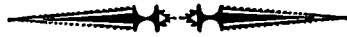
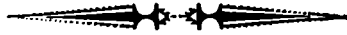


THE
MCMMAHON LINE



A Study in the Relations between India
China and Tibet, 1904 to 1914



Volume I: Morley, Minto and
Non-Interference in Tibet

by
ALASTAIR LAMB

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To the memory of
VICTOR PURCELL
teacher and friend

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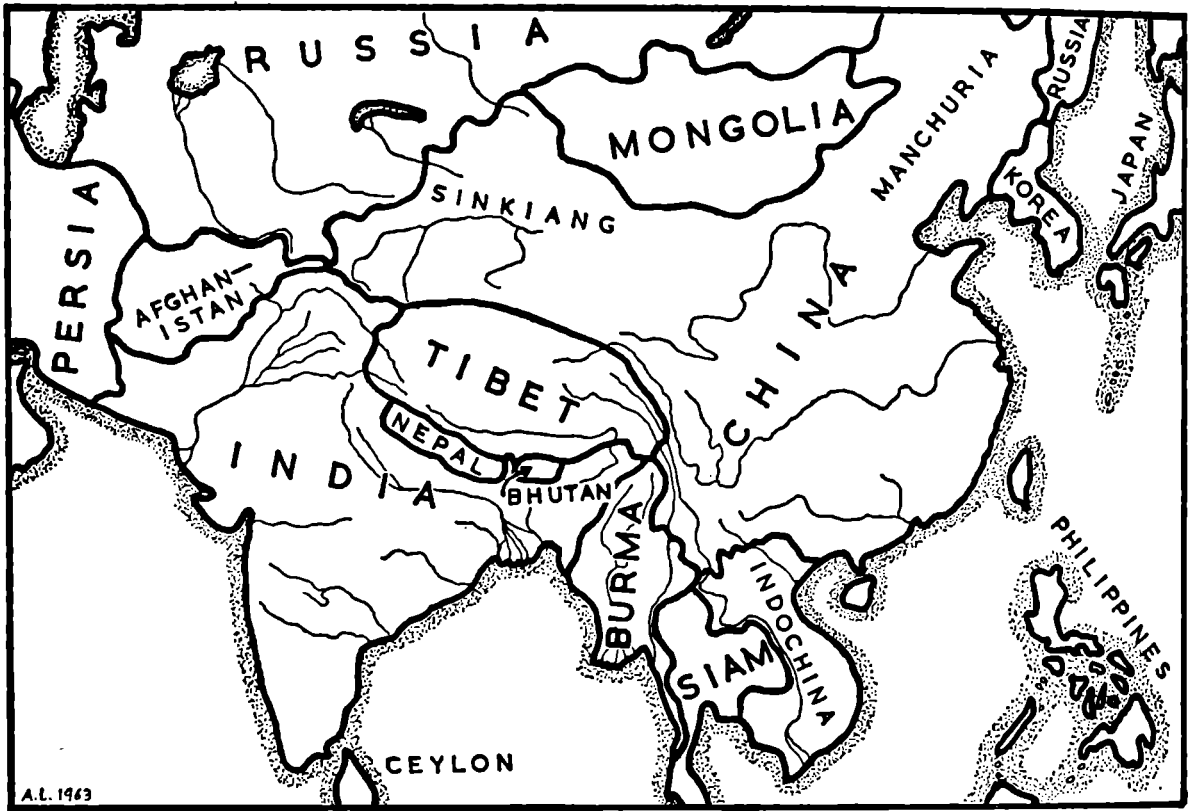
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A.L.

Wareside—Kuala Lumpur—Canberra 1962–65.

PART ONE
Searching for a New Tibetan Policy
1904 to 1906



1 *Tibet in relation to the rest of Asia*

I

INTRODUCTORY



IN the years between 1904 and 1914 the fate of Tibet was decided. The Younghusband Mission to Lhasa of 1904, perhaps the best-known episode in the history of British relations with Chinese Central Asia, resulted neither in an Indian protectorate to the north of the Himalayas nor in an independent Tibetan state.¹ The British entry into Lhasa, that mysterious city on the 'roof of the world' which had been the unattained goal of so many nineteenth-century explorers, has often been described as if it marked the conclusion of a chapter in British imperial history: in fact, it created more problems than it solved. It shattered the power of the Dalai Lama without deciding the international status of his country. It produced no geographical definitions and it delimited no boundaries. Far from eliminating Tibet as an area of anxiety for the makers of Indian foreign policy, the Younghusband Mission ushered in a decade of Anglo-Chinese and Anglo-Russian discussion over the nature of the Government in Lhasa and the kind of relations which the British might have with the authorities there. These discussions culminated in the Simla Conference of 1913-14 when, on the eve of the First World War, Chinese, Tibetan and British representatives endeavoured to arrive at a common interpretation of the political and geographical meaning of the term Tibet.

Had the Simla Conference achieved what the Indian Government hoped it would, Tibet would have received a

¹ The Younghusband Mission has been described in detail in P. Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa*, London, 1961; E. Candler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa*, London, 1905; P. Landon, *Lhasa*, London, 1905; L. A. Waddell, *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, London, 1905.

significant measure of international recognition as a State with autonomy in its internal affairs and a considerable degree of control over its foreign relations. It would have been, it is true, under Chinese 'suzerainty'; but in practice this would have been a limitation of Tibetan independence of very little consequence. In the event, however, the Simla Conference failed. The Chinese refused to sign the text of the agreement which it produced, the Simla Convention. The British, indeed, acquired a neighbour which was for the moment free of Chinese control; but this was the result of circumstances rather than treaty, and there was no guarantee that the Chinese would be permanently excluded from Tibet. The main British gain from the Simla Conference was the delimitation of the McMahon Line, the boundary along the crest of the Assam Himalayas from Bhutan to Burma, by means of an exchange of Anglo-Tibetan notes. The McMahon Line, therefore, can from the British point of view be taken as a symbol of these ten years which followed the British evacuation of the Tibetan capital in September 1904.

The object of this book is to examine how the McMahon Line evolved from the situation created by the Younghusband Mission. It is a story which develops in two stages. First; from 1904 until 1911 the Chinese dominated Tibet, filling the power vacuum which Younghusband had left behind him. Second; in early 1912 the Chinese Revolution brought about a Chinese collapse in Lhasa, creating a new power vacuum which the Indian Government endeavoured as best it could to exploit, in the process obtaining the McMahon Line boundary. The Chinese, however, never regarded their defeat after 1912 as being in any way final. They made it clear that one day they would again be as powerful in Tibet as they had been in 1910-11. In the 1950s they finally attained their goal. A result was the deterioration in Sino-Indian relations which has now become one of the dominant factors in Asian diplomacy. The Himalayan boundary crises of the 1950s and 1960s can in a very real sense be seen as a consequence of the failure of the Indian Government to discover a truly lasting solution of the Tibetan problem between 1904 and 1914. An appreciation of the lessons of that decade can illuminate the dilemma which today faces the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. Had the late Mr. Nehru and

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his advisers been in possession of a more accurate picture of what resulted from the Younghusband Mission, they might well have dealt rather differently with the Communist China which became an Indian neighbour in 1950. Perhaps it is still not too late to learn from past British experience.

The Younghusband Mission to Lhasa of 1904 took place because Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, was convinced that Tibet had become a field of play for the 'Great Game', the competition between Britain and Russia which so dominated Indian foreign policy during the nineteenth century. Until 1899 Tibet had managed to escape the consequences of that rivalry between the two Powers which had brought such turbulence, for example, to Afghan history. The British were interested in Tibet as a possible market for Indian and British goods, as a potential trade route from British territory to the Chinese interior, and as a source of gold and wool. They understood that Tibetan influence was of appreciable importance in the politics of the Himalayan States, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim; and they considered that the maintenance of a tranquil Northern Frontier would certainly be facilitated by the establishment of regular Anglo-Tibetan diplomatic relations. There can be little doubt, however, that in themselves neither the commercial nor the diplomatic advantages of British contact with the Tibetan authorities could possibly have justified anything as drastic as the Younghusband Mission.²

British relations with Tibet in the nineteenth century were much complicated by the belief that the Dalai Lama's Government was subordinate to the Chinese Emperor, and that any British overtures to the Tibetans would require prior Chinese approval. The Indian Government, which was not always impressed by the realities of Chinese rule in Central Asia, from time to time proposed that it should conduct a Tibetan policy which did not involve any measure of Chinese participation; but it was unable to win the approval of the Home Government for this step in the face of opposition from the Foreign Office.

² The history of British relations with Tibet from the eighteenth century to the Younghusband Mission has been related in considerable detail in my *Britain and Chinese Central Asia: the road to Lhasa 1767 to 1905*, which was published in 1960 and to which this present work must to some extent be regarded as a sequel. This book is hereafter referred to as BCCA.

British diplomatic representatives in China, while under few illusions concerning Chinese strength, yet appreciated the great importance which the Manchu Dynasty attached to the symbols of Tibetan and Mongol sovereignty; and they felt that to disregard Chinese feelings over Tibet would probably produce greater damage to British interests in China than could ever be compensated for by an increase in the value of the Indo-Tibetan trade.

In 1876, by the Separate Article of the Chefoo Convention, the British Minister in Peking, Sir Thomas Wade, persuaded the Chinese to agree in principle that the British should be allowed to send a commercial mission to Lhasa. The Chinese, in 1876, were in no position to refuse; but their acceptance was so worded as to make the despatch of the mission conditional upon the Tibetan political situation as interpreted by the Chinese Resident, or Amban, at Lhasa. In 1886, when the British mission authorised in 1876 was finally assembled, the Chinese had no difficulty in demonstrating that the Tibetans would not welcome it; indeed, that they would actively oppose its passage through their territory. The mission, which had been placed under the command of Colman Macaulay, was accordingly abandoned. In return for postponing their Tibetan scheme the British were compensated with Chinese recognition of the British annexation of Upper Burma, a region which the Manchus had long considered as falling within the sphere of their tributary states. This transaction was formalised in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 24 July 1886, in which the British tacitly agreed that in the future they would only establish diplomatic relations with the Tibetans through the mediation of the Chinese.

By 1886, however, the Tibetans had become extremely reluctant to accept the Chinese right to dictate their foreign policy. On learning that the Chinese had approved the despatch of a British mission to Lhasa, the Tibetans resolved to take matters into their own hands and oppose its advance by force of arms. The better to defend their frontier, they had in the early summer of 1886, just before the Macaulay Mission was abandoned, sent a detachment into the British-protected State of Sikkim, a region to which they now reasserted ancient claims. In Sikkim, at the village of Lingtu, on the main road from

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Darjeeling to the Tibetan border at the Chumbi Valley, along which Colman Macaulay was expected to travel, the Tibetans set up a military post; and they refused to retreat even after there ceased to be any question of a British mission. The British, through their Legation at Peking, requested the Chinese to make their Tibetan subjects withdraw from British soil. The Chinese showed every inclination to deny that Sikkim was, in fact, British; and, in any case, it had become abundantly clear by 1888 that they had no longer the power to oblige the Tibetans to obey their wishes in matters of this kind. The British discovered that the only way to get the Tibetans out of Sikkim was by force.

The expulsion of the Tibetans from Lingtu, which Lord Dufferin authorised in March 1888, was intended to usher in an era in which, if the British had any dealings with Tibet at all, they would have them direct with the Tibetans and not through the Chinese. China, however, was not prepared to see the symbol of its Tibetan sovereignty, implied in its claimed right to conduct Tibetan foreign relations, disappear. The Chinese, therefore, insisted that they were the proper authorities with whom the British should discuss those problems of the Sikkim-Tibet boundary which had developed from the Tibetan advance into Sikkim and its subsequent repulse by British arms; and, despite protests from India, the British Foreign Office agreed. The result was the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890³ and the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893.⁴ The 1890 Convention confirmed the British position in Sikkim and defined the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. The 1893 Trade Regulations provided for the opening of a trade mart at Yatung in the Chumbi Valley just inside Tibet, where British and Indian merchants could come freely to trade with Tibetans. Both the Sikkim-Tibet boundary alignment and the Yatung trade mart were accepted by China on behalf of Tibet as a result of negotiations in which the Tibetans were not represented. The Tibetans, under the rule of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, who, by the middle 1890s, was already beginning his schemes for an independent Tibet, not surprisingly refused to be so bound. They adhered to their own ideas as to the boundary; they maintained posts in

³ Appendix I.

⁴ Appendix II.

the extreme north of Sikkim as defined by the 1890 Convention; and when the British attempted to set up a number of boundary markers along the 1890 alignment the Tibetans promptly removed or defaced them. At Yatung, moreover, the Tibetans set out to make sure that the new trade mart would come to nothing; and they ignored British protests to China against failures to comply with the provisions of the 1893 Trade Regulations.

By the opening of Lord Curzon's administration in India in 1899 it was clear to British observers that an improvement in the state of Anglo-Tibetan relations could only be achieved through direct British contact with the Dalai Lama's Government. The problem of the Sikkim-Tibet frontier, however, was very minor ones when compared with other issues facing the British Empire at this period. No one really believed, as they perhaps had in the 1860s and 1870s, that Tibet was going to add much to the total value of British trade. The Tibetan violations of the Sikkim border were carried out on such a small scale that they could have been dealt with by the deployment of a handful of troops; but they took place in regions so remote that even this amount of martial display did not seem to be justified. Other things being equal, there were no good reasons in 1899 why Anglo-Tibetan relations should become a particular object of the attention of the Government of India. Had the Russian spectre not at this juncture been detected on the Tibetan plateau, there would almost certainly have been no Tibetan crisis in 1903-4.

Between 1899 and 1903 a number of reports reached the ears of the Government of India to suggest that Russia was busy securing a foothold in Tibet, a region to which she had easy access through her own Buddhist subjects, the Buriats of Siberia. One Russian Buriat, Dorjiev by name, had by the opening of the twentieth century achieved an important position in the Tibetan monastic hierarchy and had won the confidence of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. In 1900, and again in 1901, Dorjiev visited Russia on what were reported in the Press as embassies from the Dalai Lama to the Tsar. Lord Curzon was at first inclined to doubt that the Dorjiev missions had any political significance; but by 1902 he had changed his mind; information from Peking was suggesting that the Russians were indeed following a Tibetan policy which boded ill for the British. Not

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only were they in contact with the Dalai Lama through Dorjiev, but also it seemed probable that they were on the verge of obtaining from at least one clique in Manchu ruling circles an explicit agreement that Tibet should fall within the Russian sphere of influence. All this, of course, did not mean that the actual occupation of Tibet by Russians was particularly likely in the immediate future; it suggested, however, that Russian influence would be soon established in Lhasa to an extent which the British had never allowed it to be established in Kabul. A few Russian agents so close to India's Himalayan border, Lord Curzon thought, could do damage to British interests quite out of proportion to their numbers. The Himalayan States, especially Nepal, kept a close watch on Tibetan politics. An increase of Russian influence in Lhasa might well suggest to the Durbar at Katmandu the advantages of a policy of playing off Russia against Britain to the Nepalese benefit. Nepal's loyalty to the British cause was cherished by the Indian Government because Nepal was the source whence came the recruits for the Gurkha Regiments, units which many British officers believed to be of almost crucial importance to the military strength of British India.

The obvious counter to Russian influence in Lhasa was the establishment there of the influence of the Indian Government. This, however, was not easy to achieve. The Dalai Lama refused to accept any communications from Lord Curzon. The Indian Government had at its disposal no trustworthy agent who could reach Lhasa undetected, let alone gain the ear of the Dalai Lama, a fact which the Viceroy found most humiliating. Curzon's solution to the Tibetan problem, which he proposed formally to the Home Government in January 1903, was the despatch of a British mission to Lhasa, accompanied by an escort sufficient to overcome any Tibetan opposition it might meet with on the way. This mission would oblige the Dalai Lama to acknowledge the existence of the Government of British India and to abandon his flirtation with the Russians. It would ensure that in future an unobstructed channel of communication existed between Calcutta and Lhasa, preferably by way of a British representative permanently stationed at the Tibetan capital. It would demonstrate, once for all, that the British were not prepared to pay lip service to the 'fiction'—

the term is Curzon's—of Chinese sovereignty over a Tibetan régime which the Manchus had shown themselves unable to control.

The Home Government was unhappy about Curzon's plan. Balfour and many of his colleagues were far from convinced of the reality of Russian ambitions towards Tibet. Lansdowne, at the Foreign Office, anticipated that a British forward move in Tibet would complicate the general pattern of Anglo-Chinese and Anglo-Russian relations. Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, while sympathetic to his friend Curzon's point of view, felt privately that the Viceroy was being a trifle alarmist. All that Curzon could secure in 1903 was permission to send a British mission just over the Tibetan border from Sikkim to the town of Khambajong, where it would discuss with Tibetan as well as Chinese representatives the outstanding problems of the Sikkim-Tibet border and the proper conduct of the trade mart at Yatung according to the provisions of the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893. It was clear to Curzon, however, that once this permission had been granted, if the Khambajong talks broke down it would be very difficult for the Cabinet to prevent an advance of the British mission deeper into Tibetan territory.

The Khambajong talks were entrusted to Francis Younghusband, an old hand at the 'Great Game' who enjoyed Curzon's full confidence. When, as Curzon must have anticipated, the proceedings at Khambajong proved fruitless, there was little difficulty in persuading St. John Brodrick, who had replaced Hamilton as Secretary of State for India in September 1903, that Younghusband should move deeper into Tibet, to the town of Gyantse on the road between Lhasa and the Chumbi Valley. The advance to Gyantse took place in the first half of 1904. It gave rise to some armed Tibetan resistance, culminating in May with an attack on the British mission headquarters outside Gyantse which provided the justification for Younghusband's advance to Lhasa itself. In August 1904 Younghusband entered Lhasa, the Dalai Lama meanwhile having fled towards Mongolian territory.

As Curzon's Tibetan policy unfolded itself during the course of 1903 and 1904 the Home Government grew increasingly anxious at the way events were developing. The Russians, from

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the moment that the prospect of the Khambajong negotiations was announced, showed an awkward interest in the nature of the ultimate British intentions towards Tibet. Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, was now able to meet British enquiries about the implications of the Dorjiev missions and the truth of rumours concerning secret Sino-Russian treaties over Tibet with enquiries of his own. Did the British intend to take Tibet under their protection? To this question, which was repeated throughout 1903, Lord Lansdowne could only reply with a denial of any such intention, and truthfully, so far as the Cabinet was concerned: the last thing Balfour's Government wished at this moment was the extension of British imperial responsibilities north of the Himalayan range. These denials took their final form on 6 November 1903, when Lansdowne informed Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, that:

owing to the outrageous conduct of the Tibetans, who had broken off negotiations with our Representative, seized British subjects, and carried off the transport animals of a friendly state, it has been decided to send our Commission, with a suitable escort, further into Tibetan territory, but that this step must not be taken as indicating any intention of annexing or even permanently occupying Tibetan territory.⁵

This declaration, the Cabinet felt, also bound the British not to take any steps which might possibly be interpreted by the Russians as indicating the creation of a British protectorate over Tibet. Hence the Younghusband Mission, whatever else it might achieve, should not result in the establishment of a British diplomatic representative at the Tibetan capital.

The Cabinet, therefore, saw in British Tibetan policy little more than a demonstration of British power sufficient to warn the Russians to keep their hands off Tibet and to convince the Tibetans of the wisdom of respecting the Anglo-Chinese agreements of 1890 and 1893 relating to the definition of the Sikkim-Tibet boundary and the conduct of trade at Yatung. Curzon, of course, had rather different ideas. He hoped to end, once for all, the danger of Russian influence on the Tibetan plateau. For this something more than a demonstration was required. There should be some permanent symbol of British power easily visible

⁵ BCCA, p. 293.

to the Lhasa authorities. The ideal would be a British Residency at the Tibetan capital; but many of the desired results could be achieved by the creation of a new trade mart deep within Tibet, perhaps at Gyantse, where could be located a British 'commercial' officer. This mart was the key provision in any terms which Younghusband might secure from the Tibetans.

On 7 September 1904 Younghusband obtained the treaty for which he had come. It was negotiated in the absence of the Dalai Lama, who had fled to Mongolia; and the Chinese Resident (Amban) in Tibet did not affix his signature to it. Its validity was certainly open to question; but it served the British purpose well enough in that it established a precedent for direct Anglo-Tibetan relations and it provided the means for the future prevention of the extension of Russian influence. The full text of this treaty, the Lhasa Convention, is printed as Appendix III. Its main provisions were as follows:

(1) In addition to the trade mart at Yatung in the Chumbi Valley, new trade marts were to be opened at Gartok in Western Tibet and at Gyantse. At each of these marts a British commercial officer would be stationed, to be known as the Trade Agent; and it was clear that Younghusband intended the Gyantse Trade Agent to perform many diplomatic and political duties.

(2) In a separate article to the Convention it was stipulated that the Gyantse Trade Agent could visit Lhasa from time to time, thus, in effect, converting him into a British representative at the Tibetan capital in all but name.

(3) The Tibetans were to pay the British an indemnity of Rs. 75,00,000 in seventy-five annual instalments, and until this sum had been paid the British would occupy the Chumbi Valley, that salient of Tibetan territory south of the main Himalayan watershed which separated Sikkim from Bhutan and through which ran the main road from British India to Lhasa.

(4) The Tibetan authorities would in future accept communications from the Government of India and would enter into relations with the British without Chinese mediation.

(5) The Tibetan authorities would refuse to permit the agents of other Powers to establish themselves in the country or to interfere in its internal affairs. Subjects of such Powers, more-

over, would not be allowed to obtain commercial concessions in Tibet.

