmese leader, Aung San—but the chief reason was that they believed at the time that India was also leaving the Commonwealth. When India did not the Burmese leaders received a considerable shock.

Thailand, or Siam, was the only one of the countries of South-East Asia which had been able to maintain its independence; in spite of this, it was reckoned among the countries of the colonial area from the standpoint of geographic location, having French Indo-China as a neighbour to the west and north, British Burma in the east and north-east, and British Malaya to the south. In this buffer position, between French and British territory, was to be found a large part of the explanation of the maintenance of its independence, preserved somewhat precariously by playing off the British against the French.

But another reason for the independence of Siam was the policy of its rulers. Originally that policy had been oriented towards China but this was changed with the revelation of China's weakness *vis-à-vis* the West. The Asiatic-type monarchy was altered to an 'enlightened despotism' and serious attempts at westernization were made. There were few internal disruptions and careful diplomacy guided Thailand from Asiatic feudalism into a modern and, in many ways, model state, with official friendship for all and little malice toward any.

For the period of the war Thailand was a Japanese puppet State under the direction of one of its pre-war military leaders. At the end of the war, after having agreed to restoring 'British rights and territories as they existed on 7th December 1941 and to pay compensation for losses or damage sustained by British subjects', it satisfied the victor powers; but Thailand's sovereignty was secured.

Malay is a peninsula projecting southward from Thailand and Burma toward what in pre-war days was known as the Netherlands

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East Indies, or Indonesia. Thus it is a link between the latter and the continental territories of South East Asia. The geographical orientation is strengthened by the cultural, since the Malay peoples in both Malaya and Indonesia are fundamentally Muslim. It was the racial composition of the peninsula which supplied one of the chief reasons for Malaya's peculiar political organization, for the Malays were the only permanent population to look upon the country as their native land, while the Chinese were in a decisive majority in the Straits Settlements. It was only in the unfederated States that Malay predominance was beyond question.

If there had been a strong nationalistic sentiment developed among the Malays before the war it would probably have taken an anti-Chinese direction because of their greater numbers and their closer relationship to the people. The British, in spite of their predominant economic influence, were looked upon by the Malays, and by the Chinese and Indians, as 'protectors' of one from the other. It took the war to bring into being a spirit of nationalism. The Malay was essentially unpolitical in the Western sense, and before 1941 the Chinese and Indians, even though Malayan-born, developed their political interests and affiliations in relation to China or India rather than the country of their domicile.

The war, for Malaya as for other South-East Asian countries, had important consequences. One of these consequences was, of course, that represented by economic disruption and destruction. The fighting itself, coupled with some application of the 'scorched earth' policy and with the guerrilla warfare after the Japanese occupation, accounted for much of the destruction. The Japanese occupation had helped to stimulate political self-consciousness, among the Malays especially, and also to increase political maturity. The local barriers to the development of a Malay nationalism, represented by the existence of nine states and a colony constituting Malay proper, had been overcome by the common resistance, and Japanese-initiated institutions for self-rule hastened the process of integration.

Indonesia was another South-East Asian country emerging from the war and colonialism to play its part in Asian and world affairs. It was an archipelago extending from Malaya to New Guinea and supplied a reasonably large share of the world output of such tropical products as cane sugar, rubber, tea, coffee, quinine, oil and tin. In a total population of 70 million inhabitants well over 60 million were Indonesians, and of the non-Indonesian peoples the Chinese were most numerous with a total of some 1½ million.

The nationalist movement had started before the war, but during the war it received added stimulus; having expressed itself openly for

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the German-Japan Axis, it was fed by the Japanese who implied that the liberation of Indonesia would begin with the expulsion of the Dutch by the Japanese. However, disillusionment with the Japanese as liberators was rapid in Indonesia as they plundered the country, reducing it to economic ruin. But this did not result in another swing of the pendulum back to recognition of the Dutch as overlords, and at the end of the war, when Allied troops arrived to take the surrender of Japan, the Indonesian resistance movement demanded freedom from Dutch control. The Dutch were reluctant to grant this and refused to parley with the resistance leaders, and a long period of fighting, negotiating and more fighting set in. The Republic of Indonesia was finally recognized to have *de facto* authority over Java, Madura and Sumatra and it was agreed that Dutch and Allied forces would be withdrawn from the occupied portions of these islands so that the Republic would have them completely under its control by 1st January, 1949.

By the summer of 1949 the outcome of the civil war in China was no longer in doubt. The victory of the Communist Party over Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang régime was certain. In the given context of the growing post-war 'cold war' the significance of this new development in world affairs could not be over-emphasized—the success of Communism in China very definitely tilted the balance of power in favour of the Soviet bloc. In Asia it meant the rise of a revolutionary and aggressive power emerging from centuries of internal strife, and later foreign domination and humiliation, and it was certain to make a deep impact on the life of the sub-continent—in fact, as was noted earlier, the new leaders in China had made it clear long before they inherited power that they intended to restore China's ancient glories and territories, and to liberate others in the neighbouring countries to share in their own consuming vision. Encouraged by the sweeping victories of the Communist armies in China, local Communist parties in India, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines changed their policies in favour of open armed rebellion.

But the other giant in Asia, India, had had a few years' start in freedom, and many score of years' start in experience. With her stated leadership in Asia of the fight against colonialist oppression, then her independence, internal solidity, growing respect abroad, and her policies of firmly held and practised democracy and neutrality in foreign affairs, she was bound to influence the policies of other Asian countries. At the same time she must become China's competitor there, particularly in South-East Asia, where both countries had met as rivals for centuries long before the Europeans arrived on the scene.

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The new men in Peking had not only little time for the democracy and neutrality of India, they contemptuously dismissed it as a political fiction, and openly stated that a country could only 'lean to one side' and that China leaned to the side of Socialism. In July, 1949, Liu Shao-chi, Chairman of the People's Republic of China, spelled it out in even greater detail when he characterized the newly-liberated countries such as India, Burma, Indonesia, Philippines and South Korea as 'colonies and semi-colonies'. 'Neutrality is a camouflage,' added Mao Tse-tung, categorically, 'and a third road does not exist.'

Liu Shao-chi from Peking then gave the Communist parties in Asia their instructions. 'In dealing with the property-class reactionaries, who have surrendered before the imperialists (mostly the big upper-class reactionaries), the Communists must likewise adopt a determined policy to oppose their betrayal of national interests. It will be a great mistake otherwise. And in dealing with the national property class, who are still opposed to imperialism, the Communists must establish with them co-operation to oppose imperialism.' Then a month later, in September, 1949, Peking made it quite clear what it thought of the new leadership in Delhi, and just what its attitude toward them was going to be—a bitter, ruthless fight for the leadership of Asia: 'British imperialism and its running dog, India, through their officially controlled publications, have declared in unison that Tibet never acknowledged China's suzerainty over it, and that Britain never acknowledged China's claim that Tibet is part of China. . . .

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

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

'Under the long-standing influence of British imperialism, the bourgeoisie of India, of whom Nehru is the representative, have learned the ways of the imperialists, and are harbouring intentions against Tibet and Sikkim as well as Bhutan. Furthermore, Nehru, to

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curry favour with his masters, the Anglo-American imperialists, is placing himself at their disposal, and shamelessly holds himself as the pillar of the anti-Communist movement in Asia. . . .

'New Delhi has consistently served as the centre of imperialist intrigues for the obstruction and undermining of the people's liberation movements of Asia. The spearheads of these nations' intrigues are directed against the great struggle put up by the peoples of China, Viet Nam, Burma, Malaya and Indonesia. . . .

'The victory of the Chinese people has brought dawn to the oppressed peoples of Asia and sealed the fate of Nehru and betrayers of his ilk. The Chiang Kai-sheks of India, Burma, Indonesia and others of their ilk must march on the same road to death as Chiang Kai-shek has done. . . .'¹

The precipitating cause of this virulent diatribe against Mr. Nehru was the nineteen-nation conference which met in Delhi in January, 1949, on the initiative of the Indian Prime Minister, to mobilize world opinion against the Dutch action in Indonesia and in favour of Indonesia's independence.

Such a move placed the political and diplomatic initiative in Delhi's hands before Peking could establish its authority over China and launch out on the policies outlined in the article quoted, and was a tacit admission that the first round in the struggle for leadership had gone to Nehru and India.

¹ 'World Culture' quoted in *Panch Sheela and After* by G. L. Jain, pp. 8-10.

CHAPTER 8

Tibet (I)



The first major test of Indian foreign policy, and the first major clash between Peking and Delhi, occurred over the country of Tibet.

In 1947 an Asian Conference was held in New Delhi and, in addition to the Chinese delegation, a Tibetan delegation was invited. At the opening ceremony there was displayed in the Conference Hall a huge map of Asia on which Tibet was shown as being outside the boundary of China. The Kuomintang delegate protested at this and after some time it was altered.

But the Indian Government had also received a telegram from the Tibetan Government, on 17th October, 1947, demanding recognition of her claims to her former territories. These were listed:

‘. . . such as Zayul and Walong, and in the direction of Pemako, Lonag, Lapa, Mon, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and others on this side of the River Ganges and Lowo, Ladakh, etc., up to the boundary of Yarkhim.’

The Indian Government sent a reply (published in Indian White Paper No. 2) as follows:

‘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 agreements are reached on matters which either party would 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. . . .’

When the Communist Party took over control in Peking in 1949 this attitude was made the subject of a violent anti-Indian attack, accusing Britain and America of using India to bring Tibet within India’s influence.

‘Their thoughts now turn to Nehru of India,’ an article in *New Construction* ran. ‘They hope to use India as their Asian base to resist

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the new democracies of Asia. Tibet is the natural barrier to India. They have earmarked Tibet, like Taiwan, as part of their defence system. To preserve their rule over India, they must control Tibet.'

If nothing else in the article was true the statement that 'Tibet is the natural barrier to India' was certainly true, and had been an axiom in Indian defence thinking for centuries. But the status of Tibet, 'the saddle of Asia' as it has been called, had also been the subject of dispute between Tibetan and Chinese authorities for centuries. Even the boundary between the two countries had been disputed several times and no one seemed to know in any century where the boundaries should be drawn.

Sir Charles Bell, a former Political Officer in Tibet, and the greatest authority on the country, writing in 1924 said:

"What is Tibet? Do we mean the lands controlled by the Tibetan Government and the Tibetan tribal authorities, or the lands inhabited by the people of the Tibetan race? . . . While attempting to define the former, let us not neglect the latter, for national sentiment in Tibet, so long in abeyance, is now a growing force.'

The confusion in boundaries which existed in the minds of the leaders of the other nations was due to a variety of reasons compounded of the geographical remoteness of Tibet, the indifference of the Tibetan Government to outside affairs and the predilection of the Chinese Government for extending the boundaries on their maps farther and farther westward. Between the western boundary of China Proper and the jurisdiction of the Tibetan Government in Lhasa lay the two Tibetan provinces of Kham and Amdo, inhabited by Tibetans, but of a more virile, independent tribal type than the feudal-governed central Tibetans. This area of Kham-Amdo not only comprised two-thirds of the whole of Tibet and about 80 per cent of the total population, but it was also the most mountainous in the country whose average altitude was 15,000 feet. Scattered throughout this savage territory were thirty-nine major tribes in Kham and twenty-five major tribes in Amdo; and when there was no war to unite them against their common enemy, China, they were usually occupied in fighting each other. The other issue which could unite them, the importance of which will be seen later, was unanimous opposition to the Central Government in Lhasa.

According to Chinese writers the first record of Chinese contact with the Tibetans is in connection with fighting between the two in 2220 B.C., when Emperor Shun drove Sanmeau tribesmen into a region called San-wei which later Chinese scholars identified as constituting three parts of Tibet. The first definite contact between the

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two peoples was in the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618–907) when about one hundred missions passed between the two countries. The missions were either good-will missions carrying gifts and compliments, or diplomatic missions making treaties or renewing friendly relations.

It was in the seventh century that Tibet as a nation, and a powerful one at that, emerged from the realm of legend and entered history. A Tibetan king, Srong-tsen Gampo, conquered regions in North Burma and West China and exacted tribute from the Emperor of China, including the marriage of the Emperor's daughter. The same king was equally successful in his attacks on the Indian border, subjugating large parts of Nepal and taking a princess from that country also as tribute. These two queens were Buddhists and converted the king to their faith, and in the years that followed he extended the Buddhist religion throughout the whole of Tibet. Until this time Tibet had only had an oral language, derived from the same linguistic source as the Burmese; but Buddhist scriptures were now brought from India and a written character adapted from the Sanskrit to fit the Tibetan language.

From the time of Srong-tsen Gampo to that of Ralpa-chan, Tibet and China were constantly at war, with varying fortune. Following the death of Srong-tsen Gampo in A.D. 650 the Chinese attacked and captured Lhasa. But during the reign of Ti-tsong Detsen, in the eighth century, Tibet became one of the great military powers of Asia, reaching from the Chinese capital of Changan, which its armies had captured, to near the River Ganges in India, and from Turkestan to Burma. Inscribed stone pillars were raised in Lhasa to commemorate an agreement in the eighth century between Ti-song Detsen, King of Tibet, and Hwang-ti, Emperor of China, 'the nephew and the maternal uncle,' when they 'agreed to hold as sacred the respect of the old relationship and the happiness of the neighbours'. Toward the end of the eighth century Tibetan armies again overran western China and another treaty was concluded by which the Kokonor Lake was fixed as the north-eastern boundary of Tibet. The Tibetan king abandoned his conquests in China but retained all the mountainous lands as his territory.

In the ninth century there was considerable contact between Tibet and China when about one hundred missions passed between the two countries, and a peace treaty was concluded on a footing of equality. Ethnographically, the boundary at this time extended from, in the north, the Kuenlun mountains at roughly 35.30 north latitude and 80.30 east longitude to the Kokonor at roughly 100 east, then almost straight southward to near the 28th parallel, through Kansu, Szechuan and Yunnan on a line just to the inside of Sining, Chengtu

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and Kiating, before turning due west along Upper Burma and Assam at 29.30 north and the general Himalayan range.

In the thirteenth century Tibet became a vassal state of the Mongols under Genghis Khan; but in 1253 when a Tibetan priest, Phagspa, visited Kublai Khan he became so popular that he was made Kublai's spiritual guide and later appointed by him to the rank of priest-king of Tibet and constituted ruler of (1) Tibet proper, comprising the thirteen states of Ü-Tsang Province; (2) Kham, and (3) Amdo. In the seventeenth century, when the Great Fifth Dalai Lama visited Peking at the invitation of the Emperor of the new Manchu dynasty, the Emperor met him one day's journey from the capital. Tibetan records of the event maintain the Great Fifth was treated as an independent sovereign, the Emperor hoping to secure his alliance in order to establish Manchu rule over Mongolia.

After the death of the Sixth Dalai Lama there was a period of considerable intrigue. At one point the Chinese Emperor sent into Tibet three armies which were eventually successful in defeating the Mongols, who were in possession, and he installed a Seventh Dalai Lama of his own choice. China's claim to suzerainty over Tibet appears to date from this invasion. Following it, a Manchu Resident and a garrison force of 3,000 Chinese troops were left behind and communication with China was kept open by stationing small detachments of troops along the Lhasa-Chamdo-Batang-Tachienlu 'road'. The new boundary between China and Tibet was demarcated by a pillar, erected in 1727 on the Bum La south-west of Batang. The country to the west of this point was handed over to the rule of the Dalai Lama under the suzerainty of the Manchu Emperor, while the Tibetan chiefs of the states and tribes in the provinces of Kham and Amdo to the east of it were given the status of semi-independent feudatories of China, with Batang and Litang being placed under the administration of Szechuan. This loose arrangement lasted for nearly two centuries until the Chinese conquest of Tibet under General Chao Erh-feng in 1905-10.

The absolute rule claimed by Chinese residents in Lhasa was not maintained for long, however, and after the Opium War and the Taiping Rebellion Chinese influence diminished considerably. When an inter-tribal war broke out in Kham in 1860, rapidly involving the whole of East Tibet, the inhabitants appealed to both the Chinese and Tibetan Governments for help. The former were in no position to help because of their involvement with foreign powers, but the Dalai Lama responded by sending a Tibetan army which suppressed the fighting in 1863. The Tibetan claim to the reconquered territory dates from this time, when the Chinese Imperial Court confirmed the

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claim. It was the Younghusband expedition, which marched on Lhasa in 1904 and forced the Tibetan Government and the Chinese Amban to sign an agreement, that startled the Chinese Government into taking action. Although they signed the Adhesion Agreement to the Anglo-Tibetan Convention in 1906 they took steps to safeguard their interests in Tibet by appointing an 'Imperial Resident' in Chamdo, in East Tibet. When the Khambas revolted against Chinese interference a Chinese army under the command of General Chao Erh-feng was dispatched to bring the country under the direct control of the Chinese Government. When Chao finally left Tibet, in 1911, the work begun in 1905 was outwardly completed and there was not a Tibetan ruler left in East Tibet. From Tachienlu up to the Mekong the country was administered by Chinese magistrates, while north of the Mekong several districts had been planned. When Chao was killed—a victim of the revolution of 1911—his assistant took over, and his first act was a proposal that East Tibet should be converted into a new Chinese province to be called '(H)Si-Kang' or 'Western Kham'.

However, Chinese control over the rebellious Tibetans had not been sufficiently established to withstand much pressure and the greater part of it disappeared following the revolution in China in 1911. By the end of 1912 Chinese authority had ceased to exist in Tibet, and the Dalai Lama having returned from his exile in India, the country became once more an autonomous state.

In 1913 a conference was held at Simla between Britain, China and Tibet. The conference divided Tibet into two zones, 'Outer Tibet' nearer India, including Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo; and 'Inner Tibet' nearer China, including Batang, Litang, Tachienlu and a large portion of East Tibet. Chinese suzerainty over the whole of Tibet was recognized but China engaged not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The autonomy of Outer Tibet was recognized and China agreed to abstain from interference in its internal administration which was to rest with the Tibetans themselves. In Inner Tibet the central Tibet Government at Lhasa was to retain its existing rights, which included among other things the control of most of the monasteries and the appointment of local chiefs. But China was not forbidden to send troops or to plant colonies there.

The discussion lasted for six months and in April, 1914, a Convention was agreed upon and initialed by all three plenipotentiaries. Two days after the draft had been initialed the Chinese Government telegraphed repudiating it, but Tibet and Britain recognized it as binding upon themselves, with China, having repudiated the Convention, entitled to none of the advantages which the Convention would have conferred upon her.

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Little of major historical importance occurred in Sino-Tibetan relations between the Simla Convention and the Chinese Communist invasion in 1950.

In the intrigue following on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's death in 1933 a small Khamba army recruited by two brothers, Topgyay and Rapga Pangdatshang, was engaged by the official Tibetan Army near Chamdo and later defeated, with the help of the Chinese Army, at Batang. Later, when the Chinese thought that they might require help from the Tibetan tribesmen of East Tibet in their war with Japan, the younger brother, Topgyay, was made an honorary colonel responsible for the Kham tribesmen; a leading Amdo Tibetan, Lobsang Tsewong, was made the same for Amdo. When World War II finished, these two Tibetans, with Topgyay's brother, Rapga, and Geshi Sherab Gyaltso (both political intellectuals and rebels) formed the recognized leadership of the great fighting tribes in East Tibet, together with several able Sino-Tibetans who had had an education in China and had experience in administration.

When China's war with Japan became critical, and everyone who could fight was required to repel the invader, it was inevitable that the Chinese should turn to the great fighting tribes on the West China border for assistance. With the long history of racial antagonism there was not much hope of this materializing, either by appeals or conscription, but the shrewd move of the Kuomintang Government in appointing Topgyay Pangdatshang an honorary Colonel of the Chinese Army, responsible for bringing his Khambas to China's aid if necessary, and the other Tibetan, from Amdo province, Lobsang Tsewong, to be responsible for the Amdo Tibetans was to prove very significant.

They were never called upon to bring the Kham and Amdo Tibetans into the fighting with the Japanese but this crystallizing and recognition of leadership in East Tibet had far-reaching repercussions. By the end of the war the two above-named Tibetans had emerged not only as spokesmen for the Kham-Amdo Tibetans but also, for the first time in East Tibet's history, the tribes in both provinces were prepared to recognize them as leaders. When Geshi Sherab Gyaltso, a clever Doctor of Philosophy rebel from Lhasa, and Topgyay's brother Rapga, now a seasoned political revolutionary expelled from India by Britain, joined the other two the long anticipated take-over of the Lhasa Central Government by the East Tibetan tribes looked imminent. This possibility appeared even more certain when these Tibetan leaders—and any chieftains or traders with money to spend—had access to the huge stockpiles of arms and ammunition available in China at the end of the war. The gun-hungry Tibetans traded

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everything they had with the Chinese Generals, soldiers and even police, in order to lay hands on arms and ammunition. It was these accumulated stocks of arms and ammunition which later were to surprise the Chinese and the world.

Before the four East Tibetan leaders could put their plans for revolt against the Lhasa Government into action in 1949 the Chinese Communists had swept into power. There had been some controversy between the leaders as to whether the Lhasa Government should be completely eliminated and a completely Kham and Amdo régime set up in Lhasa, or whether the Lhasa Government having been eliminated the new Government centre should be Chamdo, in Kham, with a new trade route to India from Batang to Sadiya, or whether the new Government should be formed of some of the best Lhasa officials with the Kham and Amdo representatives.

Lest any of these possibilities should seem far-fetched, it should be pointed out that there were many more, and much more able, people among the Kham and Amdo leaders than there were among the Lhasa officials. Many of the Kham and Amdo people had been educated in China and had held administrative posts of one kind and another for several years, which certainly could not be said for many of the Lhasa Government officials. With the preponderance of two-thirds of the population, hardened, fearless fighters, wealthy families, control of the monasteries through the many East Tibetans in the priestly hierarchy, arms and trained personnel, the imminent victory of the East Tibetans seemed assured. At least, that was how it looked to the Chinese, if to no one else, and they were not slow to take advantage of it.

While some measure of secrecy was attempted, the plans of the revolution were known to many in East Tibet, and, as events were shortly to show, to the Chinese Communists as well. In August 1949, before they had established their authority over parts of China, the Communists, in a broadcast from Peking, announced that the above-mentioned four leaders had expressed their sympathy with the Chinese and wanted to associate themselves with them in liberating their own people in Tibet. This was a very shrewd political manoeuvre on China's part for at one blow it effectively isolated the most powerful, most populous and greatest area in Tibet from the Central Government in Lhasa, and gave them time to enter into negotiations with the East Tibetan leaders while at the same time bringing military pressure on them to agree to collaborate with China.

A written ultimatum was delivered to the Khamba leader, Topgyay Pangdatshang, in January 1950, by the Batang magistrate, who rode into the mountains personally to deliver it. It stated Com-

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munist China's intentions of taking over the whole of Tibet, and after that, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, and the necessity for the Kham Tibetans to co-operate in this or be annihilated. The Kham leaders made an attempt to get help from Lhasa and the outside powers—India, Britain and the U.S.—in March 1950, to fight against the Chinese, but this was refused.

On 5th August 1950 the official Chinese Communist News Agency quoted General (subsequently Marshal) Liu Po-ch'eng, Chairman of the South-West China Military Affairs Commission, as saying that 'the People's Army would soon enter Tibet with the object of wiping out British and American influence there. When the country had been liberated Tibetans would be given regional autonomy and religious freedom. Lamas would be protected. The Communists would respect existing customs. Tibetan Government officials would not be removed from their present posts. But the Tibetan Army would be reorganized as part of the Chinese People's Army.'

This determination on the part of Peking to 'liberate' Tibet, and even more to 'liberate all the territory of China' naturally caused great concern in Delhi. On the one hand the new rulers of India desired to shake off every vestige of the 'imperial legacy', which meant foregoing the 'special rights' in Tibet inherited from Britain, yet at the same time the Indian Government could not afford to be naïvely altruistic and endanger the security of their country. For it followed that if Peking's claims to Tibet were recognized Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal, which lay within the framework of the Republic of India, but only by virtue of British imperialist inheritance, (although their historic and ethnic ties were all with Tibet) might also at some future date be brought into dispute.

From Peking a spate of statements flowed forth to swamp the hesitant Delhi consultations. 'The reactionary Nehru Government naturally follows in the wake of its British masters in the exhibition of anxiety over Tibet,' ran one; and another, significantly, in the light of later developments: 'Efforts are being made to give great importance to the north and north-east frontiers of India.'

When the Tibetan Government expelled all Chinese Kuomintang personnel from Lhasa, declaring Tibet independent, Peking replied with a further broadside. In the *People's Daily*, of September 13th, there was a violent attack on India:

'The expelling of the Han people and Han Lamas, and the closing down of Han schools by Tibetan authorities on July 8th lays bare an international plot. On July 27th the official news agency of the Nehru Government announced that Tibet had never recognized Chinese suzerainty. On the same day British authoritative aides told the

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United Press that if China attempted to force her rule on Tibet, Tibet could seek British intervention. . . .

'The Nehru Government cannot deny that it has sent men to Lhasa. *The New York Times* reported from New Delhi on August 8th that the spokesman of the Indian Foreign Ministry announced that night that Bhutan had become a protectorate of India. Since the Nehru Government has announced its sovereignty over Bhutan and declared that Tibet had never recognized Chinese suzerainty, will it not declare suzerainty over Tibet? . . . The Nehru Government has no legal right to announce its protectorate over Bhutan. The United Nations should examine the matter. . . .'

On 30th September 1950, the first anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Republic, the Prime Minister of China, Mr. Chou En-lai, announced his Government's determination to 'liberate the people of Tibet and stand on guard at the Chinese frontiers.' He also expressed the hope that the liberation of Tibet would be accompanied by peaceful means through negotiations with the Tibetan leaders.

At the same time in Peking, India's Ambassador, Sardar K. M. Panikkar, was pursuing his fateful course. In the same week that the above-quoted article in *People's Daily* was printed he was congratulating himself on the fact that at a private dinner with Chou En-lai and the Burmese Ambassador, they had been able to persuade Chou to send 'good-will delegates' to South-East Asia, and persuade him to believe that there was 'considerable pro-Chinese feeling in countries like India and Burma.'

It was no doubt this incredible *naïveté* that led the astute Chou to use Panikkar to influence Indian opinion on the Tibet question and also that of Korea, although the tactics used in each case were different. Regarding Korea, Panikkar was called to another, midnight, meeting with Chou, who told him that China appreciated Pandit Nehru's actions in the cause of peace, but that China, who also appreciated peace, would not remain idle if the Americans crossed the 38th parallel. On the other hand, regarding Tibet, in which India had a direct interest, there was no such confidential gesture and Panikkar was left woefully ignorant about the whole Tibetan situation.

'To add to my troubles,' he writes, 'by the middle of the month [October] rumours of Chinese invasion of Tibet began to circulate. Visits and representations to the Foreign Office brought no results. The Wai Chiaopu [Foreign Office] officials were polite but silent. Things were certainly moving on that side.'

'The only information I was able to wring out of them was that

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certain pacificatory measures were being taken in West Sikang, that is, on the borders of Tibet proper. . . .

'On the 25th October, however, the Chinese announced on the Peking Radio that the process of "liberating Tibet" had begun. The fat was in the fire. The Government of India was troubled about the Chinese action on the Tibetan borders and I received instructions to lodge a strong protest. The Chinese reply was equally strong. It practically accused India of having been influenced by the imperialists and claimed that China had not taken any military action but was determined to liberate Tibet by peaceful means. Our rejoinder, though couched in equally strong words, recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and disclaimed all desire to intervene in its affairs. . . . Both parties had made their point of view clear and were content to let it rest there. . . .'

There seems little doubt that the cause of the complete *volte-face* in India's policy between July-August, when Nehru stated that Tibet had never been under China's suzerainty, and mid-October, when Panikkar announced that Delhi did recognize China's suzerainty over Tibet, was due to internal discussion and agreement between Panikkar and Nehru. Earlier Panikkar had written: 'The only area where our [China and India's] interests overlapped was in Tibet and . . . I had, even before I started for Peking, come to the conclusion that the British policy (which we were supposed to have inherited) of looking upon Tibet as an area in which we had special political interests, could not be maintained. The Prime Minister had also in general agreed with this view.'

India withdrawing from any responsibilities in Tibet left the country wide open to Chinese invasion, but although Peking was convinced now that New Delhi would take no military action they had to proceed cautiously, for they were still unsure as to whether the Tibetans would unite to fight against them, or that Britain might keep to the position that she still had a right to intervene to help Tibet, or that America might have some arrangement to do likewise.

On 25th October 1950 Peking Radio broadcast that the process of 'liberating' Tibet had begun. On October 30th the Tibetan Government asked for diplomatic assistance in its dispute with China, but made no request for military help.

In its first protest Note India regretted the Chinese military action and pleaded for 'slower but more enduring methods of peaceful approach'. Peking immediately replied with: 'Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China,' and went on to accuse India of working under foreign influence. When the Note was read in Delhi it was

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received 'with amazement', and India replied categorically that 'Tibetan autonomy is a fact'.

In a reply on 16th November 1950, bordering on the insolent, Peking said: 'The problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people, and defend the frontiers of China. This is the firm policy of the Chinese Government. . . . In showing its friendship with the Government of the Republic of India, and in an understanding of the desire of the Indian Government to see the problem of Tibet settled peacefully, the central People's Government of the People's Republic of China has kept the Indian Government informed of its efforts in this direction. . . .'

While the 'official' Delhi reaction was one of acceptance of the *fait accompli* in Tibet, but protesting the violating of Tibetan autonomy, the 'unofficial' reaction was almost violent and for 'strong action' in Tibet. Further evidence that the Indian policy was agreed between Nehru and Panikkar, rather than by general discussion and agreement, is contained in Panikkar's account: 'The Indian Press, egged on by the sensational reports of the American correspondents and the blood-curdling stories issued from Hong Kong by Taipeh agents, kept on talking about Chinese aggression. Even Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, felt called upon to make an unfriendly speech. There was also some support in the External Affairs Ministry for the view that India should act vigorously to protect Tibet. . . .'

There is little doubt, as Panikkar himself goes on to say, that but for the sudden Korean flare-up the influence of Sardar Patel, Acharya Kripalani and public reaction in India might have forced Nehru to take a stronger line in regard to Tibet. Patel and others were irritated not so much by the Chinese action in Tibet, and the implied threat to India, as by the high-handed decision taken by the Prime Minister and his Ambassador to Peking. But the Chinese intervention in the war in Korea, with the subtle flattery accorded to Panikkar by the Chinese Prime Minister in using him as his vehicle of communication, with the promise of even greater influence in this sphere of international involvement, stiffened the attitude of the left-wing element in Delhi and Krishna Menon was authorized to use India's influence at the U.N. to have the Tibetan appeal shelved.

With the acceptance of the Chinese policy on Tibet, Tibet's own fate was determined, but also it had shown China that India was prepared to go to considerable lengths in concessions and compromises in pursuit of her own policy of 'two-Great-Powers-in-Asia', and that this might be usefully exploited in fields other than those of brute force.

CHAPTER 9

Korea



It was in Korea that China found the evidence which showed new possibilities of India being exploited by more subtle methods. To appreciate fully the context in which this new policy of friendship with India was originated and developed it will be necessary to recapitulate some of the events leading up to the Korean War and subsequent Armistice proceedings. Before the outbreak of war in June 1950 Korea had been considered a difficult international problem, and the division of the country into North and South Korea was not only artificial but dangerous.

Krishna Menon, the Indian Chairman of the first U.N. Commission, said as early as February 1948 :

'If the Koreans are tenacious of independence, they are equally tenacious of their unity. Nothing is more remarkable than the homogeneity of the Korean nation. They belong to the same race, speak the same language and are proud of the same traditions. We are told by a distinguished Korean who appeared before us that, until recently, the terms "North Korea" and "South Korea", or "North Korean" and "South Korean", were simply unknown. Providence meant Korea to be one. The North cannot live without the South, nor can the South without the North. The South is agricultural and the North is industrial; the South is the bread-basket of Asia, the North is a reservoir of power. The South grows paddy, the North has iron, coal timber, and hydro-electric power. Korea is thus indivisible, whether you look at problems from an economic, political or historical point of view. Deep down in the heart of every Korean, whether in the North or in the South, is this longing for unity. Distracted and disillusioned, Koreans of all shades of opinion have been approaching us and telling us that "the United Nations is our last hope". If this last hope, too, is shattered, Korea may blow up; and it may be the beginning of a vaster cataclysm in Asia and in the world.'

Korea

Even before it became a tragic pawn in the Great Powers' 'cold war', and later a bloody battleground itself, Korea was involved with other Asian nations. The triangular struggle between China, Russia and Japan for control of Korea finally resolved itself decisively in favour of Japan as a consequence of the Russo-Japanese War, and the stage was set for the annexation of Korea in 1910. Between 1910 and the outbreak of World War II Japan used its control over the country to exploit its resources in favour of Japan.

It is no part of this record to go into the full background of U.N. and international participation in the discussions and, later, war over Korea but to restrict itself to the two chief Asian countries under discussion.

The possible intervention of China in the Korean War was first indicated by Chou En-lai himself to Sardar Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador, at an unusual midnight meeting. Panikkar, at that time somewhat fanatical, and with extreme left-wing sentiments, was an ideal choice from the Chinese standpoint. He was anxious to dissociate India from any Western bias, even economic, was easily flattered, and viewed himself not only as Indian Ambassador but anticipated Nehru's vision of India as a leading nation by thinking himself as representative of and spokesman for Asia. This impression arises time and again from his own autobiographical account of that period.

The reorganization of diplomatic life by the Communist Party created peculiar alignments and various levels of social and professional intercourse. For instance, in addition to the normal division between the Communist bloc diplomats and the representatives of the Western powers Peking had three further groups: those non-Communist countries who had recognized China and maintained diplomatic relations, those who had recognized but were still negotiating diplomatic representation, and those who had not recognized but had kept some official in charge of their affairs. Thus, the U.S. had no representative at all, and Britain only had a *chargé d'affaires*—and he was not recognized as 'diplomatic' but only accredited to the Foreign Office. To complicate matters further, there were also several missions which Peking did not recognize. But other missions, like the North Korean and Outer Mongolian, had staffs and recognition out of all proportion to their importance.

At the beginning of the U.N. intervention in Korea there was no unusual reaction in Peking—among the Communist officials at least, although there was a loud outcry against President Truman's action in sending the Seventh Fleet to take Taiwan under their protection.

On 1st July, 1950, the twenty-ninth anniversary of the Communist

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Party of China, India made the first move in Peking which was to bring them into such later prominence and controversy. On that date Panikkar called at the Foreign Office and had a long talk with Chang Han-fu, the Vice-Foreign Minister. Here, in Panikkar's own words, are the proposals which he put forward:

'I impressed on him the necessity of localizing the Korean conflict and put forward tentatively the suggestion that the question could probably be solved by referring it to the Security Council, with China taking her legitimate place, and consequently the Soviets giving up their boycott and returning to their vacant seat. I did not mention to him that Prime Minister Nehru had already moved Bevin in this connection. Chang Han-fu seemed to receive the suggestion very sympathetically and promised to let me know his Government's reaction soon.'

It is doubtful whether in normal diplomatic circumstances Panikkar's approach and proposals would have received serious consideration in Peking at all, for the Chinese Communist Party had up until this time been contemptuous of Delhi's pretensions to leadership in Asia, as has been noted, and were convinced that Indian officials were tied to Britain and America. But with neither of these two countries in official contact with Peking it gave India a place and prominence beyond her actual importance in her association with these countries. In the circumstances obtaining in Peking the Indian representative provided one important link with the West, and also, by stressing this recognition and ignoring the direct representative, it also served the Communist policy in insulting the Western countries as much as possible. Panikkar continues:

'On the 10th of July the Chinese Government officially replied to my representation expressing appreciation of the line that India had taken and conveying general agreement with our proposals. My first reaction was that perhaps a way had been found for settling the problem before it became too serious; but on second thoughts I realized that the proposal of seating Peking in the Security Council, however legitimate, reasonable, and logical would be resisted by the Americans since it would involve an immense loss of face to them. It was also obvious that in the face of definite American opposition Bevin would not be able to act. Still there was a chance, and on receiving the Chinese reactions Mr. Nehru formally put forward these proposals to Stalin and Acheson.'

Thus was born in precipitancy and *naïveté*—'my first reaction . . . on second thoughts . . . '—Delhi's decision to take up the cause of China's representation in the U.N. Why this should have relevance to the Korean conflict Panikkar does not make clear, for he had just

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favourably commented on the Chinese lack of interest in Korea and their commendable calm compared with the Western concern. The Russian reply was immediately favourable, accepting the Indian proposals 'on the indispensable condition of the Peking Government being given its seat on the Security Council.' However, Panikkar's optimism was tempered by the quickly acquired knowledge that Russia had only snatched at a choice piece of political propaganda; and also the belated knowledge that others would not see the relevance he did.

'That the Russians did not expect anything to come out of this was clear from the fact that *Tass* published the correspondence before Acheson had a chance to reply. Acheson of course turned down the proposal on the ground that the question of Peking's membership of the Security Council was unrelated to the Korean issue.'

However, Panikkar, encouraged by his first success, continued to pursue his line of persuasion with the Chinese; this time in respect of Taiwan. From his expressed attitude Panikkar shared the Chinese amused contempt at the contributions of the smaller Asian nations to the Korean conflict and superciliously dismissed the Philippine and Siam offers as evidence of self-interest, without any attempt at the time of providing an alternative policy from India. His whole approach was negative, with the only positive contribution the vague inducement of Chinese recognition in the U.N.—an offer that India was in fact in no position to make good.

'On the 22nd of August Chou En-lai sent for me, for a general discussion, and I took the opportunity of pressing home the desirability of restraint and moderation in regard to Taiwan, *especially when the whole world was inclined to view their case with favour.*'¹

At the same time, Panikkar contradicts himself, for in a recorded conversation with Chou En-lai at a later date, September 2nd, Panikkar and Mynt Thein, the Burmese Ambassador, in conversation with Chou, say:

'The conversation was mainly about China's relations with the outside world and we both emphasized that their present policies had only tended to isolate China from neutral opinion.'

This absorption with pro-Chinese policies, admiring the 'restraint and moderation' of the Chinese and playing down the 'bitter propaganda' against America, together with a personal opinion that Taiwan was a more dangerous situation than Korea, created in Panikkar such an attitude of mind that the announcement of Chinese

¹ *In Two Chinas*, p. 105. [Italics mine, but the opinion gives some idea of Panikkar's pompous approach; if he thought so then the whole world ought to think so, although it had no foundation in fact.]

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participation in the Korean conflict came as a considerable shock.

Without doubt it was this obvious desire to find favour in Peking's eyes, both personally and for India, as the spokesman of 'true' Asian opinion—India, Pakistan, Burma and Indonesia, as he catalogues—plus the admirable channel which he presented to Britain and the U.S., which led the astute Chou to send for Panikkar at midnight on October 2nd. In his account of the interview Panikkar writes:

'He [Chou] had the usual tea served and the first two minutes were spent in normal courtesies, apologies for disturbing me at an unusual hour, etc. Then he came to the point. He thanked Pandit Nehru for what he had been doing in the cause of peace, and said no country's need for peace was greater than that of China, but there were occasions when peace could only be defended by determination to resist aggression. If the Americans crossed the 38th Parallel China would be forced to intervene in Korea. Otherwise he was most anxious for a peaceful settlement, and generally accepted Pandit Nehru's approach to the question. I asked him whether he had already news of the Americans having crossed the borders. He replied in the affirmative but added that he did not know where they had crossed. I asked him whether China intended to intervene, if only the South Koreans crossed the Parallel. He was emphatic: "the South Koreans did not matter but American intrusion into North Korea would encounter Chinese resistance." '

The reference to 'Pandit Nehru's approach' was Nehru's message to Stalin and Acheson in which he suggested: 'India's proposal is to localize the conflict and to facilitate an early peaceful settlement by breaking the present deadlock in the Security Council so that the representatives of the People's Government of China can take their seat in the Council, the USSR can return to it, and whether within or through informal contacts outside the Council, the USA, the USSR, and China, with the help and co-operation of other peaceloving nations, can find a basis for terminating the conflict and for a permanent solution of the problem.'

Naturally, the Soviet Government gave indications that it would accept such a proposal, but the U.S. condemned it as an appeasement to aggression.

With China's intervention in Korea India redoubled her efforts to effect a cease-fire, and the Indian neutralist approach receiving such wide support in the U.N. from the newly-formed Asian-Arab bloc, it was decided in Delhi to use this support to project India on to the international scene as the voice of 'uncommitted' Asia seeking mediation and peace.

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Such a petition meant a violation of India's accepted responsibilities under the U.N. Charter, for India's new strategy could not both support the U.N. position and at the same time contribute troops as she should have done. However, considering the opportunity too great to miss, India opted out of her U.N. responsibilities and declined to send armed forces to Korea—on the rather specious ground that the structure and organization of her armed forces were designed for home defence and that her internal needs at that time were such that the government could not afford to send any of those forces to remote areas outside India.

When the U.S. presented a draft resolution to the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly stating that the Government of the People's Republic of China had engaged in aggression in Korea, the Indian delegation opposed the resolution on the ground that his Government was not convinced that the participation of the Chinese forces in the fighting in Korea was due to any aggressive intention, but was more probably due to the threats to the territorial integrity of China. He went on to add that in his Government's opinion no useful purpose would be served by branding the Peking Government as an aggressor. In the Indian Government's view the only result of such a resolution would be not merely to leave all Far Eastern problems unsolved, but also to make them insoluble.

By pursuing this policy with other Asian nations—which, without doubt, was Chou's intention from the beginning when he first assiduously courted the Indian Ambassador—Peking assured herself of an absolutely anti-Western position without losing the good opinion of an Asia still suspicious of all Communist régimes in the post-war resurgence of nationalism. With India's vocal support in the U.N., even if only by abstention, in resolutions branding her as an aggressor, she gained tremendous prestige in Asian eyes as a champion of anti-colonialist policies as represented by the intensely disliked President Syngman Rhee and his powerful Western supporters. India's 'peace efforts' on behalf of China were unsuccessful in 1950 and 1951, as far as stopping the fighting was concerned, but they were eminently successful in mobilizing the support of the Arab-Asian States behind her leadership.

When the 'cease-fire' did come to Korea it was not through any of India's efforts, or those of the Asian-Arab bloc, but largely as a result of the initiative of the two major powers and the warring groups themselves, when it was realized by both sides that the war would not achieve anything.

However, as proposals and counter-proposals were put forward and fell through, on 17th November 1952 the Indian delegate circu-

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lated a lengthy resolution, which had been drafted after exhaustive consultations with various Arab-Asian delegations. Great prominence for this resolution was achieved by the report, put out from the Asian-Arab bloc itself, that the proposals contained in it were framed with the knowledge, with the implied approval, of the Government of China.

In Peking Panikkar had become the leading diplomatic figure: all communications passed through him to the Chinese officials, whether they were from the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference or were an interpretation of his own of the likely American attitude in any given situation. By this time Panikkar had become more favourably inclined to China than ever, and among other reasons for this he gave as an example, the signing of a grain deal with China to help Indian famine conditions—using the fact of the deal to mock Western, Taiwan and Hong Kong reports of famine in China.

‘At this time we were negotiating for a grain deal with China,’ he records, ‘for milo and rice, a matter which caused some astonishment to Western nations, who had been continuously fed on propaganda about “famine” conditions in China. Hong Kong had been putting out stories of large-scale scarcity conditions in different parts of China as a result of Communist oppression, and the offer to sell food-grains to China had not, therefore, been taken seriously by the West. But—when the agreement was signed and the ships began loading in Dairen, they changed their tune. The American papers declared that it was a political deal, that China was depriving herself of food to make an impression on India.’

Despite Panikkar’s sarcastic disclaimers, this was what China had in mind, plus the fact that Chinese forces in Tibet were in a critical condition because of lack of food supplies there. Panikkar makes no mention of a condition of the agreement that a proportion of the grain sent to India should be sent to Tibet—where it was distributed exclusively to Chinese troops—presumably because this might have destroyed the point he was wishing to make; or perhaps again, as had happened in his earlier assessments of Chinese intentions, he simply overlooked the awkward indications as having no intrinsic importance.

But it was this intimate relationship with Peking’s rulers which gave Delhi an unparalleled opportunity to figure prominently in the U.N. and elsewhere, and brought nearer to realization Nehru’s coveted destiny for India in Asia and the world. Thus Krishna Menon, the Indian delegate, who piloted the resolution in the Political Committee and the plenary Session of the General Assembly, confidently stated that the Indian Government, in presenting what they thought

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might be a possible solution to the Korean problem, had acted largely on the basis of their judgment and the information they possessed.

On 5th June 1953 an agreement on repatriation of prisoners-of-war was finally concluded, and India was asked to play a major part in the implementation of this agreement. But although an agreement was reached on the repatriation of prisoners-of-war the settlement of other important disputes connected with Korea still raised many other problems, and on 27th July, 1953, an armistice was concluded in which it was stated, regarding the Political Conference:

‘In order to ensure the peaceful settlement of the Korean question the military commanders of both sides hereby recommend to the governments of the countries concerned on both sides that, within three months after the armistice is signed and becomes effective, a Political Conference of a higher level of both sides be held by representatives appointed respectively to settle through negotiations the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea, the peaceful settlement of the Korean question, etc.’

The U.S. suggested that such a Conference be held on October 15th at Honolulu, San Francisco or Geneva. The Chinese demurred and counter-suggested that several neutral Asian nations should also attend the Conference including ‘all nations on the two belligerent sides in Korea, including the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and South Korea, the USSR, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Burma.’ They also proposed that the Political Conference be held in New Delhi on 28th December 1953.

Peking had realized just how valuable India could be in reaching the other Asian nations who might in other circumstances, without so respected a sponsor, have shied away from so militant a neighbour with suspicion and distrust.

The Communist States were not the only supporters of India’s participation, the majority of the Political Committee also supporting India’s inclusion. But there was also considerable opposition to this proposal and rather than face a division in the Assembly India’s participation was withdrawn.

However, India remained as Chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in extremely difficult circumstances. President Syngman Rhee was bitterly hostile to the Indian custodian force and threatened to fight with them on several occasions, until the U.N. had to assume responsibility for the safety of Indian troops in Korea. By the end of 1953 the NNRC had concluded its work and India withdrew from Korea.

CHAPTER 10

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I have on several occasions mentioned the activities of the Afro-Asian bloc, and its growing influence in international affairs, and gradually this became a major consideration in the policies of India and China in their separate ambitions to lead Asia and influence world affairs.

When the Afro-Asian countries were struggling for freedom against their different colonialist overlords those who were against granting them freedom to rule themselves sought to maintain that they were incapable of doing so, whether the countries were India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Egypt or other countries. As was to be expected, the sceptics were to some extent proved correct and chaos and confusion prevailed in not a few of them when the protection of Western powers was removed. But within a short space of time a remarkable number of governments in most of these countries were able to ride out the initial major difficulties and maintain law and order in the domestic sphere, and some among them displayed a remarkable degree of independence in the formulation of their foreign policies also.

This led to a new development in international affairs, hastened by the urgency of finding solutions to the Korean crisis in Asia, the formulation of, first, an 'Arab-Asian' group, later extended to include an 'Afro-Asian' group. The basis of the unity of this new factor in the field of international relations was the continuous struggle which the peoples of this region were waging to extend and defend their freedom. India, Burma and Indonesia were determined to resist any encroachment on their territories and were very jealous of safeguarding their sovereign rights. In Indo-China the fight for freedom took the form of an armed struggle against the French. The underlying common factor in all these developments was the assertion of Asian

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and African nationalism against the Western domination of these two continents.

But India saw further than the mere present safeguarding of any sovereign rights, which she knew were no longer in jeopardy from Britain, to a whole new approach in international relationships in which India could play a leading part. Nehru's mystic vision regarding India's destiny coupled with the practical political possibilities of a 'positive neutralism' between the two post-war power blocs, took a new significance during and after the Korean War and Armistice.

This conviction was further strengthened when the majority of Asian nations followed India's leadership in the U.N. and found that while they might be defeated in a straight vote yet they could do more than make their presence felt. Further, Nehru's 'neutralist' policy had the advantage of being sufficiently elastic to include everything that was not in any given situation occupying the minds of the two major 'cold-war' camps. In his addresses to the Indian Parliament, and during his visits abroad, Nehru either deliberately or unconsciously blurred the distinction between the nationalist upsurge in Asia and the Communist revolution in China.

This nationalist resurgence was only partly political in character; it was also a revolt against existing economic and social conditions. Many organized political groups of the countries involved in the Afro-Asian bloc demanded a radical overhaul of the structure of the economic, social and political relationship which had existed in this part of the world for a very long time. And in India they found a country which had won its independence honourably, had retained the friendship and help of its former occupying power, had taken over the western concept of 'democracy' without losing national identity or prestige, and which had enhanced its claim to world recognition in the space of a few short years. They were thus ready to follow India's leadership.

The twelve states which were at first known as the members of the 'Arab-Asian' group were: India, Indonesia, Burma, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. It was not a rigidly organized or even fully integrated group and they took different stands on certain matters—for instance, Philippines and Thailand might vote with them in matters relating to the colonial domination of Asia and Africa. Later, Ethiopia and Liberia joined the group and the new name 'Afro-Asian' group gradually replaced the previous 'Arab-Asian'.

Towards the end of the Korean War, and following on it, India's foreign policy took a new direction. There was no shift in the basic

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objectives of her foreign policy as outlined earlier but very definitely in 1952–53 India's relations with the major powers took a new turn.

This important shift in India's foreign policy was directed towards a closer association with China than had hitherto been contemplated, and, by implication, with Russia and the Communist bloc. Not that Nehru was becoming converted to Communism, but Delhi had seen the distinct advantage of being friendly with China and the added prestige it gave to India in international affairs. Through being friendly with China, India would rank as a major voice in the councils of the world far beyond her political, economic, or military importance, and through this association would also gain prestige in the eyes of the Afro-Asian group. At the same time by 'leaning to one side' in this way she could expect a greater amount of tolerance from the West, for her close association with China would make her an admirable ally in times of crisis.

Thus there emerged from India's previous policy of neutralism, which was simply a 'non-alignment' with either power bloc, a 'dynamic' form of neutralism which was held forth as being a third possibility in a world of bipolar distribution, an ambition to construct an 'area of peace' in Asia separate from either of the two blocs but making its own positive contribution to international relationships, as had been shown in Korea.

Where this policy lost virtue, both among the Western powers and in Communist eyes, and which Nehru himself did not see—and still has not seen—was that it did not offer a fundamentally different course of action from those pursued by the major powers; partly because what India had to offer was really only an Indianized form of western liberal democracy and partly because India was still not inherently powerful enough to accomplish this anyway. The alternative which Nehru offered to the Afro-Asian bloc was strictly limited to shuttling between the two policies of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., but its attractiveness lay in showing the smaller nations the possibility of refusing to be entirely attached to the events set in motion by the activities of the two major powers. And India's example was effective because she was already important enough through her associations in both camps to be worth wooing by the major powers.

During the Korean War India had played a major role as an intermediary, though, as has been noted, her commitments under the U.N. Charter had to be sacrificed in the process. That India herself was conscious of the loss of virtue was evident from the attempt to define 'dynamic neutralism' with its pro-Communist overtones as 'a willingness to compromise for the sake of peace'.

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In December 1952 Delhi concluded a five-year trade agreement with Russia. It listed the goods which were to be exported by each country and laid down the procedure for trade and shipping and financial settlement. In 1953, Russian officials and the Russian Press began to praise India's policy of promoting peace in the world.

Delhi's relations with Peking were similarly expanded and deepened. In the international sphere India continued to champion the rights of the Chinese People's Government.

In the spring of 1952 an India-China Friendship Association was formed, and this was followed by a spate of delegations of one kind or another to and from both countries. Trade Union delegations went to China for the May Day celebrations, an official Indian Government's Cultural Goodwill Mission was led by Prime Minister Nehru's sister, Mme Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, and a sixty-member delegation went to the Asian and Pacific Peace Conference in September 1952. A jurist's mission led by the Vice-Chairman of the All India Association of Democratic Lawyers spent a month in China and returned to praise the Chinese judicial system highly.

In return, a Chinese cultural delegation of fifteen scholars, artists and scientists led by Ting Si-lin, Vice-Minister for Cultural Affairs, came to India for a five-week visit—the first visit of a Chinese delegation to a non-Communist country. An Indian Film Festival was held throughout China and attended, according to the Chinese report, by three million people in China's twenty major cities. A student exchange scheme was inaugurated and the Chinese had an important exhibition at the India Industries Fair in New Delhi. But it was significant that while the Indian attitude was enthusiastic to the point of infatuation the Chinese attitude was cautious and tentative and only contributed sufficient to keep the interest this side of respectability and reproach.