The effect of these five main provisions was to declare Tibet closed to the commerce and diplomacy of all Powers (that is say Russia) except Britain, and to permit to the British what amounted to free access to the Tibetan capital. At the same time, as a guarantee of Tibetan good behaviour, the British were to occupy Chumbi, which gave them a vantage-point whence they could again intervene in Tibet should events make it necessary to do so. All this did not of necessity mean that the British had acquired a protectorate over Tibet; but if the Indian Government had been able to exploit to the full the potentialities of the Lhasa Convention the final result would have been very hard to distinguish from a British protectorate. The Lhasa Convention as it stood, therefore, was not easy to reconcile with the implication of the assurances which Lansdowne had given to the Russians, that no British protectorate was contemplated. It was, moreover, particularly vulnerable to Chinese protest, since it left the Chinese role in Tibet ambiguous to say the least, while the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 had by implication afforded British recognition of China's status as Tibetan overlord. Thus the Lhasa Convention could not be accepted by the Home Government as it stood; and it was, accordingly, modified by a declaration by Lord Ampthill, acting as Viceroy during Curzon's absence on leave, which cancelled the Separate Article allowing the Gyantse Trade Agent to visit Lhasa, and which reduced the indemnity from Rs. 75,00,000 to Rs. 25,00,000 and the length of the British occupation of Chumbi from seventy-five years to three years.

With this modification of the Lhasa Convention the Cabinet certainly hoped that it had brought the Tibetan question to a halt. Brodrick, the Secretary of State for India, in his despatch to the Indian Government of 2 December 1904, demonstrated that in London there now prevailed a clear idea as to what British Tibetan policy should be. British influence in Tibet was desirable only 'to exclude that of any other Power'; and once this had been achieved—as Brodrick thought it had through Younghusband's show of force—then 'Tibet should remain in that state of isolation from which, till recently, she had shown no intention to depart, and which hitherto caused her presence

on our frontier to be a matter of indifference to us'. The Cabinet, in fact, was at this moment no longer, if indeed it ever had been, seriously concerned lest Tibet should become a threat to Indian frontier security. It was worried, however, that a continued British forward policy in Tibet would be interpreted in Russia as a breach of faith, a repudiation of the assurances which Lord Lansdowne had been making since 1903 and on the basis of which the Russians had agreed to certain provisions of the recently concluded Anglo-French agreement over Egypt. Lansdowne had consistently emphasised that the British wished no more than that the Tibetans should respect the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese (Sikkim-Tibet) Convention of 1890 and the Tibetan Trade Regulations of 1893. He had sworn that there was no intention to establish anything remotely resembling a British protectorate over Tibet. With these diplomatic issues in mind, Brodrick told the Indian Government that 'questions of Indian frontier policy could no longer be regarded from an exclusively Indian point of view'.⁶

It was quite unrealistic, however, in late 1904 to look on the Tibetan question as being solved for all time. The Lhasa Convention, even after modification, was by no means a complete instrument. Its second and third Articles expressly provided for further negotiations over a revised set of Indo-Tibetan trade regulations. The Indian Government had sent Younghusband a draft of such regulations which it had hoped that he would include in his treaty, but the British mission left Lhasa before this could be done. The Lhasa Convention committed the Tibetans to the payment of an indemnity; but it failed to specify how precisely this money should be transmitted to the British. Finally, it was clear that formal Chinese acceptance of the Convention was desirable, if not essential, if only because in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, to which reference was made in the preamble of the 1904 treaty, the Indian Government had accepted China's right to negotiate on behalf of Tibet. To let the Lhasa Convention stand without Chinese adherence would certainly imply an alteration in the status of Tibet, an alteration which Lansdowne had told the Russians he had no intention of bringing about.

Even had the Lhasa Convention not required further dis-

⁶ FO 535/5, No. 83, encs. 2 and 3, Brodrick to India, 2 December 1904.

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cussion, there would still have remained a Tibetan problem which the Indian Government would have found it hard to ignore. The Younghusband Mission, whatever Lord Lansdowne may have said to the contrary, brought about a drastic change in the *de facto* status of Tibet. With the advance of British troops towards the Tibetan capital the Dalai Lama had fled; and the Chinese had lost no time in declaring him deposed. Young-
husband may have hoped that the resultant vacuum in Tibetan politics would be filled by the remaining Lhasa authorities acting to some extent under the influence of the British Trade Agent at Gyantse who could visit the Tibetan capital when it seemed desirable to do so. With the repudiation of the separate article of the Lhasa Convention, however, the British surrendered their best means of exerting influence at the centre of Tibetan politics, thus leaving, it must even then have seemed, the way open for the Chinese to assert themselves in a manner that had not been possible for them since at least the 1880s. By November 1904 Satow, the British Minister in China, was reporting rumours then current in Peking that the Chinese were planning to declare Tibet a province and an integral part of the Chinese Empire.⁷ The possibility of this, in itself, was a valid reason for British effort to secure Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention.

⁷ FO 535/5, No. 52, Satow to Lansdowne, 1 November 1904.

II

THE PANCHEN LAMA COMES TO INDIA



To Curzon the main objective of the Younghusband Mission had been to create a political climate in Tibet which would prevent the penetration there of any form of Russian influence. The Lhasa Convention, emasculated by the loss of its separate article, could hardly be said to have achieved this. Arguing for a British Resident at Lhasa Curzon had written to Lord Ampthill in July 1904 (when Ampthill was acting as Viceroy while Curzon was on leave) that

with no one to keep the Tibetans straight at headquarters, they may begin a hostile and Russophile policy again the moment our backs are turned. Forts may be rebuilt. Dorjiew's may multiply. Trade may be prohibited. Our man (if we have one) sitting in Gyantse will be quite powerless: for one thing we may be sure—that no Government that we can contemplate for a long time to come will send another mission or another expedition to Lhasa.¹

Continued Russian interest in the Dalai Lama, and further visits to Russia by Dorjiev, in the years immediately following Younghusband's departure from Lhasa suggested that there was much to what Curzon had said. It is not surprising that several British officials directly concerned with the conduct of Anglo-Tibetan relations should have gone on seeking some alternative device to the right of a British officer to visit Lhasa 'to keep the Tibetans straight at headquarters'. One such person was Captain O'Connor, the first British Trade Agent at Gyantse,

¹ Ampthill Papers (E233/37), Curzon to Ampthill, 19 July 1904.

whose views were shared by J. C. White, the Political Officer for Sikkim.

W. F. O'Connor was one of the few members of Younghusband's staff who had mastered the intricacies of the Tibetan language, and was thus an obvious choice for the important post at Gyantse by which British influence was to be exerted in Tibet. He shared Younghusband's and Curzon's conviction that the British could not afford to ignore Tibetan politics as they had in the past; and he thought that an increase of Chinese influence along the Indian frontier was little more desirable than would have been the establishment here of the influence of Russia. If the British were to be denied the obvious counter of access to Lhasa, then they should seek out some substitute. The most logical policy in these circumstances would be to revive the plans of Warren Hastings and create bonds of friendship between British India and the Panchen (or Tashi) Lama at Shigatse. Younghusband had already given some thought, it would seem, to this idea while on his way to the Tibetan capital; and for this reason had not been particularly depressed by the Chinese deposition of the Dalai Lama following his flight from Lhasa.² Immediately after the signing of the Lhasa Convention, Younghusband sent O'Connor to Shigatse in the company of the party under Captain Rawling which was about to explore the Tsangpo Valley westwards to its source, and thence to Gartok and Simla by way of the Sutlej.³

Rawling's party arrived at Shigatse on 13 October 1904 and stayed there four days. They were the first Europeans to visit this place since Samuel Turner's mission 121 years before.⁴ When Rawling went on to Gartok, O'Connor remained behind to continue discussions with the authorities in Shigatse and in Tashilhumpo Monastery. He had frequent talks with the Chief Minister of Tashilhumpo, and several interviews with the Panchen Lama, who went out of his way to refer to those friendly contacts between the East India Company and Tashilhumpo

² BCCA, p. 302.

³ This journey is described in C. G. Rawling, *The Great Plateau*, London, 1905.

⁴ See BCCA, Ch. I, for an account of eighteenth-century British missions to Tashilhumpo. See also A. Lamb, 'Tibet in Anglo-Chinese relations, 1767-1842', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1957 and 1958.

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which had existed in Warren Hastings's time. O'Connor was shown some of the presents which Hastings had sent to the Panchen Lama, chinaware, silverware, French and English cutlery, jewellery and two large French watches, and which had been carefully preserved in one of the treasure rooms of Tashilhumpo Monastery. The watches, no longer in running order, O'Connor arranged to have repaired by a Calcutta jeweller. A number of political questions were discussed. The Lama, who was given details of the recently concluded Lhasa Convention, expressed himself as unhappy about the size of the indemnity which the Tibetans had been asked to pay, part of which, no doubt, was to be borne by his own treasury. On behalf of the Government of India, O'Connor presented the Lama with a collection of gifts including a Mannlicher sporting rifle, a Zeiss telescope, a Kodak plate camera, some English books and a number of photographs of London and other British cities. The Lama was particularly pleased with the rifle, not because he wished to kill anything with it, but because he much enjoyed shooting at a target. O'Connor suggested to the Lama that he might find it worth while to send a number of young Tibetans to British India for training in medical work, and the Lama welcomed this idea, though he felt that he could not act on it without first consulting the Chinese authorities at Lhasa. From his talks with the Lama and his Ministers, O'Connor concluded that the Lama was not averse to using British help to establish his political independence from the rival, and now exiled, Incarnation at Lhasa, and was seeking some means of countering the increase in Chinese power in Tibet which appeared to be the most likely consequence of the Dalai Lama's flight and the withdrawal of the Younghusband Mission. So anxious was he for his future security during the troubled times which he saw lay ahead that he was prepared, if he became convinced that he thereby ran no risk, to place himself under a measure of British protection.⁵

Timidity, indeed, was an important element in the character of the sixth Panchen Lama. At the time of O'Connor's visit a young man of about 22 years of age, the Lama was intelligent

⁵ FO 17/1753, IO to FO, 26 October 1904, IO to FO, 19 November 1904; FO 535/5, No. 65; O'Connor, *Things Mortal*, London, 1940, p. 85; FO 17/1754, IO to FO, 7 March 1905.

and able, but quite lacking in those qualities of ambition and ruthless energy which had made the thirteenth Dalai Lama such a formidable figure in Tibetan politics. As one Indian Government official (probably Sir Charles Bell), writing in 1915, remarked: 'personally the Tashi (Panchen) Lama is a quiet and unpretentious man, of great piety and kindness. Politically, his chief desire appears to be peace and quiet, and he is averse from adopting any policy which may involve risk.'⁶ This Lama, in fact, was but a pale reflection of the Incarnation at Tashilhumpo who had so impressed George Bogle, Warren Hastings's envoy, 130 years earlier. He was a rather improbable champion of British interests in the face of either Russian intrigue or Chinese expansionist policy; but he was the only leading personality in Tibetan politics whom the Indian Government could hope to exploit with profit at this time.

To what extent the establishment of relations with the Panchen Lama had become by October 1904 the policy of the Indian Government is not entirely clear. Once the Dalai Lama had left Tibet, Tashilhumpo acquired an obvious importance which did not escape the notice of Younghusband; but it is not certain whether at this time he was considering seriously the conversion of the Panchen Lama into a British protégé. With the official repudiation of some of the provisions of the Lhasa Convention, in particular the cancellation of the Separate Article which permitted the Trade Agent at Gyantse to visit Lhasa from time to time, the possibilities of Shigatse, not dealt with in the Lhasa Convention, must have become very attractive to those British officials directly responsible for the conduct of Anglo-Tibetan relations. Men like J. C. White, the Political Officer for Sikkim, and W. O'Connor, the Gyantse Trade Agent, who had both been deeply involved in the preparation and execution of the Younghusband Mission, shared Younghusband's conviction that the Indian Government could not afford to overlook any means of exerting British influence in the heart of Tibet. They were much distressed by the weakening of the force of the Lhasa Convention which Lord Ampthill, under pressure from London, had brought about. They resolved to try to turn Shigatse into a replacement for Lhasa.

⁶ *Chiefs and Leading Families in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet*, Calcutta, 1915, p. 15.

By the middle of 1905 it had become axiomatic to thinkers of the Younghusband school that the threat of Russian intrigue with the Dalai Lama had not been eliminated by the Lhasa expedition. The Dalai Lama, who left the Tibetan capital as the British were advancing into Tibet, had made his way to Urga, the chief town in Mongolia, by the end of 1904. Here he promptly established contact with the Russian Consulate, and here, in June 1905, he gave an audience to the Russian Minister at Peking, Pokotilov, who had gone to Mongolia expressly to pay his respects to the exiled Tibetan leader. Quite what was arranged on this occasion the Government of India had no means of knowing. Relations between the Dalai Lama and Russian diplomatic and consular officials would not have been quite so alarming to British observers had it been certain that the Lama would continue for the time being to reside outside Tibet; but by March 1905 Satow in Peking was reporting that the Lama was petitioning the Chinese for permission to return home, and after the Pokotilov interview the Chinese had reacted with an Imperial Decree ordering the Dalai Lama to go back to Lhasa immediately. The Chinese found the Lama's presence in Mongolia to be something of an embarrassment. He was constantly receiving delegations of Buddhists from outside the Chinese Empire, including parties of Russian Buriats, one of which brought complimentary messages from the Russian Governor at Chita. He was surrounded by a vast entourage, the costly support of which was being borne rather reluctantly by the Urga Incarnation and other leading Mongol Buddhists, who naturally expected the Chinese to pay a share. The Chinese would have been happy to see the Lama back at Lhasa, had they not realised that his return would have resulted in considerable diplomatic agitation from Satow, who had told the Wai-wu-pu that the British were not likely to ignore such an event. The Chinese eventually hit upon compromise in making the Dalai Lama leave Urga for Kumbum Monastery near Sining on the Kansu-Tibet border, where he was removed from easy access to Mongol chiefs and Russian diplomats, and where he could be watched by the Chinese authorities and escorted by them back to Lhasa should a suitable opportunity present itself.⁷

⁷ FO 17/1754, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 19 February 1905, Satow to Lansdowne, 18 March 1905, Satow to Lansdowne, 26 April 1905; PEF

The British found it difficult to decide exactly what they would do if the Dalai Lama, with or without Chinese support, tried to return. Satow had warned the Chinese that the British would not welcome such an event, but he was unable to make any definite threats, since he had been instructed by Lansdowne to 'be careful not to use any language which might commit us to armed intervention in Tibet'.⁸ If the Dalai Lama did return to Lhasa, and if he continued those contacts with Russia which his exile had not made him abandon, then there was, in fact, very little that the Indian Government could do. Another Younghusband Mission, at all events, appeared to be quite out of the question. In these circumstances the policy of close relations between the British and the Panchen Lama became increasingly attractive.

The Panchen Lama since O'Connor's visit to Shigatse had shown himself consistently well disposed towards the British, though reluctant to show his feelings too publicly for fear of reprisals from the Chinese and Tibetan authorities in Lhasa. In late January 1905 he sent presents to the Viceroy, woollen cloth and silk scarves, in exchange for those gifts which O'Connor had brought the previous October; but he was careful to address the gifts and their accompanying letter to O'Connor and not to the Viceroy, so that he could not be accused of treasonable correspondence with a foreign Head of State.⁹ He frequently wrote to O'Connor to give him odds and ends of news, mainly concerning Russian intrigues and the sinister intentions of the Dalai Lama; but was usually careful to write these messages in chalk on slates, so that they could be rapidly erased if their bearer was in danger of capture by agents of the Lhasa Government or the Chinese. In May 1905, convinced that the Dalai Lama would return in the very near future and would seek vengeance on Tashilhumpo for having treated the British as friends rather than enemies, the Panchen Lama wrote to O'Connor and 'practically asked to be taken under our protection'.¹⁰

⁸ FO 17/1754, Lansdowne to Satow, 4 April 1905.

⁹ FO 535/6, No. 21, O'Connor to India, 1 February 1905.

¹⁰ PEF 1908/22, O'Connor to White, 25 June 1905.

1908/22, Satow to Grey, 24 February 1906; FO 228/2561, Satow to Grey, 21 March 1906.

By this time J. C. White, the Political Officer for Sikkim and O'Connor's immediate superior, had decided that the best way to bring the Panchen Lama more firmly within the British orbit was to persuade him to make a ceremonial visit to British India. The Prince of Wales would be in India in late 1905. The Lama should be invited to meet the Prince and attend the Durbar to be held at Calcutta. On the one hand, by visiting India the Lama would have in Tibetan eyes committed himself to friendship with the British; on the other hand, the demonstration of British power provided by the Durbar would help convince the timid Incarnation of the wisdom of such amity. It was obvious, however, so O'Connor noted in June 1905 when White put this scheme to him, that the Panchen Lama was not going to take a step as decisive as that of coming down to India unless he received a guarantee that the British would protect him, on his return to Tibet, against the combined wrath of the Chinese and the Dalai Lama's party. 'Failing such a guarantee,' O'Connor thought, 'it would not be fair to the Lama to ask him to compromise himself with us in any marked manner, nor do I think that he would care himself to do so.'¹¹ In July, White proposed to the Indian Government that the Panchen Lama be invited, but did not send on O'Connor's views as to the terms on which the Lama would accept. Lord Curzon, who could hardly have failed to see, despite White's reticence, the implications of this scheme, agreed; and in September O'Connor was instructed to go to Shigatse to convey formally the Viceroy's invitation.¹²

On 22 September 1905 O'Connor, this time accompanied by Captain Steen, the Medical Officer at the Gyantse Trade Agency, and a small military escort, arrived once more at Shigatse. The Panchen Lama showed himself extremely interested in the invitation, though at first he was inclined to seek the permission of Peking before accepting it. O'Connor convinced him that this was not necessary, and that the British would protect him from any Chinese displeasure that might arise. Then followed a long discussion as to the size of the suite which the Lama would take with him. The Indian Government had authorised thirty companions for the Lama, who felt that he could scarcely venture abroad with less than 1,000 followers.

¹¹ Ibid. ¹² PEF 1908/22, India to White, 7 January 1906.

Eventually O'Connor persuaded him to take no more than 300 people, and India reluctantly agreed to welcome this small Tibetan army.¹³ In November, on this basis, the Panchen Lama sent by way of O'Connor his formal acceptance of the Viceroy's invitation.

As soon as the Lama's acceptance had been received, and it was too late for the Indian Government to change its mind about welcoming him, White informed his superiors as to exactly what the impending visit implied. O'Connor, whose views on this question White had hitherto not sent on to Calcutta, made everything clear in a letter of 23 November. The Panchen Lama, he wrote, 'has accepted the invitation to Calcutta, clearly understanding that it involves a promise of help from us against any attempted retaliation on the part of the Lhasa Government'. This, O'Connor felt, was no great risk, since knowledge of the British promise would suffice to restrain the Tibetan authorities from rash action; they had not forgotten the lesson of the Younghusband Mission. The Chinese, however, might also resent the Lama's action, and might, in consequence, denounce, even depose him. To prevent the Chinese from any reprisal against the Panchen Lama, O'Connor concluded, it would be advisable to move the British Trade Agency from Gyantse to Shigatse. The Trade Agent's escort would protect the Lama from physical danger. The Trade Agent, now situated in one of the two main population centres of Central Tibet, would have his finger on the pulse of Tibetan politics in a way that would never have been possible at Gyantse, which was no more than a small market town. The result of this move would be that the Trade Agent would 'safeguard that part of Tibet bordering on India from foreign influences', and would thus 'attain the object aimed at in the recent Tibet Mission, which, as things are at present, has not been secured'. The cost would be trifling; 'and as our prestige gradually increased, the necessity for expenditure would diminish'. O'Connor summed up his policy thus:

In a word, the policy which I would indicate for our adoption in Tibet is somewhat as follows: to seize the present favourable

¹³ FO 17/1756, O'Connor to India, 24 September 1905; O'Connor, *Things Mortal*, op. cit., pp. 82-84; W. F. O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond: a record of thirty years' service*, London, 1931, p. 91.

opportunity for cementing our friendship with the Tashi Lama, even going so far, if necessary, as to subsidize and protect him; to open, under the terms of the Lhasa Convention, a new Trade Mart at Shigatse: and to let it be clearly understood that any intrigues of other Powers at Lhasa would be met by a corresponding extension of our influence in the province of Tsang and Southern Tibet: and all this might be done without openly impugning or infringing Chinese suzerainty.¹⁴

These proposals White thoroughly endorsed. They were rather startling, in view of the declared Tibetan policy of the Home Government, and it is hard to imagine their being made without at least the tacit assumption that Lord Curzon would approve them. By the time they reached the Indian Government, however, Curzon's term of office was at an end.¹⁵ There was no reason to suppose that his successor, Lord Minto, was at this time particularly in favour of a forward policy beyond the Himalayas.

Minto, however, could do nothing at this stage, since the Panchen Lama had already left Shigatse and, accompanied by O'Connor, was on his way down to Calcutta, arriving at Darjeeling on 29 November. The Amban and other Chinese officials had tried at the last moment to dissuade the Lama from leaving Shigatse, but they offered no physical opposition to his departure. The Wai-wu-pu in Peking, which only heard of the Lama's intended visit to India after he had set out, hastened to point out to Satow that the Panchen Lama was a purely spiritual official, that he had 'no concern whatever with the external affairs of Tibet', and that 'if he takes upon himself to discuss or settle any question' of a political nature, 'we have the honour to state explicitly that the Chinese Government will in no wise recognise such action'.¹⁶ The Lama's visit, in fact, promised much embarrassment to the Indian Government; but all Lord Minto could do was to make sure that no political engagements with the Shigatse authorities resulted.

On 27 December 1905 the Panchen Lama made a formal call on the Viceroy. The Lama was lent the Viceregal carriage-and-four for his drive to Government House, Calcutta, and was

¹⁴ FO 535/7, No. 10, O'Connor to White, 23 November 1905.

¹⁵ Minto formally took over from Curzon on 17 November 1905.

¹⁶ FO 17/1756, Satow to Lansdowne, 30 November 1905.

given an escort from the Viceregal Bodyguard. Minto and all his staff in full uniform waited at the head of the steps to receive the visitor, who was conducted from his carriage by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Sir Louis Dane. The Lama, who was referred to officially as His Serenity—the term His Holiness was considered by Indian specialists in protocol as too Papal—then went with the Viceroy to the Throne Room, where the two dignitaries sat side by side on chairs and drank tea, after which the Lama's suite filed past bearing gifts, 'bales of silk, beautifully embossed silver and copper tea-pots, embroideries, and lastly, enormous bundles made of hide containing tea', so Lady Minto recorded in her Journal. The Lama then departed, borne away in a yellow palanquin which had been brought specially for this purpose from Tibet and which had been a gift of the Chinese Emperor and of a design used only by the Chinese Imperial family. It was carried by twelve men assisted by a large number of runners hauling on ropes.¹⁷

Two weeks later the Panchen Lama again called on Lord Minto, and on this occasion, through O'Connor, who was acting as interpreter, he made a number of requests of an awkward political nature. He asked the Viceroy to promise that if he were ever attacked the Government of India would lend him an army to defend him. He sought a letter from Lord Minto declaring formally that in the event of danger from Lhasa or from the Chinese the British would agree to help. He wanted it to be understood that the British Trade Agent at Gyantse would continue to keep in the closest contact with his Government, and that, in a case of special emergency, he could send a messenger directly to the Viceroy. Minto was hard put to find satisfactory, but non-committal, replies to these demands. He pointed out that the prospect of attack on the Lama by either the Lhasa authorities or the Chinese was remote at present, and until something more definite had occurred there was no need to consider the question of British military aid. He agreed that friendly relations between Tashilhumpo and British India should continue.¹⁸ There can be no doubt that the Lama was disappointed by these words, which were not what O'Connor

¹⁷ Mary, Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley, 1905-1910*. London, 1932, p. 21.

¹⁸ PEF 1908/22, Minto to Morley, 16 January 1906.

had led him to expect; nor, in other conversations, with Sir Louis Dane and with Lord Kitchener, did he hear anything more reassuring. Even the impressive sight of some 53,000 troops on parade—and the doubting Lama sent one of his secretaries to make sure that the same troops did not appear more than once—and presentation to the Prince and Princess of Wales can hardly have added to the peace of mind of his timid Incarnation, who was most anxious, and not without reason, as to what the Chinese would do when he returned home to Tibet.¹⁹ After a visit to Bodhgaya and other sites in India sacred to Buddhists, the Lama set out for Shigatse at the end of January 1906, accompanied by Lieutenant Bailey, who was for the moment acting Trade Agent at Gyantse, David Fraser, a private traveller, and Captain Fitzgerald, A.D.C. to Lord Kitchener. He reached Tashilhumpo on 9 February, and was welcomed with much formality and apparent cordiality by the chief Chinese officials in Tibet.²⁰

The visit of the Panchen Lama to India, which O'Connor later described as 'our little plot', failed to advance significantly British influence on the Tibetan plateau. Perhaps it might have done so had Curzon still been Viceroy, though it is to be doubted that Balfour's Home Government would have welcomed such a scantily veiled attempt at British interference in Tibetan internal affairs. Lansdowne had repeatedly told the Russians that the British wished for nothing of the sort. At the very end of 1905, however, Balfour had given way to the Liberal Government of Campbell-Bannerman, and both Morley, the new Secretary of State for India, and Grey, the new Foreign Secretary, were quite determined to prevent any action on the Indian frontiers which could possibly give occasion for Russian protest. While Lord Minto was to some extent sympathetic towards the Panchen Lama, and felt that if the Chinese tried to punish him 'we should certainly use all our influence with the Chinese Government on behalf of one who was suffering on account of his visit to India',²¹ Morley could only look on the Lama's visit, and the policy behind it which White and O'Connor had proposed,

¹⁹ O'Connor, *On the Frontier*, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁰ D. Fraser, *The Marches of Hindustan*, London, 1907, pp. 30-47. PEF 1908/22, Minto to Morley, 23 February 1906.

²¹ Morley Papers (D.573/7), Minto to Morley, 10 January 1906.

‘with a good deal of dismay’. He felt that the Home Government should have been fully consulted before the invitation to the Lama had been decided upon, let alone despatched; and he thought the plan to help the Lama in the event of Chinese reaction to the visit, even if that help were only ‘moral’, was a ‘thoroughly dubious or even obnoxious prospect’. The whole business, Morley considered, could, if allowed to continue along the lines advocated by White and O’Connor, well lead to something very like a repetition of the Younghusband Mission.²²

Minto was obliged to make White a scapegoat for the Panchen Lama affair, and to reprimand him for misrepresenting the terms on which the Lama had been invited. White had told the Indian Government in July 1905 that the Lama’s visit would not commit the Indian Government to any definite line of action in Tibet, while at the same time he was aware that O’Connor was assuring the Lama that the British would support him against any Chinese or Tibetan reprisals. Minto maintained that the Indian Government had only agreed to the visit on the understanding that it was to be quite non-political and that, as such, the Chinese had tacitly accepted it. When he discovered its true nature it was too late to cancel it, and White was severely reprimanded for misinforming his superiors. White’s explanations were not found satisfactory. His conduct was not justified by his argument that the Panchen Lama’s coming ‘must raise our prestige in Tibet and China, and though there may be some slight trouble later I see no reason to fear the result’. O’Connor, too, came in for some criticism, and was told for the future to confine his communications with the Shigatse and Tashilhumpo authorities ‘within the narrowest possible limits, and to avoid any action tending to interference with the internal affairs of Tibet, and with the relations of the Tashi Lama to the Lhasa Government and the Emperor of China’.²³

It is possible that Minto was being rather unfair to White, of whom he had not formed a good impression: ‘I am’, he noted to Morley in November 1906, ‘inclined to think White is not too brilliant.’²⁴ It is unlikely, whatever the documents preserved

²² Morley Papers (D.573/1), Morley to Minto, 28 December 1905.

²³ PEF 1908/22, Minto to Morley, 5 February 1906, India to White, 12 February 1906.

²⁴ Morley Papers (D.573/10), Minto to Morley, 4 November 1906.

in the archives may show to the contrary, that Lord Curzon had failed to grasp the implications of the invitation to the Panchen Lama to visit India. That White was allowed to go ahead and make the invitation suggests most strongly that Curzon had decided, after his efforts to obtain British diplomatic access to Lhasa had failed, to open up a route to another potential centre of British influence. The establishment of closer British relations with the Panchen Lama, moreover, provided an obvious alternative to the policy, much favoured by the Home Government, of bringing the Tibetan question once more within the framework of Anglo-Chinese diplomacy. The Panchen Lama's visit to India was arranged at a time when the Indian Government was discussing with the Chinese at Calcutta the question of Chinese adherence to the Lhasa Convention. The Chinese, as will be seen in the next chapter, were showing no signs that they would accept the prevailing Indian interpretation of the implications of Younghusband's treaty. It can hardly have escaped the notice of Lord Curzon and his colleagues that through the Panchen Lama the British might have hit upon a method of applying pressure on the Chinese negotiators. Thus it seems very likely that in his correspondence on the Panchen Lama's visit White was only doing what he thought Lord Curzon wanted him to do. After what had happened over Younghusband's treaty, the Indian Government could hardly propose in so many words that they should now stand forth as the protectors of the Panchen Lama against both the Chinese and the Lhasa authorities. On the other hand, once such a commitment had been made, even if without the express permission of Calcutta, the British might find it difficult to let the Panchen Lama down. As a way round the obstructions of Whitehall the episode of the invitation to the Panchen Lama has, there can be no doubt, a distinctly Curzonian aura.

Lord Minto, when he took over from Curzon as Viceroy at the very end of 1905, was probably embarrassed to find that he had inherited the aftermath of what must have looked like one of his predecessor's attempts to evade the prohibitions of the Home Government; and no doubt White was to some extent Curzon's scapegoat. Minto certainly did not share Curzon's obsession with the Russian threat to the Indian borders and Curzon's belief that in frustrating this threat he was justified in

ignoring the instructions of his masters in London; but neither did he share Morley's horror at all the implications inherent in British relations with the Panchen Lama. He saw no reason why British officers should not visit Shigatse from time to time, authorising Lieutenant Bailey to do so in September 1906, and granting Charles Bell, who eventually succeeded White as Political Officer in Sikkim, permission to go there in November 1906.²⁵ Bailey's visit was cancelled by Morley, but Bell managed to get going before the India Office knew what he was up to. This journey, which will be referred to again below, gave rise to another indignant protest by Morley against the way in which India continued to disregard Cabinet instructions: and, this time, with lasting effect, for Bell's visit to Shigatse in November 1906 marked the end of serious British wooing of the Panchen Lama.²⁶

The Panchen Lama's visit to India produced no solution to the problem of Tibet, but it had a number of consequences for the future shape of British policy. Morley, for whom the Panchen Lama affair was his official introduction to the Tibetan question, concluded from it that in border issues the Indian Government was not always to be trusted to obey instructions from London. Even if the Viceroy accepted his orders as binding, he could not always guarantee that his subordinate officers in remote places would do the same. Morley saw 'instructions, and the sanctity thereof, as the greatest blessing in life, just because it relieves you from the risk and responsibility of "acting on impressions", which are so apt to be dangerous'. Local Indian officials, Morley felt, particularly in complex and specialised frontier issues like that of Tibet, were always trying to 'act on impressions':²⁷ and this was a tendency full of dangers for the policy of bringing to Anglo-Russian relations that atmosphere of mutual confidence which had hitherto been so conspicuously absent. Already in September 1905, when Sir Charles Hardinge, British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, was sounding out the views of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the possibility

²⁵ PEF 1908/22, Minto to Morley, 11 September 1906, India to Bell, 10 October 1906.

²⁶ PEF 1908/22, Morley to Minto, 18 September 1906, and 15 November 1906.

²⁷ Morley Papers (D.573/2), Morley to Minto, 18 January 1907.

of a general settlement of Anglo-Russian disputes in Asia, it was appreciated that many such disputes had their origins in the actions of local agents in remote corners of Central Asia.²⁸ Even after the Anglo-Russian Convention had been signed in 1907, Isvolski, the Russian Foreign Minister responsible for its conclusion, told Sir Edward Goschen that 'he had moments of depression when fears would come into his mind lest the zeal of the more distant agents of both countries might outrun their discretion, and so give rise to incidents of an unpleasant nature'.²⁹ The lesson of the Panchen Lama's visit to India must have brought home to Morley at the very moment when he took over the India Office that he would need, if his Government's policy of rapprochement with Russia were not to be jeopardised, to keep a close check on the activities of Indian officials in sensitive areas to ensure that their zeal did not indeed outrun their discretion.

The Panchen Lama visit was certainly interpreted by the Chinese as evidence of continuing British ambitions towards Tibet. The *Chung Wai Jih Pao*, a Chengtu newspaper, was probably representative of Chinese press comment when it remarked in February 1906 that the Government of India intended 'to oust the Dalai Lama and install the Panchen Lama as the ruler of Tibet'.³⁰ The Dalai Lama in exile also came to this conclusion, and as soon as he learnt of the Panchen Lama's journey sent a special representative to Lhasa to find out the facts.³¹ The Russians, too, concluded that the Panchen Lama's visit to India must have been a symptom of British policy; and during the Anglo-Russian discussions over Tibet in the latter part of 1906 Isvolski sounded out Sir Arthur Nicolson as to what the British would feel about replacing the Dalai Lama by the Panchen Lama. The Panchen Lama, whose interviews with Lord Minto had produced none of those firm promises of British support which O'Connor had led him to expect, sought to cover himself by declaring that he had only gone to India under British compulsion.³² The

²⁸ BD IV, pp. 200-1, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 26 September 1905.

²⁹ BD IV, p. 583, Goschen to Grey, 5 September 1907.

³⁰ PEF 1908/22, Satow to Grey, 10 April 1906.

³¹ PEF 1908/22, White to India, 7 July 1906.

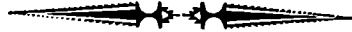
³² PEF 1908/22, Satow to Grey, 11 June 1906, Bell to India, 8 May 1909.

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Chinese, however, can hardly have believed this story; and to them the immediate result of the Panchen Lama's Indian visit was to increase their resolve to strengthen their influence throughout Tibet as soon as they could.

III

CHINA ACCEPTS THE LHASA CONVENTION AND PAYS THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF THE TIBETAN INDEMNITY



WHEN Younghusband was negotiating with the Tibetans in August and September 1904 he hoped that the Chinese would participate both in the Anglo-Tibetan discussions and in the resultant agreement; and a draft form of adhesion had been prepared by the Indian Government for Chinese signature: but the Chinese Amban at Lhasa, Yu T'ai, though apparently well enough disposed towards the British mission, had been instructed neither to sign nor in any other way to signify Chinese acceptance of the terms of the Lhasa Convention which, it was argued in Peking, violated Chinese rights in Tibet. Younghusband did his best to change the Amban's mind, pointing out that China was fortunate to have been included in the Lhasa negotiations at all, and that if he did not sign the Convention, or at least accept its validity, then the Chinese would have to face the consequences. The Lhasa Convention would stand as evidence that Tibet could make international agreements on her own behalf, and Chinese influence in Tibet would thereby suffer greatly. The Chinese refused to be intimidated, doubtless expecting the whole question of Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention to give rise to prolonged negotiations in Lhasa during the course of which they would secure considerable modification of its terms.¹

¹ FO 17/1751, Amphyll to Brodrick, 18 September 1904 and 20 September 1904; FO 17/1752, Amphyll to Brodrick, 24 September 1904.

Lord Ampthill, had he had his way, would have unwittingly created the opportunity for such Chinese procrastination. On 19 September, when he had decided that the Lhasa Convention must be modified, he instructed Younghusband to remain in Lhasa for this purpose. Younghusband was to inform the Tibetans that the indemnity had been reduced, and in return for this concession was to try to get the Tibetans to agree to the establishment of a fourth trade mart, at Rima on the Zayul or Lohit River and just on the Tibetan side of the extreme north-east corner of the Assam boundary. He was also, if possible, to arrange for the customs (collected on behalf of the Tibetans by the Chinese) on Indo-Tibetan trade at Yatung to be made over to the British as security for the payment of the indemnity. All this would have involved much discussion, and Younghusband might well have found himself staying in Lhasa well beyond the middle of October, the latest which his present instructions allowed him to remain there. By then the Chinese would probably have sent to Tibet a senior official with powers to negotiate. The outcome would almost certainly have been Anglo-Chinese discussions at least as protracted as those which preceded the Anglo-Chinese agreements on Tibetan questions in 1890 and 1893. On 27 September the Wai-wu-pu, believing that Younghusband was still in the Tibetan capital, announced that T'ang Shao-yi, lately the Customs *Taotai* at Tientsin, had been given the rank of lieutenant-general and ordered to Tibet to investigate and talk things over with the British.²

Ampthill's instructions did not reach Younghusband until 24 September (the telegraph from India only went as far as Gyantse), when the British mission had already left Lhasa and was on its way back to India. Younghusband decided not to turn back and attempt to reopen those negotiations with the Lhasa authorities which he believed had been so satisfactorily completed: indeed, it is more than probable that he had left Lhasa so soon after the signature of the Convention expressly to avoid giving his superiors in Calcutta and London the chance to have second thoughts about the terms he had secured. 'Had I attempted', he telegraphed to Ampthill on 24 September, 'to alter at this stage a settlement made with such solemnity, we might after all have failed to attain our object, while it is certain

² FO 17/1752, Satow to Lansdowne, 27 September 1904.

that the present good feeling, which is the best basis for our future relations, would have been lost.’³ Younghusband’s departure from Lhasa meant that there remained in Tibet no British officer of rank with whom T’ang Shao-yi could have discussed Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention.

The Chinese, thus frustrated in their hopes for negotiations at Lhasa, had strong arguments for negotiations at Peking or Calcutta, arguments which the Government of India found it hard to ignore. The Lhasa Convention made no explicit mention of China’s status in Tibet, yet this had been implied clearly enough in at least two Anglo-Chinese agreements, the Burma-Tibet Convention of 1886 and the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890. Thus the Chinese could reasonably claim that without their assent as sovereign power the Lhasa Convention was invalid. The Government of India, whose Tibetan policy had emerged from its endeavours to establish direct relations with Lhasa, was content to leave the Lhasa Convention as it stood (once the objectionable aspects of the indemnity, the occupation of Chumbi and the visits of the Gyantse Trade Agent to Lhasa had been removed): but Lansdowne at the Foreign Office felt that the precedent of Tibet having a right to conduct its own foreign relations without reference to its suzerain might be undesirable; the Afghans, for example, might quote it as an argument for their claim to the right to enter into direct relations with the Russians.⁴

The Lhasa Convention contained certain important ambiguities as to the status of Tibet, which both the Russians and the Chinese lost no time in pointing out. Article IX, which read as follows, was especially objectionable:

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

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

³ FO 17/1752, IO to FO, 1 October 1904.

⁴ FO 535/5, No. 15, Lansdowne to Satow, 6 October 1904.

- (*d*) no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights, shall be granted to any Foreign Power, or the subject of any Foreign Power. In the event of consent to such concessions being granted, similar or equivalent concessions shall be granted to the British Government;
- (*e*) no Tibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to any Foreign Power, or the subject of any Foreign Power.⁵

What exactly did this mean? Was Britain a Foreign Power? The Russians protested that this Article could be read to imply that the British had acquired a protectorate over Tibet. After all, they had, if they were in fact a Foreign Power as understood in the Lhasa Convention, already violated that Convention by maintaining the telegraph to Gyantse which they had constructed during the course of the Younghusband Mission. Moreover, by demanding the payment of an indemnity by the Tibetans, the British could perhaps be said to be ignoring section (*e*) of this Article. The Chinese wondered if China, too, by this Convention, was a Foreign Power in relation to Tibet; and they pointed out that if they still possessed sovereignty in Tibet—which they did not deny for one moment—and if Article IX gave special privileges to the British, then other Powers could invoke the Most Favoured Nation argument and demand either similar terms in Tibet or compensating concessions elsewhere in China proper.

In early October 1904 Satow was told by Prince Ch'ing of the Wai-wu-pu that the representatives of Germany, France, Italy and the United States had all pointed out to him the implications of Article IX. Prince Ch'ing feared lest this Article would lead to a fresh round of demands by the Powers for concessions in China, Japan in Fukien, Germany in Shantung and France in Yunnan. What Prince Ch'ing hoped was that the British would 'explain away Article IX in such a manner as to provide a complete answer to Foreign Powers who might found on it similar claims to predominance in parts of China proper'. Since the acceleration of the dismemberment of the Chinese Empire was not then part of British policy, Satow thought Prince Ch'ing's wish a reasonable one. Satow proposed that he should discuss with the Wai-wu-pu in Peking the possibility of

⁵ The full text of the Lhasa Convention is printed as Appendix III.

inserting into the Lhasa Convention some phrase recognising Chinese suzerainty over Tibet in exchange for a Chinese acceptance of the general principles of the treaty which Young-husband had obtained.⁶

The Indian Government, not surprisingly, were distressed at the prospect of a renegotiation of the Lhasa Convention in Peking. They thought that if the issue was to be discussed at all it should be discussed at Calcutta on their home ground. They appreciated the need for some further discussions, much as they disliked the idea, because they felt that without them the Chinese might be driven to take desperate measures such as declaring the whole of Tibet an integral part of the Chinese Empire, as Satow reported in November 1904 the Chinese might do. The Wai-wu-pu accepted Calcutta as the venue for talks on the Lhasa Convention, and instructed T'ang Shao-yi to proceed to Tibet via India and negotiate with the Indian Government on the way.⁷

T'ang Shao-yi was one of the ablest men then at the disposal of the Chinese Government. He was a graduate of Yale, held a doctor's degree and spoke, as one would expect with this background, excellent English. His appointment showed clearly the importance which the Chinese then attached to Tibet. T'ang, so G. E. Morrison, the influential correspondent of *The Times* of London, thought, had no great love for the British. During the period of the Boxer troubles, after the relief of the Legations, he had been unlucky enough to fall into British hands, and, Morrison said, had been imprisoned for two days and then been given the humiliating task of pulling a rickshaw for Captain Bayley of the Royal Navy. T'ang's wife, moreover, had been killed by a foreign shell during the siege of the Legations.⁸ T'ang Shao-yi, who called on Satow in late November, not long before he left Peking for India, showed himself to have definite ideas about the Tibetan problem. Tibet, he told the British Minister, was quite as much a part of the Chinese Empire as Mongolia, but in recent years Chinese authority there had been declining.

⁶ FO 17/1752, Satow to Lansdowne, 5 October 1904.

⁷ FO 17/1753, Satow to Lansdowne, 1 November 1904, IO to FO, 5 November 1904.

⁸ FO 17/1756, Note on a conversation between Sir G. Clarke and Dr. G. E. Morrison, 14 November 1905.