In a speech in Parliament, defining India's foreign policy on 17th February 1953, Nehru outlined India's aims as follows:

'It would be absurd for a number of countries in Asia to come together and call themselves a third force or a third power in a military sense. It may, however, have a meaning in another sense. Instead of calling it a third force or a third bloc, it can be called a third area, an area which—let us put it negatively first—does not want war, works for peace in a positive way and believes in co-operation. . . . Those countries who do not want to align themselves with either of the two powerful blocs and who are willing to work for the cause of peace, should by all means come together; and we, on our part, should do all we can to make this possible. That is our

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general policy and I think we should follow it without too much shouting.’¹

Whether Delhi would have accepted this new line so wholeheartedly if Sardar Patel had not tragically died is a matter for fascinating speculation. He had been against Nehru’s policy of doing nothing about the invasion of Tibet and this new alignment with pro-Communist forces would not have been to his liking at all. But he was dead, and Nehru’s control was complete.

It was this domination by Nehru which coloured all of Delhi’s thinking. He was head and shoulders above anyone else among the leading officials, and no one could approach him on questions of foreign policy. With India already a powerful voice in international affairs through his direction of policy it was easier to sit back and bask in the approbation of the other Asian countries rather than criticize the direction in which the policies were taking India. There were a few dissident voices such as Jayaprakash Narayan and Acharya Kripalani, but they were in opposition with considerable nation-wide respect but no great support behind them.

Yet for all the supposed harmony between India and China there was still suspicion about India in China and a tendency to denigrate Delhi’s actions on the slightest opportunity. For instance, on 22nd May 1953 the Peking *People’s Daily* carried an article which read:

‘Obviously a country not economically independent cannot be considered an industrialized country. Stalin has given the example of India, where there was general industrial development, but which could not be considered industrialized. India has many industrial undertakings; industry continues to be developed there, but only such enterprises which do not produce capital goods, and such capital goods as are needed and imported from Britain. Accordingly India’s industry is totally subservient to Britain’s industry. . . . India’s economy is still a colonial economy, and not an industrialized economy.’

Normally, India would have viewed with great suspicion the rise of China as a major world power, particularly in the circumstances attending upon Tibet and Korea. But Delhi was influenced by Nehru’s view that the Communist revolution in China was part of the nationalist upsurge going on all over Asia—and, in addition, many Indians who would have had little time for Communism had sympathy with an Asian régime which could hurl defiance at the Western powers.

A distinguished Indian, writing in *Foreign Affairs Reports* at this time, could say:

¹ *Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru: 1949–1953*, pp. 236–7.

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'It is owing to the similarity of the historical processes by which they achieved their independence that India and China, in spite of the difference of ideology, have . . . a common approach to Asian problems. Freedom from foreign control, the unification of the country, the establishment of a single, unchallenged authority over the entire territory of the State—these were the political objectives of the two revolutions. . . . While India chose the liberal democratic way, as a result of historical circumstances, China preferred the Communist system: but this difference in ideology does not change the basic fact that both represent the spirit of Asian resurgence. Their resentment of the great powers' reluctance to allow Asian problems to be settled by Asians, their resistance to Western attempts to build up spheres of influence in Asia, stem from their common background.'

It was this attitude in India of finding points of agreement—cultural, religious, historical, political—with China, with the heady prospect of a major 'area of peace' to influence the Western powers, which influenced her approach towards the war in Indo-China. In the liquidation of the French power in that country by the Communist-led Viet Minh forces, they saw the success of another Asian country's revolt against Western dominance, rather than an ominous step of Communist expansionism in Asia.

At the end of World War II, as has already been noted elsewhere, France wanted to resume its colonial status in Indo-China, with only a few minor modifications, but was unable to do so because of the transfer of authority by the Japanese to the Indo-Chinese themselves and the delay in the Allied forces taking over. After a series of disagreements with the Viet Nam authorities the civil war continued, while in the north the Communist Viet Minh, led by Ho Chi Minh, consolidated their power. The Bao Dai 'Provisional' Central Government of Viet Nam, which asserted authority over the pre-war protectorates of Annam and Tongking and the colony of Cochin China, was supported, after its institution, by France as an 'associated state', in the conflict with the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, which was controlled by the Viet Minh party, and which was popularly referred to as Viet Minh.

The Communist victory in China, followed by the intervention in the Korean War, brought the Viet Minh into territorial contact with a successful, ambitious Communist-controlled State which could assist it in its designs against the anti-Communist Viet Nam State, and this brought the struggle in Indo-China out of the context of purely colonial war into that of the larger international conflict.

With victories against the U.N. forces in Korea still fresh in their

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minds, and an exultant following throughout the whole of China because of the new pride in their country, the Chinese Communists were in no mood to retire from the forefront of international limelight. The rulers in Peking, turning from Tibet and Korea, extended recognition to the Ho Chi Minh government, followed by Moscow, and thus legitimized assistance given to it. America and other Western States recognized the Viet Nam 'associated' State, and the stage was set for another battle in Asia. However, India, Indonesia and other Asian 'neutralist' States refused to recognize the Bao Dai régime, because it was still identified with colonialism, and thus by inference approved of Peking's decision.

While the armistice negotiations were dragged out in Korea, China increased her assistance to the Viet Minh régime on such a scale that the latter was able to mount extensive military operations.

When the U.S. refused full support to France under the pressure of Viet Minh attacks and successful advance, France asked that the question of an armistice in Viet Nam should be placed on the agenda of the Geneva Conference of 1954, called initially to seek a solution of the Korean problem. The negotiations at Geneva resulted in an Agreement by which Viet Nam was partitioned at approximately the 17th parallel, the territory to the north coming under the authority of the Viet Minh, and that to the south under the Viet Nam. Elections were to be held throughout Viet Nam in two years' time under the supervision of a neutral committee composed of Poland, Canada and India. The Agreement represented a considerable victory for Communist China, and a further advance by India in the international acceptance of her 'mediatory' role.

This was the important factor, of course: that India was once again launched into playing a major role in Asia—and that in a country where, historically, she had always been opposed to China.

For about 2,000 years the Hindu State of Champa had existed side by side with the Sinicized State of Annam, with practically no cultural exchange. But there were very many wars, resulting, in 1471, in the capture of Champa's capital city of Vijaya by the Annamese who, after massacring 40,000 people and taking 30,000 prisoners, annexed Champa to Annam. Thus China exerted her domination over the area except for periods when weak dynasties ruled in China.

When Nehru visited Viet Nam he met Ho Chi Minh, the President of Viet Minh, on 17th October, 1954, and after discussions the following statement was issued:

'President Ho Chi Minh met the Prime Minister of India this evening and they discussed matters of mutual concern. They were

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both interested in the full implementation of the Geneva Agreements relating to Indo-China and President Ho Chi Minh assured the Prime Minister that he was giving and would continue to give his full co-operation to the International Commission to implement the agreements. He was anxious to solve all remaining problems peacefully and co-operatively so that the countries of Indo-China may live independently and prosper without any external interference. He believed in the five principles which had been agreed upon by the Prime Ministers of China and India and wished to apply them in the relation of Laos and Cambodia as well as with other countries. The Prime Minister of India agreed that the application of these principles would remove difficulties and apprehensions and help in bringing about friendly relations and peaceful co-operation between various countries. . . .’

The ‘five principles’ referred to in the communiqué were first announced in the preamble to the agreement on trade and intercourse between India and China, in April 1954, and publicly recognized as a mutual policy of both countries, first in Delhi then in Bandung. They signalled a new era in Sino-Indian relationships—or, to be more accurate, a new approach by China in its relationships with India and the South-East Asian countries, for it was no new foreign policy but a fresh tactic in its original strategy to be the liberator and leader of Asia. The proof of this assertion will be seen in later developments.

In the course of this new approach, and after the success of India’s ‘friendship for China’ line—in Tibet, Korea and Indo-China particularly—Nehru was invited to Peking in October, 1954. During this visit he was given a mammoth reception by the leaders and people of New China. But even then the Peking officials were not above using skilled duplicity to further their own ultimate ambitions, and to make certain that Nehru was not just friendly disposed towards the new régime but committed to approval of its policies as well. William Stevenson, correspondent of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, who was present in Peking at that time, records in his book *The Yellow Wind*, how skilfully Nehru was manœuvred into meeting and greeting at a public reception the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, also in Peking at that time. He writes that for a time Nehru moved among the dignitaries in the usual fashion. Then when he had been guided to a certain part of the room there was a sudden commotion, guests were quickly moved aside, and the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, surrounded by the leading Peking officials, were suddenly shown to have appeared. So had scores of photographers and newsmen, and after one surprised look at the dramatic nature of the tableaux, Nehru

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was photographed in amiable conversation with the two Tibetan dignitaries and Peking leaders. It was a small incident in its way, but it showed how careful and calculating the Chinese were to make sure that Nehru was committed.

A few months previously, on 19th April 1954, an agreement had been signed by the two countries settling the question of 'the Tibet region of China'. From December 1953 until then discussions and negotiations had been going on between the two countries, in the light of India's and China's new relationship, and agreement had been arrived at in April. In the text of the communiqué which was issued on 29th April 1954 the phrase 'the Tibet region of China' appeared for the first time.

The five principles on which both countries agreed to negotiate were listed as (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful co-existence.

Speaking of this Treaty in Parliament on 15th May 1954, Nehru said: 'A very important event to which I would like to draw the attention of the House is the agreement between India and China in regard to Tibet. That agreement deals with a large number of problems each one of them not very important in itself, perhaps, but important from the point of view of our trade, our pilgrim traffic, our trade posts, our communications there, and the rest. It took a considerable time to arrive at this agreement, not because of any major conflict or difficulty but because the number of small points were so many and had to be discussed in detail. The major thing about this agreement to which I would like to draw the attention of the House is the preamble to the agreement. . . . [He then went on to list the five basic principles.] These principles indicate the policy that we pursue in regard to these matters not only with China but with any neighbour country, or for that matter any other country. What is more, it is a statement of wholesome principles, and I imagine that if these principles were adopted in the relations of various countries with one another a great deal of the trouble of the present-day world would disappear.

'It is a matter of importance to us, of course, as well as, I am sure, to China that these countries, which have now almost about 1,800 miles of frontier, should live in terms of peace and friendliness and should respect each other's sovereignty and integrity, should agree not to interfere with each other in any way, and not to commit aggression on each other. By this agreement, we ensure peace to a very large extent in a certain area in Asia. I would earnestly wish

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that this area of peace could be spread over the rest of Asia and indeed over the rest of the world. . . .’

The Prime Minister did not have it all his own way. The leader of the Opposition, Acharya Kripalani, who had always opposed the Government’s policy in relation to China, bitterly denounced the agreement:

‘Tibet is culturally more akin to India than it is to China, at least Communist China, which has repudiated all its old culture. I consider this as much a colonial aggression on the part of China as any colonial aggression indulged in by Western nations. . . . In this age of democracy when we hold that all people should be free and equal, I say China’s occupation of Tibet is a deliberate act of aggression. . . . In international politics, when a buffer state is abolished by a peaceful nation, that nation is considered to have aggressive designs on its neighbours. It is also said that in the new map of China other border territories like Nepal, Sikkim, etc., figure. This gives us an idea of the aggressive designs of China.’

But the few opposing voices in the Indian Parliament could do nothing to hinder the agreement going through, when Nehru himself was prepared to go on record as stating:

‘[Several members] say that we have shown great weakness, that we have committed the mistake of admitting that China has full authority over Tibet or that China is controlling Tibet. . . . In my opinion, we have done no better thing than this since we became independent. I have no doubt about this. . . . This thing that we have done with respect to China, about this I have no doubts of any kind. . . .’

Thus was born, in language reminiscent of Sydney Carton, the famous Indian policy of ‘Panch Sheela’, of ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence,’ which Acharya Kripalani apostrophized as ‘born in sin’.

It was shortly after this that Nehru paid his visit to China where he was fêted and praised and wooed. He was impressed with what he saw in China, the remarkable improvements which had taken place in the life of the people in so short a time, the feeling of pride and nationalism everywhere, the enthusiasm, but he was not swept off his feet by it all. Commenting generally on his impressions he said that while China and India had similar problems of vast numbers of poor people, large areas of flood and famine, and so on, China’s government of ‘democratic centralism’ was constituted to provide much speedier answers to its problems by its very nature than the slower processes chosen by India’s federal autonomous provinces and parliamentary democracy.

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When Chou En-lai paid a return visit to India he received as tumultuous a welcome as Nehru had in China. It was during this visit that there was born the phrase, 'Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai'—'Indians and Chinese are brothers'—and so wide and deep was the acclaim that every doubtful voice was stilled. Peking and Delhi, to all outward appearances, were like, in the words of the Psalmist, 'righteousness and peace have kissed each other',—although it could hardly have been said that 'mercy and truth are met together'.

But it was at Bandung that the seal was set on the friendship; that both Delhi and Peking convinced Asia and Africa, if not the world, that they had found a flawless political formula in the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence' that was about to usher in an Afro-Asian Utopia which would be the envy and admiration of all countries of the world.

The intoxication set in from the first day when President Soekarno of Indonesia proclaimed to the world the new spirit of resurgent Asia in exciting words for Afro-Asian countries:

'Let us not be bitter about the past, but let us keep our eyes firmly to the future. Let us remember that no blessing of God is so sweet as life and liberty. Let us remember that the stature of all mankind is diminished so long as nations or parts of nations are still unfree. Let us remember that the highest purpose of man is the liberation of man from his bonds of fear, his bonds of poverty, the liberation of man from the physical, spiritual and intellectual bonds which have long stunted the development of humanity's majority. And let us remember, Sisters and Brothers, that for the sake of all that, we Asians and Africans must be united.'

It was evangelical prose suited to the spirits of the representatives meeting on their own for the first time, and it continued in the committee discussions on economic and cultural affairs. But when it came to the problem of colonialism, or 'dependent peoples' as it had been cautiously termed, the 'ba' burst' as they say in Scotland. In the condemnation of colonialism, in its accepted sense of the rule of one people by another, everyone was agreed and happy. Support was promised to those still struggling to attain their independence from Western powers and names were named freely—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, West Irian. But when the Ceylon Prime Minister, followed by a few others, named the new colonialism in the U.S.S.R. and China, there was, to change the metaphor, more than a small rift in the lute.

This might have been anticipated by the Indian delegation, for only a few months previously Nehru had stated in Parliament that 'the crisis of the time in Asia is colonialism versus anti-colonialism. Let us be quite clear about it.' Yet when this important problem arose

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for discussion at the first Asian Conference it was India herself who emerged as the country most unclear about it—and all because, like the clergyman's errant daughter, in her relationships with China her practices did not square with her principles. Here is Prime Minister Nehru attempting to state India's position for not including the Soviet Union and China under the charges of colonialism:

'It appeared to us that irrespective of whatever views may be held in regard to the conditions prevailing in these countries, or of relationships that may exist between the Soviet Union and them, they could in no ways be called colonies nor could their alleged problems come under the classification of colonialism. To so include them in any general statement on behalf of the Conference could be accomplished only by acceptance by a great number of the participants of the Conference, including ourselves, of political views and attitudes which are not theirs. It is no injustice to anyone concerned to say that this controversy reflects a projection of the cold war affiliation into the arena of the Asian-African Conference. . . .'

However, whatever it meant it was very clear to Mr. Nehru. In the end a 'formulation which did not do violence to the firmly held opinion of all concerned' was produced and passed.

But the most important decision of the Conference was the 'Declaration on World Peace and Co-operation'. This resounding title was given to the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence' which had been the foundation of the agreement between India and China over the question of Tibet. But if the acceptance of India's 'Panch Sheela' was a triumph for Delhi, and Mr. Nehru in particular, the personal triumph belonged to Mr. Chou En-lai. Throughout the Conference he was at his most charming, most moderate, most considerate. China had evil intentions towards none, he declared, and had nothing to hide. Anyone was welcome to visit China to see how they were tackling the problems facing every country in Asia—even their enemies were welcome. To show that China had no designs on other countries in Asia he offered discussions on the retention or loss of Chinese nationality on the part of the 20 millions of Chinese living outside China in Asia. He even made an announcement that China was willing to enter into direct negotiations with the U.S. to discuss the question of relaxing tension in the Formosa area.

India, quick to see another advantage in her new foreign policy as intermediary, took up the last point eagerly and Nehru offered Krishna Menon as mediator to go to Peking for further talks on this subject.

No wonder that in his report to Parliament Mr. Nehru could declare:

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‘The Bandung Conference has been a historic event. . . . Bandung proclaimed the political emergence in world affairs of over half the world’s population. It presented no unfriendly challenge or hostility to anyone but proclaimed a new and rich contribution. Happily that contribution is not by way of threat of force or the creation of new Power blocs. Bandung proclaimed to the world the capacity of the new nations of Asia and Africa for practical idealism, for we conducted our business in a short time and reached agreements of practical value, not quite usual with international conferences. . . .’

While there was little doubt about the ‘idealism’ there ought to have been less *naïveté* about the ‘practical idealism’. But Delhi was intoxicated with the vision of India’s burgeoning influence in world affairs and was in no mood to notice the many possible disillusionments ahead.

For having reaped all the possible benefits from Bandung, Peking showed how little she intended altering her original strategy to be the real leader—and absolute ruler—in Asia. India could bask in a temporary euphoria, but China would take advantage of this to consolidate her hold on what had already been gained and advance into other territories as well, the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence’ notwithstanding.

Within two months of the Bandung Conference Chinese soldiers had crossed India’s borders in their first probing invasion on to Indian territory and were preparing to militarily infiltrate Burma, and to politically isolate Burma and Nepal from Indian influence.

CHAPTER 11

Nepal



Until 1954 Nepal, with Tibet and Bhutan, was one of the last few remaining 'closed countries' of the world. This was due not so much to internal political decisions, nor even, as in Tibet, to international considerations of the advantages of having Nepal as a 'buffer State', but from physical and geographical reasons.

The exact origin of the word 'Nepal' is not known but one theory is that it is derived from the name of a celebrated ascetic 'Ne', and 'pala', meaning 'cherished' or 'looked after'; thus 'the country looked after by Ne'.

At the present day the word Nepal is used by modern geographers to denote all the country lying within the present boundaries of the Gurka Kingdom, but to the Gurkhas themselves Nepal means only the Nepal Valley and it was thus used up to 1768, the 'King of Nepal' reigning up to that time exercising sovereignty only over one of the three Principalities, or City States, of the Valley—Khatmandu, Bhatgaon or Patan—and no more. From 1768 the Kingdom was expanded, by warlike chiefs and petty kings leading their clans and tribes, to include the wide regions recognized today of about 520 miles in length and 100 miles in depth, from the Sarda, tributary of the Ganges, to Sikkim.

Four great rivers, and the jutting mountain ranges from the Himalayan peaks to the plains, split the country cross-wise into almost impenetrable areas. This is further complicated by a series of four 'terraces', or four natural steps from the plains to the peaks running the whole length of the country from north to east. The four great rivers are: in the north, Karnal, better known in India as the Gogra; in the middle, the Gandak; then the Baghmata in the Valley of Nepal itself; and in the east, the Kosi. The four 'terraces' climb from the plains of India to the peaks of the Himalayas; first there is the flat

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plain extending to the foothills; then the 'Terai' with its heavy jungles, alluvial plains and occasional clearings, rising up to about 1,000 feet; then the 'trans-Himalaya' with the great central trough of valleys and hills between the lower and inner ranges, varying in altitude up to 15,000 feet, and containing some of the best pasture and agricultural land; finally, the 'inner Himalaya' so called because of the geographical situations of the higher border ranges and peaks within Nepal territory, with peaks varying from 17,000 to over 29,000 feet on Everest. In addition to the fifty-one peaks between 23,000 to 29,000 there are an estimated further thirty-eight other unclimbed and unnamed peaks from 22,000 feet and upwards.

As with Tibet and Bhutan the early history of Nepal is shrouded in doubt and uncertainty. Daniel Wright in his *History of Nepal* drily comments that 'Baron Munchausen himself would have been considered a marvel of accuracy and truthfulness' in comparison with some of the Nepali writers of history.

Although the early history of Nepal is so veiled in mythology there is little doubt that what is now the Khatmandu Valley was at one time a huge lake. The valley itself is about 242 square miles at an altitude of 4,500 feet above sea level, surrounded by lofty peaks and the eternally snow-covered backbone of the world's highest mountains in the background. There is geological evidence that this area was at one time a huge lake although there is as yet no explanation of what caused it to disappear, but the early Hindus and Buddhists attribute the formation of the Valley to two deities, Krishna and Manjusri, who are supposed to have cut a pass through the mountains which encircled the Valley with one blow of a sword and so allowed the water to escape.

This miracle apart, what is significant about these two deities is the name of the second, Manjusri, which is taken from 'Sri,' or 'venerable one', and 'Manchu' from Manchu, or Manchuria. Manjusri is believed to have come from China on a pilgrimage at some unknown date B.C. accompanied by one Dharmakar, who was, by virtue of his extreme piety, known as 'The Treasure of the Law'. Manjusri is supposed to have established Dharmakar as the first known King of Nepal. Between them they organized the country entirely upon Chinese lines, the traces of which are still discernible not only in the knowledge, commerce and culture of the country but even in the buildings. Local Nepalese history is very obscure at this point, but some historians hold that the Newars, the chief and most gifted tribe in the Valley of Nepal, are descendants of those who accompanied Manjusri, a tribe either from Tibet or China. It is of interest to note that the very distinctive style of building and ornament in the Nepal

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Valley is the so-called pagoda style. One authority, Sylvain Levi, claims that this style originated in the early wooden architecture of India which preceded the stone monuments and that the Newars copied this and they introduced it into Tibet and China, in their travels and residence in these countries.

On the death of Dharmakar many kings and rajas succeeded one another from many different parts of India. The next one of note to Dharmakar is Raja Dharma Datta who came from Madras with a conquering army. He is supposed to have introduced the four castes of Hindus into Nepal, and to have built the most famous and venerated of the Hindu shrines in the Valley, the temple of Pashupati.

There followed then a period of historical confusion which bears no relation to events in neighbouring countries, until the seventh century. At this time, A.D. 637, a famous Chinese traveller visited India and, writing of Nepal, he said:

‘The region of Ni-po-lo (Nepal) is to be found in the centre of snow mountains. Its soil abounds in flowers and fruit, and it has a cold climate. The dwellers in Ni-po-lo are crude and of a savage nature, they are not interested in the true faith, or in justice, or in literature, but they are very skilled in the arts. Their houses are made of wood, painted and carved; they like to bathe and are fond of drama, astrology and bloody sacrifices. Irrigation makes the soil very valuable. Among them there are people belonging to the true faith and heretics. Buddhism and Brahminism flourish. Buddhist shrines and the temples of Hindu gods are close together. Trade is prosperous and business well organized and directed. . . . Recently there was a King named Yang-chou-fa-hun [Chinese pronunciation of ‘Amsu Varman’] who was famous for his knowledge and wisdom. He was himself the author of a treatise on the science of sound. He held both science and personal virtue in great esteem and his reputation was well known in all places.’

Amsu Varman is believed to have died in A.D. 641 and the seventh king of the dynasty, Yarendra Deva, was noted for two events. He was responsible for bringing to Nepal Machendra, who was to become the patron saint of the valley, and it was during his reign that a Chinese Mission visited Nepal for the first time, in A.D. 643.

This first Chinese Mission was hospitably received, but four years later a second mission, under the leadership of Wang Hieun Tse, was subjected to such insolent treatment while passing through India that China appealed to Nepal and Tibet for their help. This was promptly given and the combined forces of Nepalis and Tibetans defeated the Indian. It was at this time that Tibet’s famous warrior-king Srong-

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tsen Gampo married a Nepalese princess, following on his subjection of all country right up to the River Ganges.

Throughout the reign of Narendra the country was visited by pilgrims from China; Wang Hiuen Tse is known to have returned, and the Nepalese King sent presents and messages of good-will to the Emperor of China.

From this time until the thirteenth century there is another period of confusion. But in the eleventh century Nanya Deva, a Rajput ruler, conquered the whole of Nepal and set up his court at Bhatgaon from which he ruled over the other two capital cities of the valley, Khatmandu and Patan. He is said to have established a colony of soldiers who had accompanied him from the Nair country in the Malabar district of South India, and it is from these that the tribe of Newars who form the bulk of the inhabitants of the Nepal Valley now claim to trace their descent.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the British under Clive were establishing themselves in Bengal, the fluctuating area in the Himalayas known as Nepal gradually broke up into a number of petty principalities and small independent states. The nature of the terrain kept the tribes fighting amongst themselves in the mountains, and the animal-infested jungles and marshy malarial land of the Terai in the lower foothills effectively isolated them from any possible outside interference by Indian Rajas or British troops, even had it been contemplated.

This isolation from the plains of India had not only produced a proud independence of character among the mountain tribes, but also, as knowledge of the Mohammedan and, in their turn, the British, conquests of India infiltrated the country, it bred a contempt for the 'weaklings' of the plains. Consequently, the mountain tribes developed their own customs, and even the Hinduism which had been introduced centuries previously developed characteristics which were never recognized by the Hindus of India. The substance of Hinduism was retained but many observances considered essential by the orthodox Hindu were openly disregarded by the Nepalese tribes. Thus they felt no impulse to interfere on behalf of those whom they did not consider 'fellow-countrymen' on the plains when the British swept on to conquer the country.

But while external politics on their boundaries with India left them unmoved a series of events inside the country began, with an ever-widening circle of repercussion, which brought the last of the Newar Kings in the Valley of Nepal to appeal to the British invader of India for help. This was the rise of the state and tribe of Gurkha and the origin of the modern Kingdom of Nepal.

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By the eighteenth century the country, except for the Khatmandu Valley, had broken up into almost as many tribes as there were natural geographical divisions. The four great rivers mentioned earlier contained within their mountain and valley divisions a proliferation of Lordships, or States. The Gogra Basin in the west had twenty-two Lordships—twenty-two little States—in the hills; the Gandak Basin contained twenty-four Lordships. Both the Twenty-two Lordships and Twenty-four Lordships were nominally subject to the Raja of Jumla but this was rarely recognized and they were virtually independent and constantly at war with each other.

Among the Twenty-four Lordships was the Lordship of Gurkha which was to emerge as the greatest and most famous of all.

Despite the comparatively recent claims of the Newar tribe to originate in South India there is more ground for believing them to have come with the much earlier Chinese incursion under Manjusri. Certainly they would appear to be the original settlers in the Khatmandu Valley and they are responsible for all the architectural and artistic monuments scattered throughout the valley, many of them going back beyond the time of Indian invasions of the valley. Then, too, they were definitely Mongolian in appearance: short, yellow, with prominent cheek bones, black hair and scanty beard. They are Buddhist by religion although with a considerable amount of Hinduism, seen particularly in the prevalence of the caste system.

With these different tribes and their multifarious sub-divisions scattered throughout the tangle of well-nigh impenetrable jungles, valleys, forests and mountains, history until the eighteenth century was more or less confined to the Khatmandu Valley, or the Valley of Nepal, with the three city States there. The valley from east to west is about twenty miles long and from north to south about fifteen miles broad, varying at times as mountain spurs run into the plain and enclose side valleys. The valley contains two rivers, the Bagmati and Vishnumati, and several large streams, and when the two large rivers unite just to the south of Khatmandu they form a considerable river. The rich alluvial soil of the valley was heavily cultivated and crops could be taken from two to four times a year. Khatmandu, the present capital of Nepal, is the most recent of the three main cities, and stands near the centre of the valley with Patan two miles to the south-east and Bhatgaon eight miles to the east. It is situated at the junction of the two rivers and is said to have originally been founded in A.D. 723 as Yindesi or Kantipur; the present name is taken from 'Khat-mandu', the building, or temple, of wood—a lodging-house set up for holy men by the king in 1596.

With all this territory annexed and brought under the control of

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the Gurkha dynasty the ambitious Gurkha ruler turned towards the east and the north; and it was probably to ensure the neutrality, if not the active co-operation of Britain, that the King of Nepal agreed to sign the treaty of 1791 with Britain. For some years previous to this the Gurkhas had been encroaching on territories to the east and north. In 1774 they had attacked Sikkim and annexed part of the western province of that country. In 1788, on various pretexts, they occupied some Tibetan districts near the Nepal frontier. The Chinese Emperor sent his aide-de-camp and two other generals to reinforce the Tibetan armies, but instead of fighting the Gurkhas the generals persuaded the Tibetans to make a secret arrangement with the Gurkhas, promising to pay them annually a large sum and thus buying them off. They reported to the Emperor that the Gurkha chief wished only to send a tribute-mission to China and that they had settled the little frontier incident without the loss of a single soldier.

When the Tibetans failed to pay the annual tribute money the Gurkhas, emboldened by their earlier successes and by reports of the wealth to be found in Tibet, marched on Tibet in 1791 and quickly conquered the south-western districts, including the Panchen Lama's seat, Tashi-lunpo Monastery, in the town of Shigatse. The Tibetans had been persuaded not to fight because of an oracular prediction that it was useless to do so since the gods had determined that the Gurkhas must win.

However, when the Emperor of China received the information that the Gurkhas were masters of western Tibet he ordered an expeditionary force to be sent immediately. When the Gurkhas heard the report of an army of 70,000 Chinese advancing towards them they retreated towards their own frontiers. The Chinese army caught up with them and easily overcame the Gurkha troops, advancing to Nawakot, within one day's march of Khatmandu. At this point, fearing that, between a combination of China, Sikkim and Bhutan, they might be left without any territory at all, the Nepal Darbar, or Government, agreed to sign a treaty with China, and submitted to a treaty of the most humiliating terms. The Gurkhas undertook to restore all their plunder and to send a tribute mission every five years to Peking. It was stipulated that Nepal's tribute status was to be like that of various other dependencies of China, such as Annam, Korea, Siam and Burma, and an inscribed stone was set up in Lhasa to commemorate the conquest. (See Sir Charles Bell: *Tibet Past and Present*, Appendix III).

On receiving the news of the Chinese advance on their frontier the Gurkhas had immediately appealed to Britain for help and a Mission under a Colonel Kirkpatrick was sent to Nepal. By the time it

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arrived, however, the Chinese had reached Nawakot in 1792, the treaty had been signed, and the British Mission's journey proved futile. But a commercial treaty, already mentioned, was signed with Nepal.

In October 1801, a new Treaty of Commerce and Alliance was signed by the British and Nepalese authorities, and a British Resident was appointed for the first time at the Nepalese court. There were many objections to this officer's appointment, and, since he could do little anyway, he was finally withdrawn from the country in 1803.

Next year Lord Wellesley abrogated the treaty between the two countries because of the lack of co-operation on the part of Nepal. Following on the dissolution of the treaty, and though an attempt was made at negotiation in 1810, relations between the two countries steadily became worse. Various rulers and regents in Nepal came and went and as each gained power he—and, sometimes, she, for Ranis as well as Rajas intrigued for office—sought to extend Nepal's territory in all directions. A Gurkha army had advanced through the northern mountains and conquered and annexed Kumaon and Garhwal, and established Gurkha authority right to the banks of the Sutlej. This expansion caused the British authorities considerable uneasiness, but it was the Gurkha activities on the southern borders which finally brought matters to a head. Here they had carried on a series of stealthy, but determined, encroachments on British-claimed territory despite protests, and, finally, on the 1st November 1814, war on Nepal was proclaimed by the British.

At first the Nepalese were strikingly successful, using their knowledge of their own country to outwit and defeat the handicapped British troops. Then General Ochterlony was appointed head of an expedition and under him the British soon made their way as far as Makwanpur, only thirty-five miles from Khatmandu. The Gurkhas at this point capitulated and in March 1816, a treaty, the Treaty of Segawli,¹ was signed.

By this treaty Britain was first entitled to recruit Gurkhas for the British Army, and further, Nepal gave up all claims to Kumaon, Garhwal, the hill States to the west, and Sikkim. The Nepalese had sought beforehand, and even after the treaty was signed, to bring in the Chinese on their side to expel the British but they were unsuccessful, the Chinese having other matters on their mind at that time.

For the next thirty years the history of Nepal is a tedious record of intrigues and assassinations—500 nobles being murdered on one notorious occasion. Bhim Sen, the Regent, who had done so much to

¹ See Appendix A.

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consolidate and expand the conquests of the earlier famous Gurkha ruler, Prithvi Narayan, and who had declared war on Britain, maintained his hold on power for many years afterwards; but gradually even his power began to wane and in 1839, after being tortured, he committed suicide.

For ten years feud succeeded feud, and one Prime Minister followed the other in rapid succession, until the emergence of a figure whose name was to be as great as Prithvi Narayan's, Jung Bahadur.

He was responsible for the infamous Kat massacre in which 500 of the nobles were murdered at the Queen's instigation. He was the son of a Kaji, a Nepalese official, and, entering the military service while still young, he rose rapidly to the rank of Colonel, when, as personal attendant for the young prince, he became the Queen's lover. The Resident at that time, Major (later Sir Henry) Lawrence, mentions him as an intelligent young man, particularly expert in all military matters but, though young in years, profoundly versed in intrigue.

Following on the Kat massacre Jung Bahadur emerged as the most powerful man in Nepal, with the support of the army and his six brothers. The Rani, who had hoped to use Jung Bahadur for her own purposes, had to flee to Benares. The king tried to regain power and even led an attack against Jung Bahadur in 1847, but none of the plots against Jung Bahadur were successful, the agents were put to death and the king declared unfit to rule, and on 12th May, 1847, he was deposed and the heir-apparent put on the throne.

Jung Bahadur had got rid of every opponent, and had married members of his family into every influential family in the Kingdom. In 1849 he had offered six regiments of Nepalese troops to the British for service against the Sikhs, and while this offer had been refused, it had brought Nepal into a more favourable light with the British authorities. He even sent one of his grandsons to Darjeeling to be educated by an Englishman, Brian Hodgson.

In 1850 he was so securely established in Nepal that he felt free to go to Britain for a visit, leaving one of his brothers as Prime Minister. He was accompanied by two of his brothers and several influential men of the country. The whole party were well received in Britain, and on their return to Nepal their accounts of how they had been treated, and the success of their visit, established them in a completely new category in the minds of the people, with the British as friends to be cultivated.

In 1854 the Nepalese began to have disputes with the Tibetans, originating in the ill-treatment experienced by the embassy which was in the habit of taking the tribute and presents to China every fifth year. At

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this time the Chinese authority in Tibet was at a low ebb, and as the Nepalese embassy had passed through Lhasa they claimed that they had been insulted and their goods confiscated by the Tibetans. The Nepalese had made repeated representations to the Tibetan authorities for some action to be taken against the persons responsible for attacks on the Nepalese embassy and other nationals, and, this failing, they had then written to the Chinese Resident in Lhasa requesting him to transmit the letter to the Emperor. When all this was treated with a contemptuous silence the Nepalese declared war on Tibet.

Their primary object was to annex the portion of Tibet lying to the south of the Kerang and Kuti Passes, which had extended from the snowy range of mountains just north of the Khatmandu Valley. This area originally belonged to the Nepalis but in 1792, when the Chinese Army had invaded Nepal, the Bhutia inhabitants in this area threw off their allegiance to the Nepalese and joined the invaders and the territory was recognized by the Chinese as part of the Chinese Empire. Later, these territories were given by the Chinese to the Lhasa authorities as a grant for the benefit of Buddhist temples and the support of Buddhist monasteries in Tibet.

The war was carried on with varying success for nearly two years. The fighting was confined to the Kerang and Kuti areas, at first the Tibetans and Bhutias succeeding in holding them, then the Nepalese finally succeeding in driving them out. The Tibetans negotiated for peace and after consultations with the Chinese and Tibetan authorities in Lhasa this was agreed on 25th March, 1856. The main parts of the treaty were that Tibet should pay 10,000 rupees annually (£1,000) on condition of the Nepalese evacuating the Tibetan territory they had occupied,¹ that the import duties on goods from Nepal should be remitted; and that a Gurkha official should be allowed to remain at Lhasa to protect the interests of Nepalese traders.

Below the hills of Nepal, on the plains of India, the mutiny of the Indian Army against the British had begun, and Jung Bahadur again showed his friendly feeling towards the British by offering Nepalese troops, and this time the offer was accepted. Four thousand troops left immediately, and, six months later, on 10th December, 1857, another 8,000 under the personal command of Jung Bahadur joined a British contingent and they scored success after success. Jung Bahadur captured Gorakhpur in January, 1858, which broke the military strength and morale of the rebels in that area, and the Gurkhas played an important part in the capture of Lucknow two months later.

¹ This territory was specified as Purang, Rongshar, Kri-rong, Dzong-ga, Nya-nang, Tar-ting and La-tse.

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In recognition of these services the British Government restored to Nepal the remaining part of the Terai territory which had been ceded to them in 1816, and this cemented the friendship between the two countries.

Jung Bahadur then devoted himself to internal reforms in Nepal. The savage penal code of Nepal, whereby eyes were put out, hands cut off, and hanging were all punishments for minor offences, were now modified, and great advances were made in civilizing the country and improving the material conditions of the people.

Another innovation of his that was to have far-reaching repercussions on the country was his introduction of the law making his office of Prime Minister hereditary in the family without abolishing the institution of monarchy. This system he altered so that the succession to the office of Prime Minister was not governed by the law of primo-geniture, but the eldest among the surviving brothers succeeded to the office on the death or retirement of the incumbent. The second seniormost among the brothers held the office of Commander-in-Chief, and so on over the senior positions of rank. By this arrangement Jung Bahadur hoped to ensure that no minor ever came to occupy the high office of Prime Minister and that when the incumbent was in power he would already have held several high positions of administrative responsibility. He also persuaded the King to issue a decree giving him power of life and death in the whole of Nepal, to nominate or dismiss all government officials, to declare war and make peace with other countries. All these powers the King was persuaded to give not only to Jung Bahadur as the incumbent Prime Minister but also to his heirs as nominated in the agnate system outlined. By this decree, it was ensured, therefore, that Jung Bahadur and his family were, for all time, the government of Nepal.

But the promiscuity practised by the leading families in Nepal, and the proliferation of children inside and outside wedlock, necessitated a modification of the agnate system introduced by Jung Bahadur, and this was done by introducing three categories into the Rana administration. Those born in wedlock were known as Class 'A' Ranas, and they alone were entitled to succeed to highest offices; children born of mothers whose marriages with Rana husbands were legitimized after birth were known as Class 'B' Ranas; those born out of wedlock were known as Class 'C' Ranas, and were not entitled to succeed to the highest offices. Naturally the Class 'C' Ranas became very numerous, and as they were usually wealthy, too, because of their anomalous circumstances, they were usually in a position to do a great deal of damage by supporting intrigues. In addition, the Class 'A' Ranas were divided into several factions, and these sought the

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support of Class 'B' and Class 'C' Ranas to whatever their ambitions might be at the time and the *quid pro quo* often included appointing of the lower classes to positions to which other Class 'A' Ranas took strong exception.

The Indian freedom movement inevitably influenced the Nepalese people, for so many Nepalese had gone to India for their education that it was bound to have repercussions. Two Nepalis, who were to play a large part in independent Nepal's future history as Prime Minister and Home Minister—B. P. Koirala and S. P. Upadhaya—shared the early struggle and imprisonment of Gandhi and Nehru in India.

An underground movement was formed, run on the same lines as the Congress movement in India, and with the inter-relation of the leaders there was also a sympathetic inter-relation of the movements so that asylum was provided when the Nepali Congress members were declared rebels, and guidance and sustenance provided for the smaller sister party in Nepal.

The sands were running out for Nepal's anachronistic Rana feudalism. In the same year a plot against the Rana oligarchy was unearthed, this time not from among fellow-Ranas but from the 'people' represented by the Congress movement. Then an even greater shock was the Maharaja's, King Tribhuvan's, clandestine association with the illegal Praja Parishad Party founded in 1935 by five young Nepalis. It was an indication of the King's frustration and desperation with his contemptuous isolation by the Ranas that he allowed his name to be linked with such an insignificant and apparently hopeless organization. The British Government, which had a considerable interest in the stability of the Kingdom since it was providing 200,000 Gurkha soldiers for service in the Indian Army, was content to maintain the *status quo*. But the King of Nepal was not prepared to accept this and continued his efforts to overthrow the Rana autonomy. In January 1946, the Nepal National Congress met in Benares, in India, with the avowed intention of introducing and establishing democratic rule in Nepal, and almost immediately the King, isolated though he was, managed to establish contact with the leaders.

In 1948, the new Rana Prime Minister was Mohan Shamsheer, a strange contrast to the rule of the previous Rana in that he was known as a religious man who eschewed the licentious living of his predecessors, but who was conservative in policy to the point of absolute feudalism. In a short time he became the terror of the people, and it was inevitable that the intriguing King and his ruthless Prime Minister would clash.

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The crisis came in September 1950, when yet another plot, allegedly for the murder of the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief, along with other leading members of the Rana family, was discovered in Khatmandu. King Tribhuvan refused to sign the death warrants of the condemned persons even in the face of threats of deposition. The Prime Minister then tried to 'persuade' King Tribhuvan to abdicate in favour of the then Crown Prince (now King) Mahendra, but the King successfully managed to avoid a decision by feigning illness for the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, in the border towns the Nepali National Congress successfully organized 'satyagraha', or peaceful civil disobedience campaigns, and in March 1950, the Nepali Democratic Congress, which had been formed two years earlier by a member of the Royal Family and a number of Class 'C' Ranas, merged with the Nepali National Congress to form the Nepali Congress.

The Government of India, although it favoured a democratization of the Rana régime, took no direct interest in the affairs of Nepal following on Independence in India. What support was given from India was mostly from the Socialist Party in opposition. But towards the middle of 1949 the Government of India's attitude underwent a change when it became obvious that the Communists would take over the government in China. When the Communists eventually took over in China, the Indian Government decided to initiate a new series of treaties with the border States, and on 8th August 1949 they signed a treaty with Bhutan; on 5th December 1950 they signed a treaty with Sikkim; and in late 1949 they started negotiations with Nepal, where, after several months of suspicion and wrangling, a treaty was finally signed in July 1950.

Meanwhile, the Nepali Congress, with the secret support of King Tribhuvan, was going ahead with its plans to overthrow the Rana régime. It abandoned its policy of carrying on a peaceful agitation in September 1950 and decided to take to arms. On 29th September 1950 it was officially announced that a plot to murder State dignitaries had been discovered.

The Government of India, whose status in Nepal was at a very low ebb, was reluctant to take any action to help the 'democratic' forces against the Rana régime without some tangible evidence of the King's desire for a constitutional monarchy and democracy. But this was not difficult and the final details of Indian intervention were then worked out. On the morning of 6th November 1950 the Royal Family set out in a convoy, ostensibly for a hunting expedition; then, as by arrangement, when they were passing the Indian Embassy, the gates were suddenly opened and the Royal Family drove straight in and

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requested asylum from the Indian Government. The Rana escorts were arrested, then sent back to their masters with the news that the Royal Family were now on Indian soil. The Prime Minister at first angrily surrounded the Indian Embassy with troops, but finally submitted to Indian and international pressure and permitted the Royal Family to leave Nepal for India.

As the King flew to New Delhi, the Nepali rebels, who had been for months preparing themselves for just such a contingency, struck, and captured Birganj, the second largest town in Nepal, almost immediately, and proclaimed a rival government. There followed several months of fighting without any final result, the regular army remaining loyal to the Ranas; but, after secret negotiations in Nepal and India between the King, the Ranas and the Nepali Congress, they signed an agreement on 12th February, 1951, to form a coalition Government.

Thus ended the Rana family's monopoly of power and, with it, Nepali isolation from the rest of the world. With the Chinese Communists on her northern border, and new restless freedom movements in India and South-East Asia, Nepal was certain to be influenced by one or other, or both, and with her strategic position she was a key country in the Asian political scene.

Although there had been startling political currents, and even changes, in Nepal, they were still confined to the Khatmandu Valley as all influence had been for centuries. Outside the valley, except for the southern border with India, things might just have been as they were when Jung Bahadur came to power, or even Prithvi Narayan. Until 1950—and even until 1954—no roads had been built in Nepal, and the only link with the outside world was by a mountain trail from Khatmandu to Raxaul in India over which everything from food to dismantled motor cars had to be carried. The physical divisions of the country, which had existed from time immemorial in the long jutting arms of the Himalayas to the plains, still restricted communications and any Nepali from West Nepal wishing to visit Central or East Nepal had to travel south to India, then along the southern boundary and re-enter the country at whichever point he wished to visit. Elephants and tigers still roamed the Terai, the mountain trails were so hazardous that no ponies or mules could be used and all loads had to be carried by coolies, and the inter-tribal caste system was still such that some would not even accept a glass of water from others of their fellow-countrymen.

Only in the Khatmandu Valley was there any semblance of governmental administration, and even that was of a very primitive character due to the feudal autocracy of the Ranas. The few schools,—ten,

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all in the Khatmandu Valley—and other social benefits which had been introduced, were only for the inhabitants of the Khatmandu Valley, or for any of the hill people who chose to come and live there, but there was no attempt to open up communications or establish any form of administration in other parts of the country.

In 1950, then, Nepal, in terms of geo-politics, was of a protuberant rather than a compact form, had no geographical individuality, comprised 56,000 square miles in area, was about 520 miles long and 90–100 miles broad, with a diverse population of 8,473,478. It was primarily a country of small villages with a total of 28,780 cities, towns and villages scattered throughout the country. Of these 85 per cent had fewer than 500 inhabitants and only ten cities had 5,000 or more residents within their municipal limits. Of these ten cities five were located in the Khatmandu Valley; four were in the eastern Terai and one in the far western Terai.

The wide divergence in race, customs, territory and administration doomed the Coalition experiment before it had even begun to function. Nepal was nowhere near prepared for modern democratic methods, for in addition to the lack of administrative machinery and means of transport and communications, there was no national consciousness but only primitive tribal loyalties. The old order had been disrupted too suddenly before there could be created a countrywide social, economic and political base which might have supported democratic institutions. Also, in the two groups forming the Coalition there was no bridge between the disgruntled Ranas used to absolute power and the idealistic Congress with theories and no experience. To make matters even worse the Ranas bitterly resented the interference of India in Nepal's affairs, the Indian Ambassador at that time not helping matters any by an inept handling of the delicate situation, and consequently bringing into questioning the loyalties of the Congress leaders whose associations had all been with India and who owed their position to India's intervention.

The success of the Communist Party in China and the serious view being taken of this development in the Indian Press, confirmed the Rana Prime Minister, Mohun Shamsher, in his belief that India was anxious about her own security and wanted assistance from Nepal to deal with the threats from China and Pakistan.

It was after the Nepalese Prime Minister's visit to India in 1950 that Mr. Nehru outlined the Government of India's attitude *vis-à-vis* Nepal in the Indian Parliament on 17th March, 1950:

'Recently the Prime Minister of Nepal visited India; we welcomed and conferred with this distinguished personage and it was clear that, in so far as certain developments in Asia are concerned, the interests

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of India and Nepal are identical. For instance, to mention one point, it is not possible for the Indian Government to tolerate any violation of Nepal from anywhere, even though there is no military alliance between the two countries. Any possible invasion of Nepal . . . would immediately involve the safety of India.'

'Freedom interests us in the abstract as well as in the guise of a practical and, in the context of Asia, a necessary step. If it does not come, forces that will ultimately disrupt freedom itself will be created and encouraged. We have accordingly advised the Government of Nepal in all earnestness, to bring themselves into line with democratic forces that are striving in the world today. Not to do so is not only wrong but also unwise from the point of view of what is happening in the world today.'

The Chinese marched into Tibet on 24th October, 1950. On 12th February, 1951, in Nepal the proposals for a Coalition Government, with elections to be held in 1952, were accepted, and on February 18th, six days later, there was the first major clash. The leaders of the two groups violently disagreed at the swearing-in ceremony over the greater precedence in the seating arrangements, and also, on the question of the use of the King's seal on official documents in future, the Ranas maintaining that the Prime Minister's seal should continue to be used. Obviously any move that was going to return authority to the King was going to be stubbornly opposed by the Ranas who saw in everything a plot to undermine their authority and the restoration of the King. For what had taken place in Nepal was not really a revolution but a restoration. The King was the leader of the struggle against the Ranas, and the rebel forces had fought in his name. The Government of India had supported the King. The Nepali Congress were thus viewed as auxiliaries of the King, and the Ranas suspected—shrewdly, and not without considerable justification, as later events were to show—that as soon as the King had access to the traditional instruments of power in the army, the police and administrative machinery he would be in a position to get rid of the organization and its leaders.

Meanwhile, a new and serious development that was to have far-reaching repercussions in the country, had taken place in western Nepal. When the rebels had declared war on the Ranas in 1950 and launched their armed attacks on the border towns, one group under a nationalist leader, Dr. K. I. Singh, was located in the western areas. At the time of amnesty he refused to surrender his arms, for two reasons; one was that he charged the other Congress leaders with depriving him of arms and ammunition in a bid to destroy his reputation, and the other that the Congress leaders had betrayed

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the principles of the revolution by compromising with the Ranas.

When the Coalition Government was meeting, Dr. K. I. Singh, with a force of 500–1,000 armed men in western Nepal, started a reign of terror in the area; and because of the divisions in the Cabinet no action was taken against him. Finally, the Cabinet appealed to India who agreed to a joint police action against Dr. Singh and he was arrested with 100 of his followers and placed in a local jail. He escaped from there and was arrested again and interned in the Singha Durbar, or Government Secretariat, in Khatmandu.

On 22nd January 1952, Dr. K. I. Singh, who had been joined in prison by two leaders of the Rakshi Dal, staged a *coup d'état* with the help of 1,200 Rakshi Dal men. Dr. K. I. Singh's imprisonment, together with his previous history, and the abuses, corruption and nepotism of the Nepali Congress, which he had foretold, had made him into a sort of Robin Hood of Nepal, and his actions on release gave colour to the legend.

At 11.30 p.m. on the 22nd January he and his associates seized the Durbar, the treasury, the arsenal, airport and broadcasting station and cut the telegraphic communications with India. He then sent two emissaries to the King with his demands, which were:

1. The formation of an all-Party Government, excluding the Communists and the Gurkha Parishad.
2. The establishment of diplomatic relations with other countries on the basis of equality and no special ties with any particular country.
3. An all-Party conference to draw up a minimum programme to be implemented during the interim period before the elections.
4. The formation of a five-year plan of economic development.

King Tribhuvan was not prepared to negotiate, and he demanded that the revolt be called off immediately and unconditionally. The army stood by the King, and this, with the information that Indian troops were moving to the borders to assist the King, caused Dr. Singh to capitulate. With thirty-seven of his trusted followers he left Khatmandu and fled to Lhasa, in Tibet, then to Peking.¹

The King declared a state of emergency and gave the Prime Minister emergency powers. A curfew was imposed and political processions and meetings were banned. The Communist Party and some others were declared illegal and the Rakshi Dal disbanded. A forty-

¹ Several years later Dr. Singh gave as his explanation for not proceeding with the revolt his respect for the Monarchy. 'In January, 1952,' he said, 'I had the entire capital of Nepal in the palm of my hand. But I did not dethrone the King and stage a *coup*. If I had wanted, I could have taken everything.'

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member Advisory Assembly was constituted, with limited powers, and inaugurated on 4th July 1952.

But again there were 'inter-party' jealousies, the Nepali Congress being rent with divisions. On August 10th the Prime Minister was forced to resign because of attacks from his fellow-Congressmen. He formed another Party, the Nepal Democratic Party, and it was scarcely a week old when again the King called on him to head the Government.

Meanwhile agrarian unrest had broken out in the Terai, a no-rent campaign was launched, and troops had to be rushed from Khatmandu. In Khatmandu the municipal elections had given the illegal Communist Party a majority, winning nearly 50 per cent of the total votes polled. The Nepali Congress and the Gurkha Parishad, reckoned the least popular parties, only won four seats and one seat respectively. The post-election analyses gave the reasons for the startling result as the increasing anti-Indian feeling in the valley.

Writing in the *New York Times*, Robert Trumbull had said: 'Nepal appears to fear India's encroachment on its ancient freedom more than Communist infiltration from its northern neighbour. . . . It is said openly in Khatmandu that the real ruler in Nepal today is the Indian Ambassador, Mr. C. P. N. Singh. . . . Anti-Indian feeling is intensified by the consciousness of every Nepalese that India could, if she wished, throw an economic stranglehold on the country by her geographical position. It is known that India discouraged the consideration by Nepal of opening diplomatic relations with China. . . .'

The introduction of a Military Mission gave rise to the belief that India was controlling the Army, and Indian participation in reorganizing the administrative machinery was interpreted in the same way. When India offered financial assistance to build an eighty-mile road from India to Khatmandu this was bitterly attacked as an attempt to bring Nepal within India's influence. This anti-Indian feeling mounted throughout 1953 and 1954 as crisis followed crisis in the administration until even the Nepali Congress, born and nurtured in India and placed in power by the help of India, adopted a resolution in 1954 demanding the withdrawal of both the Indian civilian experts and military mission in the interests of what it called 'the healthy relations between India and Nepal' because 'the experience of the last two years, particularly the last eight months during which the participation of foreign advisers has been maximum, has not been happy. There are enough educated and experienced Nepalese who are capable of carrying out reforms in our mode of administration. . . .'

In May 1954 an Indian parliamentary delegation visited Khatmandu on a goodwill mission and was greeted by hostile crowds

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lining the route from the airport to the city. The angry mobs pelted the delegation with stones and garbage, and stoned the car of the Indian Ambassador.

In the Administration there was still the same chaos. Advisory Assemblies had succeeded Coalition Governments and then been replaced by the Coalitions again without making any difference. When King Tribhuvan left for Europe for medical treatment in October 1954 the atmosphere in the country was one of complete hopelessness and despair. For three and a half years there had been nothing but strife, confusion and stagnation.

Corruption and nepotism had grown to a magnitude never known before in the history of Nepal, even under the worst of the Ranas. Corruption was open and everyone in the Government was believed to be involved in some scandal or another, so that the reputation of every Government servant, including the Prime Minister, was nil. The people had lost faith in the administration, for officials preferred staying in Khatmandu to travelling with difficulty into the interior so nothing was done at all outside the valley, and little inside it. There was unrestricted traffic in arms between various communities, and the people were afraid to move about at night, even in Khatmandu. Despite politicians' professions of concern for the peasants no step had been taken to secure tenure to tenants, who were at the mercy of powerful landlords maintaining their own armed men to terrorize them. The landlords extracted interest up to 50 per cent, on everything from births, marriages and deaths, to threats of mass evictions and forced labour.

The crisis continued until the new year of 1955, when the Nepali Congress launched a civil disobedience movement and called for a general strike on 12th January 1955. It demanded a general election at an early date, the establishment of independent judiciary, grant of fundamental rights to the people, means to control inflation, the maintenance of law and order through a popularly constituted police force and the protection of the interests of the Nepalis abroad. The Crown Prince, Mahendra, who headed the Royal Council of State in the absence of King Tribhuvan in Europe, persuaded the Congress leaders to stop the agitation by promising to take effective measures to meet their demands.

Crown Prince Mahendra, whose relations with his father were barely civil, to put it conservatively, visited his sick father in France to seek powers to deal with the situation. On 18th February 1955 King Tribhuvan issued a proclamation from his sick bed dissolving the Royal Council of State and vesting all Royal prerogatives in the Crown Prince. This was again a moment of destiny in the history of

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Nepal for Mahendra was known to be a man of courage and determination. When King Tribhuvan died on 13th March 1955 in Europe, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Dev Shah ascended the throne and proceeded to use his new powers.

Not only was the new King's character known to the politicians and people, but it was known that he was opposed to the idea of a Constituent Assembly on the ground that there could not be two sovereign authorities in the country. This outspoken statement on his attitude was bound to bring him into conflict with both the old Rana order and the new democratic parties. But lest they were still in doubt, on the day of his investiture with full royal powers on February 18th, he had deliberately gone out of his way to state that the last four years of democracy in Nepal had been shameful. To those who sought to excuse the excesses by saying that democracy in Nepal was in its infancy he pointed out that infants do not indulge in bribery and corruption.

One month after he succeeded to the throne he announced the formation of a five-man Council of Advisers, all of them men belonging to the old Rana order. This was not to the liking of the political party leaders and they demanded the ending of direct rule by the King and the formation of a new Cabinet. Accordingly he called a Convention on May 8th to decide the future administration of the country, but because he included Trade Unions—even the most obscure—the political parties boycotted it. After a scathing attack on democracy and the way the country was being ruled in the name of democracy by the many political parties, the convention was thrown open for discussion. These took an unexpected turn when it was discovered that even the hand-picked Convention was against the indefinite continuance of direct rule, and it was finally decided that General Elections would be held in October 1957 and the democratic form of government preserved.

In the meantime the King initiated talks with the political leaders for the formation of a Cabinet. At first he refused to have a Prime Minister in the Coalition Cabinet, but after a few months he agreed, and then surprised everyone by inviting Tanka Prasad to form a Ministry on 27th January 1956. Tanka Prasad was not even President of his own Party, the Praja Parishad, at the time, and the most influential party, the Nepali Congress, was completely ignored. This move initiated a period of several surprising developments, all of them re-aligning the country away from India and towards China. Dr. K. I. Singh, who had been in exile in Peking from the time of his attempted coup in 1952, was granted an amnesty and permitted to return to the country in September 1956. Diplomatic relations were

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established between Nepal and China during Tanka Prasad's tenure of office and a treaty signed with China. This treaty, after reaffirming the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence', went on to agree to the exchange of diplomatic representations on ambassadorial level, abrogation of all former treaties between the two countries, withdrawal of the Nepalese military personnel in Tibet, and relaxing of trading restrictions between the two countries, with reciprocal trade and passport concessions. Later, Peking offered Nepal six crores of rupees (£5,000,000) for development purposes.

Internally, the period of direct rule by the King had been one of much activity but little evident improvement. He had sought to reorganize the administrative machinery, dismissed corrupt and inefficient officials, improved the judiciary, enacted a Police Act defining the duties of the police, promulgated a Land Reforms Act which, among other things, laid down that the landlords were forbidden to take more than 50 per cent of the produce and could not charge interest at more than 10 per cent, forced labour was abolished and a graduated tax on land incomes above Rupees 3,000 a year announced. Unfortunately, neither he nor the Government had sufficient power to go one step further and see that these measures were enforced, and so the ordinary people were left much the same as before.

In the course of time differences developed between Tanka Prasad and the King over the appointment of several ministers who were either relations or favourites of the King. When the influence of the party members was seen to be diminished by these appointments Tanka Prasad resigned on 13th July 1957. At the same time Tanka Prasad accused the Indian Government of intriguing to have his Government dismissed from power because of his pro-China policy. He produced no proof to support his allegation.

Once again the King made a surprise move for he wanted Dr. K. I. Singh, who had been living quietly in the background since his return, to head the Government. There was again the usual widespread speculation which always accompanied this enigmatic politician, those who believed he had become Communist during his exile in China maintaining that it was a Communist conspiracy to take over the country; others maintained that it was a deep plot of the King's to bring him back to power to lead a King's party; others again that it was a move by India who had bribed him to a pro-India stand to oust Tanka Prasad's pro-China foreign policy.

Dr. Singh had caused a sensation immediately on his return to Nepal when he stated that while living abroad he had been offered military help by many foreign powers to liberate Nepal, but he denied

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that the Chinese Communists had been able to persuade him at all to their views.

Certainly, in keeping with his enigmatic background, he surprised everyone in power by pursuing a moderate line and even, finally, openly clashing with the King. He had advocated a constitutional monarchical form of government, abolition of the criminal land tenure systems, nationalization of surplus lands and forests, removal of class and caste barriers, establishment of an honest and efficient administration, non-alignment with either power bloc, etc. He denounced the signing of the Sino-Nepalese Treaty on the grounds that it was wrong to have surrendered Nepal's traditional privileges in Tibet without simultaneously securing the rectification of the Nepalese-Tibetan frontiers and seeking the return of the areas that Nepal had been forced to cede to Tibet in 1792. That this was a shrewd analysis was to become evident in the next few years.

He formed a Government of his party men and some independents, with Royal nominees, and was sworn in as Prime Minister on 26th July 1957 with two other Cabinet Ministers. At the same time there was a move by the King on the one hand, who appointed three bodies—a seven-man national Council, a financing Development Body, and a special Five-Year Plan Board—and the other political parties on the other, to form a United Front to 'defend the democratic rights of the people'. Both groups were dedicated to prevent Dr. K. I. Singh from acquiring full powers.

However, Dr. Singh went ahead with his programme right from the start of his tenure of office. He announced a complete reform of administration in the country, starting with the palace itself in the removal of two of the King's four principal private secretaries. He drew up a list of secretariat and district officials who were to be dismissed and replaced by honest men. He organized an ex-Service-men's Association, which was loyal to himself and even made inroads into the King's traditional popularity with the Army. There were other more disturbing changes; he created a secret police force, he used an armed bodyguard—unusual for one of his known popularity with the people—and he released all his supporters from prison as well as the Communists.

But what probably was the main cause of his downfall was his announcing that he would set up a Commission to inquire into misappropriation of Government funds, during the previous six years, which he estimated at 5–15 crores of rupees. He also threatened penal action against profiteers and monopolists by establishing regional distribution agencies. It was obvious that with every political party, every leader, every corrupt official, every dishonest merchant roused

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against him and his proposed reforms, and the powerful interests in the royal and Rana circles, he could not last. In addition, there was the King's well-known objection to 'two sovereign authorities' and if Dr. Singh succeeded in his programmes there would certainly be no room for 'two sovereign authorities'; the one active authority would be himself.

The King reiterated this when he let it be known that he was serious about his intention to rule as well as reign. On the other hand, all Dr. Singh's history and his actions since taking office had contributed to the legend of the strong man with the interests of his country at heart, and the two concepts were bound to come into conflict. In any event he announced his resignation on 14th November 1957, giving as his reason the opposition of 'a minority of vested interests', and that America and other international interests with 'traitors at home' had made it impossible for him to continue. He charged that he had been compelled to sign an agreement regarding U.S. aid and named a number of top men in the Nepalese Government and Army who, he contended, were in league with Americans to oppose the popular measures proposed by him.

Whether these charges were part of a shrewd manoeuvre to fill in the picture of the strong man being forced to resign because of pressure beyond his control in order to add to the existing legend, the picture of the martyr, it is still not possible to say. Certainly, the ambitious, popular, impossible programme, and the manner of his going, left the way open for a popular demand for his return should the situation deteriorate and a 'strong man' of the people be required.

On 6th October 1957 the King had issued an announcement that it would not be possible to hold the elections on the scheduled date of 8th October, and did not announce any new election date. This caused an immediate uproar and the Democratic Front announced that it would launch an agitation on 8th December if elections were not held in the intervening period. The King sought to head this off, but after ten days of agitation he announced on 17th December that elections would be held in February 1959.

On 12th February 1959 the King announced the first Constitution for Nepal. It provided for the establishment of two Houses of Parliament. The Lower House was to consist of 109 members elected from single-member territorial constituencies and the Upper House, or Senate, of thirty members, of whom eighteen would be elected by the Lower House and eighteen nominated by the King. The Cabinet was to consist of the Prime Minister and not more than fourteen Ministers, a Supreme Court and fundamental rights to ensure personal liberty, equality before law, and religious freedom.

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The King would retain discretionary powers in respect of the selection of a Prime Minister, appointment of members of the State Council—similar to the Privy Council of England—and renewal of same; dismissal of the Prime Minister if the King was satisfied after consulting with the State Council that the Government had lost the confidence of the Lower House; temporary suspension of the Cabinet in special circumstances and several other provisions.

If the King in his discretion was satisfied that a grave emergency existed whereby the security or economic life of Nepal or any part of the country was threatened by war or external aggression or by internal disturbances he might make a proclamation to declare that 'his functions shall, to such extent as may be specified in the proclamation, be exercised by him in his discretion and assume to himself all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by Parliament or any Governmental body or authority'. This left the King with considerable power although hedged about with some safeguards to provide for a parliamentary democracy so long as it worked respectably. If the government looked like gravitating into its previous chaotic state the King could take over direct rule again at his own discretion.

However, the elections indicated that the people were tired of various proliferating parties and bickering between them, and the fear that no single party would be able to win an absolute majority was set at rest when the returns came in and it was seen that the Nepali Congress had emerged a clear winner with a majority of seventy-four seats in a House of 109. In its Manifesto the Nepali Congress stated that it was a Socialist party but that it would take a long time to reach this goal in Nepal. It had a thirteen-point programme of agrarian reform, and on the question of industrialization stated that it would give incentive to cottage industries run on a co-operative basis; heavy industries would be state-owned and the Government would invite foreign capital. The Nepali Congress also promised to end nepotism and corruption. In foreign policy the party would work for friendly relations between Nepal and other countries on terms of equality and mutual respect.

But a growing danger in Nepal was from the north and this danger was highlighted by the revolt in Tibet culminating in the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in March, 1959, shortly after the elections in Nepal. For a time it was rumoured that the Dalai Lama was making his way to Nepal, and this contingency demanded a positive attitude in regard to Nepali relations with China. The Dalai Lama, however, had gone south into North Assam in India. But the subsequent events in Tibet made this a major consideration in Nepali policy, for, in addition to maltreatment of Nepalese nationals in Lhasa, China

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made outright claims to Nepal for a time as being her territory with Sikkim, Bhutan, Darjeeling and Kalimpong.

Nepal, since 1908, had ceased to pay the five-yearly tribute to China which had been enforced upon her by the 1792 agreement. In that same year the Chinese Resident in Lhasa had still asserted that Nepal came under Chinese suzerainty, and suggested the blending of five colours representing China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim to oppose British claims in the area. Nepal turned this down, as well as demands for Nepalese-Tibetan tribesmen to enrol in the Chinese Army. In 1939, Mao Tse-tung had listed Nepal as one of China's dependencies when he said: 'In defeating China in war, the imperialist States have taken away many Chinese dependent States. . . . England seized Burma, Bhutan, Nepal and Hong Kong. . . .'

Following on the Dalai Lama's escape, the Chinese launched a programme of military preparations right along Tibet's borders, and particularly the border with Nepal. Roads mushroomed, new air-fields were hastily constructed, cantonments were erected and troops massed in ominous numbers.

These preparations on Nepal's borders, together with the sustained Chinese propaganda campaign in Tibet claiming the border States, led Mr. Nehru to state, during an official visit by Nepal's Prime Minister, B. P. Koirala, to India in October 1959, that India would not stand idly by if there was any aggression against Nepal.

This overture by India's Prime Minister evoked a storm of criticism in Nepal itself when it became known. B. P. Koirala was charged with endangering Nepal's independent status by initiating talks with the Prime Minister and, to calm the Nepalis incensed at this 'interference in Nepal's internal affairs' by India, he had to deny strenuously that he had ever discussed Nepal's border situation or a possible military agreement with India during his visit.

Shortly after his return from India B. P. Koirala was due to pay a visit to China when, he said, he hoped to get the problem of Nepal's boundaries with the Tibet region of China settled. He stated that there were only one or two relatively unimportant areas to be settled, as there was no dispute over the traditional boundary, and he was hopeful that these would be settled amicably during his visit. Since China had recently signed a treaty of friendship with Burma and settled outstanding disputes there, he thought that there would be no difficulties over the Nepal-China boundary.

The day before Koirala left the Leader of the Opposition presented a detailed report of the Chinese incursions, and at a private meeting with the Prime Minister he received an assurance that, failing a satisfactory settlement of the boundary question in Peking, he would

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call a secret meeting of Parliament on his return to discuss border defence.

I was in Khatmandu at the time—February-March 1960—and had several meetings with all the leading politicians, including the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, and others, and my impression of the political structure was one of extreme instability. The absolute majority of the Nepali Congress had not encouraged them to push through the desperately required reforms, and most of the leading figures—the Prime Minister apart—were concerned more with matters of prestige and personal power than government administration. They were prepared to visit India and China, or project a grandiose picture of Nepal for international consideration, and make speeches and cut a figure, but they were rarely in their offices; the same appalling confusion existed in the honeycomb secretariat that had existed previously when one department had no idea of what the other department was doing and even the Minister in charge knew little of what went on in his own. Memoranda were submitted by the various foreign agencies for development schemes, to lie in some dusty file until another series of memoranda was called for to join the first. Stories of corruption and nepotism were again current in the valley.

B. P. Koirala was well received in Peking but the only satisfaction he was given regarding the boundary was that a joint commission would be set up to enquire into the grounds of dispute. However, the Chinese Prime Minister was to call on Khatmandu after his visit to India to discuss the Sino-Indian border dispute. When he left China the Chinese Government released the information that they had considered Everest part of China in the discussions and Koirala was in trouble again with his countrymen.

When the Chinese Prime Minister arrived in Khatmandu after his visit to India to discuss the Sino-Indian boundary dispute following on Chinese occupation of Indian territory, it was to be met with banners declaring 'Everest belongs to Nepal' and a host of other hostile statements. But Peking was already launched on its policy to be friendly to Nepal, to highlight India's obstinacy in the recent talks in New Delhi, and to accord with their placatory policy toward Burma and Nepal in order to isolate them from India; and after a scathing attack on India and her claims he magnanimously offered to forego China's claim to Everest and to accept the Nepalese version of the boundaries.

Several months later the expected happened. On 15th December 1960 King Mahendra announced that he had taken over direct rule and had put Prime Minister Koirala and other political leaders in jail, giving as his reason the corruption in the Congress Party and the

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deterioration in Government administration. Thirty-six hours previously both the King and his Prime Minister had attended a dinner party for the Indian Commander-in-Chief, General Thimayya, at which both had appeared to be on amiable terms for once, and Koirala even told some friends then and the next day that he and the King had cleared up their differences. Thirty-six hours later, on the morning of December 15th, he was in jail. When the King struck only a handful of people were in his confidence, mostly palace aides and perhaps one senior civil servant.

The reasons why the Indian Commander-in-Chief should be in Nepal at the time of the King's coup are still obscure, but it is rumoured in high Nepali official circles that the King was afraid of Indian military intervention to support Koirala and his Congress Party and so he invited General Thimayya to Nepal to receive Nepal's highest military decoration and then sent him into the jungles for a tiger shoot, with the Indian Ambassador, until the coup was complete.

In taking the action he did the King actually went beyond the powers granted to him in the Constitution, for he not only dismissed his Cabinet but ordered the arrest of all members of the Council of Ministers. He also imprisoned the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition, and arrested every person who could be regarded as 'political', making no distinction between Communist and non-Communist.

The Communist Party in Nepal is not strong at all, with only about 10,000 members, but it is closely knit and well organized. How closely knit and organized can be gathered from the fact that while all the top political leaders of all the other parties were arrested and imprisoned the police were able to track down only three of the seventeen Politburo members. Further, Nepal's Communist top men remained in the country and did not go over to India as several of the other political escapees did.

The anti-Indian feeling in Nepal, never very far from the surface, rose to a high pitch immediately after the King's action on December 15th.

The Indian Prime Minister had commented mildly enough in the Indian Parliament that if such an event had happened in any other part of the world it would have been a matter of regret to them. But the happenings 'in a country on our threshold, a country with which we have such intimate relations as Nepal, have been a matter of great concern to us. . . . The basic fact remains, that this is not a question of pushing out a Government even though it has a majority. This is a complete reversal of democracy, the democratic process, and it is not

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clear to me that there may be a going back to democratic process in the foreseeable future. That is the main thing and naturally one views such a development with considerable regret.'

A full-scale propaganda blast was released in Nepal against India, notably by the four leading newspapers. They even warned Sikkim and Bhutan of Indian designs, asked them to free themselves from Indian interference and called for a federation of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, with Nepal taking the lead—a suggestion which, if it had not emanated from the King-controlled press, would have been stigmatized as a blatant Chinese take-over plan for the whole Himalayan area since this has been a Communist suggestion for the area for some time. They also published serialized anti-Indian articles, a campaign was started against the Indian newspaper reporters in Khatmandu, and even against an official of the Indian Embassy who was alleged to have paid a visit to a political worker's house.

It was little wonder, therefore, that the Chinese were pleased at the overthrow of B. P. Koirala and his Congress Government. While they had given him a warm welcome in Peking, and Chou had gone out of his way to repay the visit by going to Nepal after his visit to Delhi for the crucial border discussions in 1960, yet Koirala's rise as a socialist leader of international status was a source of irritation to them, and not at all hopeful in their plans for the strategic Himalayan States. It suited them far more to have an autocratic monarch ruling the country rather than a democratically-elected and popular Socialist oriented towards India.

It was reported in high circles in Khatmandu, although never officially confirmed, that shortly after the King took over power the Chinese extended further support to the King's Government and indicated that the King's action was warranted by the circumstances. Certainly this would explain the Nepali Communist Party's quick endorsement of the King's action, too. The support in the economic field was not negligible, China having increased her original offer of six crores rupees to twenty-three crores including the carryover. This was in reply to India's offer of forty-eight crores.

Subsequent to Chou's visit to Nepal a Joint Sino-Nepalese Border Commission had been set up to settle the problems of some 600 miles of Nepal's borders with Tibet. The Nepalese submitted 150 place names which were disputed by the Chinese who counter-claimed with nineteen of their own. The outstanding points of dispute were three sectors: in the Khimathanka area of Dhankuta in the eastern region; Rasuagarhi in the central region; and the Nara Pass of Jumla District in the western region. The crux of the dispute was the peak of Everest.

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Peking made little attempt to hide its strategy of placating Burma and Nepal, particularly in their border talks, by making concessions—although in the case of Burma the settlement of the dispute cost them a large portion of territory ceded to China—with a view to highlighting Delhi's own 'obstinacy' in coming to terms, and at the same time isolating Burma and Nepal from India's influence. It is also Peking's strategy to be friendly with the King of Nepal, who was the first to open diplomatic relations with China, in order to mitigate American influence in the country. Should this increase there is little doubt that Peking's tactics would change to subversive methods. Chou has said on a number of occasions that he would like Nepal to remain friendly and neutral and 'no one should exploit Nepal', that China 'would not tolerate Nepal leaning on the West'. He has also said that China would not interfere in Nepal's internal affairs but that China would not tolerate interference from other 'Power blocs', and there is no doubt that he would include India within this category should the necessity arise.

After the King's visit to Peking, the circumstances surrounding the announcement of the boundary treaty with China caused considerable concern to the politically-conscious Nepali citizen. For while, since the King's 'dismissal of democracy' in 1960 there has been no channel of expression for articulate public opinion, the King controlling all newspapers, there is still sufficient freedom of talk to gather popular sentiment, and there is no doubt that the boundary treaty caused profound shock. The chief reason for this reaction had been the previous administration's statements on claims to Everest and other areas, with the widespread public support for this stand, and this attitude the King's administration had sought to foster—particularly the emotional issue of the location of Everest. Even when the treaty had been actually signed in Peking by King Mahendra and Liu Shao-chi, Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic, on 5th October 1961 official agencies in Nepal continued to give the impression that the Nepalese had won all points, including the sentimental one of Everest.

But the text of the treaty, issued on October 13th, revealed the ridiculous position that Everest had to perform the geographical feat of lying broadly astride the common frontier, and that its peak would belong to both China and Nepal. Then there was the further agreement under which Nepal agreed to let China build a road linking Tibet and Khatmandu, for the first time bringing China within physical reach of the capital of Nepal, opening up whole new strategic possibilities, in an economic as well as military sense, and tilting the balance of power in Nepal in favour of China.

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For while there is no doubt that it was King Mahendra's intention to equalize the balance of power with this arrangement, by making Nepal less dependent on India, and giving her an extra political lever to use in her dealings with India, yet what has actually happened is that China has all the advantages over both countries.

For the Nepalese Communists, strong and well-organized in the south, have recently concentrated more and more in the northern districts of Nepal, and there are many indications that they are in close and constant touch with their opposite numbers in 'the Tibet region of China' across the open border, and that they are in possession of large quantities of modern weapons.

Meanwhile, into this delicately poised political scene another imponderable factor has entered. Almost 20,000 Tibetans are scattered along Nepal's northern border with Tibet, almost half of them former rebels who fought against the Chinese during the 1956-59 revolt. At present they are short of everything—food and medicine as well as arms and ammunition—but should they become a nuisance to China in their marauding raids on Chinese convoys in West Tibet as they have been doing, or should these attacks increase due to a mysterious increase in their supplies of arms, etc., or should the situation in Nepal not develop to Peking's liking, then the presence of this large, armed, attacking force on Nepal's northern border could give Peking the excuse it wanted to take direct action to absorb the country. Or it might even be that starving, freezing, despairing and frustrated at being left and ignored, these 20,000 Tibetans might be won over to the Chinese once again, and be a formidable striking force to be used against the increasingly vulnerable south.

While popular support is officially claimed for the King's rule, there is real and growing dissatisfaction. This was apparent in the first 'free' discussion to be held since the King's takeover, at a 'Conference of Intellectuals' held in June 1962, composed mainly of former officials. The fine distinction has been made that there was no criticism of the King or his policies, but only of the administration and its dilatory implementation of policies. There was little room for ambiguity, however, in Dr. K. I. Singh's statements to me in a private interview after the Conference.

'In two years', he said, 'the King has been exposed as a failure, indulging in the same intrigues of which he accused the former political parties.' Dr. Singh then went on to threaten to lead another revolt if the King did not change his ways, 'because', he said, 'as things are I can see civil war coming anyway. And I fear the same sort of action from India as in 1952—India will pretend that there has been an appeal from some Nepali source to put its troops in.

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That will bring Chinese intervention from the north, and Nepal will be finished.'

Dr. Tulsā Giri, the Nepalese Foreign Minister, was also outspoken in his denunciation of Indian actions and policies towards Nepal. Commenting on India's expressed disapproval of Nepal's agreement with China he said: 'Nepal is an independent nation. We want to develop our economy, our institutions as we think best. But while India agrees with this in principle it really wants us to go India's way.'

Behind China's present punctiliousness, however, there echo Mao Tse-tung's words quoted earlier. 'In defeating China in war, the imperialist States *have taken away many Chinese dependent States and a part of her territories. . . .* England seized Burma, Bhutan, *Nepal. . . .*'

CHAPTER 12

Tibet (II) and Border Areas:

The North East Frontier Agency: Nagaland: Ladakh



The Chinese People's Army, having entered Chamdo on 29th October 1950, remained there for several months before marching on Lhasa in September 1951. Behind this hesitation may well have been a desire to test Indian and United Nations reactions to the Tibetan appeal against the Chinese claims and action. Had firm action been taken by India or the United Nations at that point, to uphold the *status quo* at least, it is arguable from internal Tibetan evidence that China would have proceeded no further.

It must be pointed out that from a Chinese point of view there was a certain amount of justification for suspicions regarding American intentions *vis-à-vis* Tibet in 1951. There was Lowell Thomas's much publicized visit in 1949; the following year a copy of a booklet on top-secret military briefing for American troops on Tibet was circulating in certain quarters in Kalimpong and its existence was undoubtedly known to Chinese agents there. Finally, the escape of the Dalai Lama's brother, Taktser Rimpoche Thubten Norbu, to America in July 1951 was clearly a major factor in the alteration of China's policy in Tibet. Taktser Rimpoche, or Thubten Norbu as he now prefers to be known, had pretended to go along with China's plans to take over Tibet, which included the deposition of the Dalai Lama (this was before his official installation) and, with Thubten Norbu as President, the altering of the Tibet administration to suit Chinese demands. With Taktser Rimpoche in America, the possibility of American intervention may well have seemed imminent, and when the Dalai Lama was hastily installed in power, in November 1950, by the Tibetan Government, the Chinese must have decided that long-term 'peaceful measures' were no longer practicable. It was necessary to make preparations to forestall intervention, discourage possibilities of 'counter-revolution' engineered by Tibetan exiles in India, and bring Tibet quickly under complete Chinese control.

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It was for these reasons that the Chinese ignored the terms of the 17-Point Agreement of May 1951 which had been forced on what was only a Tibetan Goodwill Mission to Peking, and stamped with a false Tibetan seal. What was the Chinese 'Advisory Delegation' to Tibet became almost immediately Peking's instrument of political control. Every effort was concentrated on building a major road into Tibet, the prime, almost sole, purpose of which, even in Chinese publicity, was to carry military vehicles, troops and supplies.¹

Such a large and unexpected influx of people in the precariously balanced food situation which obtained in Tibet forced the Chinese to make drastic 'reforms' of Tibet's archaic methods of food storage, supply and distribution. As those methods were intimately connected with the rights of monasteries as granaries, landowners and tax levies it inevitably resulted in protests and scattered riots. The Chinese justified their actions by stressing the feudal character of the prevailing system, the increasing privations of the Tibetan people, and the necessity for participating in the struggle against the enemies of the motherland in Korea. But to the Tibetans, of course, it was simply an outright violation of the 17-Point Agreement, a means to eliminate Tibetan customs and, most of all, an attempt to weaken Tibetan religion.

The policy of land reform was at first, in 1952, restricted to East Tibet, presumably in order not to frighten and antagonize the Tibetan Government in Lhasa. The Chinese authorities requisitioned lands, property and goods belonging to Taktser Rimpoche, the Dalai Lama's eldest brother, at his famous monastery in Kumbum, in Amdo, as a punishment, they said, for having gone over to the Americans. This policy was rapidly extended to take in other areas and other monasteries.

But while the remote territory in East Tibet may have lent itself admirably to facilitating a rigorous enforcement of land reforms, the policy itself, in an area that was notoriously hostile to the Chinese, was bound to be an explosive issue. In 1952-53 widespread fighting broke out in Kham and Amdo. One Tibetan who escaped, once a 'People's General' in the Chinese Army from Amdo, claimed that over 80,000 rebels were involved in the fighting. Some 12,000 of them, according to him, were deserters from the Kuomintang armies who had settled down in the mountains of East Tibet. With no immediate help forthcoming from India or America, and because the Chinese, at the persuasion of East Tibetan leaders, relaxed their policy of immediate land reforms, the revolt died down—except in

¹ See Dalai Lama's press statements, April and June 1959: 'The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law.' International Commission of Jurist's Report.

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areas where local Chinese commanders made tentative attempts to introduce other reforms; as, for example, veterinary dispensaries which the sensitive Tibetans now suspected as centres for calculating their wealth in order to impose heavier taxes.

In Lhasa itself the Chinese proceeded much more cautiously, but even in the capital there were anti-Chinese demonstrations from as early as 1952. Leading priests had been persuaded to co-operate with the Chinese through assurances that there would be no interfering with Tibetan customs or religion, but they were now disturbed by the reports coming from East Tibet. Many of the nobles and high officials, particularly the younger ones, had enthusiastically joined in the earlier programmes of reconstruction and reform but now began to have second thoughts as Chinese pressures and demands on them increased. A powerful underground anti-Chinese group known as the Mi-mang Tsong-du ('People's Party') came into public prominence with demonstrations, placarding of walls, and denunciations of Chinese interference with the Dalai Lama's powers, and the customs and religion of Tibet.

Many of the issues raised by the anti-Chinese groups were apparently inspired by feudal officials, who wanted little or no change at all and were only using popular sentiment to oppose reforms of any kind. But at the same time popular anti-Chinese sentiment was very much in evidence. This, to a great extent, was due to the irritating presence of tens of thousands of Chinese troops in Lhasa and in other major towns. Some reports placed the total number of Chinese troops in Tibet at 200,000. Then there was the growing shortage of food—accelerated by the unprecedented 1953 floods and subsequent famine, which the superstitious Tibetans attributed to the displeasure of the gods with the Chinese occupation. Finally, the Tibetans resented the policy of imposing the Chinese language, dress and customs in the schools, and the Communist Party cadres.

In 1954 two major events occurred which were to have wide repercussions in Tibet. One was the signing of the Sino-Indian Trade Agreement—which included the delineation of 'The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence'—recognizing Tibet as 'the Tibet region of China'; and the second, the Dalai Lama's visit to China. The former convinced Tibetans that India and China were prepared to dispose of Tibet 'in private arrangements in favour of aggression so as to serve their own inter-Asian imperialist policies',¹ while the latter convinced the Dalai Lama that China was prepared to go to any length to sinicize Tibet. In addition to the deliberate favouring of the Panchen Lama throughout the visit, and the pressures put upon the

¹ See *Tibet in Revolt* by George N. Patterson.

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Dalai Lama to make favourable pro-Chinese speeches, there was also a crude attempt on his life coming through East Tibet—which the Chinese attributed to 'Khamba bandits'.

It was during this same visit to China that some leading officials of the Dalai Lama's entourage made contact with rebel Khamba leaders and planned a revolt against the Chinese in Tibet. This was of necessity only a loose arrangement but it served its purpose. In March 1955 Peking announced the nomination of a committee to prepare for regional autonomy for Tibet, and in September administrative offices for the committee were set up in Lhasa. This was clearly the start of an attempt to end even the limited special privileges that Tibet enjoyed and bring the country under the tighter control experienced by China's other national minorities in their 'national autonomous' areas. This move was accompanied in East Tibet by ruthless plundering of monasteries and the levying of crippling taxes. Late in 1955, the Khambas finally revolted, and the plans made earlier showed that even the East Tibetan leaders could no longer contain their people, and the whole of Kham and Amdo became involved. Marshal Ch'en Yi, a Deputy Premier (now also Foreign Minister), just escaped assassination when he went to Tibet to attend the inaugural meeting of the Preparatory Committee in April 1956.

From November 1956 to March 1957, the Dalai Lama was on a visit to India for the Buddha Jayanti celebrations there. He asked Premier Nehru for sanctuary and would not accept Premier Chou En-lai's guarantee of new, more moderate, Chinese policies. But Mr. Nehru persuaded him to return, promising to use his good offices in Peking. Later Mao Tse-tung in his secret speech on 'contradictions' among the people on 27th February 1957 (published on June 18th), declared that conditions in Tibet were 'not ripe' for 'democratic reforms'. The reforms were to be postponed until at least 1962. Peking then announced that 91.6 per cent of her officials would be withdrawn from Tibet in view of the postponement. In fact, they were only transferred from Western Tibet, where they could be observed by Indian officials, to Kham and Amdo where they could assist a reinforced Chinese army in disciplining the recalcitrant Khambas and Amdowas.

The Dalai Lama had also been promised a visit to Tibet by Mr. Nehru. The Indian Premier finally announced on 8th April 1958, that he would be visiting Lhasa; though he did not specify the date it was understood that he would go in September. But by the spring of 1958, the increasing Chinese military pressure in East Tibet against 'rebel elements' had convinced the Kham and Amdo Tibetans that

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they were facing extermination. In desperation they took to the mountains, sabotaging roads, destroying their houses and crops and leaving only their very old and very young behind. The situation was clearly too critical for Mr. Nehru to be allowed to visit Tibet and at the end of July 1956, at the suggestion of the Chinese, he announced the cancellation of his proposed visit.

By mid-1958, 20,000 East Tibetans, short of food and ammunition, had fallen back on Central Tibet, and through the earlier contacts made in 1954 were able to gain access to secret stocks of arms, ammunition and food from highly placed officials in Lhasa. These groups then took to the mountains south and south-west of Lhasa and the local revolts became a national uprising. For some time the Chinese authorities were able to keep Lhasa itself quiet by threatening to turn the heavy guns surrounding the city on the capital, including the Potala where the Dalai Lama lived. But with conditions throughout the country at explosion point even this threat no longer served to hold the citizens of Lhasa in check. On March 10th the issue was forced when the people of Lhasa refused to let the Dalai Lama accept a suspect Chinese 'invitation'; on March 17th the Chinese fired mortar shells at the Norbulingka Palace and the Dalai Lama and most of his government fled, and on March 19th the city and large monasteries erupted into armed revolt.¹

It can be seen that the Chinese were partly right in classifying the revolt as a 'tribal affair'; its location was primarily in East Tibet and most of the rebels hailed from there. What was not admitted, nor appreciated by the outside world, was that the 'tribal' area involved two-thirds of Tibet and almost 80 per cent of its population. In any case, a certain amount of anti-Chinese feeling had been in evidence in Central and West Tibet from 1952; this flared up into widespread opposition in Central Tibet in 1958 and armed revolt in Lhasa, the capital, in 1959, making the uprising definitely national.

News of this at the time was hard to come by, for in addition to the formidable geographical isolation of Tibet, the Tibetans themselves felt that India and the outside world were not only unsympathetic to Tibet's cause (*vide* the cavalier treatment India and the United Nations, who were among the recipients, accorded the Appeal and Manifesto of 4th August 1958 issued by leading Tibetan exiles) but also unable or unwilling to take any action which would bring them into opposition to China.

But the revolt ceased with dramatic suddenness, due not so much to successful repressive measures by the Chinese as to the breaking off of the struggle by the rebels for purposes of regrouping and re-

¹ See *Tibet In Revolt*.

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couping after the escape of the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Government and 13,000 refugees to India. Intense fighting had taken place in Lhasa for three days before the better-equipped Chinese troops were able to bring order into the city.

In a communiqué on 'The Rebellion in Tibet' the Chinese authorities admitted that:

'The Tibetan traitors have carried on their rebellious activities for quite a long time. . . . Since the Chinese People's Liberation Army entered Tibet and the Central People's Government and the Tibetan local government concluded the [17-Point] Agreement in 1951, they have been plotting to tear up this agreement and preparing for armed rebellion. . . . Beginning in May and June last year, on the instructions of the Tibetan local government and the reactionary clique of the upper social strata, the rebel bandits attacked the Chamdo, Dinching, Nagchuka and Loka areas; they disrupted communications; plundered the people and engaged in rape, arson and murder; they attacked agencies and army units of the Central People's Government in those places. In the spirit of national unity the Central People's Government repeatedly enjoined the local government of Tibet to punish the rebels and maintain social order. But the local government of Tibet and the reactionary clique of the upper social strata took the magnanimity of the Central People's Government for a sign of weakness. . . . They therefore refused to do their duty to check the ravages of the rebel bandits, but instead actively stepped up their treacherous intrigues. After concentrating considerable counter-revolutionary armed forces in Lhasa they started their armed rebellion on March 10, openly scrapping the 17-Article Agreement. . . . At 10 a.m. on March 20 the troops of the Tibet Military Area Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army were ordered to take punitive action against the clique of traitors who had committed these monstrous crimes. With the aid of patriotic Tibetan lamas and laymen the People's Liberation Army completely crushed the rebellion in the city of Lhasa in just over two days of fighting. Preliminary statistics show that by March 23 more than 4,000 rebel troops were taken prisoner. . . .'

The arrival of the Dalai Lama in India was first announced not by Delhi but by Peking. Although he had disappeared into the impenetrable mass of mountains in South Tibet and crossed over the Indian border at a remote and unexpected spot, yet the Chinese were able to steal a march on India by being the first to know and announce this. How this was done has not been revealed but there was an immediate outcry in the Delhi Parliament that there must be pro-Chinese intelligence agents at high Government level to intercept

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such news and flash it to the world before India could officially announce it herself. Whatever the reason, it was but another example of how Delhi invariably and needlessly let Peking outwit them in almost all phases of the political game in Asia.

From this time China launched a violent campaign against India. The Chinese radio and newspapers accused the Indian border town of Kalimpong of being 'the commanding centre of the revolt' and alleged that the Dalai Lama was abducted from Tibet by rebels at the instigation of certain Indian elements and was being held in India 'under duress'. India was accused of being influenced by 'imperialist propaganda and intrigues' and the New China News Agency said that 'deputies from all parts of the country . . . warned the imperialists and Indian expansionists not to meddle in China's internal affairs'. The Chinese authorities did not produce any evidence to substantiate their charges but contented themselves with reproducing an article which the official organ of the Communist Party of India, the *New Age*, published on 5th April 1959 alleging that Indian officials had been deeply involved with the Tibetan rebels. The *New Age* claimed that Mr. George Patterson (myself) had an active role in the rebellion and was on the friendliest terms with Mr. Apa Pant, Indian Political Officer in Sikkim; Tsering, 'one of the high-ups in the Central Intelligence Branch, now posted at Gangtok, as also other officials holding important posts'. The article concluded from those and similar 'facts' that India had interfered in the affairs of Tibet since 1949 when the Communists came to power in China.

China's official newspaper charged that the Sino-Indian friendship was 'being destroyed from the Indian side' because of India's attitude towards the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan uprising. India was even accused of wanting to 'turn Tibet into their colony for protection', and the same article went on: 'Judging by the recent vociferations of the Indian expansionists, there is reason to believe that some new schemes are now afoot that would endanger the five principles of peaceful co-existence and intervene further in the internal affairs of China.'

However, even in the midst of this vituperative tirade by which Peking obviously hoped to cover the monumental blunder of her repressive policies in Tibet and their effect on Asia and the world, the leaders in Peking noted that Nehru still clung hopefully to his policy of 'Panch Sheela' and shrewdly tried to isolate him from other Indian leaders and enlist him, fantastic as it may seem, on their side. Yet when one probes deeper into reasons and motives it does not seem so fantastic after all for China had gained so much from the 'Five Principles' through Indian friendship, and India had gained so

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little, that it was certainly worth a try to pick up the threads again—particularly when it was Nehru himself who was making the offer. Further, they calculated, if India ‘forgave’ China’s action then the other countries of Asia would have little ground to protest. Thus a lengthy, placating editorial in *The People’s Daily* on 6th May 1959 concluded:

‘The argument may have been a bit sharp because the vital interests of our Motherland and the Tibetan people are involved. But we still hope that the substance of our argument will benefit the mutual understanding between our two peoples and two Governments and that, in the language used, there has been no failure to pay regard to friendship and propriety. We are in full agreement with those friendly words to the Chinese people spoken so sincerely and seriously by Prime Minister Nehru: he said,—“We have every desire to maintain friendship between India and China” and “it would be a tragedy if two great countries of Asia develop feelings of hostility against each other.” Sino-Indian friendship is of long duration and stands on a solid foundation. Our basic interests are the same and our main enemy is also the same; we will certainly not forget our common interests and fall into the trap of our common enemy. Although it is regrettable for this argument to have taken place, we firmly believe that it will not result in feelings of hostility, nor will it shake the friendship between the two countries. Prime Minister Nehru has announced that India has no desire whatsoever to interfere in Tibet. We warmly welcome this friendly statement. Once the Indian side stops its words and deeds of interference in Tibet, the present argument will end. China never has and never will interfere in India. . . .’

Yet even as Peking was drafting this lengthy and ambiguous panegyric they were at the same time planning a further blow for India and were actually in acrimonious correspondence over violated boundaries with Tibet—although this was not mentioned by Prime Minister Nehru to the people of India.

The Dalai Lama, on his arrival in India, claimed that over 10,000 Tibetans had been killed in the fighting in Lhasa (and about 90,000 throughout the country during the whole revolt), and this slaughter, combined with the fact that Lhasa Tibetans are not as martial as the Khambas, probably accounted for the sudden termination of hostilities in the capital. It was an entirely different matter to stamp it out in the remote valleys and mountains of East and South-East Tibet. With the Dalai Lama, the members of his Government and many leading lamas and officials in India, and the increased Chinese military concentration on the main highway through Tibet and all open spaces, the rebels were forced to withdraw into the south and

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south-east areas once again. Even accepting the Chinese figures of 4,000 prisoners at face value, and making a disproportionately large allowance for another 6,000 rebels having escaped to India (out of the 13,000 following the Dalai Lama to India only 3,000 were under thirty years of age and the majority of them were lamas and harmless refugees), and accepting, too, the earlier Chinese figure of 20,000 rebels (although there were more than that in the Loka area, south of Lhasa, alone), it meant that at least 10,000 rebels were still at large inside Tibet on the Chinese Communists' own reckoning.

In a private interview which I had with the Dalai Lama in Mussoorie, on 20th August 1959, he said that he had information of rebel groups fighting in the Litang area, in South-East Tibet, and in the Chamdo-Jyekundo area in North-East Tibet, numbering several thousands, although their activities were necessarily on a smaller scale because of lack of ammunition and because they could no longer replenish supplies from captured Chinese troops due 'to a change in the types of Chinese arms and ammunition'.

The sporadic fighting continued into and throughout 1960 with variable success. With ammunition being in such short supply the rebels could only indulge in sudden marauding raids on convoys and garrisons and supplement their stocks from these.

On their part the Chinese launched an all-out ruthless campaign against not only the rebels, whom they could not reach in their inaccessible mountain retreats, but against the Tibetans in towns and villages throughout the country. Over 17,000 children were taken to China; monasteries were systematically plundered of their treasures; priests, old and young, were either imprisoned or made to work in road gangs; and all Tibetans were formed into Communist cells of ten persons with a Chinese in charge of each.

But one significant major change was that the Chinese authorities no longer made any attempt to work through Tibetan institutions. All departments were reorganized to fit in with the central administration at Peking and Chinese were put in full control of those departments. Even the leading Tibetans who had formerly collaborated with the Chinese were suspect, and although a few were retained as window-dressing, they did not play the former prominent roles allotted to them. The Panchen Lama; Ngabu Ngawang Jigme, the former Lhasa Cabinet Minister; and Pangdatshang Topgyay, the Khamba leader, were all taken to Peking for several months but when they returned to Lhasa in late 1960 they were rarely seen at any public function and were obviously suspected by the Chinese of having nationalist sympathies.

Meanwhile, in India, the Government imposed a rigid security

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guard over all Tibetans arriving with the Dalai Lama, and made certain that no one could approach him or his entourage to ask questions for some time after his arrival. They also forbade 'any political activities' during their stay in India.

It is no longer a secret that what the Dalai Lama had in mind on his arrival in India was a personal appeal to the United Nations for immediate aid of any kind—military, economic, political—for Tibet, but that on the persuasion of Mr. Nehru, and of his own 'advisers'—several of whom had personal reasons for not annoying the Indian Government—he was persuaded to keep silent.

On 20th June 1959, he held a Press Conference, at which he spoke feelingly of the 'near-annihilation' of his country, but when questioned as to specific suggestions on what he thought should be done to help Tibet he could only reply weakly, 'I have given the matter no thought'. He was so obviously not in a position to do or say anything that the Press, previously in full cry and full sympathy with Tibet, no longer took any interest. It was felt that in keeping with its policy of 'Panch Sheela'—'The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence'—still hopefully clung to by Nehru, the Indian Government would suppress the Tibetan question as much as possible in order to placate China. The Dalai Lama was prepared to go along with this policy on the persuasion of his 'advisers'.

In November 1959, a three-member Tibetan delegation went to the U.N. to request that the question of Tibet be put on the agenda and found some support from Ireland and Malaya, but the major powers would not touch it—in deference to India. The International Commission of Jurists found that the crime of genocide was sufficiently established, and with Ireland and Malaya as sponsors, the question was to be raised in 1961.

But in the meantime bitter wrangling broke out among the Tibetans in India. Many of those who had taken part in the revolt in Tibet and had fled with the Dalai Lama, losing families, wealth and property were incensed at the self-seeking policies advocated by some of the Tibetan officials close to the Dalai Lama, some of whom had been in India for several years. This group had selfish reasons for not antagonizing India with their importunate demands or embarrassing requests because their wealth and future were tied up in India; while those who had lost everything wanted strong action of some kind—any kind—that would hold out some hope for their country, their families and their future.

With over 60,000 Tibetans in India, most of them in the strategic border areas, it is to India's advantage to have them on their side in the event of future trouble on the borders, but in the deteriorating

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situation, with anti-Indian feeling increasing among them, the Tibetans were becoming more and more susceptible to the Chinese propaganda that India is afraid to help them, that soon, when China liberates the border areas, and even India, they will have no place to go, and that they ought to make their peace with China now.

The Chinese, for their part, have stated :

‘Tibet is an inalienable part of China. It belongs to the big family of the Chinese people, not to the handful of reactionaries, much less to the imperialists and foreign interventionists. The rebellion of the handful of Tibetan reactionaries and its suppression are wholly internal affairs of China, which do not permit any interference by foreigners. It is the firm and unalterable policy of the People’s Republic of China to implement national regional autonomy in the Tibet area under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government and with the broad masses of patriotic people of all walks of life as the masters, to carry through democratic reforms under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government and to build a prosperous, Socialist new Tibet by relying on the fraternal unity and mutual assistance of the working people of all nationalities. . . .’

Certainly, while this is China’s long-term intention she is having great difficulty in implementing it now for, two years after the revolt in Lhasa, she has had to call off the completing of the much-vaunted railway line to Lhasa, and postpone ‘socialist reforms’ for five years, because of the continuing guerrilla attacks and possibility of further uprisings. But while the Tibetan population is sullen and rebellious, and while at least 25,000 rebels are still free and active in the mountains, there is no possibility of a revolt on the previous scale because the Tibetans are desperately short of ammunition. Nuisance raids on convoys, garrisons, roads and granaries will continue for some time, perhaps several years, but until they find some one or some way to provide ammunition, or until India changes her present policy and allows arms to be sent, they are doomed to eventual defeat and absorption in China. Since the border conflict in the North-East Frontier Area, however, India has secretly requested the Tibetan leaders to recruit Tibetans for fighting with the Indian forces in any future war with China, and it has been reliably reported that large numbers of Tibetans are now in training in the border areas for this purpose.

THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER AREA

The mountainous region of the Himalayan border of India is over 2,000 miles long and, on an average, about 200 miles broad, roughly

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divided into three sections: (1) the Great Himalayas, with an average height of 20,000 feet, with the snow-line at about 14,000 feet. It includes such well-known giants as Everest, on the Nepal-Tibetan frontier, Kanchenjunga on the Sikkim-Tibetan frontier, and Nanga Parbat on the Indo-Tibetan frontier; (2) the Lesser Himalayas at an altitude of about 15,000 feet; and (3) the Outer Himalayas stretching from 15,000 feet to the Terais, or the plains, to the south. The whole length of border stretches from Ladakh in the north, contiguous with Sinkiang, to the North-East Frontier Area, contiguous with Burma, on the southernmost point.

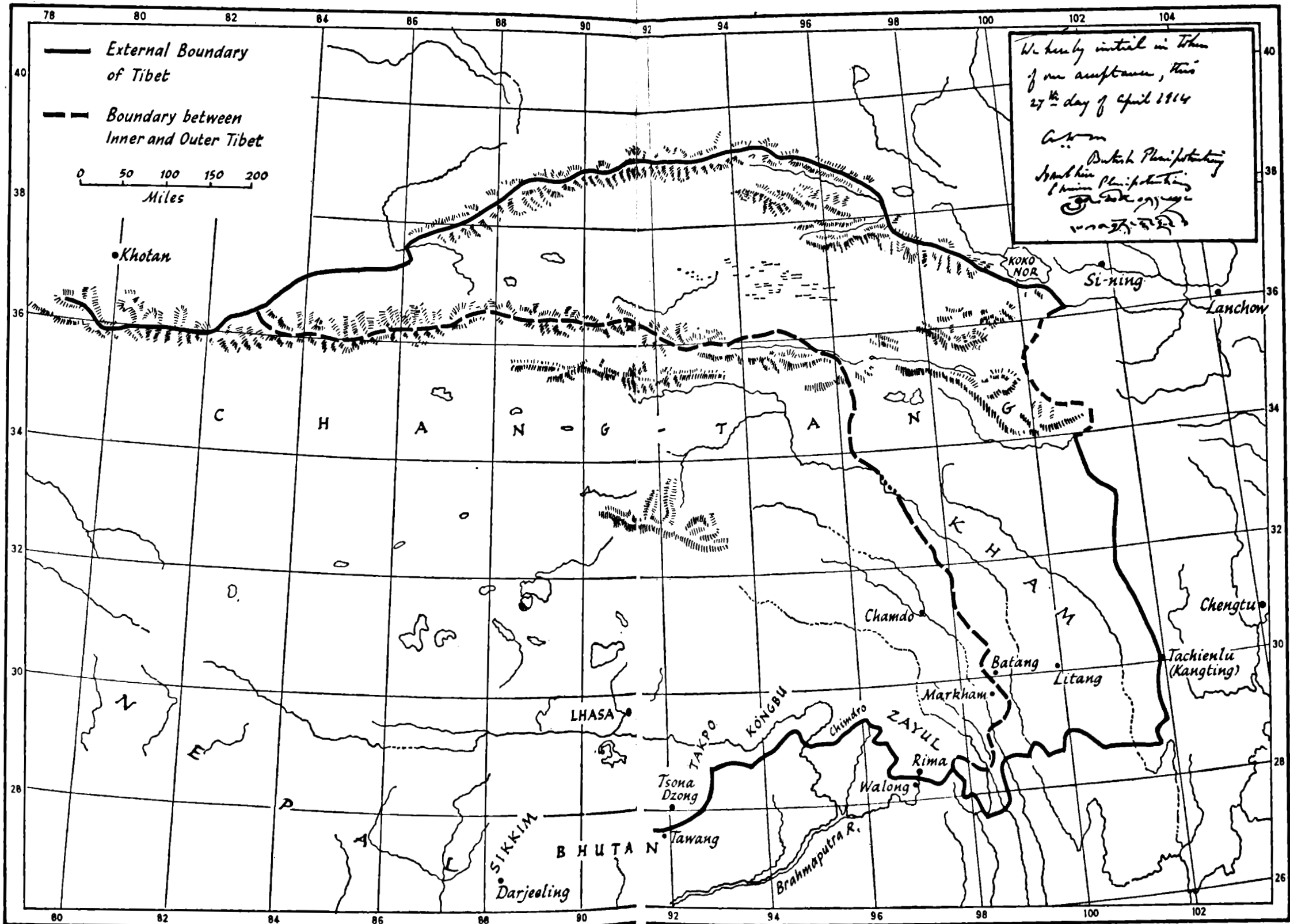
India's northern frontier is a traditional one in the sense that it has existed where it is now recognized by India for nearly 3,000 years. The Indian claim is that the areas along this 2,500-mile frontier, from the Kuan Lun mountains in the far north to the junction with Burma in the south-east, although at times existing as independent principalities, have always remained within Indian jurisdiction.