A drastic reform of the whole administrative machinery in Tibet was called for if Chinese prestige were to revive. Idle and unproductive monks, of which Tibet possessed a superabundance, should be put to useful work. The Dalai Lama should be controlled so as never again to be able to enter into those intrigues with the Russians which had made the Younghusband Mission necessary. T'ang told Satow that he was a firm believer in the reality of Russian attempts to establish influence at Lhasa. T'ang was certainly not going to hand Tibet over to the Government of India without a struggle.⁹

T'ang Shao-yi arrived in Calcutta on 2 February 1905, and the Anglo-Chinese discussions opened formally a month later.¹⁰ The British were represented by S. M. Fraser, the Indian Foreign Secretary, assisted by E. C. Wilton of the China Consular Service, who had been the main adviser on Chinese affairs to the Younghusband Mission. In a preliminary talk with Wilton on 1 March T'ang declared that he could never accept the Lhasa Convention as a valid treaty, since it had been signed without Chinese assent. He proposed that a completely new instrument be negotiated to replace the Lhasa Convention, an Anglo-Chinese treaty without Tibetan participation. This, however, was only an opening gambit. Wilton soon persuaded T'ang that the Lhasa Convention was an accomplished fact which could not be denied. T'ang, therefore, changed his attack slightly and opened the formal discussions, on 6 March, with a draft 'Supplementary Convention' to the Lhasa Convention, in which the obligations which the Lhasa Convention imposed on the Tibetans would all be assumed by the Chinese. The new trade marts were accepted, but any modifications in the 1893 regulations regarding their operation should be left to future Anglo-Chinese discussion, not Anglo-Tibetan discussion as suggested in Article II of the Lhasa Convention. British officials in Tibet would only deal with the Tibetan authorities through Chinese officials. The Tibetan indemnity, and the three-year occupation of Chumbi as security for its payment, were agreed to; but T'ang proposed that the new Convention should state

⁹ FO 17/1753, Satow to Lansdowne, 29 November 1904.

¹⁰ The course of the Calcutta negotiations between February and November 1905 are described at some length in FO 371/176, Fraser to India, 22 January 1906.

that the Amban would instruct a Tibetan official to come to Chumbi to pay the instalments. The Chinese would see that all Tibetan forts on the roads between the trade marts and the Indian frontier were destroyed. The controversial Article IX of the Lhasa Convention would be clarified by a British denial of any intention either to annex Tibetan territory or to interfere in Tibetan internal affairs, and by a declaration that all the prohibitions in Article IX applied to Britain as well as to other Foreign Powers, but not, of course, to China.

All this was not what the Government of India had in mind at all. It had not sent a British army to Lhasa in order to re-establish Chinese power in Tibet. Fraser summed up the British position in three points. The British recognised Chinese suzerainty in Tibet—T'ang had consistently referred to Chinese sovereignty. In view of the geographical position of Tibet, China recognised that the British had a special interest there. So long as no other Foreign Power disregarded the prohibitions of Article IX of the Lhasa Convention, Britain would also abide by them, though with certain exceptions arising from the presence of British officials at the trade marts: the British, for instance, could build and maintain telegraphs between Gyantse and the Indian border. In presenting these points, on 10 March, Fraser remarked that the Chinese should not press too hard their claim to unqualified control over Tibet, otherwise it might be argued that China was responsible for the Tibetan attack on Younghusband's party at Gyantse in May 1904. The Chinese, Fraser went on, had failed to make their Tibetan subjects respect the terms of the 1890 Convention over the Sikkim-Tibet boundary, and had not succeeded in obtaining Tibetan co-operation for the proper working of the Yatung trade mart. As a result of the experience of the past few years, the British had concluded that Tibet was 'an autonomous country which managed its own administration, collected its own taxes and made its own treaties with its neighbours'. In these circumstances, Fraser declared, all China could do was to confirm the Lhasa Convention as it stood after Ampthill had modified the sections dealing with the size of the indemnity and the occupation of Chumbi.

At this point in the talks Fraser raised a subject which had been of Indian concern for a number of years, but which had hitherto played no part in formal Anglo-Chinese diplomacy.

Ever since the time of the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890 British members of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service had been stationed on the border between Sikkim and Tibet. Men like James Hart, brother of Sir Robert Hart, the head of the Chinese customs service, Taylor, Hobson, Montgomery, Parr and Henderson had played a prominent part in the conduct of Anglo-Tibetan relations.¹¹ Henderson, who was the current Chinese customs officer at Yatung, had been acting as adviser to T'ang since the opening of the Calcutta talks. Indian officials, while often on personal good terms with the European staff of the Chinese customs, much resented their presence. On occasions personal relations had not been good. Sir Mortimer Durand, Indian Foreign Secretary during the negotiating of the 1890 Convention, had taken an immediate dislike to James Hart.¹² O'Connor and White were not particularly fond of Henderson, who had often ignored their advice and opinions since he took over from Captain Parr in late 1904. In December 1904 O'Connor complained at length about Henderson, who had just stated that the Lhasa Convention was invalid, much to O'Connor's disgust. The thought that Europeans were going about Tibet making that kind of remark was somewhat alarming to British officials on the frontier. When Henderson told O'Connor that he intended shortly to visit Gyantse, O'Connor was rather put out. British subjects, it had been agreed, required the permission of the Political Officer for Sikkim or his deputy before they could cross into Tibet to visit the trade marts. Henderson, of course, as a Chinese official, had not bothered to seek British authority for travel in Chinese territory. When O'Connor asked him to explain the purpose of his proposed Gyantse journey, Henderson declared in a tone of frigid formality that 'he could not recognise the right of the Indian Foreign Office to demand categorical explanations of movements or motives of Chinese officials in territory under Chinese suzerainty'.

O'Connor attacked the Chinese employment of Europeans in Tibet with powerful arguments. Parr and Henderson had both meddled in Tibetan politics and given advice to Tibetan officials which did not always benefit Indian interests. They had

¹¹ FO 17/1755, IO to FO, 13 July 1905.

¹² BCCA, p. 192.

on occasion, so O'Connor reported, treated the Tibetans with that arrogance which was so characteristic of the Chinese in their dealings with subject peoples. Since the Tibetans could not entirely distinguish between the Europeans in Chinese service and those in the employ of the Government of India, people like Parr and Henderson tended to diminish the goodwill among the Tibetans which O'Connor was trying so hard to win.¹³ Immediately after the Younghusband Mission left Lhasa the Indian Government had considered means of getting rid of these irritating European servants of Sir Robert Hart. To date they had all been British, and as such could, in fact, have been expelled legally from India or prevented from passing through India on their way to Tibet; but then Hart would have sent Frenchmen, or even Russians, in their place, which would have been far worse.¹⁴ The Calcutta negotiations offered the Indian Government a means of ending this nuisance once for all; and Fraser accordingly proposed that in any modification of or amendment to Article IX of the Lhasa Convention the Chinese should agree to forgo the right to employ any Europeans, including customs officers, in Tibet.

The question of the exclusion from Tibet of European customs officers nearly gave rise to a geographical definition of the term Tibet. Even Lord Curzon never claimed that the Lhasa Government exercised authority over all that vast area inhabited by peoples of Tibetan ethnic stock. To the east there were Tibetan districts which had for long been under the direct administration of Chinese Provincial Governments, of Yunnan, Szechuan and Kansu. In these areas the Chinese could no more be denied the right to employ Europeans than they could within the eighteen provinces of China proper. Hence an effective prohibition of Chinese employment of Europeans in that part of Tibet where, the British claimed, China had 'suzerainty' involved the specification of those parts of Tibet, like the Tachienlu region, where China might be said to have 'sovereignty'. Had this been done, then the Indian Government would have saved itself a great deal of trouble during the 1913-

¹³ FO 17/1754, IO to FO, 14 February 1905, enc. O'Connor to India, 23 December 1904, and IO to FO, 23 May 1905, enc. O'Connor to India, 24 March 1905.

¹⁴ FO 17/1754, White to India, 30 December 1904.

14 negotiations at Simla which broke down after a deadlock had been reached over just this question, the boundary between Inner (Chinese) and Outer (Lhasa) Tibet.

T'ang, however, firmly opposed any limitation of the right of European officers in the Chinese customs to serve anywhere throughout the Chinese Empire. Fraser's proposal was a slur upon the honour of a great service, and it was aimed at weakening Chinese influence on the Indo-Tibetan border where, so T'ang observed, it had been found that European officers were better able to resist the high-handed actions of some British officials, a clear reference to White and O'Connor. T'ang, moreover, was quite unable to agree to a Chinese admission that British India had a special interest in Tibet and was entitled to a special position there. Tibet was as much a part of the Chinese Empire as the countryside around Peking, and if the Chinese were to concede a special status to one Foreign Power there, then other Foreign Powers would naturally seek a similar status in other parts of the Empire. The French, for example, T'ang noted, were only too eager to find an excuse for the creation of what amounted to a French protectorate over Yunnan. From the moment that the Calcutta talks opened it must have been clear to T'ang that the views of the Chinese and the Indian Government on Tibet were so divergent as to make a mutually satisfactory compromise unlikely. India, having secured the Lhasa Convention by direct Anglo-Tibetan negotiation, wished the Chinese to accept the implications of this and to agree that, while nominally a part of the Chinese Empire, yet in fact Tibet had become autonomous. The Chinese, on the other hand, sought to nullify these implications of the Lhasa Convention. They were prepared to give India some concessions in the matter of the operation of the trade marts; but they were not prepared to surrender any of the symbols of their claimed sovereignty over Tibet even if they were not as yet in a position to give full effect to that sovereignty.

The Chinese position dictated that the Calcutta negotiations should develop along two distinct lines. On the one hand, in discussing the details of British relations with Tibet, the Chinese side was prepared to accept some of the provisions of the Lhasa Convention, though it aimed at so circumscribing them with prohibitions as to prevent their being exploited in the future by

the Indian Government as the basis for the further extension of British influence. On the other hand, T'ang and his advisers determined to maintain every possible sign and symbol of Chinese predominance in Tibet, and to do so even if the result was the breakdown of the negotiations. Thus T'ang would accept the Lhasa Convention as '*an existing agreement*' and as a basis for discussion; he would not accept it as a *valid* agreement because it lacked Chinese signature. He was prepared to discuss the new trade marts and British rights in connection with them such as the maintenance of the telegraph from India to Gyantse and the permission for British subjects to travel to the marts from India; but these provisions were to be so defined as to prevent British claims to build telegraphs elsewhere in Tibet and to deny British subjects any right to Tibetan travel off the direct roads from India to Gyantse and Gartok. Chinese acceptance of any of the terms of the Lhasa Convention, however, depended on Indian willingness to recognise Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, tacitly if not explicitly. In order to keep this particular issue in mind, T'ang, as the talks went on, became increasingly sensitive to questions of protocol. When, in April, the Bengal Government addressed T'ang in the same terms as it would one of its own officials, in a letter beginning 'I am directed by His Excellency to communicate to you . . .', the Chinese Representative claimed that he had been insulted. He, too, was 'His Excellency', and the Bengal authorities should communicate with him on the basis of one Excellency to another. He should, moreover, be addressed as T'ang *Tajen*,¹⁵ not T'ang Shao-yi. In writing to the Viceroy, T'ang counter-attacked by using for Viceroy the same term that in China meant Provincial Governor-General. As a plenipotentiary, T'ang claimed, his rank was at least equal to that of a Viceroy so interpreted.

By July 1905 the argument between T'ang and the British delegates had become centred on one issue which stood as a symbol for all the other points at dispute. Fraser and Wilton maintained that China was the *suzerain* power in Tibet: T'ang said that China was the *sovereign* power. The semantic distinction between these two terms is not particularly clear. Even during the Calcutta negotiations T'ang had from time to time said suzerainty when he meant sovereignty; and in more recent

¹⁵ A Chinese honorific, meaning literally 'Great Man'.

times Mr. Nehru has publicly ridiculed those who tried to draw fine shades of meaning to separate these two concepts. In fact, however, by the time of the Younghusband Mission the terms suzerainty and sovereignty had become part of the technical jargon of the Tibetan problem, and their use in this context had acquired a precision which might not have applied elsewhere. The British had never denied that China possessed rights over Tibet which were not enjoyed by other Powers. In the separate article of the Chefoo Convention of 1876 and in the Burma-Tibet Convention of 1886 the British had accepted the right of China to play a part in Anglo-Tibetan relations. In 1890 the British and Chinese, without Tibetan participation, had passed judgment on Tibetan claims to Sikkimese territory. In 1893, again without consulting the Tibetans, British and Chinese representatives had laid down the future pattern for the conduct of trade between India and Tibet. The Lhasa Convention, therefore, was a departure from well-established precedent, a treaty between British India and Tibet without Chinese participation; and the British could hardly maintain that in itself it implied a change in the status of Tibet. Indeed, they had on a number of occasions while the Younghusband Mission was in progress denied that any alteration in the status of Tibet was being contemplated. In June 1904, for example, the American Ambassador in London, Mr. Choate, called on Lansdowne and said that 'he assumed that we still regard Tibet as part of the Chinese Dominions, and that we . . . [the British] . . . did not desire to alter the status of the country in this respect'. Lansdowne replied that 'His Excellency's supposition was correct, and that we had indeed from the first endeavoured to work through the Chinese Government, though unfortunately without success'.¹⁶

There could be no doubt, therefore, that the British accepted formally the Chinese right to claim some supervisory status in Tibet. None of the earlier Anglo-Chinese treaties relating to Tibet, however, had defined that status with any precision. With the proposal to discuss Chinese adherence to the Lhasa Convention the Chinese had resolved to secure such a definition. In November 1904 Prince Ch'ing of the Wai-wu-pu, discussing this question with Satow, tried to formulate the correct terms with

¹⁶ FO 535/3, p. 147, Lansdowne to Sir M. Durand, 29 June 1904.

which to describe Tibet's relationship to China. The Tibetans, he said, were accustomed to refer to the Chinese Emperor as *Huang-shang*, and not as *Ta Huang-ti*, the latter term being used by Foreign Powers. The Dalai Lama recognised the Chinese Emperor as his political superior and his appointment was confirmed by a Chinese Imperial patent (*Ch'ih Shu*). Prince Ch'ing was a trifle put out when Satow, who knew his Asian history, noted that in Ming times the Japanese Shogun had also received a *Ch'ih Shu* from the Chinese Emperor. Did this mean that China claimed some measure of political superiority over Japan? Prince Ch'ing said no, in this case all that was involved was 'merely the act of a big power to a small one', and the example had no relevance to the Tibetan question. The best analogy for Tibet, Prince Ch'ing thought, was to be found in Mongolia; and he would state that in both Tibet and Mongolia, territories which had at one time been conquered by Chinese armies, China enjoyed the same political status.¹⁷ This status, so Na-t'ung, of the Wai-wu-pu, told Satow in August 1905, was *Chu Kuo* (sovereignty) not *Shang Kuo* (suzerainty).¹⁸ Tibet, in other words, was not a Chinese tributary state where Chinese rights were little more than ceremonial: it was an integral part of the Chinese Empire, and the Chinese were free to do there what they pleased, just as they could in the eighteen provinces of China proper.

¹⁷ FO 535/5, p. 125, Satow to Lansdowne, 17 November 1904.

¹⁸ FO 17/1755, Satow to Lansdowne, 10 August 1905. *Chu Kuo* is an old Chinese term going back to the period of the Warring States, and was generally used in the sense of 'part of the political entity which made up China'. *Shang Kuo*, I am informed by Dr. Wang Gungwu, who has made a special study of the concepts of Chinese political structure, is not really a translation of 'suzerainty' as the British understood that word. The expression *Shang Kuo* is sometimes used to mean a Foreign Power in the general framework of traditional Chinese ideas about Foreign Powers, that is to say, Powers in a tributary relationship with China, but not under Chinese rule. In orthodox Ch'ing political thought Great Britain would have been *Shang Kuo* and so would Siam. 'Suzerainty', in fact, would have been a concept quite foreign to a Chinese brought up in the traditions of Ch'ing diplomacy.

For a discussion of suzerainty and sovereignty, as these terms are understood by modern international lawyers, see J. L. Brierly, *The Law of Nations*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 125 et seq., and L. Oppenheim, *International Law: a treatise*, 2 vols., London, 1948, Vol. I, pp. 170 et seq.

Out of discussions such as these a quite precise definition of the terms suzerainty and sovereignty, and their implications in the Tibetan context, emerged. In a Tibet where China was suzerain the British could to some extent establish diplomatic relations with the Tibetan authorities without Chinese mediation. In such a Tibet the Chinese power was not very much more than a ceremonial reminder of past glories, and the Tibetan Government was in its dealing with British India able to demonstrate its autonomy. In a Tibet where China was sovereign, on the other hand, the British could only deal with the Tibetan Government through Chinese officials. Such a Tibet was an integral part of the Chinese Empire. During the course of the Calcutta negotiations it became increasingly clear that the Indian Government was making every effort to bring the Chinese to admit, if only by implication, their Tibetan status to be that of suzerain. The Chinese, of course, were going to avoid such an admission if they possibly could, and hence their reluctance to accept the validity of the Lhasa Convention with its implied Tibetan treaty-making powers. Much of T'ang Shao-yi's struggle during the Calcutta talks was directed towards finding a formula for the definition of Chinese status in Tibet which would satisfy the Indian Government without at the same time giving up Chinese claims. When Fraser refused to accept an article recognising Chinese sovereignty in Tibet, T'ang proposed the phrase 'Great Britain recognises the existing authority of China over Tibet'. When this was refused T'ang suggested that no mention of suzerainty or sovereignty should appear in the text at all.

Curzon, who had for several years expressed increasing irritation at the 'fiction' of Chinese authority in Tibet, was determined that the Lhasa Convention should not lead to a British endorsement of Chinese control which the Chinese were themselves unable to make effective. He decided by July 1905 that the present talks were leading nowhere. T'ang should either accept Fraser's draft in its entirety or he should go home, leaving the Lhasa Convention as a valid (in British eyes) agreement without any Chinese participation. The Home Government, however, felt that the quest for Chinese adhesion should continue, and they were inclined to agree with the Wai-wu-pu that if a settlement could not be reached in Calcutta, then negotiations

should be transferred to London or Peking. Prince Ch'ing, in July, even went so far as to suggest that T'ang should be appointed Chinese Minister in London for this purpose. The Chinese expressed themselves eager for an agreement, and, as a veiled threat, suggested that difficulties would arise if the Dalai Lama were to return to Lhasa, perhaps even with an escort of Russian Buriats, before the Tibetan problem had been settled.¹⁹

In September T'ang brought matters to a crisis when he said that he was too ill to continue in Calcutta and was requesting permission from his Government to return home. T'ang's illness was regarded with much distrust by Curzon and his advisers. It was said that all that had happened was that the Chinese Representative had knocked his foot against a croquet hoop, and that he then took to his bed for purely diplomatic reasons.²⁰ Curzon was probably right in his suspicions. T'ang is said to have requested Peking for his recall in these terms:

Being aware of the fact that our Government wants in no way to compromise our sovereign rights, and that a negotiation devoid of substance appears to be nothing but solicitation, I am bound to pray on my part for a timely recall in accordance with the guiding principle of diplomacy, 'catch the chance, wait not!', with the hope to avoid the present deadlock and to make room for a possible success in the future.²¹

T'ang's departure, at all events, was timely enough from the Chinese point of view. When, in October, T'ang's secretary, Chang Yin-tang, informed Fraser that he had been instructed to carry on the Calcutta negotiations, the Government of India found itself in an awkward situation. Curzon had resigned, and

¹⁹ It is perhaps significant that it was at this stage in the Calcutta negotiations that British officials began to plan the visit to India of the Panchen Lama (see Ch. II). Both as a counter to the return to Lhasa of the Dalai Lama and as a means of exerting pressure on the Chinese to convince them of the wisdom of coming to terms with the British over the Lhasa Convention, the establishment of close relations between the Indian Government and Tashilhumpo clearly had its value. It is hard to believe that Curzon needed White's prompting to appreciate the role which the Panchen Lama might play in the evolution of British policy towards Tibet.

²⁰ PEF 1908/22, Dane to Ritchie, 23 September 1907.

²¹ Shao Hsun-cheng, 'Review of *Tibet in Modern World Politics*, by W. K. Lee', *Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, Vol. XVI, 1932-33, p. 540.

would leave India in November. There were reasons for the belief that his successor, Lord Minto, would not be so firm in denying Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. Moreover, Fraser, the British Representative at the negotiations, had just about completed his term as Indian Foreign Secretary and would shortly hand over to Sir Louis Dane. Dane would need a fresh Commission if he were to continue where Fraser left off. It looked as if negotiations would in these circumstances have to start again from scratch. Chang Yin-tang was certainly prepared for an extended stay in Calcutta, having just renewed for a further six months the lease on the house where the Chinese delegation were living. Even if the Indian Government was prepared to face this prospect, it was not at all clear that it would bring it any advantage. Chang was not empowered to make terms other than those which T'ang had already proposed; all he offered was to discuss the 'alteration' of the Lhasa Convention and thus, by implication, to undertake its renegotiation and to declare its invalidity as it now stood.

Lord Curzon thought it pointless to go on. When Chang called on Fraser on 14 November 1905, Fraser asked him whether he would sign the last British draft which had been presented to T'ang and which T'ang had rejected. Chang refused, whereupon Fraser informed him that the negotiations had from that moment come to an end. Curzon, in one of his very last communications as Viceroy of India, said that:

In my opinion it now remains only for His Majesty's Government to intimate officially at Peking that they dispense with China's adherence to the Lhasa Convention which they nevertheless have always regarded and still regard as in itself complete and of full validity and that they will themselves without reference to the Chinese Government take such measures as they may find necessary for the execution of its terms.²²

He thought that India derived nothing but advantage from the termination of these discussions. So long as the Chinese were arguing in Calcutta the Tibetans continued to believe that the Lhasa Convention was but a temporary measure: it had already been modified once by Lord Ampthill and would probably, they

²² This was dated 14 November 1905. Curzon handed over to Minto on 17 November and left India the following day.

thought, be modified again. With the end of the talks, however, the Tibetans would have no alternative but to face up to the implications of Younghusband's treaty, and the British could begin to obtain some benefit from their Lhasa expedition, which had cost them well over £1,000,000. Failing Chinese acceptance of British special interests in Tibet, Curzon thought, total failure was the best possible outcome to be hoped for from these negotiations.

In the English political climate which had obtained in 1903 or early 1904 the Lhasa Convention might perhaps have been allowed to stand unsupported by Chinese adhesion. Had Curzon continued as Viceroy, the Indian Government would certainly have fought hard against the reopening of negotiations in Peking or London. But late 1905 saw both a change of Viceroy in India and a change of Government in England. The new régime, as we have already seen in the case of British relations with the Panchen Lama, sought only the minimum possible involvement on the Tibetan border. The Liberal Cabinet had decided upon a policy of settling the major problems of British policy towards Central Asia through negotiations with the Russians, and it hoped to create an impression of good faith and moderation in these matters which would hardly be confirmed by a denial of Chinese interest in Tibet. When, therefore, on 10 January 1906, T'ang Shao-yi, now back in Peking and a newly appointed member of the Board of the Wai-wu-pu (the Chinese Foreign Office), called on Sir Ernest Satow with a fresh draft Anglo-Chinese agreement, the British Minister was instructed to reopen negotiations.

T'ang's draft offered little new. Its terms would not have been accepted by the British side during the Calcutta negotiations. The Lhasa Convention was 'confirmed'; but in such a way as to suggest that only by this confirmation did Younghusband's treaty acquire validity. The British engaged neither to 'encroach' on Tibetan territory nor to interfere in the internal administration of Tibet. The prohibitions set out in Article IX of the Lhasa Convention were to apply to Great Britain as well as to other Foreign Powers, but the British were to be permitted to lay telegraph lines between India and Gyantse. The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and the Trade Regulations of 1893, both annexed to the draft, were to remain in force so long

as they did not conflict with either the Lhasa Convention or the present draft. In this document the issue of Chinese sovereignty or suzerainty over Tibet was deliberately avoided; but in the first article, which made China in some degree responsible for Tibetan respect for the terms of the Lhasa Convention, Chinese authority over Tibet was implied. In the third article, which amplified Article IX of the Lhasa Convention, it was made clear that China was *not* a Foreign Power in respect to Tibet, and that Great Britain very definitely *was*.²³

Lord Minto's Government of India was, in fact, not very much more eager to reopen negotiations than had been the Government of Lord Curzon. Minto noted that:

We do not attach any great importance to the adherence of China, so far as the actual working of the Convention on the spot is concerned: and we regard as a question of greater moment the settlement of the future position of the Dalai Lama. Matters are working smoothly at present in Tibet, and this result will be further assisted by the return of the Tashi Lama after his visit to India, which has been most successful.

If, Minto concluded, it was really felt to be necessary to talk with the Chinese on this matter, then 'it might, perhaps, be possible to arrange that the Chinese should intern the present Dalai Lama (as was done in the case of one of his predecessors) and definitely announce his exclusion from Tibet'.²⁴

Satow had no objection to the idea of getting the Chinese to exclude the Dalai Lama from Tibet, though Sir Charles Hardinge, now returned from St. Petersburg to the Foreign Office, thought that the Russian Legation in Peking would do its utmost to persuade the Chinese to resist such a suggestion, since, he noted, the Russians 'consider the Tashi Lama as our creature' and would be reluctant to see him in sole authority in Tibet.²⁵ In February 1906 Satow carefully sounded the Wai-wu-pu on the exclusion of the Dalai Lama and was not surprised to find them in opposition to the plan. The Chinese, he reported, had twice ordered the Lama to return to Tibet, once immediately following his interview at Urga in June 1905 with Pokotilov, the

²³ FO 371/176, Satow to Grey, 11 January 1906.

²⁴ FO 371/176, Minto to Morley, 23 January 1906.

²⁵ FO 371/176, Hardinge's minute on IO to FO, 30 January 1906.

Russian Minister at Peking; and they would find it difficult to reverse their public attitude at this stage. It seemed, however, that the Dalai Lama was unlikely to return soon to his capital, where he thought there were many people plotting against him: nor was it likely that the Chinese would press for the Lama's return so long as they had him safely under their control at Kumbum Monastery near Sining.²⁶

With the problem of the Dalai Lama's return shelved, Satow and T'ang soon agreed on a draft text which hardly differed from that which T'ang had proposed in January. A few words were changed: in Article II, for example, the British agreed not to *annex* Tibetan territory rather than not to *encroach* on it, as originally suggested. A delay was caused by the difficulty of obtaining a satisfactory Chinese text of the Lhasa Convention to be appended to the new agreement: the text which the Amban had sent back to the Wai-wu-pu in late 1904 differed considerably from the definitive English version.²⁷ The negotiations, however, were, as *The Times* reported, 'conducted in a friendly spirit without a hitch'; and they were a credit to T'ang Shao-yi, 'that accomplished Yale graduate whose appointment as one of the Ministers of the [Chinese] Foreign Office is the most satisfactory appointment made by China for a long time'.²⁸ So co-operative was T'ang Shao-yi that he even agreed to the exclusion from Tibet of European employees of the Chinese Maritime Customs, a proposal which he had resisted strongly when it was previously put to him in Calcutta. On 27 April 1906 the Anglo-Chinese Convention was signed, and attached to it were notes exchanged between T'ang and Satow in which it was agreed that the Chinese could continue to employ Europeans in Tibet for a year from the date of signature of the Convention, after which time they would cease entirely to do so.²⁹

The signing of the Convention marked a defeat for those officials of the Government of India who hoped that the

²⁶ FO 371/176, Satow to Grey, 24 February 1906.

²⁷ FO 371/177, Satow to Grey, 28 April 1906.

²⁸ *The Times*, 27 April 1906.

²⁹ For the full text, see Appendix IV. Bell, *Tibet*, op. cit., and Richardson, *Tibet*, op. cit., both print the text; but Bell omits all mention of the exchange of notes and Richardson only summarises them in such a way as to obscure their import.

Younghusband Mission to Lhasa could still provide the basis for the maintenance of a significant measure of British influence in Tibet. While the Convention did not declare Tibet to be a part of China, it certainly implied it. Article II effectively prevented the British from exploiting, as O'Connor and White had once proposed, the friendship of the Panchen Lama for political ends: this would certainly be construed as British interference in Tibetan administration. Article III ruled out the possibility of British exploitation of Tibetan mineral wealth and made it clear that in this respect at least the British were on the same footing as all other Powers except China. When the Chinese confirmed the Lhasa Convention, as they did in Article I, they implicitly assumed responsibility for those aspects of Anglo-Tibetan relations which the Lhasa Convention left unresolved. Fresh Trade Regulations, which by the Lhasa Convention would have been discussed by Tibetan and British delegates without, of necessity, Chinese participation, had now become the subject of Anglo-Chinese negotiation without, of necessity, Tibetan participation. The payment of the Tibetan indemnity had now become a matter of direct Chinese concern. As Sir Francis Younghusband was to note somewhat bitterly, 'the signature of this Convention, far from improving our status in Tibet, or conferring any increased regularity upon our intercourse, seems to have had a precisely opposite effect'.³⁰

The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 confirmed, by its reference to the Lhasa Convention, the Tibetan obligation of paying to the Government of India an indemnity of Rs. 25,00,000; but it did not specify how the money was to be transferred. The Indian Government, disappointed by the turn of events at Peking which they considered to have undermined British prestige in Tibet, resolved to exploit the indemnity as a means of demonstrating that the British still thought the Lhasa Convention a valid treaty and not to have been, as the Chinese were now giving out in Tibet, replaced by the recently concluded Anglo-Chinese agreement. The Lhasa Convention specified that Tibet should pay the indemnity: it did not say that China could pay on behalf of Tibet: the Indian Government, therefore, resolved that Tibet, if only symbolically, should pay.

The Tibetan indemnity had been justified by Younghusband

³⁰ Sir F. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, 1910, p. 343.

as a reasonable recompense for the expenses incurred by the British during the course of the Tibetan campaign; but the real reason for its imposition was political. As security until it was paid, the British were to occupy the Chumbi Valley. Before Amphill reduced the size of the indemnity, and when it was still payable in seventy-five annual instalments, this meant a virtually permanent British occupation of that tract which was considered a strategic gateway to the Tibetan plateau. Even after its reduction by two-thirds, the Indian Government still hoped to make some political capital out of the indemnity. It listened with favour to O'Connor's proposal in November 1904 that in return for reducing the indemnity the Tibetans should be asked to send a delegation of leading officials down to India, which

would have the best political result, would act as a counterblast to Dorjjeff's missions to the Czar, and the effect on the minds of the Tibetan delegates after seeing something of the wonders of modern science and war establishments would be the best guarantee for the future tranquillity of the country.³¹

The Tibetans were duly invited down to Calcutta. They refused on the very reasonable grounds that the climate of Bengal did not suit them, and that anything which needed to be discussed could just as well be discussed at Gyantse.³² Even so, the Tibetans could not, it seemed, avoid sending an official of importance to the Gyantse Trade Agency, if not to British India, to pay the required instalments, and this process might well extend over twenty-five years; for Lord Amphill, while declaring that Chumbi should be evacuated after the Tibetans had paid three annual instalments of the indemnity, did not say in so many words that the entire indemnity should be paid in three instalments only.

The Chinese were well aware of the implications of the indemnity. At the moment when the Calcutta adhesion negotiations broke down an Imperial Decree announced that the Chinese had most generously agreed to pay the indemnity on behalf of their Tibetan subjects, and in December 1905 proclamations to this effect, written in Chinese and Tibetan, were

³¹ FO 17/1754, IO to FO, 12 January 1905, enc. O'Connor to India, 25 November 1904.

³² FO 17/1754, O'Connor to India, 5 April 1905.

posted in the major Tibetan towns.³³ This news, which annoyed the Indian Government greatly as another sign of Chinese intention to reduce British influence in Tibet in every possible way, was received with mixed feelings in London. Lansdowne at the Foreign Office thought that at least until the Chinese had adhered to the Lhasa Convention they could not possibly be allowed to pay on behalf of the Tibetans: to let them do so 'would be tantamount to admitting the intervention of the Chinese in relieving Tibet from this portion of her obligations while avoiding all responsibility for any other portion of the [Lhasa] Convention'.³⁴ Brodrick at the India Office, however, while seeing Lansdowne's point, thought that 'the moral effect to be produced by exacting the indemnity directly from the Tibetans will probably be far less valuable to the Indian Government than the relief afforded from the necessity of attempting to enforce a direct tribute annually for 25 years'.³⁵

The Indian Government, on reflection, could see no easy way to prevent the Chinese from giving the Tibetans the means with which to meet the indemnity. Faced, however, with the news that the Chinese Government had instructed the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank to transmit the first instalment directly to the Indian Treasury, it resolved to insist upon the actual transfer of funds being made through a Tibetan official.³⁶ When this decision was put to Chang Yin-tang, he promptly arranged through Peking and Lhasa for a senior Tibetan Minister to come down to Calcutta for this purpose. In February 1906 the Sechung Shape set out from Lhasa with orders to collect the indemnity from Chang Yin-tang in Calcutta and hand it over to the Indian Government. Minto's reaction was to insist that after the Sechung Shape had collected the money in Calcutta he should then take it to Gyantse and give it to the British Trade Agent, the idea being that the actual transfer should take place on Tibetan soil so as to make the maximum impression on Tibetan opinion.³⁷

³³ FO 17/1756, Satow to Lansdowne, 14 November 1905; FO 371/176, IO to FO, 26 April 1906, enc. Bailey to White, 29 December 1905.

³⁴ FO 17/1756, FO to IO, 15 November 1905.

³⁵ FO 17/1756, IO to FO, 21 November 1905.

³⁶ FO 17/1756, Satow to Lansdowne, 16 November 1905; Minto to Brodrick, 30 November 1905.

³⁷ Morley Papers (D.573/7), Minto to Morley, 15 February 1906.

The Sechung Shape arrived at Calcutta in early March. The Indian Government offered to put him up at Hastings House, which was generally used to accommodate visiting dignitaries, but found to their irritation that the Chinese had already obtained a house for him, No. 15 Kyd Street. The Shape informed India that he had with him the sum of Rs. 8,33,333, or one-third of the total indemnity, the clear implication being the intention to pay in three instalments instead of twenty-five.³⁸ Minto would have liked to make an issue over this, and to stick to the letter of the Lhasa Convention as Amphill had modified it.³⁹ The Home Government, however, were of a different mind. The Foreign Office thought the Viceroy was being 'irrational'. Morley agreed.⁴⁰ India was told to accept payment in three instalments. By this time, however, some six weeks had passed. The Shape, having failed to obtain an audience with Lord Minto and growing weary of Calcutta, had by now gone off to Darjeeling, where he was staying at Ghoom Monastery. In May, Lord Minto having in the meantime given up the rather childish scheme of insisting on actual payment in Gyantse, the Shape was summoned back to Calcutta where, on 29 May 1906, he passed over to the Indian Foreign Office a cheque on the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank for Rs. 8,33,333, 5 annas and 4 pice made out to the Government of India.⁴¹ When, in 1907, Minto proposed to repeat this charade, Morley stood firm and insisted that the Chinese be allowed to pay the second instalment by direct telegraphic transfer from Peking to the Indian Treasury without the intervention of any Tibetan officials.⁴²

The course of the abortive Calcutta negotiations made a lasting impression on many British officials in the service of the Indian Government. They felt that they had to some extent been betrayed by their own Home Government. They had fought hard on the issue of the Chinese status in Tibet, and had refused to abandon what they considered to be the minimum British requirements: yet the moment the venue of the negotia-

³⁸ FO 371/176, IO to FO, 1 May 1906.

³⁹ FO 371/176, Minto to Morley, 26 March 1906.

⁴⁰ FO 371/176, IO to FO, 4 April 1906.

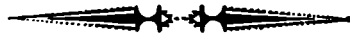
⁴¹ FO 371/176, Minto to Morley, 26 May and 29 May 1906.

⁴² FO 371/177, IO to FO, 23 February 1907.

tions had been transferred from India to Peking their arguments had been ignored and the Chinese granted terms which the Indian Government would never have offered if left to its own devices. It must have seemed to many of Minto's advisers that the British Foreign Office in London posed at least as great a threat to the security of the Indian borders as ever did Russia. The Indian Government did not forget the lessons of 1905-6. When, following the Tibetan border crisis of 1910-12, Anglo-Chinese negotiations over the status of Tibet once more seemed called for, it struggled valiantly to keep them under its own control so as not again to leave vital Indian interests to the tender mercies of the Foreign Office in London and the British Minister in Peking. Had it not done so, the Convention of 1914 would certainly have been of a very different shape, and the McMahon Line would probably never have been defined at all.

IV

MORLEY'S MASTERLY INACTIVITY AND THE QUESTION OF TRAVELLERS IN TIBET



THE Indian administration of Lord Curzon persisted in its attempts to find some solution to the problem of Tibet despite the setback over the Lhasa Convention. Even if a British representative were not to be permitted to visit Lhasa from time to time, at least the Indian Government could keep in the closest touch with the Panchen Lama and his Ministers at Tashilhumpo. The overtures to the Panchen Lama, which the documents preserved in the India Office and Foreign Office archives suggest were made largely by White and O'Connor on their own initiative, were probably approved, and their implications understood, by Curzon. The Calcutta negotiations failed, moreover, because Curzon struggled to preserve what he could of the gains embodied in the Lhasa Convention, and was not prepared to turn it into an Anglo-Chinese treaty in which the British lost their right of direct communication with the Tibetan authorities.

Lord Minto, when he had time to think about the Tibetan question after taking over from Curzon in November 1905, seems to have concluded that, after all, it would perhaps be wise to hang on to what gains still survived from the fruits of his predecessor's Tibetan policy. While Minto certainly did not share Curzon's obsessive preoccupation with the menace to British India of Russian ambitions in Central Asia, yet he saw no good reason why the Indian Government should not, if a suitable opportunity presented itself, make its influence felt in

Tibet; and he soon acquired an almost Curzonian sensitivity to questions of British prestige on the Indian frontiers. Had Minto been left to his own devices, there can be little doubt that British officials would have gone on visiting the Panchen Lama and quietly discussing political matters with that Incarnation. Had Minto retained the last word over the Calcutta negotiations, it is more than probable that their breakdown would have been final. The Indian Government would have been content with the Lhasa Convention without Chinese adherence, and Indian opposition might well have prevented Satow from heeding T'ang Shao-yi's request to reopen negotiations in Peking.

The Home Government, so long as Balfour and the Conservatives remained in power, was still committed to some degree of involvement in Tibetan problems. It had, after all, approved the Younghusband Mission. Even when it declared publicly that Younghusband had exceeded his instructions and obtained by the Lhasa Convention more than he was authorised to do, it never went so far as to say that the reasons which Curzon had adduced for sending the Mission to Lhasa were false reasons. Brodrick, however much he might be irritated by Curzon's frontier policy, was to some extent a party to that policy. The Conservative Government's opposition to Curzon was based, in the last analysis, not on questions of principle but on expediency. Curzon, so both Brodrick and Lansdowne argued, had by his Tibetan scheme stirred up something of a hornet's nest about the ears of the Cabinet. He had provided ammunition for the Opposition and he had given the Russians grounds on which to base strong diplomatic protests. Lansdowne, who had used a British denial of any intention to establish permanent influence in Tibet as a means of persuading the Russians to approve British moves elsewhere, and particularly to accept that part of the Cambon-Lansdowne agreements of April 1904 which dealt with Egypt and the holders of Egyptian bonds, found Curzon a constant source of embarrassment. Lansdowne, however, undoubtedly looked with some alarm on the evidence of Russian intrigues with the Dalai Lama, and felt that the British should do their best to counter them. Brodrick, who was the most vocal of critics of Curzon's Tibetan adventure, attacked it more out of personal annoyance with Curzon (the precise reasons for which are still obscure) than on

questions of principle. Brodrick was probably no more of a Russophil than Curzon himself. After the Japanese naval victory over the Russians at the battle of Tsushima in May 1905, Brodrick wrote that he had 'never felt so happy for years over anything abroad as with the destruction of the Russian fleet. . . . It will take them a quarter of a century to recover their prestige.'¹ He was not likely to scrutinise minutely every single aspect of Indian frontier policy to see if it could possibly cause offence to Russia. Lansdowne and Brodrick were by 1905, it is true, thinking seriously about the prospects of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. The possibilities had been explored by Charles Hardinge during his Embassy at St. Petersburg, and the Japanese victories had made some change in British relations with Russia easier to achieve, since they had diminished both Russian power and Russian interest in the Far East. As Brodrick noted in March 1905, 'the state of things in the Far East makes one begin to hope that another six or nine months may exhaust Russia to a degree which will render her innocuous to us for many years to come'.² Rapprochement with Russia, however, was no vital article of faith in the Conservative repertoire.

The Liberal Government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, which formally took office on 4 December 1905, just two weeks after Curzon had handed over the Viceroyalty of India to Minto, had resolved upon bringing about, if it at all lay within its power, a change in the nature of Anglo-Russian relations. Grey at the Foreign Office and Morley at the India Office were determined to permit no British actions which would nourish Russian suspicions. The effect of this new attitude was already apparent in December 1905 in Morley's expression of dismay at the political implications of the Panchen Lama's visit to India, an incident which confirmed Morley, the new Secretary of State, in a long-held opinion that much Anglo-Russian tension had arisen from the activities of British and Russian frontier officials, whose policy was sometimes diametrically opposed to that of their masters in London and St. Petersburg. 'Frontier men' had their point of view. It was an admirable one with which Morley sympathised. They performed extremely difficult tasks in conditions which were often most unpleasant,

¹ Ampthill Papers (E.233/11), Brodrick to Ampthill, 2 June 1905.

² Ampthill Papers (E.233/11), Brodrick to Ampthill, 17 March 1905.

and their work sometimes did not receive the acknowledgment it deserved. British officials serving on the frontiers of India, however, Morley thought, tended to have one important failing. 'They wear blinkers,' he wrote to Minto in October 1906, 'and forget the complex intrigues, rival interests and, if you like, diabolical machinations which make up international politics for a vast sprawling Empire like ours, exposing more vulnerable surface than any Empire the world ever saw.'³ A close watch from London had to be maintained on the 'frontier men'; and in this category Morley was inclined to believe the Viceroy should at times be included.

Morley's suspicion of the intentions of Indian officials when left unsupervised on the frontier or beyond it had a profound effect on the shape of British Tibetan policy over the next four years. One immediate result was the India Office doctrine that Europeans, of whatever nationality, should not be permitted to set out from British India on journeys of Tibetan exploration. In the two years following Younghusband's entry into Lhasa the Indian Government gave serious thought to a number of ventures aimed at increasing British knowledge of Tibetan geography and demonstrating beyond the Himalayas the fact that the British had now established relations with the Tibetan authorities. One such scheme was the Gartok expedition which, led by C. G. Rawling, set out in October 1904 to explore the upper valley of the Tsangpo and which provided the occasion for O'Connor's first visit to the Panchen Lama. The success of this journey suggested other projects. In February 1905 Captain C. H. D. Ryder, a former member of the Younghusband Mission, proposed a journey eastwards down the Tsangpo. He intended taking with him an escort of 100 Gurkhas and he hoped to solve one of the great geographical mysteries of the age, the problem of the Tsangpo falls.⁴ He suggested that J. F. Needham, who

³ Morley Papers (D.573/1), Morley to Minto, 11 October 1906.