When the noted Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang visited India in the seventh century he listed all the Indian kingdoms through which he passed and these included the Kapisa territory immediately south of the Hindu Kush mountains, ruled by a Kshatriya king. East of the Sindhu, the first important State was Kashmir, consisting not only of what is now Kashmir but also a considerable part of the Punjab. East of the Yamuna lay the kingdoms of Mo-li-pa-lo (or Marpo, the actual name of Ladakh), Nepal and Kamarupa.

In the eighth century the famous Tibetan king, Srong-tsen Gampo, invaded Nepal, and occupied Tirhut. But Tibetans and Chinese incursions south of the Himalayan frontiers were always short-lived and never gained any influential foothold. The Himalayan regions often changed hands, it is true, but it was almost always between Indian rulers. Only once, and that was for a comparatively short period, did a part of this territory come under direct Tibetan control and that was in Ladakh.

It was from the north-west and not from the north or north-east that India was successfully invaded, when the Moslem conquest of India took place in the last quarter of the twelfth century, and over the next five centuries established their authority right up to the Himalayas. Two Moslem rulers in the thirteenth century tried to conquer Tibet and push their frontiers beyond the Himalayas, but one was defeated and the other perished in the Himalayan passes.

In Assam the early Hindu kings were replaced by the Ahoms, a branch of the Shan tribe, and they took their name, Ahom, 'the peerless', as a title, for the king, and also for a name—later, by gradual corruption changed to 'Assam'—for the country. The Ahoms



1. Map taken from Indian Publications Division, Government of India, to show the MacMahon line.

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successfully resisted the Moslem attempts to subdue them, but from the sixteenth century the Ahom kings began to take Hindu names, and then adapting the language, customs and religion of the conquered former inhabitants became absorbed in the Hindu fold.

In the eighteenth century the European Powers appeared on the Indian scene, but they concentrated on the plains and paid little attention to the northern borders. It was in 1801 that Britain turned towards the Himalayas, first at the Kingdom of Oudh, in the central portion of the Himalayas, and gradually extended their influence to annex Dalhousie in 1856. Britain annexed Assam in 1838, but to the north and east of Assam there were tribes over whom the Ahom had lost control. The British policy in these areas was to acquire a loose political control over the tribes, with the minimum of interference compatible with the protection of the tribesmen, and to restrain them from raiding either Indian or Chinese territory.

When the Chinese General, Chao Erh-feng, invaded and occupied Tibet in 1910 and began extending his influence into North Assam, Britain decided that the area should be brought quickly under Assam Government control and sent troops to build roads and garrisons right up at Walong, on the Tibetan frontier.

In 1913, a conference of British, Chinese and Tibetan plenipotentiaries was convened in Simla in an attempt to negotiate an agreement as to the status of Tibet with particular regard to the relations of the three Governments and to the frontiers of Tibet both with China and India. After prolonged negotiations the conference, under the Chairmanship of Sir Henry MacMahon, drew up a Tripartite Convention between the three countries which was initialed by the representatives of the three parties, but was not signed or ratified by the Chinese Government who two days later repudiated the terms of the Agreement. The Convention was, however, ratified by Britain and Tibet, and China was deprived of the benefits listed in the Convention—among them the recognition that Tibet was under the suzerainty of China.

The Convention included a definition of boundaries both on the Sino-Tibetan and the Indo-Tibetan frontiers. On the Sino-Tibetan frontier a double boundary was laid down, the region between the two boundaries being known as Inner Tibet and that part of Tibet lying west of the western boundary as Outer Tibet. The other frontier between India and Tibet on the Assam and Burma borders—which later usage termed 'the MacMahon Line'—was laid down between the eastern border of Bhutan and the Isurazi Pass on the Irrawaddy-Salween water-parting. West of the Brahmaputra bend this frontier for the most part followed the main axis of the Himalayas, and east

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of that point included all the tribal territory under the political control of the Assam and Burma Governments.

The MacMahon Line formed the north and north-eastern boundary of Assam, but not of the province itself as a state of the Indian Union. A zone of about 100 miles deep within the frontier, comprising the tangle of mountains, valleys and jungles between the plain of the Brahmaputra and the high watershed of the Himalayas, was given the name of the North-Eastern Frontier Agency, abbreviated to NEFA.

The North-East Frontier Area, between Bhutan and Burma, is also claimed by China, who occupied some of it in 1960 and has since invaded the whole territory. Despite intense military preparations since 1960 this is the most vulnerable part of India's border.

The segregation of the NEFA as a separate tribal area was really begun by the implementation of the 'Inner Line Regulations' in 1873. At the same time the geographical conformation of the territory, with savage mountains and impenetrable forests, contributed to the separate development of distinctive tribal groupings. South of the Inner Line the territory comprising the six districts of Goalpara—Kameng, Darrang, Nowgong, Lackimpur and Sibsagar—were raised to the status of a province, known as Assam.

Throughout the period of British administration little was done in the NEFA other than sending in punitive expeditions to restrain the marauding tribes. It is not generally known that there was more fighting in the NEFA than there was in the more colourful and highly publicized North-West Frontier. The political emphasis during that period was to thwart the designs of Russia from the north-west, and a weak China and weaker Burma were a threat to the more vulnerable north-east. It was through the two routes from Tibet to Tawang and Rima that the Tibetans had come to first trade then inhabit the northern areas of the territory. It was through the Pangsau Pass in the eastern section that the earlier Ahom conquerors had come, with the later northern Burmese tribes and, finally, the Burmese Army. It was through this same Pass which the Indian Army passed to defeat the Japanese. It is chiefly from this area that the Nagas have successfully conducted their eight-year revolt against overwhelming Indian forces. The movement of tribes over the centuries has left this area with a predominant Tibet-Burmese people of Mongolian origin, and only a light sprinkling of Assam admixture.

Historically, the NEFA area is wide open to the claims of any of the neighbouring countries, depending on the particular basis of the claim advanced. Ethnically and economically, until the twentieth century, its associations were mostly with the north. According to

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one historian, in the fifth century a local Raja sent an embassy to the Chinese Court. A Moslem invasion was unsuccessful but a more powerful invasion by the Ahoms of North Burma in the fourteenth century succeeded in conquering a large area, extending right up to the border of Tibet. The Ahom rulers remained in power in Assam until replaced by the British in 1839. But even the Ahoms were only able to control their territory with the help of Naga warriors.

With the coming of the British, and the rapid expansion of the tea industry in North Assam, new opportunities for trade in the south were opened up to the NEFA tribes. But, also, new confusions were introduced as independent arrangements regarding the buying and selling of land were entered into between the various tribes and European tea-planters. To safeguard the rich tea interests it became necessary to extend British administration in the area, and this was done sporadically without a central policy, and reluctantly. District Commissioners and Political Officers on the plains of Assam interfered as little as possible with the hill people, except when there was a serious outbreak of fighting and when specifically asked to do so by the tribal councils.

When China's forceful and ambitious Frontier Commissioner General Chao Erh-feng entered Tibet in 1905 with a Chinese Army bent on subjugation of the country, and then turned southwards to claim 'China's' territory in NEFA in 1910, the British Government awoke to the possible dangers threatening Assam and India in this move. With Chao Erh-feng's death in 1911, and the subsequent Tibetan defeat of the Chinese, the threat was diminished, but in 1913 the British Government convened a meeting to discuss the states of Tibet and stabilize the situation. This Conference was attended by the plenipotentiaries of Britain, Tibet and China, and known as the Simla Convention. At first China objected to a Tibetan representative having equal status with the Chinese representative, but later agreed to attend. However, the terms finally proved unacceptable to China, especially those relating to the proposed boundaries between Tibet and China, and between Tibet and the NEFA. The chief Chinese objections to signing the Simla Convention, according to Ivan Chen, the Chinese plenipotentiary, were:

1. Tibet should be recognized as a region of China.
2. All the places west of the Salween shall be placed within the limits of the autonomy of Tibet but any question which may arise there of political, territorial or international nature, shall be discussed between China and Great Britain.
3. The imposing of a time limit on the Tibetan and Chinese

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representatives by Sir Henry MacMahon in which they had to give a definite answer.

When China refused to sign Britain and Tibet went ahead and signed the convention as independent states and included in the Agreement a clause depriving China of any of the advantages which would have accrued to her had she signed the Convention.

In 1914, as a result of the Simla Convention between Britain and Tibet, the India-Tibetan frontier was delimited from the eastern boundary of Bhutan to the Irrawaddy-Salween water parting. This became known as the 'MacMahon Line'. Sir Henry MacMahon, who was the British representative, recommended that while great care should be taken to avoid friction with the Tibetan Government (who had objected to the proposed alterations in the Tawang area), and the vested interests of the Tawang Monastery, an experienced British official should proceed to the western part of the Line to settle its future administration. Tawang, the area of the heaviest fighting recently between China and India, is in what is now known as the 'Kameng Frontier Tract' of the North-East Frontier Area, which was created by Britain in 1912; before then it was vaguely termed 'Western Section of the North-East Frontier'. The importance of this was stressed in the following excerpt from a report of the Chief Secretary of Assam to the Political Officer, Balipara Frontier Tract, dated 17th September 1936: '. . . It amounts to this, that while the Chinese already claim a large stretch of territory East of Tawang as part of the Sikang Province of China, the Tibetan Government, over whom the Chinese Government claim suzerainty, are collecting revenue and exercising jurisdiction in the Tawang area many miles south of the international frontier. The Government of India consider that some effective steps should be taken to challenge activities which may be extended to a claim on behalf of China to Tawang itself, or even Bhutan and Sikkim. . . . The continued exercise of jurisdiction by Tibet in Tawang, and the area south of Tawang, might enable China . . . to claim prescriptive rights over a part of the territory recognized as within India by the 1914 Convention. . . .'

In the autumn of 1936 the British Political Officer in Sikkim, Sir Basil Gould, had an interview with the Tibetan Government in Lhasa at which Tawang was discussed. The Tibetan Government's attitude was that (1) up to 1914 Tawang has been undoubtedly Tibetan; (2) they regarded the adjustment of the Tibeto-Indian border as part and parcel of the general adjustment and determination of boundaries contemplated in the 1914 Convention. *If they could, with British help, secure a definite Sino-Tibetan boundary they would, of course, be glad to observe the Indo-Tibetan border as defined in 1914;* (3) they have

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been encouraged in thinking that the British Government and the Government of India sympathized with this way of regarding the matter owing to the fact that at no time since the Convention and Declaration of 1914 had the Indian Government taken steps to question Tibetan, or to assert British authority in the Tawang area.

In 1938, a small expedition, under a Captain Lightfoot, was sent to Tawang and in his report to the Government of India, dated 7th September 1938, he also warned that unless regular tours were undertaken, and some effective measures to establish administration were introduced, British authority over the area would be lost. The Central Government in reply said that a second tour could not be allowed as it 'might result in the Government of India having to undertake permanent occupation in order to fulfill their obligations. . . .' It was decided subsequently, in July 1939, that the question of future policy should be decided after the expiry of one year. World War II intervened, and in 1947 India became independent, but the last British Political Officer there in 1947, a Colonel Betts, has told me that there was no alteration in the position when he was there and that it was still necessary to obtain permission from the Tibetan authorities in Tawang to travel in that area, that Indian authority extended only to the Se-La Sub Agency, south of Tawang, and that token tribute was paid to Tibet in recognition of this.

When India became independent in 1947 the Indian Government was almost immediately presented with a problem involving the NEFA and other border territories. The Tibetan Government choosing the time when the Kuomintang in China was in decline, and a new Indian policy imminent, sent a telegram to the Indian Government on 16th October 1947 demanding recognition of her claims to her former territories, '. . . such as Zayul and Walong and in the direction of Pemako, Lonag, Lapa, Mon, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and others on this side of the river Ganges and Lowo, Ladakh, etc., up to the boundary of Yarkhim.'

The Indian Government sent a reply (published in White Paper No. 2) as follows:

'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 Agreements are reached on matters which either party would 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. . . .'

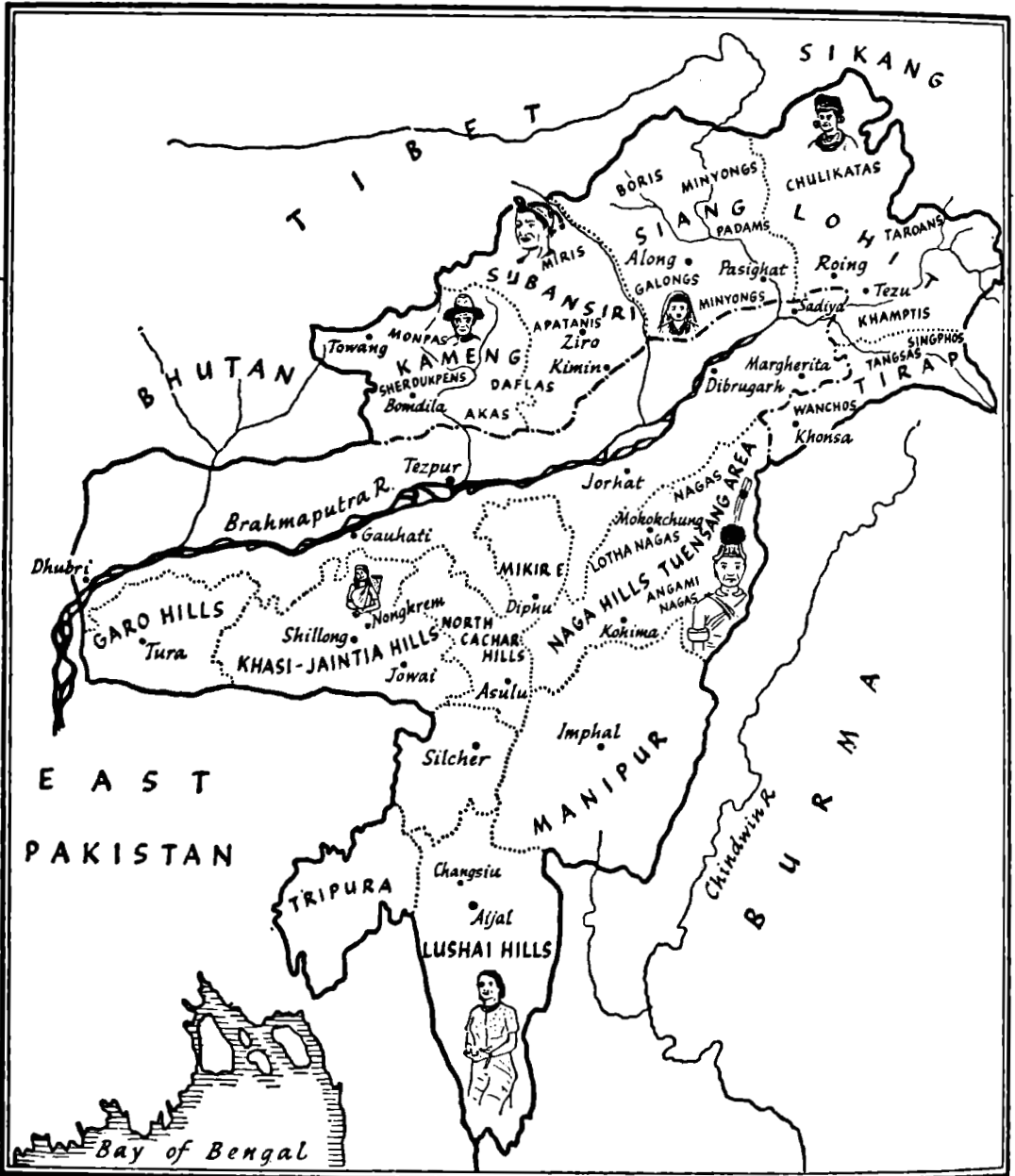
In 1950 the Chinese Army invaded Tibet and India recognized her right to do so under China's pre-1914 Simla Convention claims of 'suzerainty' over Tibet.

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Between the earlier period of China's invasion of Tibet in 1905 and later invasion in 1950, only fitful interest in the NEFA had been taken, as has been noted. Prior to 1914 the NEFA was divided into two sections, the Western and Eastern, each under the nominal charge of a district Political Officer. In 1912 these sections were named as Balipara and Sadiya respectively. Also in 1912 units of the Assam Rifles began penetrating some of the valleys in Lohit and Siang, but Subansiri and Tawang were left as administrative voids—although several letters were sent by Assam Governors to the Central Government warning that this lack of administration was in danger of letting the territory go to China by default. In 1942 another Frontier Tract was created out of the Sadiya Tract and named Tirap Frontier Tract; and in 1946 the Balipora Frontier Tract was divided into the Se-La Sub Agency and Subansiri Area. In 1949 the remaining part of the Sadiya Frontier Tract was divided into the two divisions of Abor Hills and Mishmi Hills. In 1949, the Subansiri Divisional Headquarters was established, and Tawang was brought under Indian administration for the first time in February 1951. In 1951, also, Naga Hills was formed into a separate district, and in 1953 it was named the Tuensang Frontier District. Finally, in 1954, the Divisions were given the names of Kameng (2,000 sq. miles), Subansiri (7,950 sq. miles), Siang (8,392 sq. miles), Lohit (5,800 sq. miles), and Tirap (2,657 sq. miles) and brought under a specially created administrative unit of some 31,438 sq. miles under the Foreign Ministry with the Governor of Assam acting as the agent of the President of India. In 1956 the Naga Hills and Twensang District were incorporated into one unit known as the Naga Hills and Tawang Area, and in 1962 this area, under the continuing pressure of the Naga revolt, was finally given statehood as 'Nagaland', within the Indian Union and also under the Governor of Assam.

Within this area there is still considerable dissatisfaction and unrest. The eight-year-old Naga war is likely to spread into other areas as other tribes join them for training or are supplied with arms. The Lushais, Manipuris, Chins, and Kachins to the south and east are reported to be making overtures to the Naga rebels, as they seek their own independence. To the north the Nagas have extended their rebel activities to include the Konyaks, Khamptis and others and this in the strategic areas of Tirap and Lohit with their routes of access to and from Tibet and Burma. Then the less warlike, but no less stubborn, hill tribes to the east and west are refusing to be represented in the Assam Government and are demanding separate states of their own.

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2. Tribes inhabiting the North-East Frontier Area between India and China.

The greater, and most immediate, danger lies in the recent Chinese invasion of the NEFA in October 1962 and her claims to this territory, according to the Chinese Government, 'illegally' occupied by Indian administrators and troops. In the Report of the Officials of the Government of India and the Chinese People's Republic on

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Boundary Questions, published in February 1961, the Chinese officials deliberately excluded Sikkim and Bhutan and equivocated on the status of NEFA. Later in an exchange of diplomatic Notes the Chinese Government made clear its claims:

‘The traditional customary Sino-Indian boundary east of Bhutan follows in the main the southern foot of the Himalayas, and Chinese maps “published throughout the years” have all shown the location of this line. The unilateral claim about the boundary in this sector put forward by the Indian Government in its memorandum has never been accepted by the Chinese Government. In view of the fact that the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited . . . and that moreover . . . what is in dispute is not the question of the location of individual parts on the boundary but involves the question of longer tracts of territory, the Chinese Government has always hoped to have friendly discussions . . . so as to seek a reasonable settlement of the boundary question . . . [But] the unshakeable fact remains that it is only the boundary line running along the southern foot of the Himalayas . . . which is the true, traditional customary line of the boundary between China and India in the eastern section. . . .’

Very little has been written on the tribal peoples of NEFA and much of that in notes and periodicals no longer in circulation or available. Even when these notes were being written over a century ago little could be found out and less was known. One, J. McCash, writing in *The Topography of Assam*, in 1837, could say:

‘No nations bordering upon the British dominions in India are less generally known than those inhabiting the extreme North-east Frontier of Bengal and yet in a commercial, statistical or a political point of view, no country is more important. There our territory of Assam is situated in almost immediate contact with the empires of China and Ava (Burma), being separated from each by a narrow belt of mountainous country, possessed by barbarian tribes of independent savages, and capable in being crossed over in the present state of communication in ten or twelve days. . . .’

The ‘present state of communication’ at that time meant a journey of no less than sixty-five days from Calcutta to Saikwa near Sadiya in Upper Assam, thirty-seven days of which were spent boating upstream to Gauhati, ‘the metropolis of Assam’.

The origin of the ‘barbarous tribes of independent savages’ living in the narrow strip—40,000 to 50,000 square miles in extent—comprising the North-East Frontier Area is still obscure. In fact, the same description given in 1837 could very well still be applied to the people

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living in that area in the present day, for reports still emanate from the region of head-hunting forays and human sacrifice. It was a region whose physical characteristics are similar to those described in Bhutan, with more villages and a greater amount of jungles.

There are a variety of smaller tribes in the area but the main tribes of any major significance are the Nagas, the Abors, the Mishmis, Daphlas; of those, the Nagas have emerged as probably the greatest single political problem in modern India, with their uncompromising demand for an 'independent Nagaland', and the drawn-out Naga war.

The origin of the word 'Naga' is unknown, and has been variously interpreted as 'naked' (by Ptolemy in the third century), 'mountaineer', 'people' and 'hillman'. It certainly is not known to the hill tribes themselves. The term 'Naga' has come to be used loosely to cover a variety of the smaller tribes known by different names to the more academic anthropologists, and even at times to include the Abors and the Mishmis, the other major head-hunting tribes in the area.

It has been noted in spite of the multiplicity of dialects in the area that there appears to be some common tie binding them together, and it has been suggested that this common tie may have descended to all the tribes from the great original stock by which the hills were first peopled. These aboriginals probably were of Mongoloid Tibetan stock who emigrated from the north-west border of China during the fighting which took place between the Chinese and Tartars in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These were probably then added to by tribal or group emigrations, also from political causes, from Bengal and Assam. This would explain why some of the tribes are definitely Mongolian, others are as definitely Indian, and while some have dialects derived from a common source, others speak languages of a quite different stock. For instance, the Monbas rarely mixed with the other tribes, were never independent, but came under the jurisdiction of the Lama monastery of Tawang, more famous as the route through which the Dalai Lama fled in 1959—a branch of the Drepung monastery in Lhasa. This area was under the control of the Tibetans, although it was more an ecclesiastical authority than secular, the governing officials being lamas.

As we have seen, by the thirteenth century the Ahoms had invaded and occupied the whole of Assam. Between 1205 and 1662 two Muslim invasions of Assam were made which met with almost complete disaster. The Ahoms ruled over the country up to 1770, when the Moamasihahs, dissatisfied with the oppression of the Ahoms, rose in revolt and succeeded in driving out the ruling Raja in 1774. From

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this time Assam became the hunting ground of any ambitious tribal or bandit chief.

The British Government in India paid little or no attention to this part of the continent until the eastern frontiers of Bengal began to be threatened by the advance of the Kingdom of Burma. The Indian Government protested to the King of Burma and warned him of the consequences of his activities in Assam but he paid no attention to the warnings and on 5th March 1824 the Indian Government declared war on Burma. After a costly war in lives and money the British forces eventually penetrated to Ava, where a peace treaty was signed under the terms of which the King of Burma agreed to recognize the British Protectorate over Upper Assam, Cachar and Manipur, and to cede the maritime provinces of Arakan and Tennasserim.

The occupation of this territory cost the Indian Government as many as fourteen major military expeditions between 1832 to 1880, including the second Burmese War in 1852–53, which brought the whole of the coast of the Bay of Bengal from Chittagong to Tennasserim under the Indian Government.

But while the Government claimed as British territory the whole country up to the boundaries of Manipur and Burma, it treated the North-East Frontier Area as outside Assam for all civil purposes. The actual boundary was never clear, for when the tea industry began to spread along the North Assam border, many tea companies entered into negotiations with the tribes across the 'frontier' for stretches of territory and paid to these tribes a recognized sum for their plantations. But raids across the border, and even revolts in the area—especially among the Nagas and Abors—remained a constant practice right into the twentieth century. Even in 1911 the boundary was shown in some maps as an extension of the southern border of Bhutan.

It was the raids across the border which brought the British Army on to the scene, and in a series of punitive expeditions they annexed several areas which had not previously been under the jurisdiction of any one power. This was the beginning of the Naga problem, for instance, and, by extension, of the later MacMahon Line and its repercussions for India.

So far as the Nagas were concerned, a punitive expedition sent against them in 1879 annexed a part of the territory which they inhabited, and after signing a Peace Treaty in 1880, the annexed area was known as 'the Naga Hills district', and the people 'subject Nagas'. Outside the annexed territory there were still other Nagas—there are about sixteen tribes of Nagas, totalling approximately one

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million—who were never subject to Britain, or any other power, and they were known as ‘free Nagas’.¹

When the Chinese Government sent its ‘Frontier Commissioner’, General Chao Erh-feng, into Tibet in 1905, with instructions to bring the country under the control of the Peking Government, he first of all put down all rebellion in East Tibet, then marched on Lhasa, which he entered in 1910, the Dalai Lama fleeing to India. After entering Lhasa the Chinese forces turned southward and in 1910 crossed over the south Tibetan border at Zayul deep into the Mishmi country.² In 1912, President Yuan Shih-Kai of China, on 12th April, issued a proclamation claiming that Tibet was a province of China.

With the extension of Chinese interest in the area in 1912, the tribal territory was extensively surveyed by British Army officers following on an incident in which the British Political Officer in Sadiya and thirty-eight companions had been murdered by the Abors when he returned into their territory. From the subsequent punitive expedition, and others, such as Lieut.-Col. F. M. Bailey’s exploration and survey trip (*No Passport to Tibet*) two frontier tracts were brought under Indian Government administration known as Balipura and Sadiya Frontier Tracts, each under a British Political Officer. The Lohit area was surveyed by the Mishmi Mission in 1911–12, the Dihan Valley in 1912–13, and the Abor area in 1913. Extensive surveys of the southern area of Tibet were also made by Colonel Bailey in 1913–14. It was on the basis of these surveys that the boundary between India and Tibet was sought to be delimited in 1914 when the British Government convened the Tripartite Conference between India, Tibet and China.

The war in Europe broke out a month after the conclusion of the Convention, and the Chinese Government, occupied with internal troubles of its own, decided to wait and see what emerged in the future. By the time the war was over there was no longer a Central Government in China with real authority over the provinces, and no

¹ In his *History of Assam* (published 1926), Sir Edward Gait, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., clearly stated: ‘The hilly tract inhabited by the various tribes known to us collectively as Nagas had never been subjugated by the Ahoms, and it was no part of the British policy to absorb it. . . . At last, in 1866, it was resolved to take possession of the Angami country. . . . The object in view was to protect the low land from the incursion of the Nagas. It was not desired to extend British rule into the interior, but when a footing in the hills had once been obtained further territorial expansion became almost inevitable.’ [Italics mine]

² In 1950 when I passed through this territory I saw the huge boulder, between Walong and Sadiya, where Chinese troops had cut their regimental insignia, together with the British and Indian insignias; this was to the south of Walong.

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serious effort was made subsequently by the British Government to obtain ratification of a treaty that no longer seemed to have practical importance so far as China was concerned. The frontier was effectively with Tibet, not with China—the Tibetans having managed to clear the Chinese out of the whole frontier area, including the borders of Assam—and from 1912 to 1951 Tibet was in fact an independent state, not subject to any kind of Chinese control. The Tibetans blandly recognized the frontier clause of the 1914 Convention as binding, and the Chinese, having no armed forces or administration anywhere near the frontier, were in no position to challenge it.

The British policy in the North-East Frontier Area was to interfere as little as possible. The British officers either recognized existing headmen, or appointed them, and made them responsible, paying them a regular amount as 'subsidy' for good behaviour. The frontier policy was phrased by Lord Lansdowne as 'a sphere of influence within which we shall not attempt to administer ourselves but within which we shall not allow any aggression from without'. However, missionaries were encouraged to work amongst the frontier tribes and the good work of these over the years, coupled with the non-interference of the British Administration in tribal affairs, created a tremendous reservoir of good-will towards Europeans, an attitude for which thousands of European soldiers and civilians were grateful during the fighting on this front in World War II, when the tribes fed them, looked after them, and helped them on their way to escape from the Japanese.

But the education they were receiving from the missionaries, particularly the tribes nearer the plains of Assam, had its effect in a new interest in affairs beyond the tribe and frontier area. In 1929, several representatives of the Nagas submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission, in which they stated that they would not agree to any reforms being considered which involved their being transferred under a Government based on India, and if this were not possible, they wanted complete independence:

'We, the undersigned Nagas . . . have heard with great regret that our hills were included with the "Reformed Scheme of India" without our knowledge. . . . Now we learn that you have come to India as representatives of the British Government to enquire into the working of the system of Government . . . we submit that it must be withdrawn. . . .

'We pray that we should not be thrust to the mercy of the people who could never have conquered us themselves, and to whom we were never subjected . . . leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times. . . .'

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There was much more as to the reasons for the fear of being placed under the domination of an Indian Government, from the natural dislike of the hills people for the plains people to the fear that not only land would be taken from them but their customs, laws and natural resources as well.

When the New Act (Constitution Act of 1935) was being framed, throughout the discussions it was accepted that the Naga Hills area should be outside the scope of the Act.¹

Again, before the British Cabinet Mission in 1946, the Nagas demanded independence from India, and warned that they would not accept any recommendation as to their own future without consultation.

These demands were made by a new and growing influence in Naga affairs, a body known as the 'Naga National Council'. There is actually no date for the forming of this group because it emerged from the tribal arrangements for settling their affairs which had been in existence for centuries. It had originally been concerned with furthering the cultural and social advancement of the Nagas under the British, until the new political awareness of the dangers involved in the departure of Britain dawned on them. The Naga National Council was the co-ordinating body of all the family, community and village institutions as its base, through tribal groupings and divisional zones, to the leaders at the head, who were the spokesmen.

It was this body which informed the British Cabinet Mission, in April 1946, that the Nagas would not accept any recommendation as to their future without consultation. In 1947, they demanded an Interim Government, prior to the departure of Britain, for ten years, and understood from discussions with the Governor of Assam, together with confirmation from Delhi, that this was to be agreed.

However, the 'Ninth Clause' of the proposed 'Ten Year Agreement' was too ambiguously worded in regard to future independence and the suspicious Nagas refused to sign the agreement.

When independence was not forthcoming, the fiery Naga leader, A. Z. Phizo, declared his own village of Khonoma independent from India on 14th August 1947, and renewed his agitation for an independent Nagaland. In a short time he was able to persuade the other

¹ 'Throughout the discussions previous to the framing of the NEW ACT (the Constitution Act of 1935), the authorities concerned had no difficulty in agreeing that the Naga Hills ought to be left outside the purview of the New Constitution. They were accordingly declared to be an "EXCLUDED AREA" under the Government of India (Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas) Order, 1936, and have, since 1937, been administered by the Governor at his discretion.' (*History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*, by Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, 1937-41, pp. 99-100.)

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members of the Naga National Council to follow his lead and he was elected President. From this time the Council submitted a steady flow of memoranda to the President of India, the Prime Minister and the Governor of Assam, persisting with the claims for Naga independence.

In January 1951, Phizo called for a plebiscite to prove that the demand for independence had popular support and through the plebiscite he contacted many of the different tribes in the area. The tribes rallied to him in their thousands and their thumb mark to them was more the giving of a pledge than an identifying with a policy. With this tremendous token of support Phizo then felt confident enough to approach the United Nations and foreign diplomats. They were also able to successfully boycott the District Council, State Assembly and Parliament to show their disapproval and non-acceptance of the Indian Constitution.

On the 29th December 1951, during a visit to Assam, Prime Minister Nehru agreed to meet the Naga National Council, and after a rather inept display of school-masterish scolding he informed them the memoranda all read the same to him, that they were freer than he was, and that in the present context of affairs in India and the world it was impossible to consider even for a moment such an absurd demand as independence for the Nagas.

Next year the Nagas showed their opposition to, and contempt for, the Government by staging a dramatic walk-out in their thousands from a public meeting which was to be addressed by the Prime Ministers of India and Burma at Kohima. A campaign of acts of lawlessness started with assaults on Government servants and threatening of Nagas who did not fall into line with the Council's policy of non-cooperation with the Government, obstruction to forestry officials, indiscipline of students, mass non-payment of house-tax, refusal to repair paths, boycott of Government schools. This culminated in a riot in Kohima in 1952.

Delhi, instead of seeking to win over the recalcitrant tribe, petulantly decided on a tough line to 'teach the Nagas a lesson'; a monumental error that was to cost thousands of lives and a ruined reputation. They gave stiff sentences to unco-operative villagers, beat up demonstrators, contemptuously treated the bitter, sullen Naga young men and women whose pride was irreparably damaged at this evidence of unsuccessful 'passive resistance', and in the many incidents some on both sides were killed.

During this time appeals were made by the Nagas to the United Nations, which went unacknowledged, presumably because it was thought to be an Indian 'internal affair'. In 1952 the Nagas swore to

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have no links at all with the Indian administration, and, in September 1953, that they would never be the first to move for any negotiations.

In 1954, the report of a mass killing by the Indian Army in 'free Naga' territory incensed the Nagas, and the leaders, unable to hold the young Nagas any longer, began fighting with the Indian armed police, the Assam Rifles, in 1955. When the Nagas inflicted heavy losses on the Indian forces the Indians replied by exposing the dead bodies of two respected Naga leaders in a public square in the Naga town of Kohima. Kohima was a shock, not only to the Assam Rifles, but also to the Indian Government. But for a shortage of ammunition—a supply of hand grenades went missing at a critical point—and a misunderstood order by a young Naga patrol leader, the Nagas would certainly have defeated the Indian forces. It was at this point, March 1956, that Delhi decided to use the Indian Army at full strength against the Nagas.

Meanwhile there were reported rifts in the leadership of the Naga National Council, particularly between 'General' Kaito, who wanted to become Commander-in-Chief, and Phizo, who refused to appoint him, thus precipitating the withdrawal of Kaito's Sema warriors. These jealousies provided the Assam Government with the opportunity of exploiting the differences between the leaders and in 1955 they conjured up a nucleus of a moderate (or peace) party with whom they claimed they would negotiate on behalf of the Nagas. Another opponent of Phizo's, T. N. Sakhire, was kidnapped and murdered. Phizo then disappeared because of the mounting dangers against him and operated from underground.

While the official Indian Government policy was publicly announced as 'the Army has not to fight a foreign enemy but to restore order among their own kith and kin whatever might be the attitude of the hostiles', there was also an official black-out of all information, all press correspondents being forbidden to enter the area. But reports—and not only from Nagas, from other reliable Indian sources—stated that it was punitive pressure against the non-combatant population, indiscriminately and deliberately applied through the grouping of villages.

This ruthless policy seemed for the first time to impress upon the Nagas the futility of their struggle for independence and some began to consider that submission was the only course. Some Nagas offered themselves to be enlisted as special police under Army supervision to restore peace. Village elders were approached to try to persuade Naga 'hostiles', as they were termed, to surrender. The Assam Government declared that a general amnesty would be given to all who surren-

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dered with their arms. These measures—although confused to a considerable extent by Nagas who infiltrated the Indian departments for intelligence and arms—coupled with a renewed attempt by the Government to isolate the ‘moderates’ from the ‘extremists’, had some effect, and in August 1957, a Naga Convention was held which the Government claimed was attended by 1,765 delegates from different parts of the Naga Hills district and the Tuensang Frontier Division. The ‘moderates’ were then largely instrumental in persuading this Convention and the later 1958 Naga Convention to renounce the demand for independence and, instead, to seek a settlement of the Naga problem ‘within the Indian Union’.

But even the ‘moderates’ were not to be taken as mere puppets or quislings—although they were compromised by their association with the hated Indians and by the fact that their lives and salaries depended on their agreeing with India—and they were first of all Nagas with Naga interests at heart, and many of them able men. That they were neither hoodwinked by the idealistic speeches of Mr. Nehru, nor intimidated by the ruthless methods used against their people by the Army and Assamese officialdom, was evident by their smooth manipulation of the 1959 Third Naga Convention.

The resolutions to be passed by the Convention had been drawn up well in advance of the gathering and approved by Delhi. The Naga regions were to form ‘a constituent unit of India’ and would be administered by the Governor of Assam through a Commissioner and an Executive Council which would be responsible to a Naga Legislative Council. But mid-way through the proceedings Indian political officers anxiously hovering on the outskirts discovered that something had gone awry somewhere and before they could do anything resolutions embodying the Naga demands for a full-fledged State, for old Naga forests to be returned to the tribes, and for all tribes to be united under the same administration if they so desired, had been passed by the Convention.

This was a distinct embarrassment to the Assam Government and the Central Government in Delhi, and the ‘moderates’ were for a time jubilant, naïvely thinking that the Convention having passed the demands, Delhi could not very well reject them. They pointed out that Mr. Nehru himself had said that he was prepared to concede ‘anything short of independence’, and the Convention had only demanded ‘a full-fledged State’.

But Delhi was not persuaded to concede the Convention’s unexpected demands and the ‘moderates’ were once again exposed to the accusations of the Naga National Council, that they were wasting their time trying to negotiate with the Assam and Central Govern-

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ments, since India has no intention of conceding anything short of absorption. This fear was increased at the 1960 Convention when an important resolution on the official language of Assam was passed by the Conference expressing its concern over 'the move of certain political parties in agitating the minds of certain sections of the Assamese people to demand that Assamese may be declared the State language of Assam'. This was taken as an indication of the intention to ultimately absorb the tribal people.

However, under mounting pressure the Government of India was finally forced to concede statehood for 'Nagaland' within the Indian Union and under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This agreement was negotiated with the 'Naga People's Convention' in Delhi on 1st August 1960. The State was to comprise the existing territory of the Naga Hills and the Tuensang Area and the Governor of Assam was to be the Governor of Nagaland. A transitional period was envisaged during which an interim body to be constituted with representatives from every Naga tribe was to advise the Governor in the administration.

This was as far as Delhi was prepared to go to give the 'moderates' a lever against the 'hostiles' to win over the uncommitted tribes in the area. This fact of strong tribal ties was something which Delhi could not afford to ignore, and was evident even at the talks in Delhi in the unwillingness, even inability, of the Naga People's Convention which negotiated the agreement to go ahead with the new arrangement without the co-operation of the 'hostiles'. In fact, the Secretary of the Naga People's Convention, Mr. Jaisakie, assured newspaper correspondents in Kohima that his organization would willingly stand aside if the Government of India could come to an understanding with Phizo—who, even in exile in Britain, where he had suddenly appeared from Switzerland in 1960—was still recognized as leader of the dissident Naga National Council.

The difficulties facing the Naga People's Convention were increased by their association with the Indian Army and Administrative units under whose aegis they were committed to trying to win over the hostiles and others. The Indian—with a few exceptions—is definitely distrusted and disliked in NEFA. Indian journalists noticed this in their 'conducted tour' of Naga areas in January 1961 under the supposed control of the Naga People's Convention—and even in those areas the hostiles' activities were open, anti-Indian and favouring the Western newspaper correspondents.

However, the NPC went ahead with the arrangements for the new State and on 1st February 1961 the 'Interim Body and Executive Council for Nagaland' was inaugurated.

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The number of armed rebels still in the hills was officially estimated at 1,500 but this can only be a guess and is openly derided by knowledgeable non-official sources. There is still a steady recruitment, arms are still plentiful apparently—claimed to be obtained from old wartime dumps and from raids on Army arsenals—and the morale of the hard core of the hostiles is still good. They feel, with good reason, that they can hold out indefinitely in their remote and heavily forested mountain hide-outs. Then there is always the possibility of the Chinese exploiting the Nagas, supplying them with arms, from the safety of the Tibetan and North Burma mountains in the rear—a possibility which, though officially not admitted is definitely suspected and feared in Delhi. The Naga ‘rebels’ have admitted that on two occasions since 1960 Chinese parties have entered their territory with offers to help.

On 21st January 1962, at a Press Conference in London, Phizo, after expressing the fear that India was now contemplating a ‘final solution’ of the ‘Naga problem’ along the same lines as Goa, offered for the first time to negotiate with the Indian Government. He laid down no pre-conditions, and was even prepared to discuss Indian military bases in Naga territory if these were necessary to India, and participation in development of Naga resources. He only asked that the Indian military forces be withdrawn and an independent body of some kind be set up and allowed to visit the territory to determine the Nagas’ wishes. But he warned that if he did not receive a satisfactory response from India within three weeks of his offer he would charge India with genocide and ask the International Commission of Jurists to investigate, and seek help from any source and any country willing to provide it—and that would include China.

Yet Delhi continued strangely insensitive to the consequences of her clumsy duplicity in NEFA. Having made agreements with the Naga People’s Convention representatives in Delhi, after discussions and recommendations, no sooner had the Nagas left than Delhi issued orders to Assam not to implement them or, worse still, announced terms of the Agreement which were never even discussed by the Naga representatives.

Thus, when Delhi agreed to the formation of Nagaland as India’s sixteenth state with the Naga People’s Convention, it was agreed that the members of the Naga Executive Council of that body while functioning as a Cabinet could not be formally designated as ‘Ministers’ until Nagaland was legally constituted as a State in about three years’ time. Then the Executive Councillors publicly protested that not only did they not have ‘ministerial status’ but that they were

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deprived of any effective powers by local Indian official interference, and by deliberate orders to this effect from Delhi.

Resolutions adopted by the Nagaland Interim Body in Shillong in October 1961 stated that they had decided:

1. The Interim Body should function as a Legislative Assembly.
2. That the Executive Councillors should have the powers which ministers wielded, as had been agreed.
3. That the Commissioner of Nagaland should function as a Chief Secretary,
4. That the Adviser to the Governor of Assam, an official resident in Shillong, should not have any scope for interfering in Nagaland's affairs.

The Executive Committee also complained that the 'Transition Regulation' offended against the Third Naga People's Convention decisions which had formed the basis of the previous year's (1960) agreement in Delhi. The Regulation had introduced reservations in regard to Finance and Law and Order which had not been there, either in the Naga People's Convention recommendation or the Delhi agreement. They also contended that the text of the Transition Regulation was made available to them only on the day they were sworn in. Because they did not want at that stage the achievement of over three years' patient work by the People's Convention to be wrecked, as it would have been had they protested, they decided to save Delhi embarrassment and give the Transition Agreement a chance.

However, the chief of the Executive Councillors, Mr. Shilo Ao, told a Press Conference that six months of the working of the Interim régime had shown that the unauthorized interpolated provisions of the Delhi authorities should go. Finance and Law and Order together overlapped the entire field of administration and left little scope for the Executive Councillors.

But despite this the Indian Government introduced and passed five Bills in August 1962, officially making Nagaland a sixteenth state of the Indian Union with the provisions of finance and law and order under the control of India. In London Mr. Phizo repudiated India's right to take this action and, with a Naga delegation composed of four leading members of the Naga Federal Government and Army, campaigned in Britain for Naga independence and threatened to take the matter to the United Nations.

It is no secret that the present Indian system of militarily-supervised administration is under constant tension and is functionally completely unsatisfactory. For the Army has no faith in the politicians, has even a sneaking regard for the courage and tenacity of the

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hostiles, while the politicians complain that the Army over-rates the hostiles' political influence to serve their own ends. Also, because of the continuing crisis over the Nagas, other tribes are becoming restive. In the Manipur Hills tribal groups are agitating that no settlement of the Naga problem in the Naga Hills and the Tuensang Area should be made at the cost of Manipur. The Mizo Hill branch of the Eastern India Tribal Union, the largest political party in the district, terminated its association and co-operation with the Assam Government, because of dissatisfaction with the Assam Government's handling of the food famine in their area. The Khasi Hills branch also broke away. These have all been in correspondence with Naga leaders about a possible union.

In November 1960 a twelve-member delegation representing all the five autonomous hill districts of Assam had informed Prime Minister Nehru in Delhi that nothing but the creation of a separate Hill State would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Hill people, and submitted to him their plan for the proposed Hill State—to be called the Eastern Frontier State—prepared by the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference. However, on December 12th, the Home Minister announced that the Government of India did not think that the formation of a Hill State in Assam would be in the interests of the tribal people or would be even feasible. Later, after further agitation, Prime Minister Nehru offered a 'Scottish type administration'—whatever that might mean—but this has been turned down and the demand for a separate state repeated.

In the meantime, while these events were taking place in the eastern sector of the North-East Frontier Area, an even more ominous situation had developed in the northern districts of the same area. On 23rd June 1959 China accused India of 'intrusion and occupation of Migyitun, Samgar Sanpo and other places in the Tibetan region of China, and their collusion with the Tibetan rebel bandits.' According to the Chinese Note, this area was attacked and occupied by several hundred Indian troops, equipped with radio stations and weapons of various types. The Indian Government replied that they had made immediate enquiries and that there was no truth in the report, at the same time pointing out that the nearest outpost which the Government of India had in that area was at Long-ju, south of Migyitun and within the Indian side of the traditional international border. On the 27th August 1959 the Chinese Government claimed that a group of Indian armed troops intruded into Chinese territory south of Migyitun and suddenly opened fire on Chinese frontier guards. The Chinese frontier guards fired back in self defence and the Indian armed troops withdrew. The Indian Government, on the

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other hand, claimed that a stray detachment of Chinese troops had crossed into Indian territory south of Migyitun in NEFA and fired without warning on an Indian forward picket two miles south of the international border.

Long-ju was situated to the north of the Subansiri Division, about three weeks' march from the nearest roadhead on the plains, and it was some time before the Indian press got hold of authentic information; but when, in September, the Indian Government released first-hand accounts from Long-ju stating that one Indian had been killed and others injured, there was an immediate outcry against this unwarranted attack on Indian forces in what was officially claimed as Indian territory. The Chinese Government categorically denied this allegation that they were first to fire, claiming that the Indian troops had fired first, but counter-claimed that Long-ju was part of China's territory.¹

But worse was yet to come. Shortly afterwards the Indian Government announced that the Chinese had again encroached into Indian territory in Ladakh, and had also built a road cutting through the Aksai Chin region, and once again India was faced with a critical threat to her security in the north. Early in October 1962 Chinese troops once again crossed the MacMahon Line in force and humiliatingly defeated Indian forces in battle, threatening India with war if she persists in claiming this territory which China claims belongs to her.

LADAKH

The trouble with Ladakh—'a barren, inhospitable plateau', according to India's Prime Minister—is that it has never had a properly defined boundary.

In or about the year A.D. 900, during one of Tibet's many revolutions throughout this period, one Ni-ma-mgon emigrated to Western Tibet. There, it is recorded, he married the daughter of a chieftain of Pu-kiang and 'conquered mNa'-ris-skar-gsum completely and ruled in accordance with the faith'. The term 'mNa'-ris-skar-gsum' included at this time (a) Ru-thok and Demchog, (b) Gu-ge, Garthok and Tsaparang, and (c) Pu-hrang and Mar-yul, or Ladakh. Before his death Ni-ma-mgon divided his kingdom among his three sons. To the eldest, Rig-pa-mgon he gave:

'(1) Maryul (Ladakh), (2) Ruthok, (3) Demchok, (4) *On the frontier Ra-ba-dmar-po*, (5) Wamle (Nanle), (6) to the west, at the foot of the

¹ See Appendix B, p. 293.

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Kashmir Pass (Zoji La), (7) to the north mGompo, (8) all the places belonging to rGya.'

It has been suggested that 'Ra-ba-dmar-po' is the same as 'Rabma' between Ruthok and Tso-rul (or Spanggur Tso) and the ancient frontier mentioned above.

From this time onwards for several centuries this area, with one or two exceptions, sometimes including more territory sometimes slightly less, came under the jurisdiction of the Kings of Ladakh.

In 1664-65 Ladakh accepted the sovereignty of the Mogul Emperor of India, Aurangzeb. In 1680 the Kalmuks who had been brought in to help the then Regent of Tibet invaded Ladakh, defeated the Ladakhis at Zha-mar-lung (about half-way between Tashigang and Gar-gunso), and entering Ladakh laid siege to the fortress of Bab-sgo. After three years of siege the Ladakhis appealed to the Mogul Governor of Kashmir for help. A Mogul army was sent, the Tibetans were defeated and a Treaty signed¹. This was the last defini-

¹ The Treaty of Ting-tang which followed upon this laid down the boundary as follows:

'(1) As in the beginning King Skyid-lde-ni-ma-mgon gave a separate Kingdom to each of his sons, the same delimitations to hold good. (2) The Ladakhis were not to allow an army from India to proceed to an attack upon Tibet, through Ladakh. (3) mNa'-ris-skar-gsum was set apart [from Ladakh] to meet the expenses of sacred lamps, and prayers [offered at Lhasa]; but at Menser [Menza, near Mount Kailas] the King of Ladakh shall be his own master. . . . With this exception, the boundary shall be fixed at the Lhori stream at Dem-chag.'

The Chinese position in Ladakh was stated in an official Note on 20th December 1959 as follows:

'(1) Concerning the Western sector. The Indian Government holds that the boundary line it claims was fixed by a Treaty concluded between the authorities of the Tibet region of China and the Kashmir authorities in 1842.

'But, firstly, this treaty merely mentioned that the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet would be maintained as it had been and that both sides would hold to their confines and refrain from encroaching on one another. The treaty contained no provision or hint whatsoever about the concrete location of the boundary. None of the arguments advanced by Prime Minister Nehru in his letter of 26th September 1959 to Premier Chou En-lai to the effect that the location of the boundary has been long established can prove that the boundary line now claimed by the Indian Government is well-founded.

'Secondly, the 1842 treaty was concluded between the authorities of the Tibet region of China and the Kashmir authorities, but the greatest part (about 80 per cent) of the area now disputed by the Indian Government is part of China's Sinkiang which was no party to the treaty. It is obviously inconceivable to hold that, judging by this treaty, vast areas of Sinkiang have ceased to belong to China but have become part of Ladakh. The British Government prepared in 1899 to delimit the boundary between Ladakh and Kashmir on the one hand and Sinkiang on the other, but nothing came of it. It is also inconceivable to hold that the territory of another country can be annexed by a unilateral proposal.

'Thirdly, there are many indisputable positive evidences to show that the

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tion of the Ladakh-Tibet frontier, 'at the time of the Ladakhi Kings.'

When Kashmir, under the Dogra Maharaja Gulab Singh, feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, attacked Ladakh in 1834 in an attempt to include it within his own boundaries the Ladakhis appealed to the Tibetan Government for help and a Tibetan army, assisted by Chinese troops, was sent to their aid. Gulab Singh captured Ruthok, Garthok and Pu-hrang and established his headquarters at Garthok. However, the Tibetans counter-attacked and recaptured Ruthok, Pu-hrang and moved on to Garthok. When the news of the Tibetans' success reached Ladakh a rebellion broke out there and the Dogra garrison was besieged. Both the Dogras and the Tibetans rushed up reinforcements, but before battle was joined a Ladakhi chieftain showed the Dogras how a brook could be dammed to flood the Tibetan camp. The ruse was successful and without a shot being fired the Tibetans agreed to a peace treaty in 1842:

'The conquered Ladakh, according to the frontiers it had during the times of the [Ladakhi] kings, was annexed by the high government [of Jammu, and therefore by the Sikh government of Lahore]. Everything was arranged exactly as it had been during the times of the former [Ladakhi] kings and a contract was written.'

After the First Sikh War between the British and the Sikhs a Treaty was signed. The Treaty of Lahore, in which 'rights and interests in the hill countries which are situated between the Rivers, Bias and the Indus, including the provinces of Kashmir and Hazara' were ceded to Britain. Later, in 1846, by the Treaty of Amritsar, Britain sold to Gulab Singh 'all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies, situated to the eastward of the River Indus and westward of the River Ravi, including Chumba and excluding Lahul.' Article 2 of the same Treaty laid down that the eastern frontier of Kashmir, the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet—was to be defined by Commissioners appointed by Britain and Maharaja Gulab Singh.

western sector of the Sino-Indian boundary is not delimited. For instance (a) Between 1921 and 1927 the British Indian Government made many representations to the authorities of China's Tibet region, asking to delimit the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet, but without any result. This is testified by many documents exchanged between the two sides at the time, and is also confirmed by Sir Anthony Lothian, the Briton who acted as the representative of India in his letter to the London *Times* published on 11th December 1959. (b) According to data now available to the Chinese Government, no boundary line was drawn at all in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border in the official map published by the Survey of India as late as 1943. On the official Indian map of the 1950 edition the present version of the boundary line was shown in a most equivocal way, but was still masked by the words "Boundary Undefined". It is only since 1954 that this undelimited sector of the boundary has suddenly become a delimited boundary.'

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The following is part of the statement drawn up by the Commissioners:

'As regards the Ladakh-Tibet boundary, the Commissioners—owing to Immamudin's rebellion in Kashmir—were unable to reach the Tibet border. Mr. Van Agnew, one of the commissioners, however, wrote a memorandum in which he pointed out that the line was, as he thought, already sufficiently defined by nature, and recognized by custom, with the exception of the two extremities. On the appointment of the Second Commission steps were taken to secure the co-operation of the Chinese and Kashmir officials *but the Chinese delegate never appeared and the demarcation of the frontier had to be abandoned*. The northern as well as the eastern boundary of the Kashmir state is still undefined.' (Italics mine)

The Indian Government on the basis of these treaties claimed the whole of the Aksai Chin plateau, the Chang-chungmo Valley, and the Pangong, Rupshu and Hanle areas. However, Chinese maps showed their boundary in this area much farther to the west and included about 4,000 square miles—the greater part of the Aksai Chin, parts of the Chang-chungmo Valley, and the Pangong, Spanggur Tso, and Chang-la areas in Tibet.

The Chinese, on the other hand, have contended: (a) that the then Peking Government did not participate in this treaty, and that, therefore, their successors were not bound by it; and (b) that the frontiers were never delimited, and that in any case they did not include the big bulge, which was part of Sinkiang and not of Tibet.

It must be stated against this, however, that the Chinese authorities in Sinkiang had set up a border pillar at a point sixty-four miles south of Suket, that is, *well to the north of the territory now under dispute* with India, and a map published by Peking University in 1925 showing the Chinese Empire at its widest extent under the Manchu dynasty *excluded the Aksai Chin from China's frontiers*. There is little doubt that the advance of the Chinese across this territory in 1954 was made with the knowledge and even help of the local Indian officials who took too trusting an interpretation of Mr. Nehru's 'friendship' policy of the time and never informed him of the Chinese activities.

Thus the stage was set for a further dispute between Peking and Delhi, but no one anticipated it in the manner in which it finally occurred.

Before the dispute with China Ladakh was classified geographically as being 45,762 square miles in area with a population of 183,476. Here various explorers had penetrated; notably Sir Francis Younghusband and Sir Aurel Stein among others, and all had commented

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on the desolate valleys, almost impenetrable gorges, unscalable cliffs, savage glaciers. Grass for animals was difficult to obtain, and fuel almost impossible to find, the whole inhospitable area dominated by ranges over 20,000 feet with Gasherbrun and K2, the second highest mountain in the world, hovering over these.

The people are quite definitely of Tibetan stock, speaking a clearly related form of Tibetan dialect, ruled mostly by Tibetan monk officials, or monk appointees, who recognized the authority of the Dalai Lama and Lhasa. Trade was maintained between Ladakh and Lhasa and there was a large Ladakhi community in Lhasa numbering several hundreds, both priests and merchants. The 'Boto', as the Ladakhi calls himself, in spite of his ignorance, was fast becoming conscious of the changing world around his impenetrable mountain fastnesses, and among the growing number of educated there was a feeling of resistance to all that tradition had handed down from generation to generation. But this has not yet swelled to the point of revolt against the predominating influence of religion and monks, though the latter are now definitely identified with reaction, despite the political activities of some leading priests. Kashmir's Minister for Ladhaki Affairs, for instance, Kushok Bakula, is also the Head Lama of Ladakh, and is still the 'Rimpoche', or 'precious one', to thousands of simple Ladakhis.

Religion has always been a dominant factor in the life of Ladakh, probably because of the lack of any other form of diversion in this savage country. Its most striking physical features are the evil-looking shale and sand mountains of fantastic hues deformed in grotesque shapes by the furious wind and heat. The disintegration of rock is so complete and swift that protective walls have been raised in an attempt to secure tracts of vegetation from imperceptibly moving sand and rubble in the hollow mountain valleys. With hardly three inches of rain and three inches of snow annually, nothing grows in Ladakh except with the aid of irrigating waters.

The density of population varies from one to five persons per square mile, and houses are scattered miles apart. In such savage and awesome conditions religion becomes the sole consoling factor and all life is centred in and around the monasteries, giving to the head monks the position of pre-eminence. The monasteries became the centres of social intercourse, performed the functions of administration, decided disputes among the villagers and villages. Lands were endowed to the monasteries by rajas and wealthy landowners, were tilled by the peasants and the wealth from these huge landed estates went to the monasteries. They engaged in trade, trading their surplus grain and dry fruits for Tibetan wool and butter and reselling in

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Kashmir and Sinkiang. With their vast resources the monasteries also developed into banking institutions and lent money on interest to the Ladakhis. During the past decade the course of events in that part of the world has considerably weakened the power of the monasteries and monks, economically, socially, and otherwise. The monasteries have ceased to be banking institutions following the enforcement of the Debt Cancellation Act. Then the sealing of the border with Tibet and Sinkiang brought to a standstill all trade in which the Ladakhi monasteries had a share. The extension of government administrative machinery in the interior of Ladakh in the past few years has deprived the monasteries of the control they exercised through settling disputes. And today the growing class of the educated seek both social and economic reforms and pose hitherto unknown challenges to the priestly hierarchy.

The Indian Government, more from an interest in Ladakh's proximity to Kashmir and the associated possibilities rather than from any strategic considerations against China in the area, began building some roads. A motor road from Kargil (western Ladakh) to Leh, for the first time in Ladakh's history opened up a means of communication with the rest of the country; and Leh is now being united with other parts of Ladakh including the Nubra Valley to the north, Chushul Valley to the east and Zaskar to the south.

In October 1957, and in the months following, some reports were sent to the Government of India that a Chinese detachment had crossed the Indian-claimed boundary and visited Khurnak Fort, which the Indian Government claimed belonged to India. A protest was lodged with the Chinese Government, and the Indian Government asked them to desist from entering Indian territory. The Indian Government admitted that there was no physical demarcation of the frontier in these mountainous passes, but claimed that maps in their possession were quite clear on the subject.

Although Notes were being exchanged at the time the Chinese Government made no reference to the Khurnak Fort incident, but on the 3rd November 1958 they notified the Indian Government that 'the Chinese local authorities in Sinkiang' reported that 'Frontier Guards of the Chinese Liberation Army stationed in the southwestern part of Sinkiang discovered in succession on 8th and 12th September 1958 two groups of Indian armed personnel at Tahung-liutang and Kezrekirekan on the Sinkiang-Tibet road on Chinese territory. These personnel had clearly intruded into Chinese territory to conduct unlawful surveying activities within Chinese borders. They were therefore detained by Chinese Frontier Guards.'

The Government of India expressed its 'surprise and regret' that

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the Chinese Government had seen fit to take such rigorous action in an area that was admittedly disputable but which the Chinese had no right to claim arbitrarily as Chinese territory. They also pointed out that they had received information on 18th October 1958 that the Chinese Government had been constructing a road across the eastern part of the Ladakh region of the Mannu and Kashmir State, which was part of India. This road appeared to be part of the Chinese road known as the Yehcheng-Gartok road, or Sinkiang-Tibet highway, and it entered Indian territory just east of Sarigh Jilgnang, ran north-west to Amtagar and skirting the western bank of the Amtagar Lake ran north-west through Yengpa, Khitai Dawan and Haji Langar, all of which were in indisputable Indian territory. The Indian Government even quoted a Chinese source, the Chinese member of the Boundary Commission of 1847-49, who accepted the boundary here as 'sufficiently and distinctly fixed so that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them.'

However, in a letter in reply to one from Mr. Nehru, regarding the deteriorating situation between the two countries, the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, replied:

'In your letter you have taken much space to discuss the question of the Sino-Indian boundary and thus enabled us to understand better the Indian Government's stand on the question. I would also like now to set forth the view and stand of the Chinese Government.

'First of all, I wish to point out that the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited. Historically, no treaty or agreement on the Sino-Indian boundary has ever been concluded between the Chinese Central Government and the Indian Government. So far as actual situation is concerned there are certain differences between the two sides over the border question. In the past few years, questions as to which side certain areas on the Sino-Indian border belong were on more than one occasion taken up between the Chinese and Indian sides through diplomatic channels. The latest case concerns an area in the southern part of China's Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, which has always been under Chinese jurisdiction. Patrol duties have continually been carried out in that area by the border guard of the Chinese Government. And the Sinkiang-Tibet highway built by our country in 1956 runs through that area. Yet recently the Indian Government claimed that that area was Indian territory. All this shows that border disputes do exist between China and India. . . .'

At the end of July 1959 a small Indian reconnaissance party was sent out into the disputed area. This party consisted of one officer and five others, and as it approached the Khurnak Fort it was appre-

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hended by a superior Chinese force, who had camped at a place called Spanggur, well within Indian-claimed territory. The Government of India took a serious view of this incident and lodged a strong protest with the Chinese Government at their police being apprehended in the course of their duties on their own side of the frontier and demanded their release immediately. In their reply the Chinese claimed that that part of the territory was theirs but added that they would release the persons who had been apprehended.

While the Press and public in India were still seething over the Chinese propaganda campaign following the Dalai Lama's escape to India, none of the above incidents found their way into the newspapers, primarily because it was the Indian Government's policy to play down the disagreement with China as much as possible while seeking for some sort of *rapprochement* and return to the former friendly relations with China. But on the 21st October 1959 another incident occurred which the Government could no longer hide even had they wished to do so.

On October 20th two members of an Indian police party had gone out on patrol duty in the neighbourhood of the Kongka Pass in Ladakh. They failed to return in the evening, and on the following morning another party under the direction of a senior officer was sent out to continue the search. Here the accounts of the story differ, the Indians claiming that they were suddenly fired upon by the Chinese, and the Chinese claiming that the Indians intruded into Chinese territory when they were advised to leave but disregarding this the Indians opened fire on the Chinese, when there was nothing else to do but fire back in self-defence. There was no immediate record of how many had been hurt but both sides claimed casualties.

When the Indian public received the news that nine Indian policemen had lost their lives in the clash, and others captured, there was a spontaneous outcry from all shades of political opinion. Headlines and editorials of even the most conservative papers for the first time openly denounced Mr. Nehru for his policy and actions on the Sino-Indian issue. There had been occasional protests when he had sought to play down Chinese activities in Tibet, but now that the Indian people knew that these activities had extended against Indian territory and personnel over a period of years under a cloak of words known as the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence', they felt betrayed not only by China but, worse still, by the Prime Minister they had so admired. Now there were bitter denunciations of him and the policy of 'Panch Sheela' and some papers even demanded his resignation. The popular outcry forced the Prime Minister to take strong action

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and the Army was sent into Ladakh to take over its defence, as well as that of the North-Eastern Frontier Area.

When the Chinese Government put forward proposals for a demilitarized zone on the Chinese-Indian border, and early talks between the Chinese Premier and Mr. Nehru, the Press were unanimous in their opinions that such proposals should not be countenanced.

On 15th November 1959 the ten Indian policemen who had been taken prisoner after the Kongka Pass clash were released and provoked a new upsurge of anti-Chinese feeling in India. For the prisoners reported that they had been made to walk barefoot in snow, had been confined to appalling quarters and been subjected to all kinds of indignities, until they confessed to aggression against China. Demonstrations broke out all over India and leaders of the various political parties addressed huge out-door gatherings denouncing the Chinese actions, and Mr. Nehru's own Congress Party bitterly attacked the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister, Krishna Menon, who were considered responsible 'for the weak policy towards China'.

On December 17th the Chinese Premier sent a letter to Mr. Nehru, welcoming the Indian Prime Minister's reception to the Chinese proposal for a meeting between the two Premiers, but showing no retraction from its previous stand on the boundary issue in Ladakh. In his reply Mr. Nehru reiterated his stand that he was always ready to meet the Chinese Prime Minister to settle outstanding differences but 'how can we reach an agreement on principle, when there is such complete disagreement about facts?' He said that he would prefer to wait until the Chinese Prime Minister replied to India's legitimate claims further before deciding what should be the next step. The detailed Chinese reply on 20th December 1959 left no ground for agreement, and all other correspondence on the issue over the next few months merely reiterated the stand taken by both sides. Even if Mr. Nehru had wanted to make concessions the feeling in the Parliament and country was such that he dare not. But in the meantime he sought to forestall any further Chinese moves on the borders by allocating more money for border road-building, intensive military build-up, and by ordering more troops to Sikkim's defence and stating that any aggression against Sikkim and Bhutan would be considered aggression against India and treated accordingly.

There were several charges and counter-charges by India and China that both were violating frontiers and air-space, then on 6th August 1961 Mr. Nehru told Parliament that there had been another twelve intrusions by Chinese forces into the Ladakh area. Eight of the

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intrusions were in the Chip Chap River area, two in the Spanggur area and two in the Chang Chenmo area.

According to an Indian Note on July 12th the Indian Government had protested that seven of the Chinese military outposts were 'outside the Chinese claim line as shown in their 1956 map'. The Chinese boundary in this sector, according to the 1956 map, is a concave line from the Karakoram Pass to the Kanka Pass, skirting the origins of the Chip Chap and Galwar rivers. But in the 1960 map the boundary has advanced to include a much wider area. South of the Kanka Pass the Chinese claims have also advanced from 1956 to 1960 to include Khurnak Fort and part of the Pangong Lake. Without going into confusing details of which country's outposts were where—often they were behind each other—it is obvious that the Chinese were now well beyond their 1956 line on the entire front, with one small exception in the Demchok area, and that they were trying to establish themselves on the 1960 line. It was these advancing parties which met with Indian resistance and precipitated further serious 'incidents'. China served notice on India that any further provocative act of aggression by India 'would call forth massive retaliation'.

CHAPTER 13

Bhutan, Sikkim and Darjeeling District



The early history of Bhutan, such as it was, has been lost through two disasters, a fire in the great Poonakha Monastery, and the destruction by earthquake in 1897 of many important buildings housing manuscripts. Another fire at Sonagachi destroyed the largest printing establishment in the country. However, a few manuscripts in the library of the Tongsa Penlop survived the earthquake and from these some information may be gathered. Like those of Nepal and Sikkim and Tibet these early histories are inextricably bound up with legends and myths, with little of historical value. The earliest legend dates from about the seventh century B.C. when one Sangaldip, appearing from a place known as Kooch (possibly Bhutan or Assam) conquered the countries of Bengal and Bihar. The next item of history occurs in the eighth century A.D., at which time the Indian *guru*, Padma Sambhava, converted Bhutan to the Buddhist faith. According to the historical records the chief rulers of that time were the Khiji-Khas-thod of Khempalung, in upper Pumthang, and Nagachi, King of Sindhu. Nagachi founded the kingdom of Sindhu while his sons extended his realm to Dorji-Tag and Har in Tibet and as far as Sikkim. According to Bhutanese history Nagachi appears as a sort of Solomon, for, in addition to legendary exploits and wisdom, he is supposed to have taken to wife all the most beautiful women in India, and Tibet—about a hundred in all, the account states in all sobriety.

Between the seventh and tenth centuries the territory known as Bhutan was completely over-run by the Tibetans.¹

The persecutions which attended the reforming zeal of the Yellow-hat Gelukpas in Tibet drove many lamas of the earlier Nyingmapas to seek refuge in Sikkim and in Bhutan. One of the sub-divisions of the Nyingmapa Sect was known as the Dukpas, and it was due to the

¹ See Appendix C, p. 294.

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spread and consolidation of this off-shoot of Buddhism that Bhutan began to emerge as an entity. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries there was a steady influx of lamas, of the Dukpa and other sects, into Bhutan, and a period of founding monasteries and temples, but the country as a whole was still under the control of a multitude of warring hill-chieftains with no central authority.

It was not until the second half of the sixteenth century that Bhutan was brought under one ruling power and control. This was accomplished by a remarkable Bhutanese called Du-gom Dorji, better known as Shabdung Nawang Mamgyel, son of one of the leading families. Even as a child he showed remarkable intellectual precocity, carving works in wood of marvellous beauty. He was born in 1534, started on his campaign to conquer and unify Bhutan in his twenty-third year, and for the next thirty-five years was occupied in this task of consolidating his spiritual and temporal power. During this period the Tibetans attempted five or six times to invade and conquer Bhutan but each time Du-gom Dorji defeated them, the captured booty greatly increasing his wealth and establishing him in power and prestige so that he became known in India as far as Ladakh, and the Rajas and rulers of Cooch Behar and Nepal sought his friendship and sent gifts.¹

In order that the country might be run more efficiently, and the temporal duties not become confused with the spiritual, he created two separate offices. One office, the spiritual, he himself took over with the title of *Dharma Raja*, in co-operation with a 'Khempo', or Chief Abbot: and to the temporal office he gave the title *Deb Raja*, whose functions were to attend to the general administration of the State, to deal with foreign Powers, to manage income, revenue, and other resources of the State, and to provide the lamas with food. The superior power, of course, was with the spiritual authority, as vested in himself as Dharma Raja. Both of these titles, interestingly enough, are believed to derive from Indian sources, Dharma Raja meaning

¹ A Tibetan chronicle relating to this period reads:

'In the intervals of peace the Dharma Raja devoted himself with full energy to his various State duties, founding a body of priesthood, providing for and controlling them, giving instruction to those who were serious seekers after truth; in short he was pastor, abbot, psalmist, rector, superintendent of carving (for printing purposes), architect of State and Monastic buildings, overseer of book-binding and other embellishments of the Kagyur library, settlement officer, chief commandant of the forces for quelling foreign aggressions, chief protector and ruler of his own adherents and followers, chief avenger and punisher of those who were inimical to the cause of Buddhism and the public peace. He was all these in one person, and fulfilled the duties right thoroughly and efficiently. He introduced law into lawless Bhutan. His boast was that he never wasted any time in idleness or selfish ease.'

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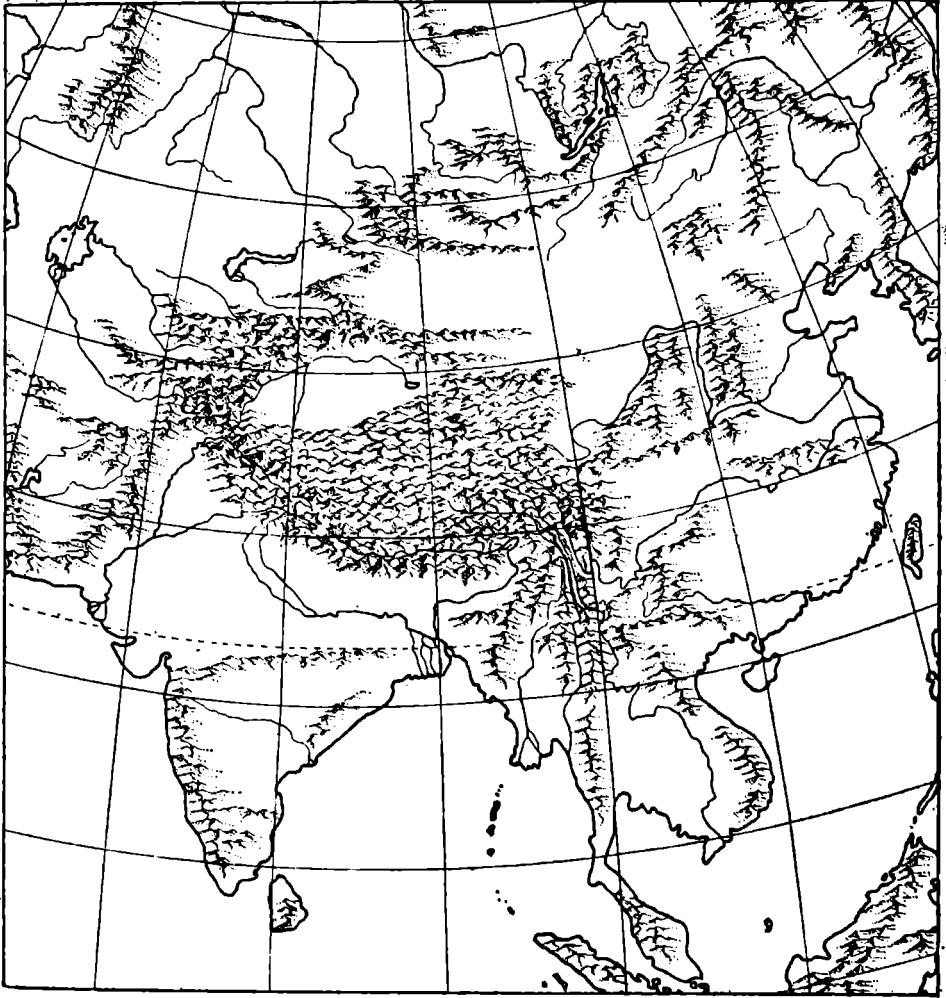
'King of Virtue', and 'Deb' being a corruption of 'Dev', meaning the deity himself.

The origins of the country of Bhutan and the Bhutanese people are even more obscure than the record of historical events. While Tibet had up until quite recently the more famous reputation of being a 'closed country' it has had a far greater number of foreign explorers and interested scholars than Bhutan. Certainly, while it has not offered the same interest or fascination as Tibet its strategic significance alone, quite apart from its flora and fauna, at least justified its providing a field study for British or Indian scholars—an official policy of disengagement that is likely to prove costly to India in the near future. Even the name 'Bhutan' has either a mixed or unknown derivative. The Bhutanese themselves have an altogether different name for their country, 'Druk-yul', or 'Land of the Dragon', and Bhutan is a name attributed to the country by outsiders at some time—'Bhut' being the name given by Tibetans to their own country, 'Bhöd-yul', and the 'tan' claimed to be a corruption of the Sanskrit 'stan' suffix used in India as in Hindustan, Afghanistan, and so on.

While no anthropological research has been done on the subject, the Bhutanese and the Tibetans derive from the same racial stock. They are descendants of Tibetans, mostly from the famous Kham tribal area in East Tibet, who have mingled with the tribals of Assam, but who, in the mountains of Bhutan, retain their definitely Tibetan characteristics of tall, powerful figures and Mongolian features, but in the foothills are smaller, darker and almost Indian. To this racial disparity has been added another factor in the peaceful invasion and spread of the prolific Nepalese, of which more later.

In Sikkim the configuration of the mountains forms a large amphitheatre as they drop from the crest of the Himalayas in precipitous terraces between two high arms of mountains to the open plains. Bhutan, although having one boundary in the mountain arm contiguous with Sikkim, is vastly different country. The Chumbi Valley, formerly a part of Sikkim, but now belonging to Tibet, forms a wedge which divides the northern portion of Sikkim from Bhutan, while Sikkim itself lies within the watershed of the River Teesta. For 600 miles the southern border of Tibet runs eastwards from Sikkim and then north-eastwards along the main crests of the Himalayan range. Through these mighty valleys pour the waters of the great rivers rising in Tibet, the Amo Chu, or Torsa, on the west, then the Manas, then the Subansiri, then the Dihang, or the Tsang-po of Tibet; and, on the east, the Lohit, all flowing into the Brahmaputra. The mountains of Bhutan split the country into a series of gigantic 'W's' as they fall away from the Himalayan mountain crests in long,

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3. Relief map of India and China

(Reproduced from part of Asia Problem map 44, with the kind permission of the copyright holder and publisher, C. S. Hammond & Co., New York.)

sloping ridges running north and south to the plains of India 100 miles away. These parallel ranges are again cut into innumerable smaller ranges forming a vast labyrinth of valleys running in every direction, while the main ridges running down to the plains divide the great rivers already mentioned.

Western and Central Bhutan can be roughly divided into three zones: (1) the foothills, adjoining the plains of India; (2) the central belt lying between these hills; and (3) the highlands immediately under the high snow ranges on the Tibetan frontier.

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The first zone includes the whole of the outer mountains for a depth of twenty to thirty miles. They rise sharply and abruptly out of the plains and are cut into deep valleys or gorges by rivers liable to sudden floods, sometimes rising 40–50 feet. The annual rainfall is from 200 to 230 inches and the mountains are densely clothed with vegetative forests as well as undergrowth. Here the climate is hot and humid, unhealthy and feverish in the monsoons, and even the higher hills are wet and misty.

The second zone consists mainly of valleys at an altitude varying from 3,000 to 10,000 feet which, with their dividing ridges, extend northwards about forty miles. These valleys are healthy, comparatively broad and flat, with a moderate rainfall and are fairly well populated and cultivated. The slopes of the mountains are much more gradual and the rise in the rivers not more than four or five feet.

The third zone comprises the high valleys at an altitude of 12,000 to 18,000 feet, sloping steeply down from the great northern barrier of snow with snow ranges between them, the peaks occasionally rising to 24,000 feet and more.

In Western Bhutan the above division does not apply, for the terrain is completely different. The outer hills are lower, the monsoon currents penetrate much farther north, through deep valleys which run nearly to the foot of the highest mountains, and consequently the wet zone, as in Sikkim, extends as far as the snows. The southern border of Bhutan emerges on to the plains of India in a series of gaping gorge-mouths known as the Dooars, or 'Gateways', of Bhutan.¹

Bhutan as it is today covers an area of approximately 18,000 square miles, roughly the size of Scotland and Wales combined. The northern boundary, which is likely to play such a vital part in the near future, has never been clearly defined.

Claude White, British Political Officer in Bhutan, after the signing of Britain's Agreement with Sikkim and Bhutan in the latter part of the nineteenth century, suggested the boundary which was later

¹ There are eighteen 'Dooars' from Bhutan to the plains (although the name Dooars is now applied to the territory, mostly tea-gardens, which sprawls along the Bhutanese border) and as they are likely to play an important part in Sino-Indian-Bhutanese politics it will be useful to list them. Eleven of these Dooars are situated between the rivers Teesta and the Monass in Bengal, and the remaining seven between the Monass and the Dhunseeri rivers in Assam. The Bengal Dooars are Dahalimkote, Mynagoorie, Chamoorchi, Luckee, Buxa, Bhulka, Bara, Goomar, Reepo, Cherrung and Bagh. Of the seven Assam Dooars two border on the Darran District, the Booree Goomah, and the Kalling Dooars; and the remaining five border on the Kamroop District, the Shurkolla, Banska, Chappagoorie, Chapkahama and Bijnee Dooars.

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accepted by Sir Charles Bell in the Anglo-Bhutanese Agreement of 1918, and by India in the Indo-Bhutanese Agreement of 1950. This boundary runs from the Chumbi Valley in the west where it is marked by a 'chorten', or religious shrine, containing a copper urn in which, when it was set up, was put blood and corpses of an eight-year-old boy and girl who had been slain for the purpose. The boundary then wanders in zigzag fashion at an altitude of 12,000 feet past Phari-dzong to Wangya-la at 28.5° latitude and 90° longitude and proceeds approximately along 28° latitude to 91.75° longitude where it drops due south ten miles west of Tawang in the North East Frontier Area, made famous in 1959 by the Dalai Lama's escape through this mountain township, and by the Chinese military invasion in 1962. But while violation of the northern boundary may be construed by India as an act of aggression and so precipitate military action it is unlikely that the Indian Government will be aware of any major incursion across the border until a considerable portion—if not all—of the country has been occupied, and so be faced with a *fait accompli*, for there are only eight small radio outposts in the whole country. In which case, the delineation of the southern boundary will be a major factor in the Sino-Indian border situation.

The southern boundaries run along the Himalayan foothills, as has been noted already, where they meet the plains of India in the rich tea-growing areas of North Bengal and Assam. But much of these areas formerly belonged to Bhutan and was arbitrarily annexed by Britain in the course of successive disputes with that country.

Relations between Britain and Bhutan commenced with a dispute when the Bhutanese invaded Cooch Behar, a small Indian State on the north-eastern frontier between Bengal and Assam. Cooch Behar was a dependency of the Indian Government and when the Bhutanese invaded the State, captured the Raja and his brother and declared that in future they would rule the State, it became a matter for the British Government in India. A small British force was sent which effectively dealt with the Bhutanese invaders, following them beyond the Dooars, and they appealed to the Panchen Lama of Tibet to intercede with Britain on their behalf. The Panchen Lama agreed and wrote to Warren Hastings, then Governor-General of India, and the wording of his appeal produced such a favourable impression on the Governor-General that he agreed to negotiate a treaty of peace.¹

¹ This first Anglo-Bhutanese Treaty, dated 1774, read as follows:

'Articles of a Treaty between the Honourable The East India Company and the Deb Raja, or Raja of Bhotan,

'1. That the Honourable Company, which from consideration of the distress

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At this time Bhutan's neighbour to the north, Tibet, was just recovering from the shock of invasion by the Dzungarian Mongols and the subsequent fighting between them and the Chinese troops sent by the Manchu Emperor to repel them. China had taken this opportunity to consolidate her position in Tibet, reorganizing the administrative machinery, establishing a permanent garrison in Lhasa of 1,500 resident Chinese troops, setting up a cabinet of four Tibetan 'Cabinet Ministers' to collaborate with two Chinese 'Residents' in governing the country. Whether it was this process of reorganization of the country that temporarily distracted the Chinese from their newly acquired interest in Bhutan is not known, but they certainly showed remarkably little interest in her claimed vassal signing a treaty with Britain. After the defeat of the Dzungarian Mongols, one of the Tibetan Ministers appointed by the Chinese, Po-lha-nas, had extended his conquest into Bhutan, exploiting the dissensions between chiefs there, and he claimed the suzerainty of that country for China, which was formally accepted by the Emperor in 1728.

Dissensions in Bhutan had broken out sometime after the death of Du-gom Dorji, who had succeeded in unifying the country. After the famous Dharma Raja's death three incarnations claimed to appear—the Chole Tulku claiming to emanate from his voice, the Thi Rimpoche claiming to emanate from his mind, in opposition to the claims of the Dharma Raja to emanate from his predecessor's body. These divisions were increased and as the squabbles multiplied so the unity of the country slowly disintegrated into the previous proliferation of hill chieftains ruling the remote valleys.

It was this factional, warring country which Po-lha-nas subdued at the beginning of the eighteenth century and handed over to the Chinese Emperor as a tributary kingdom. The Tibetan officials proceeded to restore some order to the administration of the country and a primitive system of Government was imposed. The Dharma and Deb Rajas were retained, in their capacities of overseeing the separate

to which the Bhooteahs represent themselves to be reduced, and from the desire of being in peace with their neighbours, will relinquish the lands which belonged to the Deb Raja before the commencement of the war with the Raja of Cooch Behar, namely, to the eastwards of the lands of Chicha-cotta and Pangolahaut, and to the westward of the Kyrantee, Marraghaut, and Luckeepoor;

'2. That for the possession of the Chichacotta province the Deb Raja shall pay an annual tribute of five Tangun horses to the Honourable Company, which was the acknowledgment paid to the Cooch Behar Raja.

'3. That the Deb Raja shall deliver up Dudjind-Narrain, Raja of Cooch Behar, together with his brother, the Dewan Deo, who is confined with him.'

The other six Articles dealt with trade relations and regulations regarding the handing over of offenders who might cross the Bhutan borders.

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administrations of Church and State. Beneath them there were three officers called Penlops who were the senior members of a council of seven known as the 'Lenchen'. The Penlops were the Governors of the three Provinces of Bhutan—Paro, Tongsa and Daka—in the Western, Eastern and Central districts respectively. They were expected to attend Council whenever they happened to be at the seat of government, and were liable to be called on at any time of emergency. The other members of the Council were, the Lam Zimpen, a Chief Secretary to the Dherma Raja; the Donnai Zimpen, as Prime Minister; the Tashi-shu-dzang, the Poonakha and Angdu Porung 'Dzong-bons', or 'governors', respectively of the three forts mentioned; the Deb Zimpen, or Chief Secretary to the Deb Raja; and the Joom Kalling, or Chief Judge. The Dharma Raja was elected in much the same manner as the Dalai Lama of Tibet, when as a child he had to reveal certain supernatural attributes before he was accepted as the true incarnation. The Deb Raja was supposed to be elected by the Council of permanent members, and to be chosen from amongst the principal officers of the country who were eligible for seats in the Council. However, in practice this process later passed into the hands of the Penlops of Eastern and Western Bhutan who were usually at war with each other and the Deb Raja became merely the nominee and puppet of whichever of the two happened to be most powerful at the time. Next to the Penlops in power were the Dzongbons, or governors of districts; these were usually appointed by the Penlops, and when the Penlop fell from power they were usually ousted with him, but remained in the neighbourhood of the forts or places where they held jurisdiction and intrigued again to get back into power. The officials subordinate to the Dzongbons were known as Nieboos and they were in charge of small stockades, or groups of villages.

Such a system of government in a country like Bhutan, with its physical and tribal differences, was not capable of lasting for any length of time; whichever local chieftain could muster sufficient support rose to be Penlop, then appointed the Deb Raja of his choice, ruling what he could of the country until he in turn was deposed. Only one constant remained and that appeared to be recognition of the claims of China to suzerainty over the country. On the other hand, the Bhutanese may just have considered the annual tribute-bearing Mission to Lhasa an excuse for carrying on trade, or for making profitable contacts. But whatever the reason there is no doubt that tribute was paid to China and also fines imposed by China for neglect of the same paid promptly.¹

¹ See Appendix D, p. 295.

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There is no further record of importance about Bhutan until after the first Burmese War when the Indian Government was forced into the occupation of Assam, which the Burmese had conquered and nearly depopulated. When the Burmese were expelled from the country it was considered imperative, in order to safeguard the frontier, that Britain should take over the government of Lower Assam, which the native rulers were unable to administer. By assuming responsibility for this province in 1828 the Indian Government had also to assume the very unsatisfactory relations which had for some time existed between the Assamese princes and their neighbours—in this case, the Bhutanese.

The many hill tribes had taken advantage of the confusion in Assam to raid and occupy large areas of territory in the northern regions. The Bhutanese had extended into Cooch Behar in Bengal and were in almost complete possession of the Assam Dooars. The Assam rulers of this territory had bought peace from raids by making over the territory of the seven Dooars in exchange for an annual tribute of yaks' tails, musk, gold dust, ponies, blankets and knives.

When the British Government took over Assam they adopted the relations then existing between that country and Bhutan, the arrangements about the Dooars being confirmed and renewed. These were, however, of so complicated a nature that it is not difficult to see how they must eventually result in continual misunderstandings. For instance, the two Dooars on the Darrang frontier were held alternately by the Indian and Bhutan governments during the year, the former having jurisdiction from July to November, and the latter for the remaining eight months. The other five Dooars, on the other hand, were held exclusively by the Bhutanese, and the Indian Government neither exercised any control over them, nor was allowed to interfere in any way in their internal management during any portion of the year.

The first cause of trouble arose over payment of the tribute for the Assam Dooars. Each year there was a squabble over the value of the articles given, and these arguments were followed by the Bhutanese raiding the territory of Assam and Cooch Behar and taking away loot and prisoners. These incidents increased until in 1837 the Indian Government sent a mission with Captain Pemberton as envoy to the Bhutanese Government. He was not successful in obtaining an agreement and the Indian Government decided to annex the Assam Dooars, and pay the Bhutanese Government an annual sum of 10,000 rupees for loss of revenue involved. This was carried out in 1841. However, raids into the Bengal Dooars continued to occur and the Indian Government decided to send another Mission to warn the Bhutanese

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Government of the consequences of its actions on the southern frontier. While the correspondence was going on the Bhutanese attacked Sikkim, on the ground that Sikkim had been the cause of the crisis by raiding over her boundaries and thus causing Britain to send an expedition to that country in 1861, resulting in the signing of a treaty. At the same time reports were received by the Indian Government from four different sources that the Bhutanese were about to launch an attack on Darjeeling. Two large detachments of troops were sent to the border, but when they arrived the Bhutanese forces withdrew.

The Indian Government attempted to enter into correspondence with the Bhutanese Government, but as the replies were evasive and unsatisfactory it was finally decided to send still another Mission. This Mission was placed under the leadership of Mr. (later Sir) Ashley Eden, who had negotiated a Treaty with Sikkim two years previously. After many difficulties and obstructions in Darjeeling, and on the way to Bhutan, Eden finally arrived in Paro. The Paro Penlop was the most influential man in Bhutan at that time, and he treated the Mission insultingly. When Eden returned to India he reported his reception to the Government and it was decided to punish the Bhutanese by annexing parts of Bhutan, and in November 1864 the Government declared war on Bhutan.¹ Hostilities commenced and were carried on at various points along the Bhutan border with varying success, the Bhutanese at times succeeding in driving the British troops into retreat. However, towards the end of 1865 a large expedition of 7,000 men, including infantry and artillery, was sent against Bhutan and the Deb Raja finally capitulated. The Deb Raja then concluded a Treaty on 11th November 1865, one of the terms (in addition to the terms listed in the Governor-General's proclamation) being that the Government of India, in consideration of the loss of territory sustained by Bhutan, consented to pay the Government of Bhutan an annual sum of 25,000 rupees (£2,500) to be increased to twice that amount in the event of the treaty obligations being faithfully acted upon.

The country ceded to the British Government comprised the Athora Dooars, a narrow strip of territory averaging about twenty-two miles in width and 250 miles in length lying at the foot of the hills, and the Eastern Dooars lying east of the Santos river—now incorporated with the Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam. Payment of the allowance to the Bhutan Government was temporarily withheld in 1868, due to the Bhutan Government having stopped intercommunication between Bhutan and Buxa, and again

¹ See Appendix E, p. 296.

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in 1880, when some raids were made near Buxa and prisoners taken. When these were restored the payments were renewed.

The last civil war in Bhutan ended in 1885 when the then Tongsa Penlop, Ugyen Wang-Chuk, assisted by his relative, who was Paro Penlop, defeated the three Bhutanese chieftains Aloo Dorji, the Thimboo Jungpen and Poonakha Jungpen, followers of the Deb Raja.

When fighting broke out between Britain and Tibet, the Bhutanese through their Agent, Ugyen Kazi, refused assistance to the Tibetans and warned them of the likely consequences of refusing to come to terms. This Agent who had acquired his position through his availability, by residing in Kalimpong, although he was only a minor 'Kazi', was deputed to take the letter from the Viceroy to the Dalai Lama in 1903—a letter which the Dalai Lama refused to open.

During the interval between then and the Tibet Mission of 1904 the Bhutanese, under the Tongsa Penlop, Ugyen Wang-Chuk, who was the most powerful leader in Bhutan at the time, not only refused support for Tibet but also sent a Mission, headed by Ugyen Wang-Chuk himself, to Lhasa with the British forces. When the expedition was concluded Ugyen Wang-Chuk was made a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. Up to 1904 the political relations between Bhutan and the Indian Government had been carried on through the medium of the Government of Bengal. When the fighting broke out in 1904 these political relations were transferred to Colonel Young-husband, leader of the expedition, who corresponded direct with the Government of India. When the Mission ended the political relations were then transferred to the Political Officer of Sikkim, J. Claude White, who was also responsible for political relations with Tibet. In this way the affairs of Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan were brought directly under the Government of India.

In 1907 the British Government decided that they must have some recognized head of the country in Bhutan to deal with instead of the confusion which had previously existed, and as the then Tongsa Penlop had emerged as the undoubted leader, it was proposed that he should be recognized as Maharaja of Bhutan. The Deb and Dharma Rajas were still in office; or, rather, the previous Dharma Raja had died and an incarnation had to be found so the Deb Raja held both offices; but as he was a recluse, and involved almost wholly in the spiritual affairs of the country, the Tongsa Penlop had taken over all the temporal administration. When the suggestion regarding the Tongsa Penlop was put to the lamas, headmen and people of Bhutan they unanimously agreed and in 1907, Sir Ugyen Wang-Chuk was installed as Maharaja of Bhutan.

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Claude White, the Political Officer, who went to the installation as the representative of the Government of India, then suggested that the Indian Government should take the opportunity of the new régime in the country, under the unified rule of the new Maharaja, to enter into a new Treaty, and, as a friendly gesture, to increase the very inadequate subsidy paid as compensation for annexing the Dooars—which had by that time become the most valuable tea-growing area in India.

This treaty was not negotiated during White's tenure of office, but Sir Charles Bell took up the question when he was appointed Political Officer in White's place. Another factor had arisen which gave the matter some urgency, according to Sir Charles Bell, and that was the renewed interest China was taking in Tibet and Bhutan. Just as in previous invasions China had revived interest in Tibet and the 'outlying territories' so, after Younghusband's expedition to Lhasa in 1904, the Chinese had sent an army in 1905 to East Tibet to bring the country under the control of the Peking Government.

During the 1865 war between Britain and Bhutan China had evinced no interest and made no move to help. In 1885 the Chinese Resident in Lhasa had demanded that the new Penlops or Tongsa and Paro should restore the Aloo Dorji who had fled to Tibet and appealed to them for help. The Penlop refused and shortly afterwards the British war with Tibet broke out. The Tibetan Government demanded that the Bhutanese help them during the fighting but again the Bhutanese refused. The annual tributes were still sent to Lhasa by Bhutan, but the Bhutanese claimed that these were now only religious offerings to the Dalai Lama as the 'Head of the Faith'.

However, just as Sir Charles Bell took over as Political Officer for Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan, the Chinese revived their interest in Bhutan, and the Chinese Resident in Lhasa even despatched a letter to 'the Chiefs of Bhutan', in the following words:

'The Bhutanese are the subjects of the Emperor of China, who is the Lord of Heaven. You, Deb Raja and two Penlops, think you are great, but you cannot continue without paying attention to the orders of your Ruler. Bhutan is the gate on the south which prevents entry [by the British]. The Popon [the Chinese Magistrate in the Chumbi Valley] will inspect your climate, crops, etc. The Deb Raja should endeavour to improve the trade of the country and the condition of the peasants. If you want any assistance let me know.'

This was followed by a visit to Bhutan by the Chinese Official at Gyantse, who called at Paro, the capital of Western Bhutan, where he met the Paro Penlop and the Timbu Dzongbon, and the situation began to look serious once more. Sir Charles Bell stated that, as

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matters stood between Britain and Bhutan at that time, 'Britain has the right to intervene only in the case of *disputes*. If Bhutan, at any time in the future, *agreed* to Chinese intervention of her affairs, e.g. by receiving Chinese Agents in Bhutan, we could do nothing.' At the same time a Chinese newspaper which had been started in Lhasa, launched a series of propaganda attacks against the British and called on the Nepalis and the Bhutanese—a people of the same race as the Chinese, they claimed—to combine with the Tibetans against Britain.

Sir Charles Bell had cultivated the Agent of the Bhutanese Government, Ugyen Kazi, who had taken the Viceroy's letter to the Dalai Lama in 1903, and served on other Missions, and he now requested him to persuade the Maharaja of Bhutan, together with the other Chiefs of the Council and representatives from the Monasteries, to meet him at Poonakha, in Western Bhutan. In Poonakha Sir Charles told the Maharaja that the British Government had agreed to increase the annual subsidy and then suggested that a new Treaty should be signed placing Bhutan's external affairs under the control of the British Government. At first the Council members were reluctant, but finally all agreed and four copies of the Treaty were drawn up and signed on 8th January 1910.

The Treaty was really only an amendment of the 1865 Treaty concluded at Sinchula, and after this, as stated in the preamble, it recorded:

'The following addition has been made to Article IV of the Sinchula Treaty of 1865.

'“The British Government has increased the annual allowance to the Government of Bhutan from 50,000 rupees to 100,000 rupees with the effect from the 10th January, 1910.”'

'Article VIII of the Sinchula Treaty of 1865 has been revised and the revised Article runs as follows:

'“The British Government undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part, the Bhutanese Government agrees to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations. In the event of disputes with or causes of conflict against the Maharajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar such matters will be referred for arbitration to the British Government, which will settle them in such manner as justice may require, and insist upon the observance of its decisions by the Maharajahs named.”'

The Treaty was signed and sealed by the Maharaja, each member of the Council, the ecclesiastical representative, and the Dharma Raja, whose seal was still necessary for government action of prime

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importance. The Agent of the Bhutan Government, Ugyen Kazi, received as reward for his services the title of Raja. This was a remarkable promotion in one generation for the Kazi, who, as a boy, had accompanied his father, the Kazi of Jungtsa, who had been deputed by the Bhutan Government to meet the famous Eden Mission in 1864 which ended so catastrophically for Bhutan. The young Ugyen Kazi had remained in Kalimpong, and later acted as interpreter to the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling who was organizing the newly acquired district. Then came his trip to Lhasa with the Viceroy's letter, and, for his work in bringing about the Treaty, he was raised to Raja status.

In summing up the advantage of the Treaty Sir Charles Bell shows its significance in relation to China:

'The Treaty can be used effectively to prevent Chinese colonization in Bhutan. China had already, in 1909, made strenuous efforts to populate the inhospitable tracts round Batang in Eastern Tibet with Chinese colonists. She was looking towards South-eastern Tibet, which is not far from Bhutan, with the same object in view. Bhutan has an ideal climate for Chinese from southern and central China. Owing to the decrease of its population from monasticism, disease and war, three-fourths of its land is uncultivated, and would quickly respond to the touch of the Chinese agriculturists.'

The Treaty signed by Bhutan in 1910 was the Treaty accepted and ratified by the new Government of Independent India in 1949-50.

The years between had seen little change inside Bhutan. Sir Basil Gould, the Political Officer to Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan, was invited to visit the country by Raja Dorji in 1938.¹ Raja Dorji was the son

¹ Writing of this visit Sir Basil Gould said:

'From Tibet they (the Bhutanese) imported tea and salt, trading in return rice, paper made from the local daphne shrub, and forest products, especially dyes. From India they imported increasingly in recent years, bars of iron from which they made tips for their wooden ploughshares and adzes which they preferred to saws for shaping timber, some cotton goods, and bars of silver and copper. To India they sent lac, beeswax, wool, skins and ivory, ponies and cattle. Such goods passed hands for the most part at seasonal markets a few miles beyond the borders of Bhutan. But essentially Bhutan was self-sufficing. Like other highlanders the Bhutanese wear a combined plaid and kilt, gathered in at the waist, woven in intricate patterns in their own homes. Tucked under this garment, above the belt, every Bhutanese man and woman carried a home-made and home-lacquered wooden bowl, usually of chestnut or of beech. This served both as a plate for food and as a cup for tea or for home-brewed beet and spirit. When their hair became inconveniently long every man and woman from the Maharajah and his family downwards had it clipped close to the skull and then let it grow again. . . . With abundance of easily reached timber near at hand, they were amply housed. The roofs were covered with long shingles held in place with stones, and the walls were of timber or of rammed earth. The ground floor would often be

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of the former Ugyen Kazi made Raja at the signing of the Anglo-Bhutanese Treaty in 1908. By this time Raja Dorji had become Jungpen, or Governor, of Western Bhutan, and also Deb Zimpen, or Chief Minister, to the Maharaja. Living in Kalimpong he was Bhutan's chief link with the outside world and had made himself a powerful figure in Bhutanese affairs through this position, involving as it did both politics and trade, as well as influential contacts. Also, he had married the sister of the Maharaja of Sikkim, thus consolidating his position in 'royal circles'. Bhutan might have gone on for many years living in this isolated primitive fashion, for all visits by foreigners, including Indians, were officially discouraged, but for the invasion and occupation of Tibet by the Chinese Communist Army in 1950. Once again, as in previous invasions of Tibet, Bhutan became a major factor of strategic significance, particularly in view of Peking's new ambitions in Asia, and her rivalry with Delhi.

Following the events in Sikkim in June 1949, when the Government of India declared Sikkim a 'protectorate of India', it was decided to regularize her relations with Bhutan at the same time, and a Treaty was signed on 9th August 1949 in Darjeeling. Under this Treaty the Government of India undertook to recognize the provisions of the Anglo-Bhutanese Sinchula Treaty of 1865 and the amended Treaty of 1910, and agreed to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On their part the Government of Bhutan agreed to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to their external relations. The annual subsidy paid by the Government of India in return for the previously annexed territory was raised to 500,000 rupees, and thirty-two square miles of territory at Dewangiri was returned to Bhutan.

For the next eleven years the terms of the Treaty were so strictly observed that no Indian of note visited Bhutan at all, except for a short visit by R. K. Nehru, at that time Foreign Secretary of the External Affairs Ministry. India was not represented in the country itself, and the Political Officer in Sikkim was accredited to Bhutan as well. In addition to the physical inaccessibility of the country the Bhutanese leaders made no attempt to hide their sensitivity to any attempts, even from India—one might go so far as to say particularly from India—which might be interpreted as pressure on them; all visits, even by foreign friends of the two chief families, were discouraged, or, when allowed, kept discreetly quiet, lest it should start

given over to cattle, ponies, pigs and chickens, and the open-sided top floor to the storage of grain, hay and straw. Space for cultivation and grazing was easily won by burning down the forest. . . . ' *The Jewel in The Lotus*, pub. Chatto and Windus.

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a demand from Indians for equal permission to enter the country.

When the Dalai Lama visited India in 1956 and expressed his desire for sanctuary in India, he was persuaded by Mr. Nehru to return to Tibet only on the assurances that India would use her good offices to see that China kept her promises to withdraw from Tibet and also that he himself would visit the Dalai Lama in Lhasa sometime in 1957. This proposed visit was encouraged by the Chinese so long as they could derive propaganda benefit from it, in the sense that all countries were convinced by the gesture that circumstances in Tibet could not be as bad as some observers reported when China was prepared to permit a visit from India's respected Prime Minister to Tibet's capital. When the time for the visit drew near, in the autumn of 1958, the Chinese abruptly withdrew their apparent approval of the visit and Mr. Nehru was peremptorily informed that it was not a suitable time for the visit.

With a quicker diplomatic riposte than was usual with him the Indian Prime Minister brushed aside the specious excuse that the journey might be dangerous—the Chinese thereby admitting by implication that the situation in Tibet was critical—and answered that he would instead of going to Tibet go to Bhutan, which necessitated travelling fifteen miles across the Chumbi Valley of Tibet, anyway. At the time there had been no specific occurrence on the border of Tibet and Bhutan to cause India any great anxiety, although from 1950 there had been a steady massing of troops along the border from Burma to Ladakh. But the visit to Bhutan was the first positive step that India had taken in reply to China's constant preparation and activities on her borders, and was an implied warning that India considered Bhutan her legitimate sphere of interest. This interest Nehru took out of the realm of implication during his stay in Bhutan when he stated pointedly and emphatically, 'in the event of any aggression against Bhutan by any country India would consider it as an act of aggression against herself and act accordingly'. In addition to this Indian commitment, the Indian Prime Minister commended the isolation policy of the Bhutan Government and recommended that they should continue to discourage visits from foreigners to Bhutan—even Indians, he surprisingly implied. This may have been due to the fact that while in Sikkim he was presented with a petition from the 'Bhutanese Congress Party', an organization of Nepalis which had been outlawed by the Bhutan Government but which was still active from towns along the borders of Bhutan.

When Mr. Nehru visited Bhutan there were some changes in the Government from what had existed in 1910 and 1950 but they were slight and had made little impact on the country. The former

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Maharaja had died and his son, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, had succeeded to the throne in 1951 at the age of twenty-one; and the Chief Minister, Raja Dorji, had died in 1953 and been succeeded by his son, Jigme Dorji, at the age of thirty-three. Thus, during Mr. Nehru's visit, the affairs of Bhutan were in the hands of two young men—Jigme Dorji being western-educated—who had travelled in India and Europe.

The former Maharaja had a reputation of being a tyrant and had used his reign to perpetuate the feudal administration he had inherited, the big landlords receiving the bulk of the State's income and the residue trickling into the 'Government's' coffers to pay for the unenthusiastic administration. The 'Government' was a body of 130 members formed from the Penlops, Jongpens, and headmen already described, which was 'semi-elected'—to use the term of the present Prime Minister—in the sense that the headmen of the villages were recognized as the official representatives of their districts. The 'Council' met once a year, if an emergency arose, or if the Maharaja had an announcement to make. But there was no free discussion and the 'Government' merely rubber-stamped the Maharaja's wishes. There were no trained people and illiteracy was 100 per cent.

While the previous Maharaja's power in Bhutan was almost absolute there were many of the hereditary feuds which had always obtained in Bhutan. The greatest was between the families of the Maharaja and Raja Dorji, the Chief Minister. Raja Dorji's wealth and influence had increased with his years as Trade Agent in Kalimpong, and as Chief Minister; also, through his position in Kalimpong, where he spent most of the year, and, finally, when his heart began to give trouble, all the year. This brought him into touch with all the leading Indian and European figures, until more was known of the Chief Minister than the Maharaja.