⁴ How did the Tsangpo flow into the Brahmaputra, by the Dihang or by the Dibang rivers; and did it drop from the heights of the Tibetan plateau to the Assam plains by a series of dramatic falls? These questions had interested geographers for many years. The native explorer (pandit) Kinthup, employed by the Survey of India, reported in 1884 that he had seen the foot of a great waterfall in the gorge where the Tsangpo carved its way through the Himalayan barrier. In 1906 as yet no European had confirmed Kinthup's story, and many explorers were eager to do so. Bailey

SEARCHING FOR A NEW TIBETAN POLICY 1904 TO 1906

for over twenty years as Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya, had been responsible for British relations with the Assam Himalayan tribes, should travel up from Assam to join him on the Tibetan plateau. He noted that the Tibetans at present were most co-operative, but wondered whether they would continue to be so in the near future; while the opportunity existed, the British should explore as much of Tibet as they could.⁵ In July 1905 another project for Tibetan exploration was advanced, and given Curzon's approval. E. C. Wilton, the China Consular Service officer who had been helping in the Calcutta negotiations, suggested that he return to China by way of Tibet. He would take a small escort with him and one or two other British officers.⁶ The Wilton project was abandoned when Satow reported that it was extremely unlikely that the Chinese would issue passports for Eastern Tibet, then in a very disturbed state.⁷ The Ryder project fell through for reasons which do not seem to have been connected with Tibetan policy; and by October 1905 Ryder was trying to organise an extensive British expedition to Western Tibet which would include botanists, geologists, doctors, surveyors and every other imaginable category of specialist.⁸

Curzon had been in favour of permitting a small number of British exploring ventures into Tibet along the lines of those suggested by Ryder and Wilton; but he insisted that such projects should be strictly controlled by Government. In June 1905, by a Standing Order, it was laid down that British subjects could not travel into Tibet from British territory without first obtaining Government permission.⁹ This was directed mainly against missionaries, sportsmen and gold prospectors, all of whom might involve the Indian Government in diplomatic difficulties should they fall foul of the Tibetan authorities. It was not intended as a

⁵ FO 17/1754, IO to FO, 27 April 1905, enc. Ryder to Surveyor-Gen. of India, 22 February 1905.

⁶ FO 17/1755, IO to FO, 14 July 1905.

⁷ FO 17/1755, Satow to Lansdowne, 17 July 1905.

⁸ PEF 1910/19, Rawling to Dane, 30 October 1905.

⁹ FO 17/1755, IO to FO, 21 November 1905.

and Morshead followed Kinthup's route in 1913, and found that the Tsangpo falls were really little more than a series of rapids, not the rival of the great Zambesi falls which had been hoped for. See K. Mason, *Abode of Snow*, London, 1955, pp. 89-90.

blanket veto on all Tibet exploration. Minto was of like mind. Although by May 1906 he had refused permission to the Royal Geographical Society and to the Royal Scottish Geographical Society to send expeditions into Tibet from India, a refusal which much outraged those seeking to ascend Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak, he was still approving, if only in principle, a number of other projects of a more official nature like those of Ryder and Rawling in Western Tibet, of Charles Bell to the north of Bhutan and the Assam Himalaya, and of O'Connor in S.E. Tibet.¹⁰ Had it not been for Sven Hedin, some of these ventures might actually have taken place: neither the Lhasa Convention nor the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 specifically prohibited British exploration in Tibet away from the trade marts.

Sven Hedin, the great Swedish traveller, had been exploring in Chinese Turkestan and Tibet for more than a decade. His journeys, in the past, had sometimes been watched with suspicion by the Indian Government, which believed that he was, among other things, prospecting for gold on behalf of Russian mining interests. Politics apart, however, Sven Hedin was much respected by such leading British students of Central Asia as Younghusband, whom Hedin had first met in Kashgar in 1890, and by Lord Curzon. Curzon had once told Hedin that he would, as long as he was Viceroy, assist the Swede in an assault on Tibet from the Indian side. In the early summer of 1905 Hedin reminded Curzon of his promise; and in July 1905 Curzon replied that:

I shall be proud to render you what assistance lies in my power while I still remain in India, and only regret that before your great expedition is over I shall have left these shores. . . . I will arrange to have a good native surveyor ready to accompany you, and I will further have a man instructed in astronomical observations and in meteorological recording, so as to be available for you at the same time.¹¹

When Hedin arrived in India in May 1906 the surveyor and the astronomical and meteorological expert were both waiting for him at Dehra Dun, the headquarters of the Indian Survey; but

¹⁰ PEF 1910/19, Minto to Morley, 17 May 1906.

¹¹ S. Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya: discoveries and adventure in Tibet*, 2 vols., London, 1910, Vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

he found to his disgust that Minto, while apparently as well disposed towards his plans as Curzon had been, did not feel that he could give him authority to set out without the approval of Morley. Hedin soon realised that his greatest difficulties on this particular Central Asian venture 'proceeded not from Tibet, its rude climate, its rarified air, its high mountains and its wild inhabitants, but—from England! Could I circumvent Mr. John Morley, I should soon settle with Tibet.'¹²

Morley proved impossible to circumvent. Minto, who thought that Hedin was 'well worthy of encouragement', and who felt that the Indian Government, because of Curzon's promises, was in honour bound to help the traveller, did his best to get Morley to agree.¹³ He pointed out that if Hedin were frustrated in his plans to enter Tibet from India, he would only do so from Sinkiang. Hedin, moreover, proposed to explore in the Tsangpo Valley just to the north of the British boundary; and it seemed wise to keep an eye on his activities in this sensitive area. Minto, therefore, suggested that Rawling, who was hoping to visit the same Tibetan region, should join up with Hedin. If Hedin did find gold, and Minto thought that he had prospecting very much in mind, the British would thus learn the fact in good enough time to prepare to resist the rush of gold-seekers which would inevitably follow. In making this suggestion Minto availed himself of the opportunity to propose a general policy of official British exploration in Tibet, publicly justified, perhaps, by the argument that the Lhasa Convention allowed British subjects to travel through Tibet to the trade marts without limiting them to any specific routes. Thus, Minto recommended, not only should Hedin be allowed to go ahead, accompanied for some of his journey by Rawling (and a small Gurkha escort), but other schemes, such as those of Bell, Ryder and O'Connor, should also be authorised.¹⁴

Morley was horrified by these proposals, which involved, he wrote privately to Minto, 'a complete subversion of the policy of H.M.'s Government, as I supposed myself to have made that policy clear'. He then repeated his view of that policy and its implications, thus:

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³ Morley Papers (D.573/8), Minto to Morley, 9 May 1906.

¹⁴ PEF 1910/19, Minto to Morley, 17 May 1906.

What may be our ultimate relations with Tibet, I do not venture to predict. But today? Is it not certain that our policy is to satisfy Tibet, China, and Russia—that we mean to keep our word—deliberately given to all three—that we mean no intervention or anything leading to intervention? Why else did we take such trouble, after I came to this Office, to procure the adhesion of China? Yet here, before the ink on the Chinese settlement is dry, and before we have even seen the text of it, here is a policy from Simla, of expeditions, explorations, and all the other provocative things—that, in case of Tibetan resistance would mean either another senseless Mission, or else humiliating acquiescence. What may be done in the way of exploration by and by, I repeat, I do not presume to say. But today!! Consider the language held by Spring-Rice to Lamsdorff only a few weeks ago¹⁵—each of them solemnly and emphatically declaring that he would have nothing to do with intervention. Consider the row we made (very rightly) about the Buriat escort for the Dalai Lama.¹⁶ And now here we are, sending a whole squad of explorers in every direction, and Sven Hedin with a troop of Native Assistants, a force of Gurkhas, and a British Officer in charge. I cannot but think of this as Curzonism pure and simple.¹⁷

Morley may well have thought that if Minto had decided to announce the intention of the Government of India to continue to exert its influence in Tibet, he could hardly have found a more public way of doing so. Sven Hedin was at that time one of the best-known explorers in the world. His Tibetan adventures, accompanied by Rawling and his Gurkhas, would have been certain to have received the widest possible international press coverage. O'Connor, or Ryder, or Bell by themselves could perhaps have explored to their hearts' content in obscurity; but not so a British companion to Sven Hedin.

Morley's refusal to allow Sven Hedin to enter Tibet from British India was indeed widely publicised, which possibility may well have influenced the Secretary of State in his attitude.

¹⁵ Referring to discussions concerning Russian relations with the Dalai Lama which took place between Spring-Rice, the British chargé at St. Petersburg, and Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, in April and May 1906. See BD IV, pp. 326–30.

¹⁶ A proposal by a group of Russian Buriats to escort the Dalai Lama back to Tibet. See p. 83 below.

¹⁷ Morley Papers (D.573/1), Morley to Minto, 7 June 1906.

If Sven Hedin was the last person likely to travel unreported in the world's press, he was probably the best person to prevent from crossing the Indo-Tibetan border if Morley was looking for convincing proof to the Russians of British good faith in their declared intention of neutralising Tibet from the influence of all Foreign Powers. On learning of Morley's rejection of Minto's petition on his behalf, Sven Hedin wrote personally to the British Prime Minister, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.¹⁸ He also appealed to his own King, Oscar of Sweden, who approached Rennell Rodd, the British representative in Stockholm, to see if Morley's attitude could be modified.¹⁹ Lord Percy, who with Curzon had become one of the most effective Parliamentary critics of the Liberal Government's Indian frontier policy, questioned Morley in Parliament on the refusal of Hedin's request, which gave the Secretary of State for India an opportunity to declare that 'the Indian Government favours the expeditions of experienced explorers, but the Imperial Government has decided otherwise, and considers it advisable to continue the isolation of Tibet which the late Government so carefully maintained'.²⁰ Morley always claimed that his Tibetan policy was the same as that of Brodrick before him; but it is unlikely that Brodrick would have tried so hard to keep Sven Hedin out of Tibet.

Hedin, refused permission to enter Tibet from British Indian territory, resolved to do so from the territory of China, and for that purpose made his way to Kashmir, where he found himself faced with another British-made obstacle. The British Resident in Kashmir had been told, Hedin discovered, not to allow the Swedish traveller to go on northwards unless he proved to be in possession of a valid Chinese passport for Sinkiang, a document which, of course, he did not have.²¹ The British eventually relented, and after some delays Hedin was allowed to enter Chinese territory from the barren wastes of the extreme north-east of Ladakh without a passport. He was, however, much annoyed by the whole episode. It is not surprising that Sven Hedin, who was not inclined to Anglophil sentiments at the

¹⁸ Hedin, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 8.

¹⁹ PEF 1910/19, Rennell Rodd to Grey, 23 July 1906.

²⁰ Hedin, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 10-11.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

best of times, should comment in his account of this journey, *Trans-Himalaya*, on the folly of Morley's Tibetan policy which had lost the British all the prestige in Tibet gained with such labour by the Younghusband Mission.

Morley claimed on a number of occasions that his attitude towards the Tibetan question was no different from that of Balfour's Conservative Government. Taking Brodrick's despatch to the Indian Government of 2 December 1904 at its face value, this was to some extent arguable.²² Brodrick had said that British policy in Tibet aimed only at the exclusion of the influence of another Foreign Power, by which he meant Russia; and once this was obtained, Tibet should revert to its former isolation. The Younghusband Mission, however, did not in the eyes of its champions meet with complete success in this respect. It marked an important British victory in the campaign against Russian penetration into Tibet, but it was by no means a final one. The Government of India, to whom the Russian frontier threat was inevitably far more real than it was to Whitehall, thought that much remained to be done before the northern borders could be regarded as secure. All the threads of British activity in and towards Tibet since the end of 1904, indeed, were directed ultimately towards the exclusion of Russia. The establishment of relations with the Panchen Lama, the struggle to keep some teeth in the Lhasa Convention, the proposals for exploration in Tibet by British officers, all these in the last resort could be defended as necessary counters to the continued relationship between Russia and the Dalai Lama in exile and to the continued presence of Russian agents in Tibet of which O'Connor from time to time found evidence in the gossip of Gyantse.²³

²² See p. 13 above.

²³ For example, in July 1905 O'Connor heard from a Japanese, E. Teramoto, who was travelling through Tibet disguised as a Mongol, who had just been to Lhasa and who was certainly a Japanese spy, that a party of Buriats accompanied by two Russians had recently been in Lhasa and had amongst their baggage boxes of arms and ammunition. Shortly after he met Teramoto, O'Connor received a letter from the Panchen Lama which reported that there was a Russian at Lhasa; and this story was confirmed by a party of Nepalese traders returning home from Lhasa, who said that they had seen with a group of Mongols there 'a tall man with a flowing beard down to the waist' who, they thought, 'was undoubtedly a foreigner, and,

Evidence that Russia had not abandoned her Tibetan interest reached alarming proportions in the spring of 1906, when it was discovered that Dorjiev had once more visited Russia on, it seemed, a mission from the Dalai Lama to the Tsar, to which the Tsar responded with a telegram to the Dalai Lama. At this time, moreover, it was widely reported that a number of leading Russian Buriats proposed to form a volunteer guard to escort their religious chief, the Dalai Lama, from his place of exile back to Tibet.²⁴ Reports such as these, far more concrete indications of Russian policy than anything available to Lord Curzon when he was planning the Younghusband Mission, could have been ignored by no British Government; and Morley did not ignore them. Like Brodrick before him, his policy aimed at the exclusion of Russian influence from Tibet. His proposed method of achieving this, however, differed fundamentally from that adopted by the Conservative Government. There were to be no more Younghusband Missions. Where Minto and the Indian Government, perhaps inevitably, were still inclined towards a basically Curzonian solution of meeting the Russian threat by means of counter-measures on the Indian frontier, Morley advocated negotiation in London and St. Petersburg while the frontier was left strictly alone. The only permanent answer to the Tibetan problem, he felt, was a mutual Anglo-Russian agreement to keep Tibet neutral, an agreement the efficacy of which depended upon the good faith of the two sides. This was, in essence, a policy of 'masterly inactivity'—recalling the opinion of Lord Lawrence's Administration in the 1860s that Russian ambitions in Central Asia were best countered by diplomacy in Europe, and that Indian trans-frontier adventures could achieve no useful results and might well lead to disaster. Morley, in fact, hoped that the Anglo-Russian Convention, the negotiation of which began in the summer of 1906, would be the answer to Tibet.

The Anglo-Russian Convention might indeed remove the Russian bogey; but what about the Chinese bogey? It did not

²⁴ See p. 83 below.

they believed, a Russian'. FO 17/1755, IO to FO, 7 September 1905, enc. O'Connor to India, 10 July 1905; Curzon to Brodrick, 29 July 1905; IO to FO, 25 September 1905, enc. O'Connor to India, 30 July 1905.

require a great deal of political intelligence to see that a Tibet denied to both British and Russian influence was a standing invitation to China. Morley, by deciding upon a policy of British non-interference in Tibet enshrined in an Anglo-Russian agreement, deprived himself of his most effective weapon against the rise of Chinese power in Lhasa territory. Probably he realised this: the Chinese did not worry him. He failed, however, to reason out the implications of his policy one stage further. If an Anglo-Russian agreement would, incidentally, open the door of Central Tibet to the Chinese, then, if British border requirements were to be met, an Anglo-Chinese agreement was also called for. Such an agreement was not seriously considered either in London or in Simla before 1910: at the moment of writing, in the summer of 1964, the Indian Government has still not been able to bring itself to accept the full implications of negotiations of this kind.

PART TWO
The Anglo-Russian Agreement concerning
Tibet, 1906 to 1907

V

PRELIMINARIES



IN June 1906 the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Sir Arthur Nicolson, formally opened negotiations with Alexander Isvolski, the newly appointed Russian Foreign Minister, to remove some of the major causes of Anglo-Russian tension in Asia. Tibet was on the agenda, along with Persia and Afghanistan. Thus, within a few weeks of the signing of the agreement whereby China accepted the Lhasa Convention, Morley could point to what he must then have considered to be the beginning of the final phase of the Tibetan question and a triumph for his policy of settling Central Asian questions through European diplomacy.

The Nicolson-Isvolski talks were the outcome of a policy dear to the Liberal Cabinet; but it was a policy for which the Liberals could not claim sole credit.¹ The idea of easing Anglo-Russian tension in Central Asia through the negotiation of agreements defining the limits of the spheres of influence of both Powers can certainly be traced back to the Clarendon-Gortchakoff discussions of the late 1860s; and in 1881 Sir Alfred Lyall had proposed with much good sense that the Afghan question could best be solved by means of an Anglo-Russian treaty.² Since at least 1903 British statesmen and

¹ As Morley was quite prepared to admit. 'It may surprise you', he told Minto in July 1906, 'to know that Lansdowne in the winter of 1904-5 sent proposals to Petersburg exactly on all fours with our present plans, about Persia, Tibet and Afghanistan. Don't divulge this at present: we keep it in reserve in case we are attacked by the late Government.' Morley Papers (D.573/2), Morley to Minto, 11 July 1906.

² See Sir H. M. Durand, 'Sir Alfred Lyall and the Understanding with Russia', *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, 1914.

diplomats had been actively exploring the possibilities of an Anglo-Russian *detente* in Asia. The growing menace of Imperial Germany made closer British relations with Russia as logical as closer British relations with Russia's ally, France. The Boer War had shown up a number of grave defects in the apparatus of Imperial Defence, and had, in consequence, made highly attractive any proposal to protect the Indian frontier by diplomatic rather than military means. Curzon's ideas on countering Russia by a British military occupation of Persian Seistan or the lower Helmand Valley in Afghanistan were not welcomed in Whitehall.³

In November 1903 Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, and Hardinge, then Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and soon to be British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, explored in a series of talks with Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, some of the theoretical aspects of a general Anglo-Russian settlement of Eastern disputes.⁴ Russian aspirations appeared to clash with British interests in three main regions, in the Near East, in Central Asia and in the Far East. The question of the Straits, of Russia's access from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, had long been an issue where the British persisted in blocking Russian ambitions. The threat of a Russian advance right up to the Indian borders had been a cause of British anxiety and alarm for nearly a century: and by 1903 Persia, Afghanistan, Sinkiang and Tibet had become buffer zones along the Indian border into which Russian influence had either penetrated or was about to penetrate. In the Far East, in Manchuria and Mongolia, Russia seemed on the verge of acquiring vast tracts of Chinese territory without providing the British with the opportunity to secure compensating advantages. Each of these three regions, the Straits, the Indian buffer zone and the Far East, possessed its own peculiar problems; and it was unlikely that they could all be brought within the scope of a single comprehensive agreement.

Probably the most promising area for the resolution of Anglo-Russian rivalries by negotiation was the Indian buffer zone.

³ Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, 3 vols., London, 1928, Vol. 2, pp. 267, 309.

⁴ BD IV, pp. 184-8, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 22 November 1903, Lansdowne to Spring-Rice, 25 November 1903.