However, the Maharaja's son, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, married the second daughter of Raja Dorji, and a few months later the Maharaja died and Jigme Dorji Wangchuk succeeded him. Jigme Dorji Wangchuk had not had a Western-education like the family of Raja Dorji, but he was an intelligent young man, who visited India and Europe with Raja Dorji's son, and he had a wife who was Western-educated in India, the U.K. and U.S.A. and had studied Civic Administration among other allied subjects. Under the new Maharaja schools were introduced, and a hospital and dispensaries and, after long discussion, he finally decided to take the risk of sending students to study in Indian schools. Financial help from India enabled the Bhutanese Government to start on a programme of road-building, which envisaged for the future a 150-mile road from Buxa

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Doors to Thimbu—one of Bhutan's three peripatetic state 'capitals', depending on where the Maharaja is in residence—an extension of a still unconstructed highway beyond Thimbu to Eastern Bhutan, a matter of another 200 miles; and feeder roads from Assam connecting with the national highway.

But a lot of Bhutan's 'development' was limited to paper programmes. Because the 'Government' was so scattered and isolated, administration was limited to a few officials. Like his father, Raja Dorji, Jigme Dorji spent most of his time in India; other Penlops and Jongpens remained in their own districts, the 'capital' moved with the Maharaja and nobody bothered a great deal about anything. The hospital and dispensaries were oftener than not without medicine, which expired beyond their effective dates in storage through lack of interest or authority to issue. Schools were unattended because teachers were not paid and had to find other means to supplement their income. Even the 'Army' was subject to this feudal indifference, for while 'on paper' it was supposed to number 2,500 with a ceiling of 20,000, it was really only a militia who were occasionally issued with guns for firing practice for a few days, after which the guns were returned to the headmen and the 'army' returned to their villages and fields. The training of the militia was in the hands of three junior lieutenants who returned from Dehra Dun Military Academy in 1958-59, and while even the elementary instruction which they could have taught might have been useful they, too, were subject to the same lack of interest and official encouragement.

Forming of political parties is forbidden and criticism of the Government is not only discouraged but suppressed; but the outlawed party already mentioned, the Bhutan State Congress, is very active clandestinely in the country, particularly in the south and west. In these areas live the bulk of the Nepali inhabitants of Bhutan. Estimates as to their numbers vary; the Bhutanese Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji, claims that they only form 25 per cent of the population of Bhutan, while the Bhutan State Congress and the Ghurka League of Darjeeling claim that they number 64 per cent of the 700,000 (a dubiously inflated figure: In 1935 it was only 300,000) estimated population of Bhutan. Whether 25 per cent or 64 per cent, or somewhere between, this is a very discontented group in Bhutan, for they are not represented in the Bhutan Government, the Government claiming that 'their interests are taken into consideration in any discussion' and that this is sufficient. This discontent makes them easy targets of the Bhutan State Congress whose programme is the abolition of this discrimination against Nepalis liberation from the 'autocratic and arbitrary rule' by the Maharaja, and an introduction

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of popular government. It also demanded a change of the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty, with closer relations with India in view of the danger to Bhutan from the Chinese—although this was before the deterioration in Nepal-Indian relations.

And in spite of Mr. Nehru's assurances that any act of aggression against Bhutan will be met by India, there is a strong feeling in Bhutan that India would no more help Bhutan in an emergency than she would help Tibet. This suspicion was reinforced when Jigme Dorji went to Delhi with the publicly expressed purpose of obtaining a defence agreement in writing from the Indian Government, following on Mr. Nehru's assurances, but was unsuccessful in persuading the Indian Government to agree. Money was given for road-building and other projects but nothing was put in writing about the defence of Bhutan. During this visit the acting Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji—he has never been officially and permanently confirmed as such by the present Maharaja—made several very controversial public statements which displeased the Government of India. For instance, in Shillong, on 2nd October 1959, he had stated Bhutan's position in relation to the Sino-Indian border dispute as 'he would not like his country to involve itself in the Sino-Indian border dispute'. He added that because 'Bhutan did not want to get involved in the dispute he would not support the Indian stand that the MacMahon Line was the valid boundary between India and Tibet'. Then again at a Press Conference in Calcutta in August 1960 he said that if Bhutan did not receive aid from India that she would get it from the U.K., U.S., U.S.S.R. or other sources. To a few friends he let it be known that he had been approached by both Russia and China with offers of technical aid and diplomatic recognition. However, when Chou En-lai visited India in April 1960 Mr. Dorji expressed the hope that Mr. Nehru would raise the question of Bhutan's north-east frontier, a portion of which, about 300 square miles, had been claimed by China in its map.

The Chinese continued their massive military build-up on Bhutan's borders, with propaganda infiltration by Tibetan refugees and other means, and in February 1961 the Maharaja of Bhutan, with his acting Prime Minister, visited Delhi. While in Calcutta, *en route*, they called a Press Conference and at the Conference they announced that China had been in touch with Bhutan, offering aid for development projects, recognition of her sovereignty and diplomatic recognition abroad. There is no doubt that the Maharaja and his Prime Minister hoped to use this as a lever to win more offers of help from Delhi and also to diminish the pressures from the Indian Government that India's interpretation of the phrase in the Indo-Bhutanese

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Treaty, 'guided by the advice' of the Indian Government in external affairs, constituted control over Bhutan's external interests.

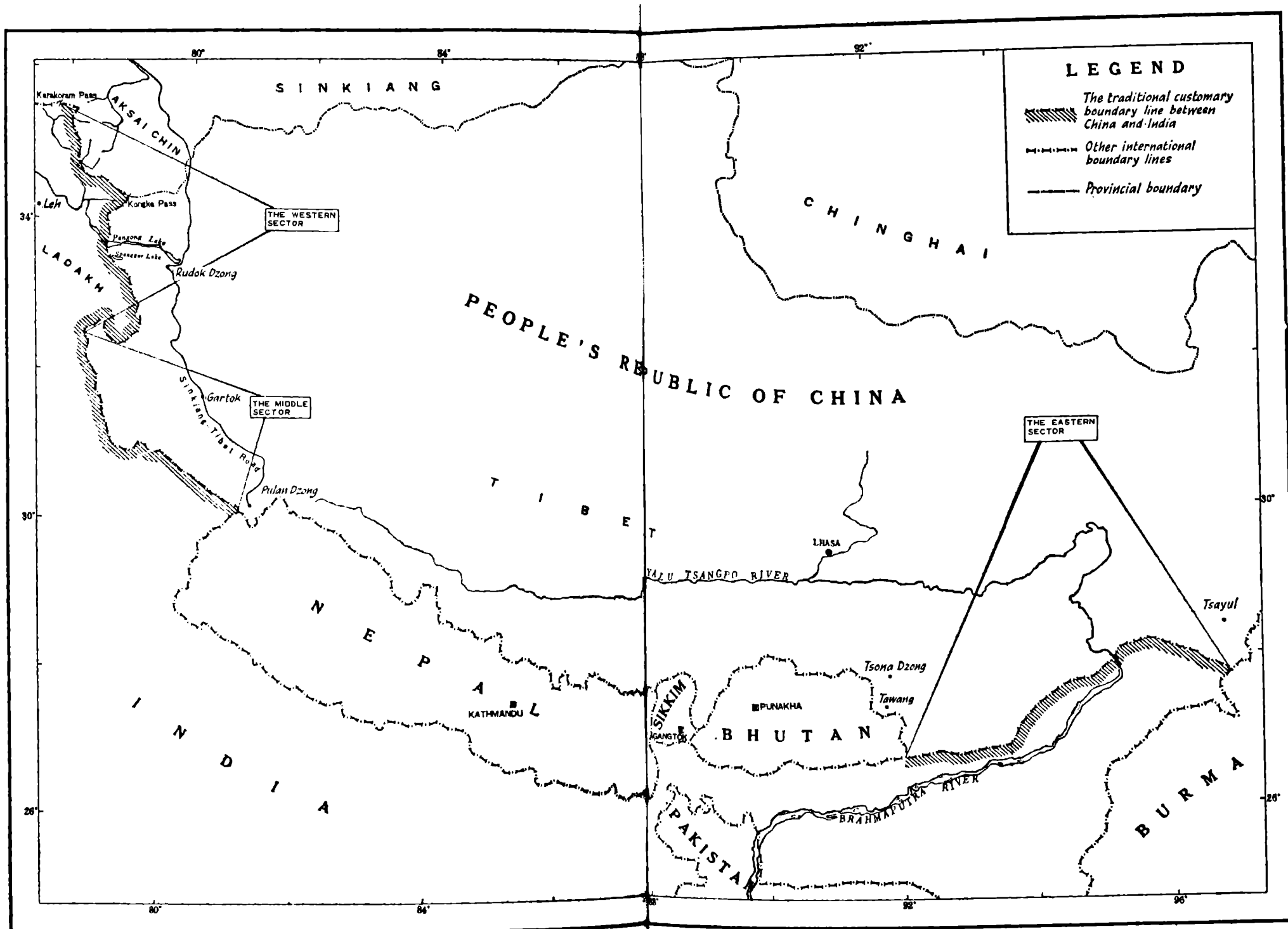
However, when they reached Delhi the Maharaja and the Prime Minister found that they were unable to resist Indian pressures for various reasons (among them it was said that India was blunt about the manner in which Indian aid in the past had been mishandled, or had found its way into foreign banks) and they not only agreed to new concessions to India—accepting a Planning Commission for Bhutan to organize development, more roads, schools, small industries, etc.—but also agreed to India taking the responsibility for Bhutan's defence, a prerogative which until then she had jealously guarded. But in August 1962 Jigme Dorji still insisted that the Bhutanese Government did not want Indian troops in Bhutan when challenged about reports of Indian troops in the country. He said that recruiting in Bhutan would be stepped up and those recruits would be sufficient to defend Bhutan.

Less than a month later Delhi was again shocked and irritated to find that Russia as well as China ignored her claim to special influence in Bhutan, for the new Soviet atlases issued at that time showed India's international border south of Sikkim and Bhutan instead of to the north of these principalities, as India claimed.

The Chinese propaganda in Bhutan is clever, for not only do they point out the injustices of the feudal administration which are evident everywhere, but they pay well for any goods which they acquire and say that these prices will be maintained if the Bhutanese people put the Chinese in control of their affairs. They also point out that the Bhutanese are of Tibetan stock, speaking a language allied to Tibetan, have the same religion and recognize the Dalai Lama as their leader, their trade has always been with Tibet and their roads led there, that there is little trace and no affinity with India. There is a Bhutanese representative and a Trade Agent in Lhasa, and Bhutanese are allowed free entry without any documents into Tibet and China, and free use of medical and educational institutions there.

There is strong anti-Indian feeling in Bhutan, and while the Bhutanese people are not pro-Communist (they know little or nothing about it except by vague reports from Tibetan refugees) they have been historically, economically and racially associated with their neighbours to the north. The Chinese have, therefore, fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction and unrest.

Should Peking choose to move into Bhutan they could very well claim that they were supported by history and the people, while Delhi could only claim an inherited agreement with the British imperialists and feudal rulers. In such an event would India be prepared to go to



4. Map from Chinese Government Foreign Languages Press, Peking, showing what China affirms to be the traditional customary boundary line between China and India.

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war with China as she states at present and in a country with such geographical and political difficulties? Yet if she does not, more than a small principality is at stake, for with a Chinese occupation of Bhutan, Sikkim would become strategically useless, and then China would be in a position to claim the lower Himalayan areas, the world's richest tea-growing districts of Darjeeling and Dooars, the oilfields of Assam and be right on the plains of West Bengal only 300 miles from Calcutta.

SIKKIM

Present-day Sikkim is small and, in itself, insignificant but the inverted triangle of the Chumbi Valley—formerly the seat of Sikkim Rajas, later taken by Tibet, and now occupied and garrisoned by the Chinese People's Liberation Army—was designated by Sir Charles Bell 'a dagger aimed at the heart of India', and because of this it has now assumed international significance.

Like all countries scattered along the mighty Himalayan mountain ranges and watershed Sikkim paid little attention to defining her boundaries; but, whereas Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal were militant races, the original inhabitants of Sikkim, the Lepchas, or Kong-ba (the 'ravine folk'), as they call themselves, were a quiet forest-dwelling people interested only in cultivating their land and living in peace. Where the Lepchas originated is still not known but their Mongolian features and certain peculiarities of language and religion suggest that they are a very ancient colony from Southern Tibet.

The early Lepcha chronicles, like those of their neighbours, are historically unreliable for they are heavily interlaced with legends and myths, and reliable accounts do not begin until, as in Tibet, the seventh century and the reign of the famous Tibetan king, Srong-tsen Gampo. Even these accounts are only relatively accurate, for the date of Srong-tsen Gampo's birth is variously given as between A.D. 600–627.

The State of Sikkim is situated in the Eastern Himalayas and is bounded on the north and north-east by Tibet, on the south-east by Bhutan, on the west by Nepal and on the south by the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, encompassing an area of 2,818 miles and a population of 165,000. But, while that is its position now, it formerly occupied a far greater area before Tibet, Britain, Bhutan and Nepal all helped themselves to slices of her territory.

A Dr. Oldfield, writing in 1858 (*Sketches from Nipal*, Vol. 1, pp. 53–4) describing earlier Sikkim said:

'The hill country constituting the basin of the Kosi river is divided into two provinces or districts by the Arun river. The district lying on the right bank of the Arun, and extending between it and the Dud Kosi, is the country of the Kirantis—a hill tribe of low-caste Hindus,

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who once possessed considerable power and territory in these eastern hills, but were speedily reduced to submission by Prithvi Narayan after his conquest of Nipal. The district lying on the eastern or left bank of the Arun, and extending from it to Sikkim (i.e. the Sikkim of 1858) is Limbuana, or the country of the Limbus, another tribe of low-caste Hindus. It formerly belonged to Sikkim, but was conquered and permanently annexed to Nipal, the territories of the Niwar kings of Bhatgaon extended eastward to the Dud Kosi river, which fixed the boundary between the country of the Niwars and the country of the Kirantis.'

In 1864, Sir Ashley Eden noted that 'Sikkim, though a very petty State then, was formerly a fair-sized country, reaching from the Arun river on the west to the Taigon Pass on the east, from Tibet on the north to Kissengunge in Purneah (on the plains of India) on the south.' But Sikkim, for almost a hundred years now, has contracted to a country smaller than Wales.

On the northern border of Darjeeling, the main chain of the Himalayas throws out to the south two enormous spurs—the Singilila and Chola ranges. These two mighty barriers enclose three sides of a gigantic amphitheatre sloping down on its southern, or open, side towards the plains of India. The expanse of mountain country thus enclosed consists of a tangled series of interlacing ridges, rising range above range to the snow-covered summits of the 28,184 feet Kanchenjunga massif and sister peaks of the Eastern Himalayan range. The hills, lower mountains, and heavily-terraced rice-fields of this area, which give it the striking appearance of an amphitheatre from the air, make up the territory of Sikkim. The encircling wall of peaks and passes forms on the north and east the frontier of Tibet, on the west and south-east it divides Sikkim and Darjeeling from Nepal, and the Dichu forms the boundary between Sikkim and Bhutan. The northern mountains of Sikkim are Himalayan in scale and character, the snow-fed torrents of the Lachen and Lachung rivers pouring through precipitous valleys to meet in the broader and even more turbulent River Teesta. The lower levels of the 'amphitheatre', the valleys of the Teesta, Balasun and Mahanadi rivers, are wider spaced, more heavily cultivated and slope gently to the plains in broad expanses of dark-green tea gardens.

It is claimed on rather hazy authority that the first rulers who came to Sikkim came from Tibet, and were descendants of Tibet's famous seventh-century king, Srong-tsen Gampo. But even in the accepted history, before they arrived in Sikkim they had travelled many centuries and many miles from Lhasa to East Tibet, then back to West Tibet, and, finally, to Sikkim. While in Sikkim the family

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became involved in internecine quarrels and one branch went to Bhutan for help. The Bhutanese responded, the others were defeated, and from this branch sprang the first Raja of Sikkim, Pun-tshogs Namgyal, in 1641. At this date all the present sub-divisions of Kalimpong, as far as the Tegonla range, were known as Mon-loong-kha-zhi and belonged to Sikkim—a factor which takes on ominous significance in the light of China's present claims to the area.

According to the Sikkimese legendary records the founding of the Sikkim 'Raj' proper connects the establishment of settled government in Sikkim with the great ritualistic schism in the Tibetan Lamaistic Buddhism. Buddhism, as has been already noted, was introduced into Tibet during the reign of Ti-tsong Detsen in the eighth century by the introduction of pundits from India. But from this time, from being one of the chief military powers of Asia Tibet gradually deteriorated into a nation largely robbed of vitality through the ramifications of the subsequent parasitical priesthood which developed and fastened on the vitals of the country.

The form of Buddhism which was introduced into Tibet became mixed up with the earlier black practices of shamanistic Bönism, and gradually became a cloak for the worst form of aggressive demon worship by which the Tibetans were put in constant fear of their lives from the attacks of malignant devils both in this life and in the world to come. The 'lamas', or 'priests', multiplied rapidly and soon usurped authority in matters of state and finally gained full control, overthrowing the King and assuming the kingship from among themselves. The 'priest-king' structure in Tibet, as in other lands, proved a retrograde move and the lamas ruled the country entirely in their own interests keeping the laity in ignorance and abject servitude, until the former virile Tibetans became the most priest-ridden people in the world, with reputedly fully a third of the nation's manhood being absorbed into the parasitic structure.

About the middle of the fourteenth century a great reformer, known as Tsong-ka-pa, was born and he revived the religion in a purer form, introducing laws of discipline, insisting on the celibacy of the priesthood, forbidding the consumption of alcoholic liquor, and restricting the proliferation of lesser gods and devils in the Tibetan religion and the worship the magic-loving people gave to them. It was sometime after the death of the 'Perfector of the Priesthood', as Tsong-ka-pa was called, that the first indication of a new process became evident when priests began to claim that the spirit of the 'Perfector of the Priesthood', had passed into another priest, who, it was claimed, therefore, had a right to succession. The idea appealed to the Tibetans, who were accustomed to the process of

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transmigration anyway, and the new suggestion that it was possible for someone to waive his right to Buddhahood in order to return and help others still struggling on the upward path gained wide support and was soon established.

Tsong-ka-pa, however, was not the first Dalai Lama. The line of Dalai Lamas did not start until the end of the fourteenth century, and the title of Dalai Lama was not created until the sixteenth century when it was given by the Mongolian king to the third in line of succession.

But to return to the history of Sikkim and the effect which the above events had on that country. It is claimed in Sikkim tradition that three monks of the unreformed 'Nying-ma-pa' sect, or 'Red-hats', fleeing from the persecution initiated by the reforming Geluk-pa sect, or 'Yellow-hats', finally arrived in Sikkim in the early part of the seventeenth century and decided to convert the country to Nying-ma-pa Buddhism.

The traditional record of their deliberations runs as follows:

'The three lamas held here a council at which Hlatsun Chhembo said, "Here are we three lamas in a new and irreligious country. We must have a 'dispenser of gifts' (i.e. a King) to rule the country on our behalf." Then the Nga-dak-pa Lama said, "I am descended from the celebrated Tertön Nga-dak Nyang-re who was latterly a governor; I should therefore be King." While the Kartok-pa Lama declared, "As I am of royal lineage I have the right to rule." Then Hlatsung Chhembo said, "In the prophecy of Guru Rimpoche it is written that four noble brothers shall meet in Sikkim and arrange for its government. We are three of these come from the north, west and south. Towards the east, it is written, there is at this epoch a man named Phuntshog, a descendant of brave ancestors of Kham in Eastern Tibet. According, therefore, to the prophecy of the Guru we should invite him." Two messengers were then despatched to search for this man Phuntshog. Going towards the extreme east, near Gangtok, they met a man churning milk and asked him his name. He without replying invited them to sit down and gave them milk to drink. After they were refreshed he said his name was Phuntshog. He was then conducted to the lamas, who crowned him by placing the holy water vase on his head and anointed him with the water, and exhorting him to rule the country religiously, gave him Hlatsun's own surname of Namgye and the title of "Chho-gyal", or "religious King". Phuntshog Namgye was at this time 38 years old, and he became a lama in the same year of 1641 A.D.'

The alliance having been formed with the object of the conversion of the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of Sikkim, to Buddhism and

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the initiation of Phuntshog Namgye as the Raja of the whole country, it was not long until this was accomplished. The easy-going Lepchas readily accepted the externals of Buddhism; monasteries were built to preserve the memories of the missionary lamas, and the descendants of the Tibetan settler, Phuntshog Namgye, are recognized to this day as the rightful rulers of Sikkim.

The external as well as the internal policy of the petty principedom thus formed was determined by the manner of its creation. The chief of the community, raised to power by the ingenuity of the Tibetan lamas, was subsequently forced to acknowledge the religious and political predominance of the rulers of Tibet. When the hostility between the two major sects of Nying-ma-pa and Geluk-pa gradually diminished, and the craving for ritual revived, the religious and political bonds binding Sikkim with Tibet grew closer. Doubtful questions of discipline and procedure were referred to Lhasa for the decision of the Dalai Lama and his mandate came to be virtually, if not always actively, admitted to be the final appellate authority in Sikkimese affairs.

While this religious and political syncretization was going on the Rajas of Sikkim were being brought within a cultural context higher than they had previously known. Although Chinese historical and political influence in Tibet had been tenuous and fluctuating, her cultural influence had been extensive and permanent. From being 'fierce barbarian shepherds' with red-painted faces and dressed in felt and skins, the Tibetans gradually absorbed Chinese habits and civilization. The rulers and officials took to wearing brocade and silk, sent their children to Chinese schools to be taught the classics, and invited scholars from China to come to Tibet to compose official reports. Silkworms' eggs, mulberry trees, whisky, barley beer and cheese were introduced, and tea from China became the national drink. Chinese workmen taught Tibetans how to make writing-brushes and Tibetan scholars use the wooden or bamboo stylus in the same way as the ancient Chinese did before the invention of the brush. Buddhist scriptures, medical treatises and musical instruments were also sent from China until finally Tibet, while racially antagonistic to and politically independent from China, was culturally little different from her. All these Chinese cultural influences introduced into Tibet were gradually absorbed into the Tibetan ruling circles in Sikkim. Wool, silk, tea, all the comforts and enjoyments of life came to them from Tibet, so that it was little wonder that their continual effort was to show themselves to be thorough Tibetans. In addition, the Tibetan language was used at their court, and their chief advisers were drawn from Tibetan monasteries.

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In the reign of the third Gyalpo, or Raja, Cha-dor Namgye, Sikkim was overrun by the Bhutanese. Cha-dor Namgye quarrelled with his half-sister Pende-Amo and she—who considered that she as the elder was entitled to the throne—invited the Bhutanese to invade Sikkim and attack her brother. The Deb Raj of Bhutan sent an army which defeated the Sikkimese forces, seized the palace of Rubdentse, and compelled Raja Cha-dor to flee to Tibet.

Cha-dor Namgye remained several years in Lhasa, studying hard, and steadily rose in scholastic eminence until he became secretary to the Sixth Dalai Lama. When the Dalai Lama died Raja Cha-dor decided to return to Sikkim accompanied by several influential Tibetans. When this news reached the Bhutanese they retired from the occupied parts of Sikkim west of the Teesta river, but still maintained their position at Dumsong, and retained what is now the Kalimpong district of India and up to Tegonla. In this way Sikkim was deprived of the bulk of the Mon-loong-kha-tzi.¹

Then in 1788 the Nepalese Ghurkas invaded Sikkim and went on to attack Tibet, but they were defeated by the Chinese and retreated to Nepal.

Sikkim got back a small portion of her State but was obliged to pay the Ghurkas' tribute to Nepal until 1815 when the latter were defeated and driven out by the British, who in 1817 restored West Sikkim and the Terai to the Raja. But the beautiful, fertile Chumbi Valley was retained by Tibet—or rather the Chinese Resident in Tibet, and became 'the dagger aimed at the heart of India'—up to the Chola-Jelep mountain range. In the following few years several disputes between the Tibetan and Lepcha factions in Sikkim broke out, causing disturbances on the Indian frontier until in 1826 the Indian Government was compelled to intervene, and in 1828 Captain Lloyd was sent to settle matters, during which mission he reported the

¹ Another annexation of territory took place, according to Sir Ashley Eden's report, as follows:

'During the war (in Cha-dor Namgye's reign) the Bhuteahs had seized and confined at Punakah a Sikkim Chief named Athoop, the ancestor of the Gangtok Kazi who confined Drs. Hooker and Campbell, and again fought with us in 1861. The Sikkim Rajah on his return procured his release and the Bhuteahs on setting him free bribed him to remain a friend to their Government. He had been well treated during confinement and his son Joom-Tashi, born during his captivity, turned out a thorough Bhutea. He eventually became the most powerful man in Sikkim, and kept up continued correspondence with the Bhutanese; and some years later when there was a dispute between Bhutan and Sikkim regarding the boundaries between the two countries he treacherously gave up to Bhutan all the tract between the present (1865) Sikkim border and the Taigon Pass, including Darling-cote, Jouksa and Sangbe, which in those days were richly cultivated tracts.'

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excellent prospects Darjeeling held out as a Sanatorium. When approached about the possibility the Sikkim Raja gave the Darjeeling hill district of six miles of territory to the Governor of Bengal as a gift.

But Sikkim's political and territorial difficulties were not yet at an end. Earlier, in 1819, a serious quarrel had arisen between the Raja, Cho-pho Namgye, and his uncle, Bho-lad, and in 1820 Bho-lad was murdered by one Tung-yik Mincho, more commonly known as Pagla Dewan, or 'the mad Chief Minister', who gradually usurped all power in Sikkim.

In 1849 when a Dr. Hooker and a Dr. Campbell were travelling in Sikkim, with permission of the British Government and Raja, they were seized by order of the Dewan and made prisoners. The Dewan's intention was to force Dr. Campbell, who had been appointed Superintendent of Darjeeling District, to relinquish claims for the surrender of criminals, to make him agree to the dictates of the Dewan regarding the giving up of escaped slaves, and to detain him until these conditions should be sanctioned by the Government. When the British Government warned the Dewan that the Raja should answer for any harm to the British subjects he eventually released them on 24th December 1849.

In February 1850 a punitive expedition was sent into Sikkim. The outcome of the expedition was that the annual grant of Rupees 6,000, paid to the Maharaja for the Darjeeling District, was stopped, the lower portion of Sikkim known as the Sikkim Terai was annexed, and also the portion of the Sikkim hills bounded by the Rumman river on the north, the Great Rungeet and the Teesta on the east, and by the Nepal frontier on the west. This new territory was put under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent of Darjeeling.

The Pagla Dewan was also dismissed from office, and for some years events proceeded smoothly enough, but in time he managed to work himself back into power and began his harassing tactics over the border again. In April 1860 two cases of kidnapping were reported to the Indian Government and, all efforts to procure reparation having failed, the Governor-General decided to occupy the territory of the Raja lying to the north of the Rumman river and to the west of the Great Rungeet. The force advanced to the Teesta, when the Sikkimese acceded to the terms dictated by the Governor-General and on the 28th March 1861 a new Treaty, consisting of twenty-three articles, was concluded with the envoy of the Raja of Sikkim.

By 1880 intrigues and quarrels had broken out again over the question of the succession, and over the settling of Nepalese in

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Sikkim. These were temporarily sorted out but in 1880 several events of a more serious nature developed.

When Raja Changzed Kan-po visited Tibet in 1879 he met the Chinese Resident there and entered into some sort of agreement with him and the Tibetan authorities. When he died in the same year the Chinese Resident invested him with a Chinese button of the First Rank, the usual token of recognition of Chinese overlordship.

Between 1880 and 1885 fighting broke out between Bhutan and Tibet and all trade was stopped because of this. In 1885 a British mission known as the Macaulay Mission was permitted by the Chinese authorities to proceed to Lhasa, but when it arrived at the Tibetan border the Tibetan authorities refused the Mission permission to proceed, on order from Lhasa.

When the Macaulay Mission withdrew the Tibetans took this as a sign of weakness on the Indian Government's part and occupied Ling-tu, a mountain near Gnatong, about eighteen miles inside the Sikkim frontier. The Raja of Sikkim chose this time to pay a visit to Chumbi and in defiance of the Indian Government remained there, until in 1887 he returned to Gangtok, in the meantime having made an agreement with the Tibetans at a place called Galing.

The Indian Government demanded the withdrawal of the invaders, but there was no response to the letter addressed to the Chinese Government (Chinese influence in Tibet at this time was at a low ebb) nor to the letter addressed to the Lhasa Government. In March 1888 the Sikkim Expeditionary Force was sent to Ling-tu, which the Tibetans were forced to evacuate, and in September the campaign ended with the complete expulsion of the Tibetans across the Jelep-la in North Sikkim. The British troops advanced twelve miles across the frontier into the Chumbi Valley, but, in order to avoid offending Chinese susceptibilities, they were withdrawn almost immediately to Gnatong within Sikkim territory.

Then a significant change in the Sikkimese ruling dynasty was introduced that was to have repercussions in 1961. The British authorities decided to depose the reigning Maharaja, Thatob Nangyal, for his pro-Chinese activities, and they removed him and his second wife to Kurseong, in India. They then sent for his eldest son, the Crown Prince, who was with his mother, the Maharaja's first wife, in Chumbi, to come to Sikkim to reign in his father's stead. But the second wife shrewdly sent word to the first wife not to come to Sikkim, that it was only a ruse by the British, and the first wife with her son, the real heir to Sikkim's throne, returned to Lhasa. In time the second wife in exile in India had a son, and although younger

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and junior the British authorities took him and put him on Sikkim's throne as the recognized Maharaja.

But to return to the dispute between Britain and China over Sikkim.

The above display of force brought the Chinese Resident to India. The Indian Government desired that a British Protectorate over Sikkim should be recognized, the Tibet-Sikkim frontier delimited, and Indo-Tibetan trade promoted. Accordingly, in March 1890, a Treaty to this effect was signed by Great Britain and China.

The Treaty contained eight articles, two of the most important being as follows:

‘ARTICLE 1

‘The boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into the rivers of Tibet. The line commences at Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan frontier, and follows the above-mentioned water-parting to the point where it meets Nepal territory.

‘ARTICLE 2

‘It is admitted that the British Government whose Protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognized, has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State, and except through and with the permission of the British Government neither the Ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any kind, formal or informal, with any other country.’

(Tibet Past and Present: Appendix V.)

This Treaty settled all disputes in regard to Sikkim's frontiers and status, and the northern boundaries were further ratified in the terms of the Simla Convention, between Britain, China and Tibet signed in 1914. Sir Charles Bell giving an account of this in his book, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, says:

‘It was one of my duties to negotiate with the Tibetan Plenipotentiary the frontier to be established between Tibet and north-eastern India, following for this purpose a line, eight hundred and fifty miles long marked out on a map by the British Plenipotentiary, Sir Henry MacMahon. I was also to gain Sha'tra's consent to the frontier desired by Sir Henry, which stands back everywhere about a hundred miles from the plains of India.’

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The development of Sikkim from a backward feudal country into a reasonably efficient State was the work of the British Political Officer, J. Claude White, who lived in Sikkim for nearly twenty years. He had been originally an engineer of the Public Works Department, and after his arrival in Sikkim he initiated plans for opening up tracks through the densely forested hills, registered rights in land, the development of a single form of law and justice, and started schools and hospitals. Without even an assistant he ran the Police, Revenue, Forests, Education, Excise, Agriculture, Public Works, Judicial, Administration Departments; kept up a diplomatic correspondence with Tibet and Bhutan, and introduced apple-growing, cloth-weaving, carpet manufacture and mining. He also encouraged immigrants from Nepal to settle in the almost unpopulated southern areas of the State, a policy, later restricted by Sir Charles Bell, which was to have far-reaching effects on Sikkimese politics in the future.

In 1914 there had been no wheeled transport in Sikkim but within a few years a road ran from the plains of India at Siliguri to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, seventy miles away. This was later extended by a Punjabi engineer from Gangtok, at a 6,000 feet altitude, to the Tibet border, twenty-seven miles away at 14,000 feet, an engineering feat which he brilliantly accomplished in the precipitous mountains without ever rising more than 350 feet in a mile. Other routes led from Gangtok to the Tibet frontier at the Natu-la, to Rungpo and Kalimpong, and to other parts of Sikkim, gradually linking up the formerly untouched remote area with the administration in the centre.

The Second World War in its early stages did not affect Sikkim very much. A large proportion of the population of Sikkim was not considered fit to be put on the official list of 'martial races' eligible for recruitment, but even so the Sikkim contribution was well above the average for India, one Sikkimese subject of Tibetan extraction winning a V.C. for knocking out three Japanese machine-guns. The Maharaja's eldest son, Peljor, obtained his wings in the Indian Air Force but was killed soon after in a flying accident.

The Maharaja, Tashi Namgyal, had succeeded his half-brother in circumstances described earlier, in 1914. At the time he had been called from an English school, but under Sir Charles Bell, and an English assistant, he had been taught how to rule the new Sikkim, increased five-fold in population and ten-fold in material sources since the British took over the country thirty years before. He was installed as the eleventh consecutive Maharaja in April 1918, and at the persuasion of Sir Charles Bell the Indian Government agreed to give him full ruling powers, for the first time since Sikkim joined the

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British Commonwealth that its king ruled in fact as well as in name.

But Sir Charles Bell's sanguine expectations of a beneficent enlightened ruler were not fulfilled. During the period of the installations and the British withdrawal from India the Maharaja, Tashi Namgyal, had introduced only a few minor racial reforms and granted a minimum of political liberties. His rule was the typical one of autocratic and absolute exercise of power limited only by the local power of the big landowners, or Kazis, which accompanied their lease of land from the Government. The Kazis were responsible for revenue and judicial functions, but these were vaguely defined and scarcely ever executed; they were also the country's lawmakers, administrators and judges. The people, mostly peasants, were helpless and unscrupulously exploited.

By the time India had attained her independence in 1947 there was widespread discontent in Sikkim, and political agitators amongst the people initiated a 'No Tax' campaign. This resulted in the emergence and formation of the first political party in Sikkim, the Sikkim State Congress, and the beginning of Sikkim's 'revolution'. For the next two years the Sikkim State Congress, with two or three other newly formed political parties, agitated for greater reforms and freedom and called on the peasants to join in a 'No Rent' campaign. Some provincial Congress leaders were arrested and their fellow party-members marched on Gangtok. The Indian Political Officer to Sikkim intervened on their behalf and largely through his good offices the leaders were released and serious trouble was averted. Following on this demonstration the Maharaja was forced to make concessions and he announced the formation of an Interim Government with Congress participation, and this took office in May 1949.

The 'Interim' or 'Popular Ministry' consisted of five men, of whom three, including the Chief Minister, were drawn from the State Congress and the other two were nominated by the Maharaja; but again the Maharaja refused to co-operate and new demonstrations were initiated by the State Congress which, in the new context of Communist victories in China and possible later interest in Tibet, made India decide to take strong action in this strategic border State.¹

¹ There were difficulties of representation due to the variety of people making up the 165,000 of the population of Sikkim. The original inhabitants, the Lepchas, had over the years decreased or intermarried with the more virile and prolific Bhutias and Nepalis until only a few thousand remained. The Nepalese had proliferated until they numbered more than three-fourths of the total population, and as the social customs of the Hindu Nepalis differed from those of the Buddhist Lepchas and Bhutias there was little intermarriage between the communities. The ruling families still married into the Tibetan aristocracy so

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A copy of a 'Memorandum on Sikkim Affairs', which was drawn up by the Sikkim State Congress and submitted to the Government of India at the time, has recently come into my possession and as it is likely to have considerable importance in Sikkim's future history. I will quote it in full:

SIKKIM AFFAIRS

Dr. B. V. Keskar, Deputy Minister to the Government of India in the External Affairs Ministry, came to Gangtok on a four-day visit towards the end of May. The Ministers met him on two occasions and had the benefit of his advice in various matters. Dr. Keskar was refreshingly frank as regards the attitude of the Government of India towards Sikkim compared with that of the previous British régime. He said that the Government of India regarded Sikkim, though a small state, as of considerable importance and were therefore anxious that the administration should be carried on peacefully so that no adverse elements should creep into or find a place in the State. He said that the Government of India could not countenance any disorder or turmoil to disturb the security of the Indian frontier and that, in the event of such a contingency arising in Sikkim, the Government of India would be obliged to exercise their authority.

Dr. Keskar left Gangtok on May 27. Ten days later, i.e. on June 5, Mr. H. Dayal, Political Officer in Sikkim, sent for all the five ministers and without any mincing of words announced the summary dismissal of the Ministry in the name of the Government of India. He said that the Government of India were appointing a Dewan to administer the State and that meanwhile he was assuming charge of the administration himself. All that he would disclose by way of explanation was that the political situation called for immediate intervention of the Government of India as foreshadowed by Dr. Keskar. The career of the month-old ministry, which enjoyed the confidence of at least 75 per cent of the population, was thus hastily brought to an end.

It is very doubtful whether Mr. Dayal could have gauged the political situation from any other standpoint than that of those vested interests which constituted the society in which he moved and which comprised his immediate advisers. His duties as Political Officer did not bring him in contact with the masses as represented by the State Congress. Now, if Mr. Dayal had taken the Ministry or the State

they maintained that rule in Sikkim did not rightfully belong to the 'masses', who were of 'foreign Nepali' stock, but to the Tibetan-Bhutia-Lepcha communities represented by themselves and the minority tribes.

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Congress into his confidence, instead of springing a painful surprise on them, there would have been no need to take military precaution to carry out the purpose of the Government of India. It was against the vested interests, as understood in Sikkim, and against their oppression and tyranny that the masses had been struggling. So the one-sided view of the ruling class, by which Mr. Dayal would appear to have been swayed, could not prevail.

The sudden dissolution of the Ministry came as a rude shock and disillusionment to the people of Sikkim. It showed the Government of India in a dubious light but clearly not as a champion of democracy against despotism. The people of Sikkim are not so backward as are generally supposed. They contain a high percentage of literate men, i.e. literate in their own languages, comparable with that of any district of India. They are a phlegmatic people—not so easily excited as the average Indian—hence the misconception that they are backward. They feel that the Government of India, by snatching away the hard-earned privileges of the State Congress, have gone the way of British Imperialism. They also fear that the Dewan's administration would be no improvement on the autocratic rule of the Maharaja while it might reduce to serving two masters instead of one. The leaders of the State Congress were thus faced with the immediate task of pacifying the people, and in this they succeeded for the time being by putting a plausible construction—maybe mistaken construction—on the decision of the Government of India.

The press reports of the Sikkim episode were of an alarming nature, and extravagantly so. They depicted Sikkim as in a state of emergency with imminent threats of disorder and bloodshed overwhelming the State as a result of the *démarche* by the Sikkim State Congress. As a matter of fact Sikkim had never been more peaceful and contented than during the twenty-nine days the popular ministry lasted. Another political party called the Sikkim National Party, which had been bolstered up by the vested interests as a truculent rival of the State Congress, had melted away the moment the popular ministry came into being. Some of the leaders of this party were already making overtures to join the State Congress. The sudden overthrow of the Ministry, however, enabled the National Party to re-emerge as the rival of the State Congress.

On June 11th, the Political Officer sent for the President of the State Congress and told him that he (the President) and two of his colleagues might keep themselves in readiness to go to Delhi. Nothing could have suited the State Congress better, and the President informed the Political Officer accordingly. As a matter of fact the State Congress had already decided to send a deputation to Delhi on its

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own and this was accordingly stopped. Nothing further was heard from the Political Officer again and a whole month had elapsed since he last sent for the President.

The State Congress, therefore, viewed the situation with some misgiving and decided that no further time should be lost sending a deputation to Delhi. It was hoped that an interview with the Prime Minister of India would be arranged in Calcutta during his recent visit there but this was not to be. So the deputation has now arrived in Delhi in the hope of obtaining an interview with the high officials of the Government concerned.

The State Congress is the only political party in Sikkim worth the name. There were two other parties, viz. the National Party and the Praja Sammelan. The National Party is actually represented by a dozen-odd Bhutias and Lepchas. Its membership is recruited by force from among the simple Lepcha ryots of the Maharaja's 'private' estates. It is openly sponsored by the Maharajkumar, heir apparent to the throne, and may be identified as the 'King's Party'. Praja Sammelan is an offshoot of the Gurkha League of Darjeeling. Its membership is confined to a single village with about two scores of people. The actual membership of the Sikkim State Congress on the roll numbers more than 60,000 people out of a total population of one lakh and a quarter (125,000). While the National Party and Praja Sammelan are both necessarily communal bodies, the State Congress is an all-embracing, comprehensive organization and includes even the priest of the palace in its membership.

The State Congress unalterably stand by the following demands which they repeatedly submitted to the Maharaja of Sikkim:

1. Accession of Sikkim to India.
2. Abolition of landlordism.
3. Installation of a popular Ministry (Interim) leading in due course to full responsible government.

So by 8th June 1949, twenty-nine days after their announced freedom and before most Sikkimese knew they had it, their country had again become a 'protectorate'—'in the interests of law and order'.

However, the leaders of the Sikkim State Congress were determined not to give in so easily to the Indian take-over and they requested a meeting with the Prime Minister of India. This was not granted at first but a meeting with the Foreign Secretary of External Affairs, Mr. K. P. S. Menon, Deputy Minister, Dr. B. V. Keskar and several other Indian Government officials, was arranged on July 25th.

At the meeting the President of the Sikkim State Congress, Mr. Tashi Tshering, said that when he had met the Prime Minister the

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previous December he had understood from him that the Prime Minister favoured the project of persuading the Maharaja of Sikkim to form a Popular Ministry; how was it then that the Government of India instead of supporting the Popular Ministry should themselves be responsible for its downfall at the instigation of the Maharaja?

The Foreign Secretary replied that the Government of India had to intervene since they could not tolerate any threat of disorder in a border State like Sikkim. Dr. Keskar added that the Government of India was fully alive to the interests of the people of Sikkim, and said that the 'threat of disorder might not have come from the Congress side but it might have come from the Maharaja's side'. Thus the Government of India were obliged to take action according to reports received from the Political Officer. He also said that the Dewan (quasi Prime Minister) was being sent 'for the good of Sikkim but that his [the Dewan's] administration would be for the briefest possible period'. After the Dewan had studied the situation for a month or so, the Government of India would call a Conference in which the Maharaja, or the Maharajkumar (Crown Prince), the Dewan and the Congress leaders would participate. The Conference would deliberate chiefly on two matters, viz. the future administration and the introduction of the election system.

When the two Sikkim State Congress leaders saw Prime Minister Nehru a few days later, it was on the understanding that 'they were not to discuss any serious business with him'. However, on one point the Prime Minister was very explicit: he said that his Government would always stand for democracy and would not support autocracy in any form.

On 5th December 1950 a Treaty was signed with Sikkim by which Sikkim became a protectorate of India, retaining internal autonomy and handing over the administration of external relations to the Government of India.

The Indian Government, through the Dewan, almost immediately began to remedy the worst grievances. They took the revenue functions from the landlords, the peasants were given receipts for their payments and were assured that they could now only be evicted from their land by due process of law, house tax was abolished and reasonable regulations were introduced for the payment of debts, and Panchayats, or village councils, were developed.

These measures served to relieve some of the tensions between the people and the Maharaja but they did not satisfy the wider demands which were now being voiced by the several parties. The Sikkim State Congress demanded abolition of the landlord system, introduction of responsible government with the Maharaja as constitutional monarch,

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and accession of the State of India, with internal autonomy. The Sikkim National Party (the Bhutia-Lepcha vote, or 'King's Party') demanded an independent Sikkim, with the Maharaja as the sovereign head, and only foreign affairs, defence and communications in Indian hands. The Sikkim Raja Praja Sammelan (a minor Nepali Party) wanted the Maharaja to be deposed and Sikkim to become a Part C State of India administered by an Indian-appointed Chief Commissioner. The Scheduled Caste League favoured reforms and an independent Sikkim.

The Government structure which emerged was an attempt to satisfy the disparate demands of all the conflicting interests—race, palace, religion and parties.

The Maharaja is the supreme ruler of Sikkim (although in the case of the present Maharaja, who has almost completely retired from active participation in the country's affairs, the Maharajkumar, or Crown Prince, has unofficially taken over his father's duties, sharing much of his power—some conservative authorities in Sikkim would maintain that that is an over-generous estimate, that the *Dewan* wields *all* power) with the Indian-appointed Dewan, who, in spite of the assurance given in 1950 that it was 'for the briefest period', is still in office in 1962.

The Maharaja is assisted by an Executive Council. This Council is composed of one member of each of the leading parties who are appointed by the Maharaja from among those elected to the State Council. The State Council has twenty members—twelve are elected on a communal basis from the four constituencies, six Lepchas, six Bhutia. One general member is elected by all voters; one represents lamas belonging to recognized monasteries; the remaining six are nominated by the Maharaja. The State Council is authorized to enact laws for the country, but subject to the Maharaja's approval. Other matters which can only be discussed with the Maharaja's consent are foreign affairs, State enterprises, police, land revenue, ecclesiastical matters. Still others, chiefly those reserved by India, are forbidden to be discussed at all.

The Executive Council elected from each of the leading parties are appointed by the Maharaja from among those elected to the State Council. The Council members hold office at the Maharaja's pleasure and are responsible to him for the executive and administrative functions of the Government. The Dewan is President of the Executive Council. At first there were only two Senior Executive Councillors authorized to deal with Government matters, and these all to be referred to the President, the Dewan, at all times, but in the past few years three junior Executive Councillors have been recognized,

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but they have no 'executive' authority. The Maharaja retains a veto over all the decisions of the Executive Council. According to the original proclamation when the Executive Council was established its authority only extended to matters of health, education, excise, press, transport, bazaars, forests and public works.

Since the annual revenue of the country was only about Rupees 400,000 the Government of India undertook a Development Plan covering a period of seven years from 1954 to 1961. The development expenditure was reckoned at Rupees 22·5 million, later increased to 30 million. Almost half this total was to be used on Transport and Communications alone, the remainder divided between Agriculture and Rural Development, Social Services and minor Irrigation and Power Projects. Although the Plan was framed to cover the period 1954-61 very little development work was undertaken before 1955, the reason being the shortage of trained personnel needed for the technical projects. This trained personnel was eventually recruited in India, such as doctors, forest officers, agricultural experts, engineers, etc. Schemes were initiated to train Sikkimese in these skills so that they could take over themselves at a future date. A motorable road to the Natu-la, on the Tibetan border, from Gangtok, a T.B. Hospital and dispensaries, a hydro-electric scheme, 250 miles of tributary roads, were only a few of the major projects envisaged.

In the summer of 1953 the first general elections were held when about 40 per cent of the 60,000 eligible voters went to the polls. Candidates had to be at least thirty years of age, while the minimum age for voters was twenty-one. The State Congress won all six seats for the Nepalis, and the National Party all those for the Bhutia-Lepchas. The Raja Praja Sammelan was almost completely eliminated.

The second elections were held in 1958. By this time there were considerable changes throughout the country. Some political reforms had been carried out and there was a greater measure of freedom, although still room for considerable improvement; there was a levelling-up in citizenship status, removal of the evils of landlordism—although the palace had been allowed to retain the royal estates—and considerable economic development. There were no more requests for a merger with India, but there was a widespread desire for the abolition of the office of the Indian Dewan. There were demands for parliamentary government and constitutional monarchy, mainly because the Maharaja had retired from active participation in the country's affairs, and the Maharajkumar was becoming increasingly disliked for his inept dabbling in the party politics of the country and his almost complete identification with the policies of India in the person of the then Dewan, R. K. Rustomji.

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Internal factions split the parties; the National Party, previously financed by the Maharaja and with the Maharajkumar as its leader, had split over the issue of Parliamentary Government versus Monarchism, and the leader of the split was bitterly anti-Maharajkumar. The other branch of the National Party entered into an alliance with the State Congress, whose president, K. R. Pradhan, was claimed to be hand-in-glove with the Palace and the Dewan. This had created tensions in the State Congress where the anti-palace, anti-Dewan element was being led by a young fire-brand, C. D. Rai. Also, a new party, claiming to represent all communal groups, the Swatantra Dal, had appeared, its President the former President of the State Congress, Kazi L. D. Dorji, an able and respected Sikkimese of Lepcha origin. The result of this 1958 election gave the Congress a majority of the seats in the State Council, with the remainder divided between the National Party and the Swatantra Dal.

However, the Swatantra Dal and some others alleged that there had been extensive electoral malpractices and demanded an investigation. An Election Tribunal was set up to enquire into the allegation and on the 25th May, 1959, it pronounced its judgment that: (1) K. R. Pradhan, President of the State Congress and N. K. Pradhan, Secretary-General of the State Congress, had been guilty of corrupt practices and dissemination of false propoganda, and disqualified them from holding office for six years; (2) that Sonam Tshering, President of the National Party, was also guilty of corrupt practices and disqualified from holding office for six years; (3) that Thendu Bhutia, of the National Party, was also guilty and suspended from office. A re-polling of the constituency had to be held.

This decision of a respected Tribunal produced a near-crisis in the country, for it meant that the State Congress was deprived of its two chief leaders, and the Executive Council of its two Senior Executives, in K. R. Pradhan and N. K. Pradhan, who were also, as had been noted, pro-palace and pro-Dewan. Their removal meant that the chief posts in the State Congress were open for the unpredictable but certainly anti-palace, anti-Dewan, C. D. Rai. The Nationalist Party, representing the original Bhutia-Lepcha vote, was also deprived of its leader in the judgment.

As if matters were not bad enough the Maharajkumar at first delayed implementing the Election Tribunal's judgment for several months, while speculation and tension built up throughout the State; then, when political demonstrations were held in Gangtok—3,000 people in the city of 7,000 inhabitants turning out to cheer the fiery anti-palace speeches—an Extraordinary Gazette was issued

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under the name of the Maharaja on 4th September 1959. This really Extraordinary Gazette announced that, 'His Highness has been pleased to order' that (1) K. R. Pradhan 'is disqualified for seeking membership of the Sikkim Council for a period of six months with effect from 25.5.59. There will be a by-election for this seat;' (2) N. K. Pradhan, 'the same'; and (3) Sonam Tshering 'is disqualified for seeking membership of the Sikkim Council *for a period of three years with effect from 28.5.59*' (italics mine). In other words, the Maharajkumar—with the collusion of the Dewan, or even at his instance—had decided to set aside the judgment of the eminent Election Tribunal (set up at his own request and with the co-operation of the Government of India) substitute 'six months' for 'six years', and that retroactively, in order to replace the two State Congress leaders and Executive Councillors because of their known sympathies; and, final folly, to deliberately, in an unparalleled piece of vindictiveness, punish the National Party leader with three years suspension although his crime had been no greater than the others. There was an immediate uproar among all the political parties at this evidence of blatant interference and favouritism. But neither the Maharajkumar nor the Dewan were perturbed and both of them to me, in a private interview, dismissed reports of unrest and dissatisfaction in the State as 'unfounded rumours', although I had made a point of interviewing several of the parties' leaders on the issue.

The results of the by-elections were a further blow to the palace and Indian interests. C. D. Rai scored a resounding victory over the former President K. R. Pradhan by 3,013 to 634. N. K. Pradhan, the former Secretary-General and nominee of the K. R. Pradhan faction, just got through against his rival by 1,550 to 1,278. On the fourteen 'popular' elected seats in the State Council the new alignment, after 12th February, 1960, was the National Party, now led by a new Chairman, Martam Topden's faction, with a majority of six Lepcha-Bhutia seats, plus that of one Chuksum Bhutia, who won the general seat on the Congress Ticket but was later expelled for disobeying its directive to resign. Of the Nepali group C. D. Rai emerged with the support of three Nepali members while N. K. Pradhan had the support of two. The Sonam Tshering group of the National Party and the Swatantra Dal had no representation.

But worse was to follow. Because of the Maharajkumar's ill-judged action four of the existing parties, namely, the Sikkim State Congress 'ginger group' led by C. D. Rai, the Sikkim Swatantra Party, led by Kazi Lhendup Dorji, the divided Sikkim National Party, led by Sonam Tshering, and the Sikkim Praja Sammelan, led by D. B. Tewari, broke away, or dissolved, and formed a new

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political party by merger, called the Sikkim National Congress Party, with Kazi L. D. Dorji, as President.

Announcing the New Party Kazi Dorji declared: 'A Sikkim run by Proclamation cannot be called a democratic country. . . . Never before, in the history of India and China, has Sikkim come within the orbit of both India and China. In such a critical period, therefore, the aspirations of the people of Sikkim must find expression in the formation of responsible government based on a written Constitution. Nothing short of these will satisfy the people of Sikkim. . . .'

After a series of increasingly critical events, in which the Maharajkumar tried to offset the importance of the new party by ignoring its existence and appointing minority members to influential positions in the Sikkim Durbar, and the new Party held public meetings denouncing the Maharajkumar, Dewan, and the new Indian interference, a delegation of the Sikkim National Congress went to Delhi in August 1960 to protest against the autocratic régime in Sikkim. The delegation presented a Memorandum to Prime Minister Nehru in which the following demands were made:

1. A completely representative government with an executive entirely responsible to an assembly elected by adult franchise on a party basis.
2. The monarchy to be constitutional, for which a constitution should be drafted. The privy purse to be by agreement and in consonance with the prestige and dignity of the institution.
3. Rule of law to be established and nobody to be above the law.
4. Judiciary to be completely independent of the executive.
5. The High Court to be established by a charter.

The Memorandum went on to denounce the political machinations of the Maharajkumar and the Indian-appointed Dewan who were exploiting the weak patronage-ridden government situation in Sikkim to their own advantage and thereby endangering the security of the State by creating conditions which were favourable to Chinese Communist infiltration.

At the time of the delegation's visit to New Delhi the Maharajkumar of Sikkim was on a visit to Moscow and Europe and expected to be away for several weeks. However, he abruptly cancelled his tour, returned unannounced to India and Sikkim, and in collaboration with the Dewan, rushed into existence a 'Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1960'. A copy of this Regulation was sent to each party leader with a peremptory note attached by the Dewan:

'I am enclosing a copy of the Sikkim Subjects Regulation, 1960, which is to be promulgated shortly by His Highness. I shall be glad to be informed, within a week, if you wish to discuss any point in this

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connection before the Regulation is formally published in the Gazette.'

There was an immediate outcry against this attempt to take over absolute control, and threats to launch national-wide demonstrations. The major objection was to Clause 11—which read:

'His Highness may by order deprive any Sikkimese subject of his status if the Government are satisfied that such subject (a) has been guilty of acts of gross disloyalty to His Highness . . . or has shown himself by act or speech to be guilty of disaffection towards His Highness.'

This was interpreted as a move to have all opposition muzzled, for the decision rested with the Maharajkumar and the Dewan as to what constituted 'acts and speeches of disloyalty and disaffection'. There was no rule of law and the so-called 'constituted government' was appointed by the Maharajkumar and the Dewan.

There were other bitterly contested clauses, such as the regulations governing the persons constituting Sikkimese subjects, which were alleged to be discriminatory and vindictive against other racial groups; and the most bitterly opposed of all, Clause 15, which read: 'All rules, regulations, orders and instructions hitherto in force in Sikkim territory in relation to the definition, acquisition and loss or deprivation of the status of Sikkim subjects are hereby repealed.'

However, by prompt use of press and publicity channels to India and foreign countries the Maharajkumar was constrained to keep his Regulations in abeyance and the crisis simmered down. But only for a short time, for with both groups, the palace and the Sikkim National Congress, campaigning for more influence among the people—and the former at a disadvantage because of a growing political awareness among the ordinary people, who were beginning to realize that they could get far more by 'demanding their rights', as the Sikkim National Congress continually informed them, than they ever had from 'feudal handouts'—it is inevitable that there will be another clash, which can only result in another advantage to China, who are astutely manipulating people and events from the background—with a further defeat for India.

It is difficult, admittedly, for Delhi to take action—any action—in Sikkim without making matters very much worse. If it seeks to impose a solution by force, after the pattern of the 1949 action already described, then without doubt China will denounce the move as 'military aggression' against the Sikkimese people, and with or without—but probably the former—a direct appeal for help from the political leaders of Sikkim she will take action against India.

It is possible, however, that Peking would not precipitate a military

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showdown in Sikkim where India has a reputed force of 50,000, but strike quickly into Bhutan where India officially has no troops and fighting would be negligible, giving as her 'reasons' the 'imperialist designs' of India against the border countries. In this way Peking would gain every advantage without any risk, occupation of Bhutan would render Sikkim strategically useless, and the Indian troops would have to withdraw. It would bring China on to the plains of India at Assam and Bengal, near the unsettled tribal areas, and, more important still, into the richest tea-producing area in the world—already troubled by Communist labour agitation. To crown all, India would be in the embarrassing position before the eyes of the world of having forced an imposed solution on Sikkim, making her motives in Bhutan very suspect indeed, and would be in no position to keep Nehru's oft-repeated assurance that India would meet any aggression with aggression, thus laying herself open to another catastrophic diplomatic and psychologically disastrous defeat.

The situation in Sikkim is further complicated with the ambiguous position of the Maharajkumar, and his eldest sister, Maharajkumari Ku-ku-la. The Maharajkumar has no official status in Sikkim, claiming to act only as 'adviser' to his father, the Maharaja, so the Indian Government can take no official action against him for any troublesome interference. The Maharajkumari is an even more difficult problem, since she is a most attractive woman, who delights to play politics after the manner of the eighteenth-century women of France. Through her considerable charm and high-level friendships new factors are constantly arising from the most unexpected sources to further bedevil and obscure the already confused political and economic scene in Sikkim.

Meanwhile Peking has served notice on Delhi that China does not accept the claims to a special relationship in Sikkim made by India, and has refused to discuss the boundaries of Sikkim and Bhutan during the Boundary Commission meetings in 1960. And thirty-five miles from Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, the Chinese continue to dominate the passes into Sikkim with 50-100,000 troops at the ready, digging trenches, building roads erecting cantonments and gun-emplacements. A steady stream of Chinese propaganda claims that Sikkim, Bhutan, Darjeeling and Kalimpong, are 'fingers on the hand of China' and belong to the great motherland; and that as they are at present with Indian and other spies, imperialists and warmongers they are 'lice in the clothing of China' and must be cleaned.

To the south, India warns that any attempt to 'liberate' Sikkim will be opposed by India, that Sikkim is a protectorate of India, and that India has full responsibility for Sikkim's affairs through agreements.

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The Chinese have recently cast doubts on the validity of these agreements made with the Maharaja of Sikkim by claiming that he is not the true ruler of the country anyway. They claim that the rightful ruler of Sikkim is with the Chinese in Tibet, and that the present Maharaja is a usurper appointed by the British and maintained by Delhi to further their own designs. The historical records of Sikkim uphold the Chinese claims, as has already been noted earlier, for it is true that the Crown Prince, or 'eldest Kumar' was in Tibet when Britain took the younger brother of a second wife and put him on the throne. It is this younger brother who is the present Maharaja, while the family of the older brother, and the legitimate Crown Prince, are still alive, some refugees in India and some in Chinese hands in Tibet.

Now that the Maharajkumar has finally persuaded Delhi to accept his 'Sikkim Subjects Regulation', with a few minor modifications, and has enforced them on the Sikkimese people by royal proclamation, the situation is prepared for Chinese intervention. The political parties have protested and demanded not only a discussion of the controversial Subjects Regulation but a review of the so-called 'constitution of Sikkim', which they claim does not exist. Several members of the Durbar have crossed the floor and representative government has become a mockery.

In this atmosphere of conflict and tension Sikkim was supposed to go to its General Elections in February, 1962. But feeling against the royal régime and Indian policies is so great that in February, 1963 elections were still not held. Then the Maharajkumar announced his engagement to an American girl and the Sikkim National Congress, still embittered by the 'Subjects Regulation', denounced the proposed marriage. The political leaders are so disgusted with the rulers of Sikkim, and with the leaders of Delhi, that they might well make embarrassing, if not impossible, demands on India—with catastrophic consequences.

DARJEELING DISTRICT

Darjeeling and Kalimpong, two small towns on ridges of the lower Himalayan foothills in North Bengal, at first glance may not seem to merit a section to themselves but on closer study they emerge with an importance quite disproportionate to their size.

Darjeeling and Kalimpong are situated at about 7,000 feet and 4,000 feet respectively, facing the magnificent 28,000-foot Kanchenjunga massif, and on either side of the turbulent River Teesta. The Teesta rises on the Tibetan side of the Himalayas, in Lake Chalaum,

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north of the Dankia Pass, about 17,500 feet above sea level and seventy-five miles north-east of Darjeeling. Several tributaries pour their waters into the Teesta and during the monsoons it is a raging, mud-brown, boulder-tossing flood as it passes through the forty miles of the narrow, winding Teesta Valley.

This, according to Indian military intelligence, is the most likely route of Chinese invasion of India.¹

During the period of their ascendancy a favourite way of claiming authority over territories conquered by Chinese armies was by the Emperor giving 'seals of office', or titles, which flattered local rulers. When the various rulers accepted and used these they automatically became vassals of China and within the Chinese sphere of influence. Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, as has been noted elsewhere in this book, all accepted at one time such seals from China. With Darjeeling and Kalimpong originally included in Sikkim and Bhutan it can be seen how easily China has established her claim to these very important strategic areas.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century what were then the districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong were both in Sikkim, but, in a war with Bhutan, Sikkim was first overrun by the Bhutanese and then, when the Bhutanese withdrew from Darjeeling several years later, they arbitrarily occupied what is now the Kalimpong sub-district, thereby leaving Darjeeling in Sikkim and Kalimpong in Bhutan, as has been noted.

In 1828 two Englishmen, Captain Lloyd and a Mr. Grant, the

¹ In an article in the *Defence Services Forum* on 7th November 1959, entitled 'Problems of Indian Defence', there occurred the following analysis:

'A major attack by China on India will most probably be preceded by a series of probing attacks along the Sino-Indian Frontier, similar to the attack at the Longju outpost. . . . The purpose of these attacks will be to tie down the Indian Army over a wide area, thereby causing an excessive strain on the Army's logistical support facilities. When the Indian Army is sufficiently engaged so that its strategic reserves are committed into action or denied the support for rapid movement for disposition at the point of major Chinese attack, then it will be time for the Chinese to attack. Where will they attack India? A glance at Figure 1 will show that the most obvious and ideal area for attack will be through the Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri Districts of West Bengal. The objectives would be: Tactically: To cut off the Indian forces in the Assam-NEFA area, build up a defensive shoulder towards Patna to shield the main attack which will continue into the "Industrial Heartland" of India. In this area (to the north and west of Calcutta) are located four of India's five steel mills, the major deposits of coal and iron-ore, mica, India's largest port (through which it currently earns about 40 to 45 per cent of its foreign exchange from tea and jute alone). This is the key to India and the obvious objective of a military campaign.' (Institute of Political and Social Studies, Writer's House, Calcutta-17.)

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Commercial Resident at Malda, who were on a mission to settle internal disputes between Nepal and Sikkim, decided that the former Gurkha state of Darjeeling, then deserted, would make an excellent sanitarium. This suggestion was approved by the then Deputy-Surveyor-General of Bengal, and the East Indian Company directed that Lloyd be deputed to start negotiations with the Sikkim Raj for a cession of the Darjeeling hills either for an equivalent in money or land. This transfer was successfully negotiated on the 1st February 1835 through the personal influence of Lloyd with Sikkimputtee, the Raja of Sikkim, who handed over the strip of hill territory, about five to six miles wide, stretching from the northern frontier of the district of Pankabarie in the plains, which included the villages of Darjeeling and Kurseong.

The Deed of Grant was worded as follows:

‘The Governor-General, having expressed his desire for the hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness to avail themselves of its advantages, I, the Sikkimputtee Raja, out of friendship for the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East Indian Company, that is, all the land south of the Great Rangit River, East of the Balasun, Kahail, and the Little Rangit Rivers and West of Rungpo and the Mahanadi rivers.’

This was an unconditional cession of what was then an uninhabited mountain. But in 1841 the Government granted the Raja an allowance of Rupees 3,000 per annum as compensation and this was raised in 1846 to Rupees 6,000 per annum.

After the cession Lloyd and a Dr. Chapman were sent to investigate the climate and capabilities of the area. They spent the winter of 1836 and part of 1837 doing this and when it was finally decided to develop the site as a Sanatorium, Lloyd was appointed Local Agent to deal with applications for land which began to pour in from residents of Calcutta. Where, in 1836, Lloyd and Chapman found only a few huts erected by the Raja of Sikkim, by 1840 a road had been built from Pankabari, there was a staging bungalow there and at Mahaldiram, an hotel had been started at Darjeeling and another at Kurseong, and in Darjeeling thirty private houses had been erected and nearly as many building sites taken up at Lebong a few miles beyond. The rest of the ceded area was under forest and practically uninhabited.

In 1839, Dr. Campbell of the Indian Medical Service, British Resident in Nepal, was transferred to Darjeeling as Superintendent. In this capacity he was in charge not only of the civil, criminal and fiscal administration of the district, but also of political relations

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with Sikkim. Under Campbell's administration the population rose from about 100 in 1839 to 10,000 in 1849.¹

In 1847 the great explorer-botanist, and friend of Darwin, Dr. (later Sir John) Hooker, who visited Darjeeling on his way to Sikkim, had a memorable journey in many ways. His experiences recorded in his *Himalayan Journals* were classics of nineteenth-century literature; his specimens of flora were the foundation of the famous Himalayan collection in Kew Gardens.

But from the time of the unconditional cession of Darjeeling district by the Sikkimputtee Raja in 1836 until the visit of Dr. Hooker in 1849 relations between Darjeeling and Sikkim had deteriorated. The increasing importance of Darjeeling under free institutions and just administration was a source of loss and frustration to the lamas and leading officials of Sikkim, headed by the 'Pagla Dewan' (or 'mad Prime Minister') Namgyay, who shared a monopoly of all trade in Sikkim and lost rights over those slaves who settled as free men and British subjects in the Darjeeling territory. Frequent kidnapping and demands for return of slaves took place, and the climax was reached when in November 1849 Dr. Hooker and Dr. Campbell, who were on an exploratory tour of Sikkim with the permission of the Raja and British Government, were made prisoners.

Various demands were made as conditions of release but the Sikkimese eventually released both the prisoners unconditionally on 24th December 1849. In February 1850, a small punitive force was despatched to Sikkim and remained on the north bank of the Great Rangeet river for several weeks. But the most important punitive action taken was the withdrawal of the grants of Rupees 6,000 from

¹ In 1852, an Inspecting Officer, W. B. Jackson, could write:

'Whatever has been done here has been done by Dr. Campbell alone. He found Darjeeling an inaccessible tract of forest, with a very scanty population; by his exertions an excellent Sanitarium has been established for troops and others; a Hill Corps has been established for the maintenance of order and improvement of communications; no less than 70 European houses have been built, with bazaar, jail and buildings for the accommodation of the site in the depot; a revenue of Rupees 50,000 has been raised and is collected punctually and without balance; a simple system of administration of justice has been introduced, well adapted to the character of the tribes with whom he had to deal; the system of forced labour formerly in use has been abolished and labour with all other valuables has been left to find its own price in the open market; roads have been made; experimental cultivation of tea and coffee has been introduced and various European fruits and grapes; and this has been effected at the same time that the various tribes of inhabitants have been conciliated and their habits and prejudices treated with a caution and forbearance which will render further progress in the same direction an easy task. . . .'

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the Raja and the annexation of the Terai and the portion of the Sikkim hills bounded by the Rumman and the Great Rangeet on the north, by the Teesta on the east, and by the Nepal frontier on the west. The area annexed was 640 square miles in extent.

The Terai and the hill territory annexed from Sikkim were managed by the Superintendent, who, from the 8th May 1850, was termed the Deputy Commissioner. The annexations brought about a significant change in the relations between Sikkim and the British. Previously the Darjeeling District had been an enclave in Sikkim territory and, to reach it, the British had to pass through a country acknowledging the rule of a foreign, though dependent, Raja. After the annexation British territory was continuous with the British administered districts of Purnea and Rangpur in the plains, and the Sikkim Raja was cut off from access to the plains except through British territory.

When peace had been restored along the turbulent frontiers there was a period of marked agricultural development in the Darjeeling District and Bengal Dooars. At first large areas of forest land were cleared and brought under cultivation. Then new and more efficient methods of cultivation were taught to the peasants—terracing, ploughing and irrigation. Finally, what was to have far-reaching economic repercussions for India, there were introduced new crops—tea, cinchona, potatoes, cardamoms and oranges—the greatest of these being tea.

According to Dr. Hooker the introduction of the tea-plant from China into the Himalayan and Assam areas of India was at the instance of the Superintendents of the Botanical Gardens in Calcutta and Saharunpore.

It was the famous Dr. Campbell who started experiments with the tea-plant in Darjeeling. The success of the experiments encouraged others to experiment with seed distributed by the Government. While Dr. Campbell and a few others were optimistic about the results obtained Dr. Hooker and some others considered that too much moisture and too little sun at Darjeeling made it unlikely that tea cultivation at that altitude would ever be remunerative. However, by 1856 developments had been advanced from the experimental stage to the commercial stage. By the end of 1866 there were thirty-nine tea gardens in production with 10,000 acres under cultivation and an annual output of over 433,000 lb. of tea. By 1940 these had multiplied to 142 gardens with 63,059 acres under tea and an output of 23,721,500 lb. per year. In 1870 the labour force in the tea gardens was about 8,000; in 1940 it was 61,540, and the actual population on the tea gardens in 1941 (according to the census), was 146,508. The

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same census showed that the population of Darjeeling District had grown from 100 in 1836 to 376,369 in 1941.

I have spent some time in giving details of the development of the tea industry in Darjeeling District not only from the point of view of local interest, nor even because the name of Darjeeling is inseparable from that of tea, but because the industry itself and the labour which it has absorbed and employed is a key factor in the modern political situation on the border, between India and China.

Tea is still India's greatest export and income earner, but in the past few years there have been ominous signs of decline in the industry. This has been brought about by a series of factors. Following on independence in India, and the initiation of Five-Year Plans to industrialize India, a great burden of taxation was placed on the tea-producing institutions, the taxes increasing as the profits grew in the good years, but when profits ceased for a variety of reasons the taxes and demands were not withdrawn, with the result that many gardens ceased to be a lucrative proposition.

By 1954 European owners had sold off many gardens and these had been taken over by Indian owners. As most of the latter were looking for short-term quick profits they put very little into the gardens in the way of plant development or rotation of crops, and cut overheads often by putting in Indian assistants with little knowledge of tea production, and, as they were usually from the plains and with a contemptuous and condescending attitude towards the hill-people, there developed points of friction over a wide area.

The relationship between the British and the Nepali hillmen since the days of Dr. Campbell, and through two World Wars as comrades-in-arms, had deepened into mutual friendship and respect, and the European garden managers had continued to look after the interests of their tea garden labourers in paternal fashion, providing medical and social extras, dispensaries, playing-fields, schools, welfare clubs, pension schemes—not only for the employed workers, but, as their families grew, for the other members as well. With new and ever-increasing taxes and union demands, even in the bad years, it was impossible to maintain these contributions to workers' welfare and the gardens were sold.

The Indian buyer, who had studied the situation, saw that if little was put into a garden, the leaf plucked to the bare branch every year without thought of the future of the bush, and all welfare to the workers cut down or even stopped, he could in five years make a substantial profit on his purchase. Between 1950 and 1957 this happened on a large scale and by 1959 over 50 per cent of the tea gardens had passed from European control to Indian—but, more significant still,

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several gardens had closed down altogether, throwing thousands out of work. These were excellent material for the agitators, and many wild-cat 'unions' were formed by foot-loose agitators who managed a good living out of Union funds and the exploitation of the quick-tempered, uneducated hillmen.

The Communists were not slow to see advantages in this and they moved into the area with a well-knit organization and apparently limitless funds. In the past ten years the Communists have become the major influence in the Darjeeling District, with slightly more than half the tea garden labour unions under their control.

By 1960 the Darjeeling-Kalimpong area had two Communist sitting members out of five district representatives in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, they dominated the trade unions in the North Bengal tea-growing districts, and had a heavily-supported and well-financed Party organization. At the General Meeting of the Communist Party of India in Assam in late 1959 the Darjeeling District Communist Party strongly advocated that the C.P.I. should uphold the Chinese claims that the border between India and Tibet is open to dispute, so that a link between them and China could be established. They are also the most vocal about demanding an 'autonomous hill area' for Darjeeling District, together with Sikkim and Bhutan, and on occasions even extend this to include Nepal and parts of NEFA and North Assam. This is a project which appeals strongly to the chauvinistic, anti-Indian Nepali, and at the same time it contributes to Peking's ambitions of appropriating the territory for herself.

The centre of China's activities for the area has been the Chinese Trade Agency in Kalimpong, which had a staff out of all proportion to its importance.

KALIMPONG

Kalimpong is now a sub-division of Darjeeling District administration, but, as has been noted earlier, it was not always in India; in fact, it was not always in Bhutan although Bhutan claimed it and even administered it for a time, but was taken by Bhutan from Sikkim, in 1700-06.

After the British Mission led by Ashley Eden had been insultingly treated in April 1864 Britain decided to annex the Bengal Dooars and such hill territory as might be necessary to prevent Bhutanese incursions into Darjeeling District, in the plains south of Bhutan. Small expeditions were sent into Bhutan in the winter of 1864. These met with very little opposition, and all conflict ceased when a new Treaty, to replace the one forced on Sir Ashley Eden, was signed in which an area of 524 square miles, comprising what is now the Kalimpong

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Sub-district, as well as the Bhutan Dooars and passes leading into the Bhutan hills, were ceded to the British in return for an annual subsidy. At first the Kalimpong area was classified as a Subdivision under the Deputy Commissioner of the Western Dooars District, but in 1864 it was transferred to the District of Darjeeling.

Many factors have contributed to the rapid growth in population in the Kalimpong Subdivision. At first it was the agricultural development which attracted people from Nepal and other areas, and the Government encouraged immigrants. Of the 524 square miles only ten square miles were put under tea cultivation, and 401 square miles were given over to Government Estates, with cinchona, cardamoms, potatoes, oranges, etc., being grown; the remainder was given to the 'immigrants' to cultivate rice and maize chiefly. Then there was its proximity to the borders of Sikkim sixteen miles away, and sixty-five miles from the Jelep-la, and about fifty miles to the Natu-la, the main passes between Tibet and Sikkim.

It was this proximity to the main trade routes to Tibet, Central Asia and China, which really contributed most to Kalimpong's development, for Tibetan mule caravans found it a better terminus than the hotter towns on the plains and Indian merchants soon found their way, with shops stocking all kinds of goods, to Kalimpong.

Although lower than Darjeeling, thirty-two miles away, and not so popular as a 'hill-station', Kalimpong became a much more colourful and attractive town than Darjeeling. There were several reasons for this, including the lower rainfall and greater variety of mountain people in the bazaars; but the chief reason was the influx of Tibetans into the town after the Chinese Communist attack on Tibet in 1950. This unprecedented influx of Tibetans, tourists, scholars, diplomats, and a host of other 'unclassifiables' besides, provided a context in which intrigue became almost a necessity, not just a pastime, and Kalimpong was precipitated onto the headlines of the world's papers, as a 'nest of spies'—the Indian Prime Minister's description—and then, after the Tibetan revolt in 1959, became even more world famous as 'the centre of revolt'—the accusation of the Chinese Government.

While the term 'nest of spies' applied to Kalimpong by Mr. Nehru was an exaggeration, there was a considerable amount of intrigue going on from 1950 onwards. The Chinese, Kuomintang and Communists, intrigued; the Indians, Communists and non-Communists, intrigued; the Tibetans, priest, lay, Lhasa official and Khamba tribesman, Dalai versus Panchen faction, aristocratic families, feuded and intrigued; Americans, British and Russians intrigued. Some did it because the atmosphere of the town 'got' them, some

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because they were bored or dispossessed, some were amateurs who indulged for the 'kicks', a few were skilled professionals, working skilfully and effectively outside the knowledge and publicity of town and press.

In spite of the military and security control of the Chinese on the Tibetan border constant contact was easily maintained between Tibetans living in Kalimpong and their relatives and friends inside Tibet. Medical supplies, and even arms and ammunition were slipped through to the guerrillas by many channels; papers, propaganda pamphlets and correspondence were introduced into Lhasa, and throughout other towns and monasteries in Tibet, almost at will. Messengers disguised as muleteers and traders, crossed into India regularly, sometimes by-passing check-posts, at other times openly registering but using different names and occupations each time. It was no wonder the Chinese Communists developed a violent hatred for Kalimpong.

When, under mounting pressure by the Chinese Communists and diminishing ammunition supplies, Khamba guerrilla fighters began to fall back on Central Tibet in the summer of 1958, the Lhasa officials and citizens were forced to make a decision they had long postponed. Either they had to hand these 'Khamba tribal rebels', as the Chinese termed them, over to the Chinese for punishment or openly express their sympathy with their revolt and help them; they chose the latter course. Out of this new relationship a new name was coined to give the revolt a national character. Formerly the guerrillas had been known as *Chu-zhi Kang-druk*, a name meaning 'Four Rivers, Six Mountains', which, while denoting the aim for a return to the free 'Greater Tibet' indicated in the name, was identified almost exclusively in peoples' minds with the rebels from Kham and Amdo in East Tibet. In 1958 a new name was coined, 'Chul-ka Sum', to denote the national character of the revolt, and the new unity of all Tibetan people who were included in this ancient name, which was applied to the 'three units, or provinces' of Tibet—Kham, Amdo and Ü-Tsang.

Word of this new unity and organization was sent to Tibetan exiles in Kalimpong with requests to form Tibetans resident there into the united 'Chul-ka Sum', to do what they could to obtain and send help to Tibet.

After secret meetings in Kalimpong the various leaders of separate groups united in forming the Chul-ka Sum Party, and sixteen groups of Tibetans visited Kalimpong, Gangtok, Darjeeling and Kurseong to collect signatures of loyalty to the new Nationalist Movement. From the members of the Dalai Lama's family through Cabinet

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Ministers, local minor officials to Tibetan coolies in the bazaar all Tibetans rushed to sign. Hoarded guns, money, horses, mules and 300 Tibetans were collected and recruited and sent to the rebel forces fighting in Tibet.

On 10th July 1958 the Chinese Government protested in an official Note to the Indian Government that Kalimpong was being used as a base for anti-Chinese propaganda and activities, which the Indian Government denied.¹

On the evening of 4th August 1958 every Tibetan official of note in India, Cabinet Ministers together with guerrilla leaders and delegates, met in Kalimpong to draw up a final appeal to India and the U.N. on the predicament facing Tibet. They had been warned by India not to indulge in these activities, but in the face of the mounting record of deaths of families and relations in Tibet and urgent appeals for help, they were forced to ignore the warnings from the Indian Government.

Next morning over 300 copies of an Appeal and Manifesto were posted to countries represented on the U.N., responsible newspapers and religious organizations throughout the world.

India moved swiftly to counteract the effect of this action by the Tibetan exiles, and the Tibetans were warned that no further such statements were to be issued or they would be given twenty-four hours to leave the country. Further, no statements were to be given to newspaper correspondents who might come looking for news. At first the warning was only given to the six signatories of the Appeal and Manifesto, but within a few days it was extended to include twenty-five leading Tibetans in Kalimpong and Darjeeling and, eventually, myself. (See *Tibet in Revolt*.)

However, the situation inside Tibet was too serious and the issues, family and national, too urgent for even this warning to be heeded, and many Tibetans took great risks in spite of it. The later Chinese allegations, though, that Kalimpong was the 'centre of revolt' were blown up out of all proportion and bore little relation to the true facts. Certainly, letters passed to and from Lhasa to individuals in Kalimpong, and supplies—mostly medical—were sent from Kalimpong to the rebels, but, that apart, the Tibetans in Kalimpong contributed little to the revolt in Tibet.

Even the much publicized captured documents photo-copied by the Chinese Communists in their official Note, 'Concerning the Question of Tibet', were sent on March 17th, seven days after the revolt had broken out in Lhasa, large-scale public demonstrations had taken place, and the day on which the Dalai Lama actually fled from Lhasa. In any case the documents simply announced that Tibet

¹ See Appendix F, p. 298.

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had been declared an Independent State on March 10th and that Tibetans in Kalimpong should publicize this and ask for neighbouring countries and the U.N. to send delegations to Tibet to inspect the real situation—a far cry from being the ‘commanding centre of Revolt’, claimed by Peking.

But the unbridled attacks by China on India, and Kalimpong in particular, together with threats to ‘liberate Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kalimpong’, began to worry the Indian Government.

In the *People's Daily* of Peking, of March 31st, an editorial declared: ‘The Chinese policy towards Tibet was based on unity, equality and the gradual realization of regional national autonomy and democratic reforms.’ Despite this, ‘what the clique of reactionaries in Tibet worked for is not at all regional autonomy. What they want is the so-called independence of Tibet, plotted for many years by the imperialist aggressors. Utilizing their position in Kashag [Parliament], *utilizing Kalimpong which is in a foreign land as a centre for collusion with imperialism*, the Chiang Kai-shek bandits and foreign reactionaries, they actively [. . . words missing] rebellious bandits, directed them in committing arson and in plundering, ravaging the people and attacking the garrisons and the communication lines of the People's Liberation Army. . . .’

A month later the *People's Daily* was still insisting that Kalimpong was a base for the Tibetan rebellion. ‘It is true’, the newspaper said, ‘that the traitors’ activities in Kalimpong are sometimes open and sometimes secret. Our Indian friends may not be aware of it, but this does not warrant the conclusion that we, too, are surely not aware of it.’

The Chinese propaganda barrage against India, and particularly against Kalimpong, together with the military build-up of Chinese Communist forces opposite Bhutan and Sikkim and the sustained propaganda advocating the imminent liberation of these areas, with Darjeeling and Kalimpong, created a near panic in Kalimpong in the autumn of 1959. There were also murmurings amongst the Tibetan community that reprisals should be taken against the Chinese Trade Agency in the town, which the Indian Government circumvented by placing an armed guard on sentry duty around the Trade Agency building. Then, to make matters more difficult, thousands of destitute refugees arriving in India from Tibet began making their way to Kalimpong to add to the tensions in the town.

In December 1959 the Government issued an order restricting entry to the town. All foreigners had to show passports at the Teesta Bridge, and if they wished to remain in Kalimpong for more than seven days a special permit had to be obtained. Within a few months

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a few Europeans and several Chinese had been ordered to leave, and while intrigue still continued, Kalimpong's usefulness and temporary fame as a 'nest of spies' was over. But that this was not sufficient was seen when the Government decided to go a step further and make Kalimpong a 'notified area', thus recognizing it as the most important strategic point on the Himalayan frontier.

With the Chinese Trade Agency under Indian guard and strict supervision, the Sino-Indian Boundary Commission producing statistical evidence to favour India's claims, the Chinese in physical possession of many border areas but faced with the possibility of war, it looked as if China had gone as far as she could go short of outright war—unless India could be subverted from within by her own Communist Party.

CHAPTER 14

The Communist Party in India



Peking's ambitions to leadership of Asia, and primacy in world Communism, were made much easier by the existence of Communist parties in most of her neighbouring countries. (The exception, of course, was Tibet, although even here the Chinese had trained several leading Sino-Tibetans in China for some years before they came to power. For instance, a young Sino-Tibetan, Puntshok Wanggyay from Batang, in Kham, East Tibet, was their chief collaborator until the revolt in 1958–59 when he 'disappeared' after protesting at China's ruthless treatment of the Tibetans.) But it was in India that China had the greatest potential fifth-column, for there the Communist Party was the largest single Opposition Party. The important, and intriguing factor in Peking's ambitions, therefore, was whether the Indian Communist Party would align itself with China or pursue a more 'democratic' policy in keeping with the Indian national character.

In any of its ambitions for Asian and world conquest the chief area of interest and activity of the Chinese Communists was obviously the Indian Communist Party itself. That this was a primary interest of the Chinese was evident as early as 1950. In January of that year, Mao Tse-tung, in a letter to the Indian Communist Party, published in *The Communist*, Bombay, stated that 'relying on the brave Communist Party of India and the unity and struggle of all Indian patriots, India certainly will not remain long under the yoke of imperialism and emerge in the Socialist and People's Democratic family. That day will end the imperialist reactionary era in the history of mankind.'

From the Communist point of view there was nothing incongruous in this—to other people—act of blatant interference in what were the domestic affairs of another country, for it was inherent in and con-

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sistent with the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist doctrine in regard to the decisive role of 'leadership'.

A Communist Party defines itself as the vanguard or leading element of the proletariat, which is in turn the leading class in the next stage of human history. The Party claims an exclusive right to lead by virtue of the revolutionary destiny of the class it claims to represent; and it also has an obligation to lead by virtue of the inability of that class to fulfil its destiny spontaneously. Thus in Marxist-Leninism the idea of leadership is given an exalted importance.¹

One of the fundamental differences in Nehru's thinking with that of the Communists, as has been noted already, is in his concept of 'democratic decentralization' for India. The Chinese Communists, on the other hand, in the true spirit of Marxist-Leninism, advocate and practise exactly the opposite, 'democratic centralism'.

The purpose of 'democratic centralism', in the internal organization of any Communist Party, is to make that Party a more efficient instrument of political action. The principles of 'democratic centralism' could be summarized as follows: all leading bodies of the Party are elected and must report periodically to the organization; and decisions of higher bodies are absolutely binding on all below, on the basis of strict discipline ensuring the subordination of the minority to the majority. In theory power is built upward and exercised downward. This centralization must be genuine and not formal; that is, the leading organs are obliged to 'constantly direct and exercise a systematic influence over the Party work'. But at the same time the 'democratic' basis of the centralization must also be genuine, in that power must be founded not on mere formal election but on a 'living association' between leaders and led in which the members recognize the legitimacy of Party authority. Factionalism, defined in the Constitution of the Communist Party of India as 'contest for supremacy within the Party', is absolutely forbidden.

Related to the Communist Party of India 'democratic centralism' means an heirarchy of units based on the primary cell—a group of members in factory, village or urban neighbourhood. All the cells in a given locality participate in the basic directing unit of the Party, the town or the local conference. The town or local conference elects representatives to the district conference, the district conference elects

¹ This is stated explicitly in the 'Principles of Party Organization' of the Comintern: 'Leadership is a necessary condition for any common action, but most of all it is indispensable in the greatest fight in the world's history. The organization of the Communist Party is the organization of Communist leadership in the proletarian revolution.' (Communist International, Bombay, People's Publishing House, n.d.p.2.)

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representatives to the provincial conference, and the provincial conference elects delegates to the National Party Congress.

Without going into more detail it is sufficient to state that the formal organization of the Communist Party of India (CPI) attaches the highest importance to creating and sustaining a strong leadership, and the rules formally provide a greater degree of centralization than even do those of the Russian Communist Party. On the other hand, there are certain unusual provisions in the rules of the CPI such as the right of every member or unit to communicate its 'wishes, suggestions, remarks or complaints' directly to the Central Committee at any time. This, together with some other provisions, plus the combination of authoritarian leadership and articulate membership, accounts for the CPI's history of paradoxical mixture of centralization and indiscipline.

In January 1920 a Bengali Brahmin, a remarkable character by the name of M. N. Roy, went to Moscow. In his early youth he had associated with the Bengali terrorist movement, and on the outbreak of World War I he became an agent of the 'Berlin Committee', and in that capacity he carried on anti-British activities throughout the Far East. After a romantic and explosive visit to America Roy fled with his new American wife to Mexico where he founded the Mexican Communist Party with Michael Borodin. From Mexico he went to Moscow, to seek help in forming a Communist Party in his own country.

All the Russian leaders, including Lenin, were impressed by this able and audacious young Indian, who had founded the first Communist Party in Latin America and one of the first outside Russia, and it was this respect which probably accounted for the tolerance of Lenin to Roy's criticism of the then Communist line in regard to the peoples of the East.

Lenin maintained the view that Communist Russia should support the national liberation movements in Asian countries, including India, regardless of their ideological bases. He held that since, according to Marxism, every stage of social revolution is historically determined, colonial countries like India should have their own bourgeois democratic revolution before the stage of proletarian revolution could be entered upon.

Roy disagreed with this and pointed out that even in the most advanced colonial countries, such as India, the bourgeoisie was not economically advanced nor socially differentiated from the ancient feudal orders of Eastern countries. Hence Roy characterized the Gandhian movement in India as purely 'reactionary', and argued that Gandhi was only a 'religious and cultural revivalist'. Roy

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argued that the Indian revolution must originate from the workers and peasants on the Russian model.

The Second Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow in July and August 1920, and was notable as far as India was concerned, for the Communist International set up a 'Central Asiatic Bureau', which was designed to further Communism in that area, particularly in India. One of its chief members was M. N. Roy. It was not a success and was dissolved soon afterwards, but M. N. Roy continued to grow in esteem and influence in Moscow, and from there continued to send revolutionary literature in the name of the 'Communist Party of India' to India. He was also among the supervisors of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, which had 600 students from all parts of Asia. The Indian section was small, numbering only twenty-two members, but the Chinese section formed the largest with the Koreans a close second.

In 1922 M. N. Roy sent his chief assistant, Gupta, to India, 'to establish centres' for the reception of Communist propaganda and to arrange for its underground circulation. Before the end of the year five of these centres had been formed and the Communist Party of India was in existence on Indian territory.

But the seeds of the problems that were to bedevil the Communist Party of India for many years, right up to the present, were already evident in the many dissensions among the early leaders: the jealousies and, most serious of all, the apparent lack of understanding of India's requirements. Thus, for instance, it was said at the Third International:

'Communists had not done much in connection with the great trade union movement in India, and the large number of strikes which convulsed the country.'

This criticism caused Roy to step up his propaganda for revolution in India, and by mid-1923 the five centres were working at high speed. Two of them, at Bombay and Lahore, were putting out publications respectively known as *The Socialist*, edited by one, S. A. Dange—later to be an important figure in Indian Communism—and *Inquilab* (Revolution) edited by a Muslim. It was Dange who founded 'The Red Flag' (Mill Workers) Union which was to play an important role, subsequently, in the history of Communism in India.

But it was in Calcutta that the first front workers' and peasants' party was formed in 1925 with the significant name of 'Labour Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress', at the insistence of Moscow, who felt that not enough organization and infiltration was being done. During 1925 a Communist, D. R. Thengdi, was actually President of the All India Trades Union Congress.

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However, in the latter part of 1925 the gains made by the Indian Communists were more than offset by the schisms in their ranks. One group followed the orthodox Moscow line in planning more parties such as the Labour Swaraj Party of Bengal, which would culminate in one large All India Workers' and Peasants' Party and which the Communists would control behind the scenes. The other group wanted the Communist Party of India to act openly under its own name, to carry on, by constitutional means, agitation of a Marxist nature and to be independent of the Kremlin.

During the period of 1924–29 it was the Communist Party of Great Britain, following completely the Moscow line, which dominated the activities of the Communist Party of India. So much so, that Roy went to China where, impressed with the belief that China would go Communist, he took up the slogan 'Follow China's lead'. This propaganda was apparently smuggled across the Tibetan-Assam frontier with the help of Assamese tea garden workers.

But despite these intra-party schemes and schisms of the different leaders and groups, from the beginning the CPI was handicapped by the fact that it was openly allied to and controlled from Moscow and, consequently, never regarded as a truly national party. Because of this doctrinaire orientation Indian Communists failed to understand the significance of Gandhi's nationalist movement, and on a number of occasions even clashed with the forces of Indian nationalism. It was primarily for this reason that they failed to win mass support during the critical period of the 1930's and 1940's, and the Party's base remained exceedingly limited. Not only did they consider their main task that of furthering the cause of the Soviet Union but Moscow dictated both the strategy and tactics which they should adopt, and those were both frequently changed to meet the changing requirements of Soviet policy, bringing the CPI into even greater disrepute.

Another source of controversy and difficulty within the CPI has been the partial monopoly of information concerning just what is the current international Communist line. There have been occasions when the prevailing Indian Communist leadership has temporarily sought to resist changes in policy proposed by the international authorities, and has even refused to disseminate the relevant international pronouncements to the ordinary members. This manipulation of information on several occasions has misfired, either through the information becoming available through popular English-language newspapers and magazines, or through direct communication by inter-Party groups with their opposite numbers in other Communist countries—to the considerable embarrassment of the

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prevailing leadership. This had critical repercussions during the pro-Nazi period, then later when the Russian policy was switched to anti-Nazi and the CPI had to follow suit—against all the national interests of their own country at the time. But worse was to follow when the Sino-Soviet differences were made public and, later, when China invaded Indian territory.

There have always been rumours current about amounts of Moscow gold finding its way into CPI funds, but only once has there been any significant evidence of this produced when Feroze Gandhi, the noted M.P., produced photostatic evidence in Parliament. But indirect subsidies of unknown amounts are provided through profits on the sales of books and pamphlets shipped free on a very large scale to the CPI by the Russian and Chinese Communist Governments particularly.

All of the present members of the Central Committee of the CPI who exercise leadership in one form or another have been with the Party as general secretaries since its formal inauguration in 1934. They are Dr. G. Adikhari, P. C. Joshi, B. T. Ranadive, Rajeshwar Rao, and A. K. Ghosh. They are all college-educated, with degrees including M.A., LL.B., and D.Sc. They all joined the Party while in college or immediately after leaving it, and all are very prolific writers strongly identified with particular 'lines'. None of them has a mass following of any consequence, nor seems to possess any marked skill in the arts of mass leadership.

However, in recent years a different type of 'mass' leader has emerged in the CPI in the persons of the parliamentary members. Those include A. K. Gopalan, R. N. Reddy, Yella Reddy, D. D. Barman, Hiren Mukherjee, K. C. George, and Renu Chakravarty. This list includes all those Communist M.P.s who are in the Central Committee, plus the two prominent Bengali M.P.s, Hiren Mukherjee, and the woman member, Renu Chakravarty. In almost all of these they had extensive political experience in the Congress or Congress Socialist Parties before joining the CPI, and have shown on several occasions that they provide popular leadership, and the future of the CPI may well lie with some of them rather than the 'old Bolsheviks' of the Party.

The peculiar process by which leadership is created within the CPI results in unstable factional struggles of an intensity unusual among Communist Parties in other countries. Most Communist Parties in the West, and many of those in Asia, have had relatively stable leadership for many years—leadership which could survive changes in policy required by the international line, and in the course of time create a more mature and efficient political organiza-

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tion. The CPI has not 'matured' in this way and it continues to be plagued by the type of factionalism which existed in other Communist Parties in the 1920's and 1930's. A change of policy in the CPI almost inevitably means a change of leadership.

The chief problem of the CPI, which has never been resolved, is: 'How to come to power in a democratic society?' This leads inevitably to another question: 'What should be the attitude of the CPI to the ruling Congress Government?' which is a loose coalition of left- and right-wing forces; and, more particularly: 'What should be their attitude to Mr. Nehru?' Ever since 1951, when the CPI switched from violent to peaceful methods, these questions have exercised the minds of both rank-and-file members and delegates. An extremely vocal minority has advocated a return to an insurrectionary policy, despite the fact that this policy failed in 1948-49. It was in the 1948-49 period that there was an important 'intervention' by China in the affairs of the Communist Party of India. In June 1948 the Andhra branch of the CPI, taking its cue from the Chinese Communists, argued that the struggle against the bourgeoisie be against the 'big bourgeoisie' only, and that the armed part of the struggle be limited to peasant guerrilla warfare as opposed to insurrectionary activity in the urban areas. Advocacy of this policy for India was taken up in 1949 by no less a leading Chinese Communist theorist than Liu Shao-chi. But B. T. Ranadive, who was General Secretary at the time, bitterly assailed this Chinese intervention and denounced Mao Tse-tung as a colleague of 'these Communist heretics'.

The success of the Chinese Communists in 1949 went against Ranadive with a vengeance and, combined with the failure of the CPI, led to Ranadive's dismissal. He tried to retain his authority of the now fast-declining CPI with an abject apology, but to no avail, and in 1950, the Central Committee reconstituted the Politburo and itself with a new policy.

The new CPI leadership, in contrast to the old, went out of its way to praise Communist China, and sought to give the impression that Peking, not Moscow, was the new ideal of Indian Communism, and attacks on the Nehru Government, together with guerrilla warfare in the Telengana area of Hyderabad and the adjoining area of Madras, formed the CPI's activities over the next few years.

A little-noticed but important advance of the CPI during that period took place in Kashmir. In September 1952 the leader of the Communists in Kashmir, Dhanwantri, addressed what was described as 'the first public meeting of the CPI in the State'. The CPI had already made significant progress in Kashmir and it was reckoned that penetration in Kashmir was already well ahead of advance in

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any other part of India. But it was now serving notice that it was coming out into the open after several years of working behind the scenes. At the time it was claimed that out of seventy-five members of the Kashmir Constituent Assembly no less than fifteen were secret Communists, with at least three in the Cabinet.

So successful had the CPI policies been in Kashmir that one observer reported: 'The Indian Communists are gleefully proclaiming in every nook and corner of the Punjab and Pepsu that it is only the matter of a year or two when the Indian Red Revolution would be initiated in Kashmir, the Indian Yenan. The Red Army rising from the hilly state would, they claim, be backed by the armed might of the new China and Soviet Russia.'

But the majority view up to the present, culminating in the 1958 Amritsar Congress majority decision to renounce violence, has been that the Party should seek power through the ballot box, make common cause with the left wing of Congress, and support Mr. Nehru in his policies.

At that time, of course, the CPI was still buoyed up with its victory in an open election in the State of Kerala, in South India, where the only democratically-elected Communist Government in India—or the world—gained control in 1957. Here the CPI had gained power in free elections, with control of the Government, by gaining a majority of the seats, although not of the electorate. The CPI in Kerala had no more than 40 per cent of the electorate behind them when they took over power there. Yet within three years of taking over they were faced with state-wide demonstrations demanding their dismissal and intervention by the Central Government. There were several factors in this situation, not all of them due to faulty handling by the Communists.¹

The Kerala people were noted for having the highest literacy rate in India, but had also one of the poorest states, the majority of Keralans being poor and some very poor indeed. But also Kerala had a very high proportion of Christians, if not the highest in India, particularly Roman Catholics, and many Muslims. Between those two (24 per cent Christian and 10 per cent Muslim) plus the Nairs, a community forming 17 per cent of the population, the Communists

¹ Mr. S. Mulgaonkar, the editor of the national daily, *Hindustan Times*, wrote: 'There is no doubt that whatever the sins of the Communists in the 28 months they held power, they had been able to give the common man a sense of belonging, a feeling that he counted, a confidence that he could hold his head high in dealing with the Police and Government functionary. The Communist rule was efficient and free from corruption, at any rate, at the level of the common man's contact with the machinery of administration.'

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were faced with a total of 51 per cent opposition once they were alerted, organized and brought to the polls against the CPI.

This might never have happened in Kerala, though, had the Communist Party not attempted too much, too fast, even if for the best reasons. It might have been expected that the majority of voters would agree that an excess of zeal was a fault on the right side, for this was to be preferred to the conspicuous lack of it in preceding Ministries in almost all departments—but for the religious factor. Certainly, there was little else uniting the ‘triple Alliance’ opposed to the Communists—Congress, Praja Socialist and Muslim League—whose whole appeal was in the incongruous ‘religious’ association and opposition.

Even at that, although the Communists were electorally defeated, they increased their poll almost as much as the three parties of the Alliance put together. Not only did the Communists poll more votes than they did three years previously but they increased their share of the poll substantially—the CPI claimed a 50 per cent increase, from 2,300,000 in 1957 to 3,500,000 in 1960.

There was, therefore, a certain amount of justification for the bitterness of the Communist leader, B. T. Ranadive, writing in the Communist Party monthly, *New Age*, when he said:

‘It was a known and accepted fact that the Communist Party, though it had a majority of seats, had behind it no more than 40 per cent of the electorate. The legislature was dismissed under the plea that it had lost its following among the people, that it had lost its popularity.

‘The resolution of the Congress Parliamentary Board, justifying the demand for intervention, stated: “It seems obvious that a big change-over has taken place among the people and many of those who supported the majority party (Communists) in the Assembly have changed over and are opposing it.”

‘Whether Nehru and the Union Government led by Nehru, seriously believed it or not, they used it as a pretext for dismissing the Ministry, hoping that the Kerala electorate would be misled by their propaganda. They made the strength of the Communist Party the central point in the election and lost heavily, the Kerala electorate having given a strong and convincing rebuff to Nehru and his colleagues. . . .’

Asoka Mehta, the Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party, said at the time this was ‘a grim contest which the democratic parties have won, but which the Communists have by no means lost.’

The Communists had consolidated their hold upon the lower caste groups and untouchables, but lost the support of the influential middle-class community of Nairs, and it was this latter particularly,

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the loss of the middle-class vote, which turned the scales against them.

However, the possibility of the future return of the Communist Party to power in Kerala still appears likely, for if they have a few obstacles to overcome the Democratic Alliance has many major problems to solve which the period since the election has highlighted and exacerbated. Communal feeling in India generally has increased, particularly in the Congress towards the Muslim League, and their future co-operation in the Alliance, even on an anti-Communist basis, is doubtful. There are other critical factors, discussed elsewhere in the book, which also contribute to the lack of confidence in this 'unholy alliance' if ever there was one.

But, in addition to the several local, and national, circumstances acting against the Communist Party in Kerala, there was the major crisis of China's action in Tibet and subsequent invasion of Indian territory.

When the news of the ruthless Chinese Communist suppression of the Tibetan revolt was brought to India, coupled as it was with a violent propaganda attack by China on India, the CPI was quick to rush in with the allegation that this was the work of right-wing, pro-imperialist elements in the ruling Congress Party, and Renu Chakravarty, the Bengali Communist, even went the length of impugning the integrity of India's left-wing Political Officer in Sikkim, Apa Sahib Pant, for allegedly aiding and abetting in both the revolt and reports of the revolt to the world's press.

But a further catastrophe, for which the CPI was totally unprepared—and unfitted to resolve because of its structure, policy and factionalism—overwhelmed them when China first of all captured some Indian troops, then shot some others, and, finally, occupied some 12,500 square miles of Indian territory by armed intervention, and claimed another 36,000 square miles.

When the news of the Sino-Indian 'border dispute' was first made public, the CPI was immediately split into a 'nationalist' (pro-Indian) faction and an 'internationalist' (or pro-Chinese) faction. The former argued that China's belligerent action had alienated the majority of Indians and that unless the Party reflected the views of their fellow-countrymen they could court political disaster. The pro-Chinese faction claimed that a Communist country could never be guilty of aggression, that the Chinese case was right and the Indian wrong, and that since the Indian Government had swung to the far right it was the duty of Communists to fight it with every weapon they had.

As relations between the two countries worsened, the right-wing of the CPI, led by S. A. Dange, pointed out that if the Party did not come out strongly in defence of India over the border dispute it would suffer irreparable damage.

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In November 1959, at Meerut, after a stormy meeting of the National Council (the former Central Committee), a resolution was passed clearly supporting the Indian stand on the eastern frontier (the MacMahon Line), and, less clearly, on the frontier in Ladakh. This policy was endorsed at a meeting of the Council in Calcutta in May 1960 although with some equivocation. Mr. Nehru was strongly criticized for his handling of the crisis, and it was said that his obduracy proved he had surrendered to reactionary forces within the Congress Party.

The border dispute showed no sign of abating, but, on the contrary, of hardening, and as it was prolonged it had widespread ramifications throughout the CPI. For instance, not only were there factional differences, but also regional—such as retaliatory tactics in Bengal for Kerala to embarrass the Government, or exploiting the unstable situation in Assam over the linguistic disputes, or advocating regional autonomy for the strategic Darjeeling area—and, of course, the fundamental doctrinaire question which still had not been solved—‘What should be the CPI attitude to the “national bourgeoisie parties”?’

According to Dange (who, in the ideological dispute between the Soviet Union and China, had supported the Russian argument that war in today’s conditions was not inevitable) the aim of the Communists should be to organize a ‘national democratic front’ which would include left-wing elements from Congress and Socialist parties. The Communists should co-operate with those sections of the ‘national bourgeoisie’ to fight ‘imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism’; and this ‘Front’ could pave the way for a ‘non-capitalist society’ which would be the forerunner of a ‘fully-independent socialist society’. Put briefly, what Dange advocated was co-operation with the Nehru wing of Congress, even to the extent of forming temporary electoral coalitions in regional elections.

The ‘Ranadive’ group (led by B. T. Ranadive, who, as an ardent Stalinist thirteen years ago, had made an insulting reference to Mao Tse-tung), on the other hand, argued that there could be no co-operation of any kind with the Congress. Mr. Nehru, he claimed, was tainted with ‘right-wing reaction’, and his efforts to build a socialist society were a mere sham. Ranadive’s main point was that the Nehru Government’s action in 1959 which terminated the life of Communist administration in Kerala clearly indicated that Nehru was either a right-wing leader or a willing tool of the reactionaries within his party. Ranadive also maintained that present alignments of Indian foreign policy, such as the dispute with China, friendly relations with the new Kennedy administration in the U.S.,

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support for Mr. Hammarskjöld and the U.N. effort in the Congo, all pointed to the fact that Nehru's policy of 'non-alignment' had been abandoned in favour of one of support for the Western powers.