Here, by 1903, four quite distinct problems had developed, each, unless some mutual agreement was reached, likely to give rise to periodic crises. First: in Persia the influence of Russia had increased to the point where the entire north of the country was, it seemed, turning into a Russian satellite. Not content with their dominant position at Teheran, where every decision of the Shah appeared to have been made only after Russian assent was obtained, the Russians had of late been showing an interest in the Persian Gulf. The Indian Government, while it did not enjoy the prospect of Russian-dominated north Persia, yet could do little about it. The Gulf, on the other hand, had long been regarded as a British preserve; and Curzon, for one, was determined to keep it so. In September 1899 Curzon was suggesting a policy of 'recognition of British and Russian spheres of interest in the dominions of the Shah'. Russia would be given a free hand in the north in return for her recognition of the special British interests in the Gulf and in Persian Seistan which marched with British India.⁵

Second: there was the extremely difficult question of Afghanistan. For much of the nineteenth century it had been an axiom of the Indian Government that Russian agents must be excluded at all costs from this kingdom, whose rulers, if they wished to enjoy relations with Foreign Powers, should do so by way of the British. Two Anglo-Afghan wars had been fought over this issue. By 1903, however, the Russians had acquired a long common border with territory under the control of the Amir of Afghanistan, and they felt that they should have some diplomatic contact with him, if only to cope with local problems arising from the existence of such a common border, issues like the sharing of water for irrigation from the rivers which flowed through both countries, the combating of locust migrations across the border and the control of plague and cholera. When, in 1900, the Russians used these arguments to justify their request for diplomatic facilities in Afghanistan, and when the Russian Political Agent in Bokhara, M. Ignatieff, wrote to the Amir suggesting that direct friendly relations between Russia and Afghanistan be established, the Indian Government was horrified. What the Russians were seeking was the right to establish a Commercial Agent at Kabul; but, so Curzon

⁵ BD IV, pp. 356-63, Curzon to Hamilton, 21 September 1899.

remarked, 'a Russian Commercial Agent would soon become a political Envoy', and the only result would be to convince the Amir of British weakness. The Russians persisted in their Afghan requests, and the Amir appeared to be interested in their overtures. Lord Curzon tried to persuade the Amir to come to India to talk things over. The Amir refused. Curzon began to think seriously of applying pressure by the occupation of Afghan territory, a prospect which caused much alarm in England. Finally, in early 1905, the Amir was persuaded to receive an embassy from the Indian Government, led by Louis Dane; and in March 1905 the Amir Habibulla signed a treaty with the Indian Government to replace that which his father, Abdur Rahman (who died in 1901), had signed in 1880 and confirmed in 1893. The Amir accepted a British subsidy and agreed to leave his foreign relations in British hands. This agreement, which Curzon thought no final answer to the Afghan problem, at least saved the British from transfrontier expeditions in this quarter. However, so long as Russia persisted in seeking the right to send agents to Kabul the Amir would go on looking for a balance for his relations with the British, and the Afghan danger would continue.⁶

Third: there still remained competition between the British and the Russians in Chinese Turkestan. Since 1890 the British agent at Kashgar and the Russian Consulate there had intrigued with the Chinese authorities against each other. Russian influence, for instance, had persuaded the Chinese to oppose the claims of the British-protected Mir of Hunza to rights in Raskam and the Taghdumbash Pamir along the Chinese side of the Tarim-Indus watershed: this was a minor issue, but it was one in which, so Curzon felt, British prestige was involved. Since the Anglo-Russian Pamirs settlement of 1895 had stabilised frontiers in this region, however, Sinkiang did not present a very pressing threat to Indian security. It was possible that Russia might take over Kashgaria one day, and the result would be the creation of a common border between the British and Russian Empires of a kind which the Pamirs agreement of 1895 had tried to avoid. In 1895, of course, the political status of the British Karakoram boundary was far less secure than it

⁶ BD IV, pp. 512-21; Sir W. K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 173-80.

was in 1903; Chitral and Hunza-Nagar had only just been brought under effective British control; the Durand line which defined the Anglo-Afghan border had been in existence for but two years; and the Russo-Afghan boundary in the Pamirs had just been defined by treaty, but how successfully no one yet knew: thus the presence of Russia right up to the Karakoram watershed could have then led to serious crises. By 1903, however, British control south of the Karakoram watershed was undoubted, though the precise alignment of the India-Sinkiang border might yet be the subject of some argument. In these circumstances, if Russia did acquire Sinkiang the worst that she could do—even the most fanatical of Russophobes did not by this time believe that hordes of Cossacks would march down into India across the Karakoram Pass—would be to further hamper the by no means large British trade in the region and, if it seemed worth their while, to raise fairly minor border disputes. Until Russia did make a definite move towards the occupation of Sinkiang, so most British observers then thought, it would be as well to keep Anglo-Russian competition here off the agenda of any general settlement. Sinkiang, after all, was under direct Chinese government, and, unlike Tibet, its status was not in serious dispute. Discussion of Sinkiang, it was appreciated, could only result, if a settlement were genuinely sought, in British acknowledgment of Russia's predominant position: and there seemed little point in conferring needlessly on Russia special privileges within the territorial limits of the Chinese Empire. Until the Russians decided to occupy Sinkiang—which they might never do—their opposition to the British had to be expressed mainly by means of intrigues between their Consulate in Kashgar and the local Chinese officials. The British could counter in like manner. Indeed, since 1891 the British representative at Kashgar, George Macartney (whose Consular status the Chinese did not formally recognise until 1908), had been doing just this, trying to convince the Chinese officials that it did not pay to trifle with the agent of the British Empire and that it was unwise to get too involved with the agents of the Tsar. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, both in London and St. Petersburg it had been realised that Anglo-Russian conflict in Kashgaria was often more a personal struggle between Macartney and the Russian Consul-General,

Petrovsky, and his successor Kolokolov, than a fundamental contest of British and Russian interests.⁷ If the atmosphere of Anglo-Russian relations improved elsewhere, it seemed likely that Macartney and Kolokolov would become better friends.

Fourth: Tibet, which had not played a part in the nineteenth-century history of Asian competition between Britain and Russia, suddenly became prominent in 1900 following the first Dorjiev embassy from the Dalai Lama to the Tsar. Tibet was adjacent to British territory, but nowhere did it touch Russian possessions. The British could show good reasons why the status of Tibet, upon which depended the peace of a long, undefended boundary, should not be altered. The Russians, while they could argue on the basis of their Buriat Buddhist population that they had some interest in the Dalai Lama as a spiritual chief, could hardly claim that it was vitally necessary for them to enter into relations with him over political matters. In fact, however, the Russians did have a certain political interest in the Dalai Lama. Just as the Chinese had found the control of the centre of the Tibetan Buddhist Church of great value in dealing with the tribes of Mongolia, members of that Church, so did the Russians at the very end of the nineteenth century, when their policy became increasingly directed towards the creation of what amounted to a protectorate in Mongolia, see that the Dalai Lama could possibly help them as he had hitherto helped the Chinese. Even if British opposition prevented them from maintaining direct relations with the Dalai Lama, it was still worth their while trying to stop that Incarnation from becoming a British puppet. Their policy could reasonably aim at a Tibet free from both Russian and British influence, a neutralised Tibet; and this agreed closely with what the British had declared their Tibetan policy to be.

The four regions of the Indian buffer zone, therefore, could well be the subject of Anglo-Russian negotiation, though, in the event, Sinkiang was left out. Of the other three regions, one, Persia, involved issues of great importance to the Russians; and here Russia could reasonably expect concessions: another, Afghanistan, the British felt was vital to their Imperial security; and here the Russians would probably have to see things from the British point of view: the third, Tibet, was of great interest

⁷ BD IV, pp. 200-1, Hardinge to Lansdowne, 26 September 1905.

to the British, but was not an area where the British (or, at least, the Home Government) felt they required positive influence; and the Tibetan question could probably be settled by a mutual Anglo-Russian self-denying ordinance. The problem of Tibet, indeed, in any such Anglo-Russian discussions provided an obvious opportunity for both sides to demonstrate their moderation and good faith, the better to reach settlement on the really vital issues of Persia and Afghanistan.

The framework of an agreement along these lines had been devised during the course of conversations between Lansdowne and Benckendorff in November 1903. It had become apparent to the British Foreign Office at that time, moreover, that the Indian buffer zone was a topic which was best kept separate from the problems of Russia in the Far East and of Russia and Turkey. The Far Eastern question, by 1902, was a matter which the British could not discuss without reference to their Japanese ally, a fact, in view of the state of Russo-Japanese relations then prevailing, which would be fatal to the whole negotiations. The Near Eastern question formed part of the general fabric of European diplomacy, and there were excellent reasons why the British side should try to prevent it from complicating the problems of the Indian frontier zone: but, in the event, it did not always prove easy to keep Central Asia and the Eastern Question separate. The Straits remained a primary objective of Russian policy. British Foreign Ministers, as we shall see, could not always avoid the temptation to offer concessions in Central Asia in return for Russian moderation in the Mediterranean. During the 1906-7 negotiations the British managed to exclude the Eastern Question despite Russian attempts to bring it within the scope of the discussions; but in 1915, when the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention was under review, Central Asia and the Straits found themselves placed side by side on the agenda.

The talks between Lansdowne, Hardinge and Benckendorff in 1903 were exploratory. They revealed areas in which a negotiated settlement might be possible. They did not, however, initiate such negotiations. Further investigation of the question took place in 1904 and 1905. Early in 1904, for instance, King Edward VII visited Copenhagen, where he had the opportunity of meeting the Russian Minister in Denmark, Isvolski. The

King and the Russian diplomat agreed that an understanding between the two Powers on some of the questions outstanding between them would be most desirable.⁸ In June 1904 Lansdowne provided an example of the kind of British concessions which might be offered in any such general settlement when he informed Benckendorff that:

Provided the Russian Government were able to give an equally satisfactory assurance with regard to Egypt, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to give the Russian Government an assurance to the following effect:—

His Majesty's Government still adheres to the policy laid down in their telegram of the 6th November [1903] to the Government of India, i.e., that they do not contemplate any annexation of Tibetan territory, nor the establishment of a permanent Mission at Lhasa.

But he was careful to add that 'His Majesty's Government cannot undertake not to depart in any eventuality from the policy which now commends itself to them'.⁹ Lansdowne, as has already been remarked, found it easier to assure the Russians that the British had no designs towards a Tibetan protectorate than to prevent British officials on the spot from taking steps which could be construed by the Russians as indicating that a British protectorate was, in fact, being established. Hence the determination of the Home Government, a determination which the Liberals shared when they took office in late 1905, that the British should not annex Tibetan territory and establish anything like a Lhasa Residency (or, for that matter, a Shigatse Residency). Tibet, on the eve of the Younghusband Mission's arrival in Lhasa, had already become something of a symbol of British good faith in the quest for an Anglo-Russian settlement of Asian disputes.

By 1904, therefore, a number of British statesmen and diplomats had become convinced that logic dictated that Britain should come to terms with Russia. In the Foreign Office Sir Charles Hardinge was a particularly influential champion

⁸ BD IV, p. 188, Lansdowne to Spring-Rice, 22 April 1904.

⁹ BD IV, p. 310, Lansdowne to Hardinge, 3 June 1904. This particular proposal, of course, involved a mixing of Central Asian and Mediterranean issues which by 1906 the British had concluded it would be as well to avoid.

of this view.¹⁰ In 1903-4, as Assistant Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, he had explored the possibilities in conversation with Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador. In 1904-6 Hardinge, as British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, had the difficult task of explaining to the Russians the true meaning of the Younghusband Mission and dealing with Persian and Afghan crises. In early 1906 Hardinge returned to the Foreign Office as Permanent Under-Secretary, in which post he was able to provide a link of continuity between the Russian policy of Lord Lansdowne and that of Sir Edward Grey. More than any other individual Hardinge deserves to be considered as the initiator of the Anglo-Russian negotiations which opened at St. Petersburg in June 1906; and it is ironical that he should later have been the Viceroy of India who was to discover that the resultant agreement, the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, had imposed firm shackles on the Indian Government's freedom of action on its Northern and North-Eastern Frontiers, a conclusion which emerged clearly from the Tibetan crisis of 1912.

While British diplomats like Hardinge might have been urging an Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* since 1903, and while their views might have been shared by some Russians at that date, the actual initiation of serious negotiations was not possible until, as A. J. P. Taylor has observed, the mood of Russia changed.¹¹ Defeat by Japan in the Far East and the outbreak of revolution at home convinced the Russian Government far more than any of Hardinge's arguments that a new foreign policy was called for, a policy which concentrated on Europe and the Near East and which did not emphasise adventure at the distant termini of the Trans-Siberian Railway. With this change of mood came a new Russian Foreign Minister, Alexander Isvolski, who had for a number of years been urging that Russia's destiny lay in the west. With Isvolski's appointment the opening of Anglo-Russian negotiations on the Indian buffer zone became practicable; and, with the conduct of these negotiations as one of his major objectives, Sir Arthur Nicolson, who had recently been the British Representative at the Algeciras Conference, was sent as British Ambassador to St. Petersburg.

¹⁰ Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, *Old Diplomacy*, London, 1947, pp. 97-148.

¹¹ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1914*, London, 1954, p. 442.

Nicolson arrived at his new post on 28 May 1906. The negotiations with Isvolski opened just over a week later.¹²

Nicolson was instructed to discuss with the Russians questions relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. Tibet, from the point of view of long-term British interests, was probably the least important of the three regions. He was authorised to open the negotiations with Tibet for this reason, since here it was felt that the British could afford to accept no more than their minimum requirements, and in the process could demonstrate their good faith and genuine desire to reach agreement. The Tibetan question, for all that, was one urgently requiring some solution. Had no general discussions been contemplated, it is most probable that some Anglo-Russian agreement on Tibet alone would have emerged at this period in an attempt to end the tensions engendered by the Younghusband Mission.

The British entry into Lhasa in August 1904 caused the Dalai Lama to leave Tibet: it did not, however, make him desist from all contact with the Russians; indeed, by taking up residence in Mongolia he found communication with Russian representatives easier than had been the case in Lhasa. From the moment that he reached Urga the Dalai Lama was in touch with the Russian Consulate-General there. In June 1905, as has already been noted, the Russian Minister in Peking, Pokotilov, came up to Urga expressly to call on the Lama.¹³ While this was going on, to the considerable irritation of the Indian Government, Russian agents, or so O'Connor's reports from Gyantse would indicate, continued to come and go between Lhasa and Russian territory. It began to look as if the Younghusband Mission had been in vain, an impression reinforced by the attitude of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa towards the observation of the provisions of the Lhasa Convention. Tibetan officials were making trouble over the British occupation of Chumbi, which they said did not in any way affect their rights there. The Phari

¹² A detailed study of the Nicolson-Isvolski negotiations, which continued from June 1906 to August 1907, can be found in R. P. Churchill, *The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1939. An excellent account of these negotiations, from the London point of view, is to be found in G. Monger, *The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy 1900-1907*, London, 1963, Ch. 11.

¹³ See p. 20 above. See also J. J. Korostovetz, *Pre-War Diplomacy*, London, 1920, p. 48.

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Dzongpöns, who had in the past supervised the Chumbi administration, tried to ignore the British presence and, without seeking British permission, attempted to enter the valley to collect taxes and settle disputes. The Lhasa Convention was certainly a bit vague on the Chumbi question. The Tibetans may well have genuinely believed that British military occupation was all that was implied, and that traditional Tibetan rights would persist. They said that Brigadier-General Macdonald, who had commanded the military side of the Tibetan Expedition, had given them to understand that this was to be the case. The Lhasa Convention, however, did make it clear that the Tibetans were to cease the vexatious habit of trying to tax the Indo-Tibetan trade at Phari at the head of the Chumbi Valley: but in November 1905 O'Connor was reporting that the old 10 per cent duty at Phari was still being collected. The Tibetans, a year after Younghusband had returned to India, were still failing to observe the Convention in a number of other ways. They had closed the old trade route through northern Sikkim to Khambajong (in breach of Article II); they had failed to pull down defences on the road between Gyantse and Lhasa, and were busy rebuilding the Gyantse fortress (in breach of Article VIII); they had delayed the delivery of letters from India to the newly established British Trade Agency at Gartok in Western Tibet (in breach of Article V). All this indicated to observers in London that the Indian Government would soon be crying out for permission to start exerting pressure on the Tibetans to make them respect the engagements which they had entered into with the British. Just such arguments had been used to justify the Younghusband Mission in the first place.¹⁴

The Indian Government, of course, was entitled to have its treaties respected; but during his last year of office Lansdowne at the Foreign Office was becoming increasingly worried at the Russian reaction to any British pressure on the Tibetans. In August 1905 Benckendorff, on instructions from St. Petersburg, had protested against what he described as signs of the British intention to maintain a permanent occupation of parts of Tibet despite Lansdowne's assurances to the contrary of June 1904.

¹⁴ FO 17/1755, W. Tyrrell, Memo. on the Remonstrances of the Tibetan Government, 7 September 1905; FO 371/176, O'Connor to White, 18 December 1905.

Benckendorff referred to British garrisons at Chumbi, Phari and Gyantse; he claimed that railway and telegraph lines were being laid from Darjeeling into Tibet; and he stated that the British were building barracks, drilling troops and encouraging foreign settlement on Tibetan soil.¹⁵ Lansdowne was able to reply that much of what Benckendorff had said was nothing more than a very distorted picture of the British occupation of Chumbi and the establishment of the British Trade Agency at Gyantse, both authorised by the Lhasa Convention. He was, however, unable to deny all Benckendorff's assertions with a clear conscience, since the British had indeed constructed a telegraph line to Gyantse.¹⁶ 'Is not the telegraph line to Gyantse', Lansdowne minuted, 'a weak point in our case?'¹⁷ The problem, of course, was whether Article IX(d) of the Lhasa Convention, which prohibited concession hunting in Tibet, applied to the Indian Government as well as to other 'Foreign Powers'. Lansdowne, in an interview with Sazonov, then Secretary at the Russian Embassy in London, had implied in September 1904 that the prohibitions of Article IX *did* apply to the British;¹⁸ and he was now embarrassed by this demonstration that in the opinion of the Indian Government they did not. He at first considered denying the existence of the Gyantse telegraph, but then decided to 'grasp the nettle' and tell Benckendorff about it, justifying it as necessary for the security of the Gyantse Trade Agent, who could use it to summon help in the event of sudden Tibetan attack.¹⁹ The telegraph was eventually legitimised in the Anglo-Chinese Convention a few months later. By late 1905, at all events, Lansdowne could see that any British action in Tibet, whatever justification might be found for it in the wording of the Lhasa Convention, would probably give rise to Russian protest, and thus aggravate that Anglo-Russian tension which the Foreign Office was hoping to alleviate.

If British policy towards Tibet gave ground for Russian

¹⁵ FO 17/1755, Lansdowne to Hardinge, 9 August 1905.

¹⁶ FO 17/1755, Memo. to Benckendorff, 20 September 1905.

¹⁷ FO 17/1755, Lansdowne, minute on IO to FO, 7 September 1905.

¹⁸ FO 17/1755, Lansdowne to Hardinge, 27 September 1904.

¹⁹ FO 17/1755, Lansdowne, minute on Memo. to Benckendorff, 20 September 1905.

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protest in 1905, in early 1906 the Russians provided the British with useful ammunition for a counter-attack. In February 1906 Dorjiev was again in Russia. In early March he had an audience with the Tsar, during which he presented gifts from the Dalai Lama, such objects as a Buddha image, some Tibetan texts and some pieces of embroidered cloth.²⁰ On 5 April 1906 the Tsar replied by the unusual step of sending the Dalai Lama a telegram, Urga being linked to the Russian telegraph system. The message was as follows:

My numerous subjects professing the Buddhist faith had the happiness of saluting their spiritual Chief during his sojourn in the north of Mongolia, on the borders of the Russian Empire. Rejoicing that my subjects were able to receive a beneficent spiritual influence from Your Holiness, I beg you to believe my feeling of sincere gratitude and esteem towards you.²¹

On the face of it this was an innocent enough message. The Russian Government hastened to deny that it had any political implications. Count Witte, when Spring-Rice (then *Chargé* at St. Petersburg) protested against the telegram, said that it 'was designed mainly for internal consumption with special regard to the Buddhist communities in Russia':²² but the 'Buddhist communities in Russia', a reference to the Russian Buriat Mongols, were at that moment taking an alarming (to the British) interest in the future movements of the Dalai Lama. A group of leading Buriats had recently offered to form a guard to escort their spiritual leader from his Mongolian exile back to Lhasa.²³ A Buriat delegation had gone to Urga to propose this plan to the Lama, and it was, it seemed, to this visit that the

²⁰ FO 371/176, Spring-Rice to Grey, 14 March 1906. Of the embroidered cloth from the Dalai Lama, Spring-Rice noted privately to Hardinge that 'the Emperor has had a sad disappointment. There was an inscription on the embroidery which was presented to him and he thought it was one of his new titles. It turned out to be the Chinese advertisement of a Shanghai firm. How Curzon would squirm with indignation!' See S. Gwynn, ed., *The Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice: a Record*, 2 vols., New York, 1929, Vol. 2, p. 74.

²¹ FO 371/176, Spring-Rice to Grey, 7 April 1906.

²² BD IV, pp. 327-8, Spring-Rice to Grey, 10 April 1906.

²³ FO 371/176, Spring-Rice to Grey, 29 April 1906.

Tsar was referring in his telegram. The Tsar's message, therefore, could well be interpreted as official Russian approval for the Buriat guard, as this plan to escort the Dalai Lama home came to be called.

To Spring-Rice, as well as to Grey and his associates at the Foreign Office in London, the episode of the Buriat guard looked far more like evidence of the Russian intention to interfere in Tibetan internal affairs than anything that Curzon had produced in support of his proposal to send a mission to Lhasa. The Buriat guard, it transpired, was to number between thirty and forty men. They were to be armed. Their plans were well known to the Russian Government, which seems to have approved them. Spring-Rice thought it likely that the guard was made up of men who were, or had been, serving in the Russian Army; he noted that many Buriats engaged in regular service in the Tsar's armed forces. Spring-Rice lost no time in protesting against the guard, because, so Grey had authorised him to say, 'the presence of a Russian escort beyond the frontier of Tibet would, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be objectionable as constituting an interference in the internal affairs of the country on the part of Russia'. He told Count Lamsdorff that he hoped that the Buriat guard would not try to cross from Mongolia to Tibet. To this protest Lamsdorff gave the following explanation as to how the Buriat guard had come to be created:

A number of the [Russian] Emperor's subjects looked on the Dalai Lama as their High Priest, and quasi-divinity. The Dalai Lama himself, and his disciples on his behalf, were convinced that his life was threatened in case of his return to Lhasa. It was highly unreasonable that he should continue his wanderings in the neighbourhood of Urga and among the princes of Mongolia. His return to his capital city was to be wished for in the interests of the Buddhist communities of Northern Asia. But he had, it seemed, refused to return unless he received some solid guarantees that his life would not be in peril. These guarantees the Russian Government had been unable to give him. But it was difficult for them to refuse a request proffered by the Russian Buddhists that some of their number might accompany their master to his home in order to defend him from possible attacks on his sacred person. The Russian Government, acting on the advice of officials who had special knowledge of the temper of the Siberian Buriats, had

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agreed to this request, but nothing was further from their thoughts than a desire to intervene thereby in the internal affairs of Tibet.²⁴

Lamsdorff agreed to telegraph Urga at once to order the Buriat guard to escort the Dalai Lama only as far as the Mongolian border, where they would hand over the Lama's care to a Tibetan escort. The Buriat guard would then return immediately to Russian soil. Lamsdorff assured Spring-Rice that there had never been any intention for the Buriat guard to remain in Lhasa once its task had been accomplished. All the Russian Government desired was that the Dalai Lama should run no risks and that the internal tranquillity of Tibet should be preserved. They had, accordingly, told the Lama in no uncertain terms that once he was back home he should behave himself, 'that he must not assume a provocatory attitude, and that he could count on neither support nor assistance from Russia'.