In addition to these two groups, a third, led by the Kerala Communist leaders, E. M. S. Namboodiripad and A. K. Gopalan, took up a centre position. According to them, the Party's task should be to 'simultaneously unite with and struggle against the Congress Party'. They claimed that although the Congress Party was a heterogeneous organization it was essentially the political party 'of that section of the bourgeoisie which was objectively interested in the carrying out of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal tasks'. The CPI should, therefore, strive to protect the workers' interests by opposing the 'anti-people's policies' of the Government, and by defending the 'progressive and democratic policies' of the Congress Party from the attacks of 'right reaction'.

It was in this climate of bitter division and factionalism that the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of India met at Vijayawada, in Andhra, in April 1961. For two years they had been unable to function effectively, and what decisions were taken had to be done with an eye on the forthcoming Indian general election to be held early in 1962.

Nearly 500 delegates from all parts of the country were present, and there were fraternal delegates from the Soviet Union, Italy, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Australia. The five-man Soviet Delegation was led by Mikhail Suslov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, and the most important Russian official ever to have attended an Indian Communist Congress. His presence clearly indicated, as the meeting progressed that, although Moscow wanted the pro-Russian faction to remain on top, it was against any open condemnation of China's actions on India's borders. This was made easier by the absence of any representative from the Chinese Communist Party. This was not because China ignored the Congress but, according to one report, because a Chinese delegation which had attended an earlier meeting in Delhi and was due to go on to Vijayawada, was unable to obtain visas from the Indian Government.

The debate on the party programme went on for two days, during which Ranadive and his supporters, having failed in their attempts to get the Congress to shelve discussion on the long-term programmes, then fought desperately to prevent the Dange draft from being carried. Suslov, when it came to his turn to bring his fraternal message, attempted to throw his weight behind the Dange proposals, by pointing out that the Party had to work in 'specific complicated

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conditions'. But even his intervention had no influence on the left, who continued to press their point, and finally succeeded in preventing the passage of the Dange draft.

With the Party bitterly divided over the definition of long-term aims, which neither left nor right could produce a programme to solve, the Congress turned to resolutions on immediate political tactics.

The National Council had adopted the right-wing resolution in February, so it was invested with official status. Therefore, when Ajoy Ghosh spoke in support he took the line of the General Secretary's report on national and international developments since the 1958 Congress. It was a long and brilliant performance which was ultimately successful in his aim of stealing the militants' thunder, and, to change the metaphor, spiking their big guns at least. His analysis of the Indian situation differed very little in substance from that of Ranadive's, yet the conclusions which he drew were entirely different.

After his speech Ranadive remarked: 'He has said all that we wanted to say. The differences on the issue of the tactical line seem to have narrowed down completely.' Nevertheless, his own resolution denouncing Congress and calling for a militant mass-movement was moved next, and was followed by Namboodiripad's compromise motion.

In the ensuing debate, delegates lined up for or against the official policy according to the situation prevailing in their own states. The Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Madras parties supported it, while the Punjab, West Bengal, Andhra and Tripura were highly critical. The only surprise in the line-up was Kerala, where the party had been so summarily dismissed by the Central Government in Delhi.

On April 13th the General Secretary's report with left-wing amendments (described as the 'Vijayawada thesis') was accepted unanimously. But on the 14th the truce came to an abrupt end when the Ranadive group made a desperate last-minute attempt to prevent the official resolution from being adopted. However, the Dange group, having already made significant concessions refused to be thwarted at this stage and the attempt was defeated.

The following day the Congress passed the official resolution calling for the creation of a 'national democratic front' in which 'anti-imperialists and anti-colonial sections of the national bourgeoisie would find a conspicuous place' and the amended Ghosh report was added to it.

The extent of the confusion which had prevailed during the three days of bitter debate may be gauged by the fact that nearly 300

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amendments to the official resolution were reported to have been tabled.

From the above, therefore, it is obvious that there was no agreement even on immediate political aims, and the Congress was forced into the absurd position of adopting a resolution while at the same time demanding that it be amended in order to present a façade of unity to the watching press and public.

In the amended version of the Ghosh report the need for 'independent mass activity' in addition to the 'united front approach' was stressed so as to placate the militant left-wing. It was also noted that although the CPI's influence among the people 'has increased in a majority of states, it is still far from being a decisive factor in the country's political life'.

The Chinese Communist leaders have left the CPI leaders in no doubt where their sympathies and support lie—with the left-wing. They have on several occasions stated that the CPI, as it has functioned in the past is not a true revolutionary Communist Party and until it develops more militant policies it will never be of any use to the Communist cause. It is because of this conviction that the Chinese Communists have not considered the effect of their own actions on the fortunes of the CPI in India—such as the border invasion and its consequences to the Communist Party membership—and are not likely to let such considerations influence their decisions in the future. The Chinese influence will continue to be behind the left-wing group (and it is significant that West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab Communists, with territories adjoining the 'Tibet region of China', are all pro-China), and, when some effective leader of the militant faction shows signs of emerging as a force on the Indian national scene what influence they can wield will be swung behind him. But as it is constituted at present, the Communist Party of India seems doomed to be the ineffective political party it has always been, and, unless some major and unexpected event happens—such as Nehru's sudden death, an attempted military take-over, a split in the Congress Party—they are likely to continue in the words of their own report, to 'increase in a majority of states' but still remain 'far from being a decisive factor in the country's political life'.

But should an effective pro-China leader or clique emerge, then, without doubt, the CPI would be the greatest fifth column of the Chinese Communists in Asia, or, for that part, in the world.

CONCLUSION
THE VERDICT, 1963

CHAPTER 15

The Verdict, 1963



‘Why is a Red Army organized? It is to defeat the enemy. Why study the laws of war? It is to apply them in war. . . . For example, when a certain wing of the enemy, which is exactly his weak spot, is chosen for the point of attack, and the result is a success, this means harmony between the subjective and the objective, or between the commander’s reconnaissance, judgement and determination, on the one hand, and the realities of the enemy and his dispositions, on the other. . . . Perfect harmony between subjective command and objective situations in entire engagement is achieved when the attack is properly timed, the right moment to call up reserves is chosen, and dispositions for battles and operational actions are all favourable to us and unfavourable to the enemy. . . . This is not so with an easy-go-lucky military man, whose military plan is based upon a wishful basis. Such a plan is fantastic and unreal. A reckless and passionate military man is easily cheated by the enemy or enticed by superficial, fragmentary information, and moved by irresponsible suggestions of subordinates based neither on truth nor intelligent understanding. He is likely to fail because he either does not or is unwilling to know that any military plan must be based on necessary reconnaissance and careful deliberation over his own situation and that of the enemy as well as over the interrelation between the two. . . .’

(From *Strategic Problems of China’s Revolutionary War*,
by Mao Tse-tung.)

In the above excerpt from the writings of the greatest tactician in Asia there is summed up the characters and attitudes of the two greatest protagonists in Asia, Mao Tse-tung of China and Jawaharlal Nehru of India, and the reasons for their respective successes and failures on the Asian scene. For Mao, the ‘entire engagement’ has been one of long calculation and preparation, the ‘attack was properly timed’, the ‘right moment chosen’ when ‘dispositions for battles and operational actions were all favourable to us and unfavourable to the enemy’, who were ‘enticed by superficial

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fragmentary information and moved by irresponsible suggestions of subordinates based neither on truth nor intelligent understanding'. Hence, Nehru was outmanœuvred when Mao moved into action and China, acting according to the Maoist dictum, was continuously successful.

From the moment of her triumphal 'liberation' of Tibet in 1950, Peking made no attempt to hide her ambitions to take over the 'dependent States' which had formerly belonged to China. As early as 1939 Mao had stated that these 'dependent States and territories', taken from China by foreigners, included 'Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan'; and soon after the occupation of Tibet in 1950 the Chief of the Central Office of the Chinese Communist Party, Yuang Shang-kim, said in a message: 'After the liberation of Tibet, the Chinese people and the Nepalese people will be united in close solidarity for the sake of defending Asia and preserving peace.'

As will have been seen from the foregoing chapters, Peking is now poised to accomplish all her declared aims—plus some of her undeclared ones. Right from the beginning of their relationship Peking has deliberately exploited and almost without exception completely outwitted Delhi in the contest for leadership in Asia—even if that leadership involved a militarily imposed dictatorship over the territories in question.

When China moved into Ladakh and blatantly occupied the territory in the face of India's protestations, Mr. Nehru's statement in Parliament regarding the 'incursion' was taken up in all Indian papers as outright 'aggression' and warnings were sounded in all editorials that Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan would follow. In India—in Parliament, Press and among the people—the era of Sino-Indian friendship was at an end and an era of controversy and strife—perhaps even war, Mr. Nehru warned sombrely—had begun.

From the time of the Dalai Lama's spectacular and successful escape to India China had thrown off all attempts at pretence of friendship, all appeals to the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence' and the 'Bandung spirit', and launched a virulent anti-Indian and anti-Nehru campaign through all propaganda organs. Nehru was openly accused of having 'fallen into the hands of reactionaries and imperialists and lost his original socialist philosophy because of his limited contact with the masses and reality'.

A more ominous development was the openly stated intention to 'liberate the border states of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, and an intensifying of Chinese Communist activity in the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Laos, South Vietnam and anywhere else in the underdeveloped world friendly to the imperialists'.

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During the famous November 1960 Conference of eighty-one Communist countries in Moscow to settle Sino-Soviet ideological differences, the Chinese attacked Khrushchev's basic policy in general but his 'Afro-Asian' policy in particular. They accused him of 'curbing the anti-imperialist struggle in Asia, Africa and Latin America', especially in Iraq, India and Algeria. They attacked his 'friendship with Nasser, Nehru, Kassem and Soekarno', and demanded that the Communist Parties should 'behave more aggressively' towards these countries' leaders and the 'national bourgeoisie' at large. The outcome of the November Conference was that while the eighty-one parties accepted the Russian theses that the economic contest between the Soviet Union and the United States was 'the main form of class struggle at present' they insisted on the need to intensify the class struggle proper, especially in the under-developed countries—a triumph for the Peking line.

When in February 1961 the 'Report of the Officials of the Government of India and the Chinese People's Republic on the Boundary Questions' was released, it offered voluminous proof, Mr. Nehru claimed, that the occupation of Ladakh and NEFA was completely illegal and the result of invasion. But the irony of the massive documentary proof of India's case was not in the fact that it had proved China in the wrong but that it proved Mr. Nehru in the wrong. He had sought to convince his countrymen at the time that China was not guilty of 'aggression' but of 'an incursion'. What the document proved above all was that either the officials in India's Ministry of External Affairs could not have been doing their homework, or, out of deference to their Prime Minister's known attitude *vis-à-vis* China, they had suppressed the evidence which was at hand to the detriment of their country.

The statistical summary of the evidence showed that India had produced 630 items of evidence against China's 245 items during the talks. On page after page it was recorded: 'The Chinese side did not deal with this evidence'—'The Chinese side cited only one document to support their claim'—'The Chinese side did not refute this evidence'—'The Chinese side failed to bring forward any evidence of this nature to support their case'. But it must be added that the quality of the Indian evidence was very poor, including some very dubious sources indeed.

The most significant aspect of Peking's current campaign, however, is not so much its bellicosity as the scale on which it is winning friends and converts. Despite the reported critical food shortage in China, Peking sent 15,000 tons of rice to Guinea and a 25 million dollar loan. North Korea also received 105 million dollars in October 1960.

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They offered increased aid to Nepal and to Burma, diplomatic recognition and technical aid to Bhutan, and increased their military help to Laos and Viet Nam to the edge of war. As well as taking over the economic burden of Albania from Russia, China also offered military help and support to Indonesia in her claim to Dutch West New Guinea. Meanwhile, India has been completely isolated and Delhi seems completely paralysed in the face of the Chinese political offensive, restricted to sending protest notices or requests for further talks.

It could be argued that all this was necessary for the record, but taken in conjunction with Delhi's past attitude in regard to Peking, all it really did was to confirm the impression of almost incredible *naïveté* in India's attitude towards China. What does Nehru really expect to gain from talks with Chou En-lai? That Chou will apologize and withdraw when 'proved' wrong? Fantastic as it may seem, this is the only conclusion to be drawn from Nehru's statements, following on the publication of the 'Boundary Questions' document, that Peking should 'broadly acknowledge' India's claims.

From the Prime Minister's and others' statements made at the time of the border dispute with China it was evident that Delhi was convinced that China was aggressive, irrational and unscrupulous in her policies, but there was no attempt to rethink or produce a new policy to deal with the realities and dangers from Peking. On the contrary, Mr. Nehru in Parliament made an impassioned defence of his 'Panch Sheela', and claimed that it had been proved 'successful' because 'other countries had recognized it'.

The most ominous feature of the 'Boundaries Report' lay not in what was discussed about the border disputes but in what the Chinese refused to discuss, namely, the position of Bhutan and Sikkim. The intransigence of the Chinese delegation in refusing to discuss these countries is an important pointer to Peking's future sphere of activities. The Report stated:

'Regarding the boundaries between China and Bhutan, and between China and Sikkim, the Chinese Government has always declared that they do not fall within the scope of the Sino-Indian boundary question.'

The Indian Prime Minister was exasperated at this further evidence of Chinese duplicity, for it was a blatant reversal of what Chou En-lai had assured him during his visit to Delhi in 1960. On that occasion he had stated publicly that 'China recognizes India's relations with Bhutan'. However, when he returned to Peking, the Chinese official version of this statement was altered to read 'China recognizes India's *proper* relations with Bhutan'.

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But there are many complications facing India, other than the major one of China's reaction to the border dispute.

There is the present accord between Pakistan and China, between Pakistan and Nepal, between Nepal and China, between China and Burma—and China's support of Pakistan in Kashmir. If the Kashmir situation became critical India might be faced with China in Kashmir as well as on her north-eastern borders.

Then the Naga leader, A. Z. Phizo, has charged India with genocide and has been assured of support from a force of 6,000 Kachins and other border tribes in his area to fight India. If Delhi persists in its intention to settle the Naga revolt by force and not negotiation, instead of releasing the reported five divisions of Indian troops for military action elsewhere, India is more likely to be faced with increased opposition from reinforced Nagas—with Chinese help—and an even greater military involvement in territory favourable to China.

In Nepal the increasing reports of local revolt, with official accusations of Indian interference and help to the Nepal Congress Party inspiring the revolt, will mean a greater deterioration in Indo-Nepal relations, and a greater alignment with China on the part of Nepal. If the fighting continues it might easily result in Nepal being divided in civil war between Congress in the south and the Communists in the north in another Viet Nam, with China supplying the Communists from Tibet.

The Maharajkumar of Sikkim has announced that there is evidence of large-scale Communist activity in Sikkim—from both Nepal and China. The Maharajkumar himself has not helped the situation by marrying a foreigner, an action which displeased Sikkimese politicians, Indian officials—and, in the ostentatious American diplomatic attendance at the wedding celebrations, the Chinese.

India has lodged a protest with both the Chinese and Burmese Governments over the delineation of the 'western extremity' of the Sino-Burmese border on the map appended to the Sino-Burmese border agreements between the two countries, stating that this constitutes an encroachment on Indian territory. Earlier, Chou had said that the treaty was a 'milestone in the development of friendship between the two countries' and attacked 'a handful of ill-intentioned people—"imperialist lackeys"—who tried to sow discord' between them.

Bhutan had held out against being brought into the Indian 'sphere of influence', citing Sikkim as an example of what happened when India took a direct interest in the affairs of a border country.

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It was Bhutan's intention to stay 'neutral' in the dispute between the two Asian giants—that is, if the Bhutanese 'government' of headmen did not take matters into its own hands and appeal to China and repudiate the Maharaja's leaning to India.

When, in October 1961, India again accused China of another eleven incursions into Indian territory since 1960, six in the Ladakh area of Kashmir, three on the Tibetan border, and two in NEFA—India again only lodged a 'protest'. Mr. Nehru admitted that the news was 'startling' but 'reports exaggerated' and the Indian military position was 'better than two years ago', while Krishna Menon said that 'no active hostility' had taken place.

However, for some unknown reason India decided to take military action against the Portuguese colonial territory of Goa. Several reasons have been advanced for this—the Indian General Elections in February 1962; Krishna Menon's increasing dominance over the Defence Ministry and Army, together with his difficulties in his North Bombay constituency where he was opposed by the redoubtable Acharya Kripalani on an issue of public confidence; the necessity to placate a growing public annoyance at Chinese occupation of Indian territory—but it was probably a combination of all these.

Certainly the crisis of conscience which Mr. Nehru had to undergo in sanctioning the invasion caused him considerable distress, while Krishna Menon could dismiss it airily with a 'Ghandi isn't here, is he?' statement.

But the most likely explanation, in addition to the considerations listed above, is that India wanted to relieve the Army of any other commitment in the event of a final show-down with China now inexorably looming ahead. It is only the recognition of this possibility which could have forced Nehru to take the decision on Goa—or elsewhere. For China had served notice on India that the military preparations on the northern borders were aggressive in design and that if India 'does not desist . . . Chinese forces will cross the MacMahon Line and enter the vast areas between the crest of the Himalayas and their southern foot'.

China kept to her word and in October 1962 moved into Tawang, in NEFA.

This, then, is the dilemma of Indian policy *vis-à-vis* China that, while India must protect her territories and obtain a withdrawal of the Chinese, she must also try to avoid a war for that purpose because, as Mr. Nehru puts it sombrelly, 'a war between India and China would be one of the major catastrophes of the world—for us and the world.'

Yet it is the seeming inevitability of this conflict which brought

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India to take military action in Goa—a further tarnishing of her international reputation and consequent success for China—and is inevitably leading her to take action elsewhere, Nagaland and Kashmir. Warning statements to Pakistan as well as to China, supplies of arms to the Nepali Congress to overthrow the King of Nepal, promises of action to 'settle the Naga problem'—all of these have to be viewed in the light of Delhi's desperate struggle to survive without a clear policy in the struggle to the death with Peking, who have a clearly designed policy.

Launching the General Election campaign the Indian Congress President called on the Party to 'end Chinese and Pakistan aggression in the Himalayas and Kashmir'. Another member of the policy-making committee stated that 'both China and Pakistan should know India will take steps to end their aggression on Indian soil just as she ended Portuguese aggression in Goa'.

In Delhi the defence planners advocated a 'probing action' in June-July 1962 and moved trained mountain troops into the border areas to cut Chinese supply lines. This produced a series of Chinese counter-attacks and a warning of large-scale reprisals. The reasons behind the Indian decision were threefold:

1. It would serve as a test of Chinese long-range intentions regarding India.
2. It would test the validity of the Indian foreign policy assumption that, in the event of a Sino-Indian conflict, Moscow would bring pressure to bear on Peking to withdraw.
3. It would create a more sympathetic mood in the U.S. where there was increasing reluctance to support India financially after Goa.

Inside India itself the political situation had deteriorated dangerously. While to a superficial observer there would appear to be a stable administration and a well-disciplined Army, to a close observer neither of these is strictly true. The ruling party, the Congress, is split into rival factions, and corruption is rife at all levels; while in the Army there are tensions following on the dismissed Krishna Menon's 'political' appointments during his term of office as Defence Minister, and also following the military defeat by the Chinese in NEFA.

The dangerous fissiparous process which has been slowly eating away at Indian stability for the past few years has recently increased its tempo to the point where Mr. Nehru, while refusing the petition of thirteen judges to appoint a National Tribunal to investigate corruption, was forced to appoint a National Integration Council, with himself as head, to try to hold the country together. And although this was suspended following on the border attack, many

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believe that the dangerous disunities will increase. Even the secular parties—the Congress, the Praja Socialists and the Communists—will not be able to refrain from exploiting the three main dividing factors; religion, caste and language.

There has been a spate of bloody Hindu-Muslim riots recently that ironically coincided with the holding of the All-Party Conference. There are deep-rooted differences between Bengalis and Assamese in Assam which have already resulted in riots and hundreds of deaths—and that in an area dangerously contiguous with NEFA and Burma, and with the warring Nagas. There is the rising demand of the other tribes in NEFA for an 'Eastern Frontier State'.

In South India the Dravida Munetra Kazakani, an extremist organization with its roots in the traditional caste rivalry between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin Hindus in orthodox Madras, continues to demand a separate Dravidian nation free from 'Hindu imperialism'—in simpler terms, freedom by domination from the north.

Then there is the ominous rising scale of complaints by spokesmen of the 42 million Muslims who remained in India after the division of the country, that they are being treated as second-class citizens—a feeling which has exploded in the bloody riots already mentioned. The Muslim League in Kerala, though originally a small organization confined to the State, has recently, through new pressures, been showing increasing signs of co-ordinating its activities with Muslim organizations in North India, and so making the voting strength of India's second largest religious group a major factor at the coming elections. This will also have an important side effect in Kerala itself where there is dissatisfaction with Congress over the working of 'the Alliance' to defeat the Communists.

Last of all, there are the militantly religious political parties which unashamedly play on communal feelings—the Hindu Mahasabha and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh—and they, too, have increased their strength at the expense of the now effete Congress Party.

In a country where there are almost 400 million people, speaking almost 840 languages, 18 million of whom are under-employed, a secular democratic government would have immense problems at any time. The present Congress Government in Delhi seems unable to meet the challenge in the fast-closing time at its disposal. For, in addition to the increasing reluctance of western governments and business concerns to put money into the corruption-ridden economy, there is increasing doubt about the direction of the Government's own economic policies.

In the border provinces of Bengal, Assam, United Provinces and the Punjab, the leaders of the Communist Party of India constitute

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the 'internationalist wing' of the Party. And it is reliably reported in informed circles that when the Indian Communist leaders went to Peking in October 1959 they were bluntly told by Mao Tse-tung and Liu Shao-chi that they could not hope to come to power by tamely supporting Nehru and his policies as they had sought to do; that they would have to build their party in the tradition of the Communist Parties of Russia and China into a militant fighting organization. Following the Chinese incursions into NEFA the Communists organized city-wide riots in Calcutta. In November, following on the Ladakh incursion, the Communists launched a massive rally in Calcutta, the Assam Communists called for a general strike in Sili-guri, a strategic town in the north-west communications system, and the Communists in all border areas stepped up their pro-Chinese propaganda, criticizing India's large-scale development plans in border areas and exciting local grievances.

Although the Communists hold only twenty-eight seats in the Indian Parliament, they are, nevertheless, the strongest opposition party, and Mr. Nehru is known to fear any further increase in their representation, especially in large cities such as Calcutta and in delicately balanced states such as Kerala.

When Ajoy Ghosh, the adroit West Bengal 'moderate' Communist, sought to minimise the adverse electoral effect of China's militant policy by gently 'deploring' the action, he received an unrepentant and brusque retort from Peking who accused him, rather obscurely, of a new heresy, 'tailism'.

In the face of this militant re-grouping the Congress Party in power continues to disintegrate on an increasing scale. This is grave in its possible repercussions, for the differences were not just ideological, which might have been understandable in the light of the pressures on the country, but are due to personalities, languages and a growing casteism which inflames passions on a wide scale. There is finally a nationwide cynicism and disillusionment at the magnitude of the corruption which was prevalent and spreading at all government levels throughout the country.

In Assam, Andhra, United Provinces, Mysore and Orissa, the organizational and parliamentary wings of the party are in open conflict and the ministerial group itself divided into warring factions. No attempts are made to solve the problems by principles, high-minded or otherwise, but by an unscrupulous expediency which leaves even more problems than it solves.

But Peking, too, despite its external victories, is having its internal troubles. In the *People's Daily* of 22nd January 1961, the Chinese leaders appealed for unity within the country, and accompanied the

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appeal with the announcement of a purge that was to reach into every town and village. The chief cause of unrest in the country had been unprecedented famine and the collapse of the much-publicized 'communes'.

After the usual claim that 'more than 90 per cent of the population supports the régime' the announcement went on to state 'but the extremely small number of landlord and bourgeois elements are attempting a comeback'. The remaining 60 million, or 10 per cent, the report went on, 'have not been sufficiently remoulded . . . and have taken advantage of the difficulties brought about by the natural calamities and some short-comings to carry out sabotage activities.'

With the combination of 'natural calamities', 'some short-comings' in the commune system, 'sabotage activities' and 'comeback attempts by bourgeois elements' China's pace of economic development has been considerably slowed down, but until this series of unexpected events there was no doubt that she was well ahead of India.

In 1961 China's steel production was over 13 million tons compared with India's 4 million tons. China's coal production was 350 million tons compared with India's 50 million tons. China's average food-grain growth was about 180 million tons compared with India's 70 million tons. Even making allowances for the disparity in population—China, over 600 million, and India, over 400 million—the figures would seem to prove conclusively that China's industrial and agricultural rate of production was much greater than that of India.

In the field of foreign policy Peking's gains have been formidable. What China lost by the ruthless suppression of the revolt in Tibet she more than made up for in the image of a powerful, confident nation, capable of defying the opinions of both the West and Russia with apparent impunity. Towards the neighbouring countries of Burma and Nepal Peking was all sweetness and light—making concessions, signing agreements, offering financial and technological assistance. The same friendly approach was made to Bhutan, offering recognition of Bhutan's sovereignty, diplomatic recognition, technological and financial help—the refusal of which Bhutan's ruler's may yet live to regret. Pursuing the militant 'Peking Line' advocated in Moscow, China has provided large-scale military help in Laos, and North Viet Nam, and overcome Indonesian antagonism by recognizing her claims to West New Guinea and the offer of military help. In Pakistan they are successfully wooing the Government with offers of recognizing Pakistan's claims to Kashmir, and regularizing of the boundaries in that area, partly as a threat to both India and Russia. In North Korea and Japan Peking has continued to seek friends and

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influence people by a moderate approach, and even Formosa has been left alone.

Only to India—and Russia, of course, in the international sphere—has China been deliberately provocative. When Mr. Nehru made the understandable comment that India was consolidating her military forces in the border area, China countered immediately with a violently provocative threat of war, and accused him of developing this policy after his visit to the United States.

But it is true that on the thirteenth anniversary of the Communist régime in China, the early impetus has gone out of the revolution and some of the early enthusiasm has dimmed.

It is evident that, in the cold terms of *realpolitik*, China has made rapid and extensive gains while India has been isolated, outwitted and defeated—and, what is worse, without a policy to counter China. For 'Panch Sheela' and 'Hindi-Chini-bhai' and the 'Bandung spirit' have all been shown to be useless and empty slogans when applied to a purposeful and ruthless China.

Yet Mr. Nehru gives no indication of coming up with an alternative policy. In November 1960, during a private interview with him to discuss various aspects of India's foreign policy in Asia, I put several questions to him, and as these concern various countries and problems raised in previous chapters I will give a part of the transcript of the tape-recorded interview below:

Question

As late as 1954 you, Sir, made the statement: 'The crisis of the time in Asia is colonialism versus anti-colonialism. Let us be quite clear about it.' Do you still feel that this is Asia's most urgent consideration? And in this do you now include Communist colonialism (which, from its context, you were not doing in 1954)?

Answer

I feel the crisis of the times is the question of disarmament. Because behind disarmament lies all this tremendous conflict between so-called east and west and its repercussions in Asia and Africa. If any effective progress was made there that immediately affects all these other questions. So far as colonialism is concerned, there is no doubt that colonialism has been on the retreat for many years and had faded out in many countries in Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, there is no doubt also that it remains in some places. It remains in two ways: one is that it is in the process of going out, or will go out, in the course of the next few years perhaps. When you talk about Communist

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colonialism: first of all, I don't think the word is correct. You may call it Communist expansionism: colonialism is a technical word developed more especially in the nineteenth century. In that sense, it doesn't apply. But in another sense you may say 'Communist expansionism' somewhere, or 'the suppression of people' somewhere else. It's a question of language.

Question

A prime object of India's foreign policy attacks has been the Western attempts to form alliances and collective security agreements, branding them as attempts to 'reduce the independence of Asian members', to 'restore western control over Asia', to upset the 'area of peace' which it is India's ambition to construct; the basis of this attitude being that you believe Communism cannot be defeated by force, does not spread by force, and thus needs no military counteraction. In the light of recent Chinese attacks on border territory, do you still retain the same attitude? And, if so, how do you reconcile the movement of troops to the Himalayan borders to counter Chinese Communist aggression there? Or the mutual defence arrangements with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim?

Answer

Now it is difficult for me to lay down a very fixed rule which would apply in all circumstances. Maybe immediately after the last war conditions were such this became to some extent inevitable. But taking the world as it is today, or for the last three years or more, these alliances seem to me not to even help security except in a very, very temporary way; to give some psychological satisfaction but in effect to make the world more dangerous. It is to some extent the Maginot Line mentality which really doesn't protect very much but gives a false sense of assurance, and with the development of modern warfare those alliances have become less and less important in that context. More especially in Asia, I quite definitely think they've done no good at all. I look at it as objectively as possible.

You must distinguish between a country taking effective measures for its defence; that is one thing. It may be justified, it may not be; that depends. But an alliance inevitably is an alliance against somebody, not an alliance in the air. Some danger is apprehended from some other country. Now, that really means attracting first of all that country's hostility. Now suppose, let us take South-east Asia; I mean the Indochina States and others. The whole basis of the Geneva agreement to end the Indochina wars was that the Indochina States should

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have a neutral policy. Of course, they may mentally incline this way or that, but they should not tie themselves up, or become a battleground, otherwise there's a battle, there's no security. As it happens, there, geographically, they are so situated that the advantage lies to the neighbour countries to attack them much more than to distant countries. It really puts them in a very difficult position. While sticking to the Geneva agreement basis may not solve every question, it does prevent these dangerous developments. I think SEATO does no good to them at all. You may think possibly of a world war—then, of course, SEATO does not come in, it's a world war. The way it is a world war is not likely to take place in Indochina. There are other more important places. It is true that we have taken steps to defend our Himalayan borders by construction of roads, etc., and communications and other methods. It has nothing to do, again I would say, with these military alliances.

We are convinced, apart from our general policy on military alliances that if we did that, we would by no means strengthen our position on the borders, we may even weaken it. The burden would fall on us, if trouble occurs, to defend it. Nobody else would defend us there. But a change of policy in that respect on military alliances would affect our various activities in the world. It's not a question of borders—it's a change of our whole concept.

Question

Is the reported growing Chinese-Russian ideological conflict likely to affect India in any way since Indian policy, at least up until the border incidents last year, has been to remain friendly with both of these countries?

Answer

That is difficult for me to answer—in what way it affects India. Now the present position is that our relations broadly speaking with Soviet Union are very friendly, as friendly as they have ever been.

Our relations with China are strained. We're not in the habit of going out and using strong language against any country even if we want to express our disagreement—we do so in relatively moderate language. It is a habit we have deliberately tried to develop; of course, it doesn't help very far. That doesn't mean that we weaken about our policy but the expression of it we try to make as little aggressive or provocative as possible.

Question

In the Lok Sabha, on 18th May 1954, you, Sir, are reported to

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have said: 'It was in the time of Lord Curzon that the Britishers in India started on an expansionist drive and entered into some arrangements with countries neighbouring India. But it is quite clear that it is impossible today to continue any such arrangements created by British imperialism. . . .' And again, when one member referred to some maps, you replied: 'All these maps were prepared by British imperialists. Is Dr. Sinha proposing that we should follow these maps prepared by British imperialists?' These remarks were made in relation to Tibet, but do you not feel, in the context of the present Sino-Indian dispute, that they seriously undermine India's claims—for instance, in (1) the British arrangement with Bhutan and Sikkim, and (2) the maps being produced as evidence based on the MacMahon Line? Or do you see a difference?

Answer

There is no doubt in the early years of this country, about the time of Lord Curzon, British policy was conditioned here in relation to Tsarist Russia. There was no China to be afraid of and Tibet did not count. Yes, 'the Great Game'. It was Tsarist Russia coming down. In fact, their policy, broadly, was to support the then China, and counterbalance Russia. And they did some things then, pro-China things, which may otherwise not have been done but for this policy. All those agreements with Tibet made Tibet a kind of a, well—very much a kind of sphere of influence, I would not call it dependence, a sphere of influence of the British. And when, later, this question came before us immediately after independence, regardless of China, it was clear to us that we could not maintain their policy. Things change fast and we could not function in, well—some imperialist way to surrounding countries. And we came to conclusion we had to change this in consultations with Tibet. We had some batches of troops, not much, a couple of hundred here, a couple of hundred there, trade groups and all that, telephones, men. So we had decided to do that, gradually. Then China came in. In the early days they came in and we couldn't help it, there was absolutely no basis for our objecting, once we accept the fact that China is the overlord of Tibet. It follows, and whether it followed or not, practically, there is no point in our keeping a couple of hundred men in Lhasa and a couple of hundred at Gyantse, or Yatung, there is no point in it. We had to withdraw and therefore we came to an agreement on that, recognizing that position.

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(Interruption by myself)

But is there any compromise involved in India accepting British arrangements in Sikkim, Bhutan, etc., while rejecting them in Tibet?

(Answer continued)

No, we look upon these places as, well, much more closely attached to India—Tibet was not attached to India. Tibet was by everybody considered an outside country with whom these countries had very close relations—but Sikkim much closer than Bhutan—Bhutan, in fact, was a completely isolated country, no roads, nothing; but there is an understanding that with regard to foreign affairs—foreign relations—they would consult India; that was their stand. And we abided by that and we gave them throughout some kind of subventions, which we increased, in fact; plenty of money for their internal development schemes, roads, etc. Bhutan is separate. Sikkim is much more definitely—I don't like to use the word 'protectorate', but it is more definitely within the Indian sphere of help, etc.

About the maps—the MacMahon Line, as it is called, was supposed to be the result of an inquiry made as to the conditions there. It was not a new line; it was the result of an inquiry, naturally, by the British, or by the British representatives, plus the other side, as to what the previous conditions were which were laid down. Our case is not that the MacMahon Line had been decided by the British but that throughout it has existed, and this is a piece of evidence to show that it has. Yes, it's a recognition of a fact.

Question

Have you any comment to make on Mr. Chou En-lai's recent statement when he strongly criticized India's intransigence over the border claims and talks?

Answer

All I can say is, I don't agree with Chou, and for the past two or three months there have been official records and lots of evidence has been produced and when at any time this evidence comes out, it will indicate how strong our case is, based not on any new development but on history, tradition, practices, government practices, travellers' accounts, everything. It is a very strong case.

Question

You, Sir, have said: 'Where freedom is menaced or justice threatened, or where aggression takes place, we cannot and shall

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not be neutral.' How do you reconcile this statement with India's reluctance to take up the case of Tibet?

Answer

Tibet? . . . We have not come out as knight errant for it simply because we cannot do anything about it. . . . What has happened in Tibet has grieved us, distressed us greatly, but we could not do anything about it—except of course to deliver strong speeches. Taking up the question of Tibet would do no good. While emotionally we could sympathize with Tibet, it would not help them in their present predicament to take up the issue politically.

There was no doubt that the Prime Minister was deeply sincere in his attempts to answer these and other questions, with no deliberate consciousness of evasion; but to me the frightening fact which emerged was his apparent inability to comprehend fully China's basic intentions. He was confident that India 'had a strong case', in his own words—but before which tribunal? Even when the hurriedly self-appointed Colombo Conference of six 'unaligned' Afro-Asian nations put forward a proposal for settlement of the dispute in January 1963, the Indian Prime Minister, in the teeth of bitter opposition, decided on further discussions, and accepted the proposals—on condition that China accepted them first.

To the political student it was obvious that China had no intention of pleading a case before the world, for her claims to Himalayan and other territories. Any discussions held were for the sole purpose of consolidating what she had while preparing for further moves. But Prime Minister Nehru, in Delhi, found it difficult to let go his dream of a Sino-Indian *entente cordiale* as part of India's destiny in international affairs.

With the granting of independence to India, and the emergence of a new and powerful revolutionary government in China, Mr. Nehru was faced with different and intractable forces. The guiding principles of British policy with regard to the tangle of Himalayan policies were that the frontier of 'India' in the larger sense should be along the main watershed of the Himalayan range, and that Britain could not admit any authority of Tibet or China to the south of it. The principle of the watershed was itself an innovation, belonging to modern scientific geography and British imperial interests in the nineteenth century.

Thus, often there was confusion over the geographical watershed and the traditional boundaries accepted by the Himalayan people, as has been shown. When disputes arose local officialdom in India tended to take a different view from that of the Foreign Office in

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London, which was primarily concerned with maintaining good relations with China. So that at the time of the negotiations over Sikkim in 1888 Lord Salisbury was in favour of accepting the Chinese claim to suzerainty there on the ground that it was merely nominal and its retention a matter of 'face' for China. But Durand, the principal British Indian official engaged in the negotiations, protested that if Britain were to give way over Sikkim 'we must be prepared to do so at some future time not only with regard to Bhutan and Nepal, but also Kashmir and her feudatories such as Hunza and Nagar and any of the smaller Himalayan states, which may have committed themselves', and might 'even have China claiming suzerain rights over Darjeeling and the Bhutan Dooars, which were acquired from her so-called feudatories'.

The British, who declined to recognize Tibetan and Chinese suzerainty over Sikkim, were progressively less willing to recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet after 1914. The Indian Government, however, anxious above all things to win the friendship of China, filled with enthusiasm for the progressive and anti-imperialist régime which came to power in 1949, and despising Tibet as a backward medieval country badly in need of social reform, recognized the Chinese suzerainty and as a corollary agreed that the military conquest of Tibet was a Chinese internal affair. Having taken Tibet with Indian acquiescence China today claims at India's expense everything that was ever within the sphere of Tibetan influence.

In particular the frontier east of Bhutan, known as the MacMahon Line, was invalidated by India's acceptance of China's sovereignty in Tibet. On the Joint Commission in 1960 the Indian side vainly invoked the Tibetan signature to the agreement; the Chinese firmly replied that it had no validity without Chinese endorsement. In some of the diplomatic Notes exchanged in 1961 the Chinese Government made clear the extent of its claims in the eastern section:

'The traditional customary Sino-Indian boundary east of Bhutan follows in the main the southern foot of the Himalayas. . . . In view of the fact that the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited . . . and that, moreover . . . what is in dispute is not the question of the location of individual parts of the boundary but involves the question of larger tracts of territory, the Chinese Government . . . seek a reasonable settlement of the boundary question. . . . [But] the unshakeable fact remains that it is only the boundary line running along the foot of the Himalayas . . . which is the true, traditional customary line of the boundary between China and India in the eastern section. . . .'¹

¹ 21st February 1961 and 4th May 1961.

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Since China has no prospect of persuading India peacefully to surrender the territory of the North-East Frontier Agency, it has been suggested that the claim to the territory is only a bargaining counter to be traded against Indian recognition of Chinese ownership of the Aksai Chin, in Ladakh, which is really important to them on strategic grounds. But while this might be accepted in regard to China's overall ambitions in Asia, the Aksai Chin road has no great strategic significance in relation to Tibet. The 3,000-mile supply line from North-West China, through Sinkiang and the plateau of West Tibet, would be exposed to the same threat of destruction as the Lanchow-Lhasa railway line, the Lhasa-Chamdo and eastern Tibet roads were during the 1957-59 revolt.

To take this view is to fail to take account either of the intensity of purpose of the present régime in China to take back everything to which it can make even the most shadowy historic claim, or of the special Chinese jealousy of India as China's rival for influence and leadership in Asia.

There seems to be little doubt that following on their 'magnanimous' withdrawal from India's NEFA after inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Indian Army, China is now preparing to deliver a *coup de grace*. This would be accomplished by moving into and occupying Bhutan. Not only is her historical claim to this territory much more firmly based than in NEFA but occupation of Bhutan would isolate Assam from the rest of India. Bhutan—at its western extremity, even without its formerly annexed territories, now part of India—forms part of a narrow neck of territory, some thirty miles wide, with East Pakistan, through which runs the only rail and road link between the rich oil and tea areas of Assam and India. Further, it would give China control over NEFA, access to all the rebellious tribes in the north-east and, without occupying any 'Indian' territory, bring her influence right down to uneasy East Pakistan. It would also bring her into direct touch with the militant state parties of the Communist Party of India, and so in a position to create a 'Yenan-type', revolutionary Communist Party able to take over control of India.

This is the vision which the Chinese leaders in Peking have held out to the people of the Himalayas and Asia. It is far more than a policy, but the implicit benefits of the policy seem eminently satisfactory to the individual nations. A Confederation of Himalayan States to include Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and Nagaland. A major road and aid for Nepal; diplomatic recognition, sovereignty and aid for Bhutan; arms and independence for the Nagas; border agreements for Pakistan and Burma, military aid for Indonesia, Laos and North Vietnam. And, more ambitious still, the greater vision

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lying tantalizingly just beyond—world recognition and power. For Peking is now putting forward its grand plan—a three-Continent Conference—to include Asia, Africa and Latin America, but to exclude the West and Russia.¹

What has India to offer in exchange? As 1964 opens very little, if anything. Mr. Nehru is tired and uncertain, still hopeful that his early dreams of a united India and China will somehow be fulfilled. He has written: 'For my part I am almost always more concerned with the future. It satisfies one's conceit to imagine that one might mould it . . . the future which I dream is inextricably interwoven with close friendship and something almost approaching union with China.'²

The dream is shattered, and he finds it difficult to adjust to reality. Is it too much to hope that an Indian Government might also propose a Confederation of Himalayan States—but to include Tibet as well? Tibet with Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and Nagaland, could form an effective buffer group between the two Asian powers and also form a viable unit. And China might well be prepared to exchange military withdrawal from Tibet, and the Dalai Lama's return, for Indian military withdrawal from Sikkim, Bhutan, NEFA and other areas. It is no secret that India is already arming Tibetan guerrillas in anticipation of further fighting on the borders. But it is a futile gesture unless it is linked with a practicable and attractive policy. The same applies to the tough Naga guerrillas, who will inevitably turn to China for arms in opposition to India's stiff-necked militancy.

Like a weary boxer coming out for the fifteenth round, India in her fifteenth year of independence is in trouble, serious trouble, against a powerful, confident opponent, waiting to deliver the knock-out. No amount of shouted advice from the seconds in the corner, or spectators around the ringside, can help now; the only help lies in the reserves of the man in the middle of the ring. India's great question in 1964 is not 'After Nehru, Who?', but 'With Nehru, What?'. If this is not answered, and soon, it will be 'After Nehru, the deluge'.

¹ *Sunday Times*, 26th May 1963.

² *Nehru's Letters to His Sister*. Faber, London.

Appendix A



The Treaty of Segwli consisted of Nine Articles, the most important of which, in the light of later Sino-Indian disputes, were as follows:

ARTICLE III

The Rajah of Nepal hereby cedes to the Honourable the East Indian Company in perpetuity, all the undermentioned territories:

‘First—The whole of the lowlands between the rivers Kali and Raptee.

‘Secondly—The whole of the lowlands (with the exception of Bhatwar Khas) lying between the Raptee and the Gunduk.

‘Thirdly—The whole of the lowlands between the Gunduk and the Kooree, in which the authority of the British Government has been introduced, or is in actual course of introduction.

‘Fourthly—All the territories within the hills eastward of the Teestu.

‘Fifthly—All the territories within the hills eastward of the River Meechee, including the fort and lands of Nagree, and the pass of Nagarcote, leading from Moring into the hills, together with the territory lying between that pass and Nagree.

ARTICLE V

‘The Rajah of Nepaul renounces for himself, his heirs and successors, all claims to, or connexion with, the countries lying to the west of the River Kolee, and engages never to have any concern with these countries or the inhabitants thereof.’

ARTICLE VI

‘The Rajah of Nepaul engages never to molest or disturb the Rajah of Sikkim in possession of his territories; but agrees, if any differences shall arise between the State of Nepaul and the Rajah of Sikkim, or the subjects of either, that such differences shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government by whose award the Rajah of Nepaul engages to abide. . . .’

Appendix B



The following is the text of the Chinese Government's official Note of 1st September 1959:

'The Indian Government's claim that Long-ju is Indian territory as made in the notes of the Indian Embassy in China of June 27th and August 27th is entirely groundless; the Chinese Government absolutely cannot agree to this claim.

'Long-ju is part of the Migyitun area and has all along been under the jurisdiction of the Tibet region of China. . . .

'As the Indian Government is aware, the Chinese Government has pointed out no section of the Sino-Indian boundary has ever been formally delimited; the boundary between the two countries is yet to be settled through surveys and discussions between the two sides. The Chinese Government has also repeatedly pointed out that the so-called traditional boundary between India and the eastern part of Tibet region of China as referred to by the Indian Government, i.e., the so-called MacMahon Line, was set forth in the past by the British Imperialists unilaterally and has never been accepted by the Chinese Government; it, of course, cannot be regarded as legal. Nevertheless, even by documents and maps related to this so-called traditional boundary as set forth by the British, Long-ju is unquestionably within Chinese territory. It can thus be seen that the Indian Government's claim that Long-ju belongs to India is devoid of any ground no matter viewed from what aspect. . . .'

Appendix C



An account given by a Captain Pemberton during a Mission to Bhutan in 1838 reads as follows:

‘There is a tradition current in Bhutan that the country was once ruled by Tibetan officers resident in it, and that all the palaces and castles now occupied by the Deb and Dhurma Rajas, Penlows, and Jungpens were originally constructed by Chinese and Tibetan architects for the accommodation of those provincial governors; but that after holding the country for some time, and finding it totally unprofitable, the officers were withdrawn, and the Bhutans were allowed to govern themselves; still, however, agreeing to the payment of an annual tribute, and recognising the supremacy of the Emperor of China in secular, and that of the Dalai (Grand) Lama in spiritual, affairs. The style of these buildings, which unites the peculiarities of the Tibetan and Chinese architecture, greatly tends to confirm this current belief; and that the Tibetan influence did extend far more to the southward between the seventh and tenth centuries than it has done since is proved from a fact mentioned by Monsieur Landress in the introduction to the translation made by him and Messrs. Klaproth and Abel Remusat of the Chinese work, *Foe-Koue-Ki*, where, speaking of the Tibetans, he says that “during the Tsang dynasty from the seventh to the commencement of the tenth century, they issued forth as conquerors from their original limits; waged an almost incessant war against China; and following the course of their rivers, which issuing from the south-eastern corner of their valleys opened a route to India, extending their conquests in this direction to the Bay of Bengal, to which they gave the name of the Tibetan Sea:” At what period the withdrawal from Bhutan took place I have not the means of forming a probable conjecture; but it appears quite certain from the result of enquiries made during my residence in the country that the power of China is regarded with considerable respect by the authorities in Bhutan, and a very marked deference is shown to the supposed views and wishes of the authorities resident in Lhasa, both Chinese and Tibetan.’

Appendix D



To quote from Captain Pemberton's account of 1838 again in this connection:

‘The only occasion on which anything approaching to regular communication (between Bhutan and Tibet) takes place is once a year, when orders are received from Lassa (Lhasa); on this occasion, it is said, messengers arrive bearing an imperial mandate from China addressed to the Deb and Dhurma Rajas of Bootan, and the Penlops and Jungpens under their orders. It is written on fine cambric in large letters, and generally contains instructions to be careful in the government of the country, to quell promptly all internal tumult and rebellion, and to report immediately, on pain of the infliction of a heavy fine, any apprehended invasion from external foes. A reply is despatched by special messengers who are always attended by twenty-three coolies bearing loads of a particularly fine description of rice grown in Assam, called Malbhoge, other foods to the estimated value of 3,000 rupees per annum are also sent consisting principally of Assam erendi silks . . . cotton cloths . . . and choora, made of a very fine rice grown in Assam. On one of these occasions it was stated that the orders contained in the Imperial Mandate were neglected, and a fine equal to five thousand rupees was in consequence imposed on the Bhutan Governor, which was paid by three instalments in three years.’

Appendix E



'Fort William, the 12th November, 1864.

'Proclamation'

For many years past outrages have been committed by subjects of the Bootan Government within the British Territory, and the territories of the Rajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar. In these outrages property has been plundered and destroyed, their homes been taken, and many innocent persons have been carried into and are still held in captivity.

'The British Government, ever sincerely anxious of maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring states, and especially mindful of the delimitations imposed on it by the treaty of 1774, has endeavoured from time to time by conciliatory remonstrances to induce the Government of Bootan to punish the perpetrators of these crimes, to restore the plundered property, and to liberate the captives. But such remonstrances have never been successful, and even when followed by serious warning, have failed to produce any satisfactory result. The British Government has been frequently deceived by vague answers and promises for captives liberated no offender punished and the outrages have continued.

'In 1863 the Government of India, being averse to the adoption of severe measures for the protection of its subjects and dependent allies, despatched a special Mission to the Bootan Court, charged with the proposals of a conciliatory character, but instructed to demand the surrender of all captives, the restoration of plundered property and security for the future peace of the Frontier.

'This pacific overture was insolently rejected by the Government of Bootan. Not only were restitution for the past and security for the future refused, but the British Envoy was insulted in open Durbar, and compelled, as the only means of ensuring the safe return of the Mission, to sign a document which the Government of India could only instantly repudiate.

'For this insult the Governor-General in Council determined to

Appendix E

withold for ever the annual payments previously made to the Bootan Government on account of the Assam Dooars and Ambaree Fallucottah, which had long been in the occupation of the British Government, and annex these districts permanently to British Territory. At the same time still anxious to avoid an open rupture, the Governor-General in Council addressed a letter to the Deb and Dharma Rajas, formally demanding that all captives detained in Bootan against their will should be released, and that all property carried off during the last five years should be restored.

‘To this demand the Government of Bootan has returned an evasive reply, from which can be gathered no hope that the just requisitions of the Government of India will ever be complied with, or that the security of the Frontier can be provided for otherwise than by depriving the Government of Bootan and its subjects of the means and opportunity of future aggressions.

‘The Governor-General in Council has therefore reluctantly resolved to occupy permanently and annex to British Territory the Bengal Dooars of Bootan and so much of the hill Territory, including the forts of Dallingkot, Passakha (Buxa) and Dewangiri, as may be necessary to command the Passes, and to prevent hostile or predatory incursions of Bootanese into the Darjeeling District, or into the plains below. A military force amply sufficient to occupy this tract and to overcome all resistance has been assembled on the frontier, and will now proceed to carry out this resolve.

‘All Chiefs, Zeminders (landlords), Munduls (headmen of villages), Ryots (peasants) and other inhabitants of the tract in Ghatia are hereby required to submit to the Authority of the British Government, to remain quietly in their homes, and to render assistance to the British Troops and to the Commissioner who is charged with the administration of the tract. Protection of life and property and a guarantee of all private rights is offered to those who do not resist, and strict justice will be done to all. The lands will be moderately assessed, and all oppression and extortion will be absolutely prohibited.

‘The future boundary between the Territories of the Queen of England and those of Bootan will be surveyed and marked off; and the Authority of the Government of Bootan within this boundary will cease forever.

‘By order of the Governor-General in Council.’

Appendix F



The Chinese Note of 10th July 1958 read as follows:

‘Since the peaceful liberation of the Tibetan region of China, reactionaries who have fled from Tibet to Kalimpong have been carrying on subversive and disruptive activities against China’s Tibetan region under the instigation and direction of the U.S. and Chiang Kai-shek clique and in collusion with local reactionaries in Kalimpong. . . .’

‘According to reliable material available to the Chinese Government the American Chiang Kai-shek clique and local special agents and Tibetan reactionaries operating in Kalimpong have recently stepped up their conspiratorial and disruptive activities against the Tibet region of China. Using Kalimpong as a base they are actively inciting and organizing a handful of reactionaries hidden in Tibet for an armed revolt there in order to attain the traitorous aim of separating the Tibet region from the People’s Republic of China. . . .’

The note then went on to list the names of several leading Tibetans—Gyalu Thondup, Thupten Norbhu (two of the Dalai Lama’s brothers), Shakabpa, Lukhangwa—and some organizations—‘Tibetan Freedom League’, ‘Kalimpong Tibetan Welfare Conference’, ‘Buddhist Association’—and a Tibetan Newspaper, the *Tibetan Mirror*, as well as propaganda pamphlets, all used in the plans to overthrow the Chinese Communists in Tibet.

The Indian Government replied to the Note on August 3rd, stating: ‘. . . The Government of India have no evidence that U.S. Government and the Kuomintang régime are using Kalimpong as a base for disrupting activities against China’s Tibetan region. The Government of India will never permit any portion of its territory to be used as a base of activities against any foreign Government, not to speak of the friendly Government of the People’s Republic of China. . . .’

‘The Government of the People’s Republic of China have mentioned six persons by name in their note as among those who are carrying on anti-Chinese activities on Indian territory. Some of these

Appendix F

persons have already been warned that if their activities, political or otherwise, are such as to have adverse effect on the relations between India and China, the Government of India will take the severest action against them. The Government of India have no definite evidence that these persons have been indulging in unfriendly activities. Even so, the Government of India propose to warn them again. . . .’

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