Spring-Rice had by this time concluded that the whole episode of Dorjiev's mission, the Tsar's telegram and the Buriat guard represented the Russian counter-move to the British-invited visit of the Panchen Lama to India. The Russians, he thought, had been worried lest a British-supported Panchen Lama should so threaten the position of the Dalai Lama that the latter would be forced to defend himself, the outcome being a conflict 'between the two spiritual potentates one of whom will support Russian and the other British interests'. Any weakening of the influence of the Dalai Lama was detrimental to Russian projects for using the Dalai Lama to help them in their plans to extend their influence in Mongolia. Russian policy, therefore, was to get the Dalai Lama back home as soon as possible and in such a way as to show the Panchen Lama and his faction (which presumably included the British) that to oppose the Dalai Lama involved the risk of opposing the Tsar.²⁵

Had the Russians, indeed, persisted in their proposal to escort the Dalai Lama, if only to the limits of Mongolia, and had the Lama, in fact, set out for Tibet, Morley might well have found it hard to prevent the Indian Government from reviving those proposals for the support of the Panchen Lama which O'Connor and White had so strongly advocated. The outcome

²⁴ BD IV, pp. 329-30, Spring-Rice to Grey, 2 May 1906.

²⁵ FO 371/176, Spring-Rice to Grey, 10 April 1906.

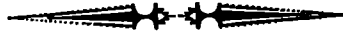
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could well have been the despatch of a British armed mission to Shigatse, with a resultant great increase in Anglo-Russian tension. The Chinese, however, seem to have saved the situation. No sooner had news of the Tsar's telegram to the Dalai Lama reached Peking than the Chinese Government sent Duke P'u and another member of the Imperial Family up to Urga to warn the Lama that if he went on intriguing with the Russians the Chinese would see to it that he never returned to Lhasa and never regained his former status and titles. The Lama appears to have been impressed. He put off for a while his projected return to his capital, and began thinking instead about a visit to Peking to clear up his differences with the Manchu Dynasty. Thus the Buriat guard never set out.²⁶ A crisis was avoided; but the conclusion derived from these events both in London and in St. Petersburg was that without some Anglo-Russian agreement the Tibetan situation remained one full of dangers. Tibet was thus guaranteed a place on the agenda when the Nicolson-Isvolski talks opened in June 1906. The Buriat guard episode, moreover, took place while the final stages of the negotiations between Satow and T'ang Shao-yi over Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention were in progress. There can be no doubt that these signs of Russian interest in Tibet were an inducement to both the British and Chinese sides to come to terms as quickly as possible; and it is probable that one result of the Tsar's telegram to the Dalai Lama and of the Tsar's approval of the Buriat guard was the ease and rapidity with which the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 was signed and sealed.

²⁶ FO 371/176, Satow to Grey, 3 May 1906.

VI

THE NEGOTIATIONS



I. THE SCOPE OF THE TIBETAN NEGOTIATIONS

IT seemed reasonable to open the Nicolson-Isvolski negotiations with the Tibetan question, both because it was a subject then much discussed by British and Russian diplomats and because it seemed to be an issue in which the British could, by their moderation, demonstrate their good faith and genuine wish for a settlement over Persia and Afghanistan. Accordingly, Nicolson, in his instructions of 23 May 1906,¹ was authorised to propose the following five points as a basis for discussion of Tibet:

1. Russia to recognize (as Great Britain has done) the suzerainty of China over Tibet, and to engage to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet, and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration.
2. Subject to the above stipulation, Russia to recognize that, by reason of its geographical position, Great Britain has a special interest in seeing that the external relations of Tibet are not disturbed by any other Power.
3. The British and Russian Governments to severally engage not to send a representative to Lhasa.
4. The British and Russian Governments agree not to seek or obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights in Tibet.
5. The British and Russian Governments agree that no Tibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to them, or to any of their subjects.

¹ BD IV, p. 331.

Such issues as the Gyantse telegraph, the temporary occupation of Chumbi and the payment of the Tibetan indemnity were, of course, understood to be excepted from these provisions; and the Russians were expected to acknowledge the validity of the Lhasa Convention and the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 which had just been concluded. Isvolski agreed without much argument to four of these points, nos. 1, 3, 4, and 5, which were incorporated with only minor changes in the final Arrangement. Point no. 2, however, presented a number of difficult problems, the discussion of which constituted the greater part of the Tibetan element in the negotiations.²

Point no. 2 in Nicolson's draft involved the following questions:

- (1) the status of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, and the nature of permitted future British and Russian relations with these two Incarnations;
- (2) the precise implications of the rights which the British had gained in Tibet from the Lhasa Convention and which had been confirmed by the Anglo-Chinese Convention, including the British occupation of Chumbi, the British status at the trade marts, the Gyantse telegraph and the nature of British contact with Tibetan officials;
- (3) the question whether the British and Russian Governments should permit their subjects to undertake unofficial travel in Tibet for scientific, non-political, reasons;
- (4) the problem, the consideration of which emerged from the question of Tibetan travel, of what exactly the term Tibet meant and of where exactly did Tibet meet China proper;
- (5) the Russian contention that the British, in return for Russian recognition of British special interests in Tibet, should acknowledge Russian special interests in Mongolia.

A solution of sorts to some of these questions was embodied in the final Arrangement which Nicolson and Isvolski signed on 31 August 1907, and in the exchange of notes which followed. Other questions, such as the geographical definition of Tibet, baffled the negotiators and were eventually shelved. The Russian

² BD IV, p. 337.

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effort to mix Tibet and Mongolia was successfully resisted by Nicolson, who was determined to confine the Anglo-Russian negotiations to the three regions on the agenda and to avoid complicating the settlement of the Indian buffer zone by the discussion of either the Far East (Mongolia and Manchuria) or the Near East (the Dardanelles).

2. THE DALAI AND PANCHEN LAMAS

When the Nicolson-Isvolski talks began in June 1906 the question of the Dalai Lama's future had received considerable emphasis from the continuance of Russian relations with him. In his place of exile in Mongolia the Lama had received Russian diplomats and personal messages from the Tsar. Russian subjects were proposing to escort the Lama back to Tibet. His agent, Dorjiev, had recently been in St. Petersburg. It was inevitable, therefore, that the consideration of the Tibetan problem should begin with a discussion of this issue.

Isvolski described Russian interest in the Dalai Lama thus. The Buddhist subjects of the Tsar, he remarked with reference to the Russian Buriats, occupied a strategic area on the Russian side of the borders between the Russian and Chinese Empires, and by their military prowess were of great value to the Russian armed forces. They looked on the Dalai Lama as their spiritual Chief. It was clearly in the Russian interest that their relations with this personage should not be hampered. The Russian Government, therefore, wished to ensure the right of Buriat access to the Dalai Lama for the same reason that Russian Catholics had been allowed to maintain spiritual relations with the Pope. As far as the Dalai Lama was concerned, all that would be involved would be occasional religious missions from Tibet to St. Petersburg and occasional visits to Lhasa by parties of Buriats. To these purely spiritual relations Isvolski hoped that the British would not object. Russia, Isvolski went on, was not interested in any particular Dalai Lama. If the British disapproved of the present Incarnation, might not his removal be obtained and might he not be replaced by someone more acceptable to the British? In conclusion, Isvolski noted, the Panchen Lama (whose very existence Isvolski only seems to have discovered in June 1906) was also venerated as a religious

leader by the Russian Buriats, and he, too, should not be isolated from them.³

Nicolson felt, and Grey agreed with him, that the return to Lhasa of the thirteenth Dalai Lama would be undesirable at present; and he was not prepared to consider the possibility of attempting to bring about the replacement of the Lama by someone of a less ambitious temperament, since this would involve considerable interference in Tibetan affairs and could only be achieved through Chinese co-operation. In the British view it was best that the Dalai Lama should stay where he was. The Russian argument for the right of Buriat contact with Tibetan religious leaders, however, was one that could not be denied. The British could not prevent all contact between Tibetan and Russian Buddhists, and they did not wish to do so. Their aim was to prevent the Russians from using the religious issues as an excuse for posting a Russian 'religious' agent at Lhasa, an official who could well be as political as the 'commercial' agent whom Curzon had hoped to station in the Tibetan capital. The Indian Government, when consulted on this point, could find no objection to the continuation of spiritual relations of some kind between Tibet and the Russian Buriats. 'We have no wish', Lord Minto told Morley, 'to prevent the visits of *bona-fide* Buriat pilgrims to the Holy Places in Tibet in accordance with established practice'; but, he went on, 'we fail to see that the mere fact that these visits take place constitutes any reason for the establishment of relations between Russia and Tibet'. If Russian Buriat pilgrims, for example, were to get into trouble in Tibet, this would not be a reason for the establishment there of a Russian official with consular functions: 'Russia's proper course would be to address the Government of China.'⁴

Isvolski was quite sympathetic to the British point of view on this problem. He agreed with Nicolson that the best solution to the question of the Dalai Lama's future movements, indeed, of his future as Dalai Lama, was to leave matters as they were. If the Chinese were able to secure the Lama's return to Tibet, then there was little that the British and Russian Governments could do to prevent it; but it seemed that the Chinese were by no

³ FO 371/177, Nicolson to Grey, 13 June 1906.

⁴ FO 371/177, Minto to Morley, 13 July 1906.

means anxious for the Lama to go home at this time. In any case, Isvolski and Nicolson decided that their Governments should agree to take no steps to bring the Lama back to Lhasa. Isvolski further accepted the British contention that Russia should not have political relations with Tibet of any kind, even if purely spiritual matters were all that were concerned. He insisted, however, and Nicolson concurred, that Russian Buriats should be permitted to visit Tibet for religious purposes so long as they did so in a private capacity: but he appreciated that Buddhists from British India were entitled to the same right. The Buddhists, British or Russian, could naturally in their private capacity discuss spiritual matters with the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and other leaders of the Tibetan Buddhist Church. The final agreement on this point was that:

It is clearly understood that Buddhists, subjects of Great Britain or Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious matters with the Dalai Lama and other representatives of Buddhism in Tibet.

Long before this formula was reached, however, Nicolson had concluded that Russian interest in the Dalai Lama was really related less to Tibet than to Mongolia, and the Russians were finding the Lama's support of some value among the Mongol tribes.⁵ Their policy, for this reason, was probably just as well served by the Lama while he was living outside Tibet, at first in Mongolia and then at Kumbum monastery near Sining in Kansu. In any case, the Russians could have all the relations they required with the Lama through Dorjiev, a point brought home when Dorjiev again visited Russia in November 1906.⁶ On this occasion Dorjiev had come straight from Kumbum, where he had left behind a secretary as his personal representative with the Lama. It was clear by this time that no formula which permitted Russian Buddhists, if only for the most spiritual reasons, to visit the leaders of the Tibetan Buddhist Church could prevent Dorjiev from going about his business. The British were never able to prove that Dorjiev was a political agent. Moreover, even if they managed, which was very unlikely, to persuade the Russians to agree to a specific prohibition of Dorjiev from Tibet, they could do nothing to prevent

⁵ Nicolson Papers (Supp. Vol. 1905-10), Nicolson to Grey, 5 July 1906.

⁶ FO 371/177, Nicolson to Grey, 19 November 1906.

the Russians from finding a substitute. On this question of the Buriats and the Tibetan Church the British, in fact, had no alternative but to accept at its face value Russian denials of political intent.

3. PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE LHASA CONVENTION

During the course of the talks with Nicolson, Isvolski on a number of occasions sought clarification of those rights in Tibet which the British had won by the Lhasa Convention and which had been confirmed in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906. Isvolski was unhappy about the British right to direct relations with the Tibetans through the British Trade Agents, if the Russians were denied similar rights. The Russians were apparently just as unconvinced by the 'commercial' nature of these Anglo-Tibetan contacts as the British were by the 'spiritual' nature of the missions of Dorjiev. In the event, Russian acceptance of the provisions of the Lhasa Convention respecting Anglo-Tibetan commercial relations was given in exchange for the British recognition of the Russian Buriats' spiritual interest in Tibet. Thus the same section of the final Arrangement which referred to Buddhist pilgrims (Article II) contained the following paragraph:

In conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Tibet, Great Britain and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. This engagement does not exclude the direct relations between the British Commercial Agents and the Tibetan authorities provided for in Article V of the Convention between Great Britain and China of the 27th April 1906.

These words, it should be noted, introduced formally into the language of the Tibetan question the expression 'Chinese suzerainty'. The expression had been used by the British during the Calcutta and Peking negotiations of 1905-6; but the Chinese had refused to accept 'suzerainty' as a valid definition of their status in Tibet, and the term does not appear in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906. Its use in the Anglo-Russian Convention, and for the first time in a British treaty relating to Tibet, was at the request, it would seem, of the Government of

India, which feared lest the Nicolson-Isvolski negotiations should result, if only by implication, in the definition of Tibet as a Chinese province. Lord Minto had a very different idea of the international position of Tibet. 'In our view', he telegraphed Morley on 13 July 1906, 'Tibet is a feudatory state under suzerainty to China, possessing wide autonomous powers, together with power to make treaties in respect of frontiers, mutual trade and similar matters with coterminous states.'⁷ This description of the status of Tibet agreed very well with the Russian picture of what the status of Outer Mongolia should be; and no doubt Isvolski accepted the term 'suzerainty' in connection with Tibet in the hope that the British might agree to apply it to Mongolia as well.

Isvolski at the outset of the talks made it clear that he did not think that a permanent British occupation of the Chumbi Valley could be reconciled with China's position in Tibet, be it suzerain or sovereign. He was surprised when Nicolson told him that the occupation of Chumbi had been limited to three years only, and appeared to be unaware of the modifications which Lord Amphill had made in the Lhasa Convention. He thought, for example, that the Lhasa Convention gave the British the right to have a representative at Lhasa (though Amphill had cancelled the Separate Article which implied this).⁸ The Chumbi occupation, even though now limited to a short duration, continued to worry him throughout the negotiations. He wanted Nicolson to agree to append to the final agreement some confirmatory statement that the British would not, provided the Tibetans respected the Lhasa Convention, remain in Chumbi beyond 1908. This declaration, which implied a somewhat humiliating (to the British) lack of Russian faith in the word of the Government of India, became implicitly a condition upon which Isvolski would make some formal acknowledgment of British 'special interests' in Tibet as specified in no. 2 of Nicolson's draft proposals. The outcome was that as an annexe to the final Arrangement Great Britain declared that 'the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by British forces shall cease after the payment of three annual instalments of the indemnity', provided that the Tibetans had in the meantime complied with the Lhasa

⁷ FO 371/177, Minto to Morley, 13 July 1906.

⁸ FO 371/177, Nicolson to Grey, 13 June 1906.

Convention and that the trade marts had 'been effectively opened for three years'. This declaration ended thus:

It is clearly understood that if the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by British forces has, for any reason, not been terminated at the time anticipated in the above Declaration, the British and Russian Governments will enter upon a friendly exchange of views on this subject.

In return for this statement, which gave the Russians the right to an interest in one aspect at least of the British administration of the Indo-Tibetan border, Isvolski agreed to insert in the preamble of the Arrangement a declaration that 'Great Britain, by reason of her geographical position, has a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the external relations of Tibet'.

At a fairly late stage in the negotiations Isvolski appears to have decided that the creation of the Tibetan trade marts had conferred a commercial advantage on the British which Russia was entitled to share. He hinted in private and informal conversation with Nicolson that the Arrangement on Tibet might well contain some reference to Russian right of access to these centres of Tibetan trade. The prospect of Russian Trade Agents at Gyantse and Gartok, however, which was clearly implied here, was not welcomed by Nicolson, who managed to avoid the issue by pointing out that Russian trade with Tibet was, inevitably, an overland trade carried on through Chinese territory, and, therefore, no useful discussion of the problem could take place without prior reference to the Chinese. Nicolson was determined, in any case, that the Arrangement should contain no reference to the future of Russian trade in Tibet. Isvolski appears to have sensed that it was pointless to labour this particular point, and the subject was dropped.⁹ It is hard to see how the British could, in fact, have agreed to consider Russian trade in Tibet without also discussing British trade in Sinkiang and Mongolia and thus widening the scope of the entire negotiations.

4. TRAVELLERS IN TIBET AND SCIENTIFIC MISSIONS

During the course of discussions about the shape of Russian relations with the Dalai Lama, Nicolson stated that the British Gov-

⁹ FO 371/382, Nicolson to Grey, 2 February 1907.

ernment hoped to see in the future the total exclusion from Tibet of Russian officials and would like some treaty provision to this effect. Isvolski said he was rather surprised at the implications of this. Did Nicolson mean that the British Government was seeking the total isolation of Tibet from the rest of the world and the total prohibition of travel there by explorers with purely scientific objectives. A prohibition against Russian officials entering Tibet, whatever the purpose, meant, in fact, that the Russian Geographical Society, for example, could never send an exploring expedition there, since in Russia everyone of note, including explorers, was an official of some sort.¹⁰ Nicolson, of course, had explorers very much in mind; and it seems that the subject of prohibiting Russian officials from Tibet arose because of reports in the press that the Russian traveller Kozlov was at this very moment in Mongolia preparing an ambitious venture of Tibetan exploration.¹¹ Morley, who had just decided to stop British officers from crossing the Indo-Tibetan border and who had turned down Sven Hedin's request to be allowed to enter Tibet from British India, was reluctant to see the Russians do what he had denied to the British. The India Office, throughout the negotiations, continued to press for some reference to the ban on Tibetan travel in the final agreement;¹² and Nicolson was obliged to raise this issue from time to time despite the obvious distaste with which Isvolski regarded it.

The question was indeed a tricky one. A treaty provision categorically banning all Russian officials from Tibet would never be accepted by Isvolski, who could point to the fact that the British had the right to send their officials into Tibet through their access to the trade marts. Moreover, a treaty prohibition of British and Russian exploring ventures in Tibet was unlikely to be very effective. British subjects could be prevented from entering Tibet from India. The Russians could inform their officials that they must not try to enter Tibet.¹³ But neither

¹⁰ FO 371/177, Nicolson to Grey, 13 June 1906.

¹¹ PEF 1910/20, Dane to Ritchie, 7 June 1906, ref. *Times of India*, 12 May 1906.

¹² FO 371/177, IO to FO, 29 November 1906, for example.

¹³ Thus Isvolski announced in July 1907 that he had warned the Russian Geographical Society that Colonel Kozlov, an Army officer and therefore an official, must not cross the Tibetan frontier. FO 371/382, O'Beirne to Grey, 29 July 1907.

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Power could, in fact, stop private individuals from crossing into Tibet from Chinese territory; nor could they prevent the nationals of other Powers from doing so, unless the Chinese agreed to close Tibet in this way. The Government of India, with whom on this occasion Nicolson was inclined to agree, thought this particular issue rather pointless.¹⁴ It would not stop the Russians from sending agents into Tibet, since Buriat pilgrims could always be employed in this capacity. A total ban on all Tibetan exploration, as Lord Minto had pointed out in May 1906, would tie British hands while in no serious manner affecting the activities of people like Sven Hedin. If territory along the Indian borders was to be explored, it was preferable that the British should play a part. As Nicolson summed up this point of view:

If Russia contemplates entering at any time into secret relations with the Tibetan authorities, it would, I imagine, be rather through agents of the standing of Dorjjeff than through Russian officials, who would probably be hardly fitted for the purpose. I fear it would not be possible to devise formulae which would prevent and forestall any possible future desire to get behind the Convention, should the Russian Government wish to deviate from a loyal observance of their engagements.¹⁵

Morley at the India Office, however, was determined that something should be written in to the Anglo-Russian Arrangement on this subject. His attitude to British travel in Tibet has already been noted; and there can be no doubt that he looked on a prohibition of Tibetan exploration as a valuable method of keeping British travellers, official and private, from getting into trouble with the Tibetans and thereby creating conditions in which another British armed venture across the Himalayas might seem to be called for.¹⁶ The proposal that the Russians be asked to ban their officials from Tibet was dropped, but Morley's insistence meant that Nicolson had to try to secure some mention of the exploration issue. This he proposed to do by means of an exchange of notes attached to the final Arrange-

¹⁴ FO 371/177, Minto to Morley, 24 July 1906.

¹⁵ FO 371/382, Nicolson to Grey, 30 January 1907.

¹⁶ FO 371/382, IO to FO, 7 March 1907.

ment rather than by a clause within the body of the Arrangement. The exact formula posed a number of difficulties, some of which Benckendorff resolved in London when he suggested that the British and Russian Governments should agree by notes not to permit scientific missions into Tibet for a period of five years after the signature of the Agreement.¹⁷ The moratorium, after discussion, was reduced to three years, and the notes to be exchanged were worded with great care.

Both Governments declared that they considered it of value, 'pour autant qu'il dépendra de lui', not to permit, unless otherwise mutually agreed, the entry into Tibet of a mission of any scientific nature whatsoever for the next three years. Both Governments proposed to approach the Chinese Government with the request that for this period China would undertake a similar prohibition on Tibetan ventures. At the end of the three-year period Russia and Britain would reconsider the question of scientific missions in Tibet and decide if any further measures were necessary. This was really nothing more than a decision to postpone, in deference to the wishes of the India Office—and despite the protests of the Indian Government—the whole question for three years. It was no permanent solution; and, as Sir Edward Grey observed, 'in the long run scientific missions will have to go to Tibet. No country can in these modern days be kept in "purdah".'¹⁸ The Chinese, when they were asked to join in the closing of Tibet to scientific explorers, stated that:

China had no intention of rescinding the prohibition which she had always maintained against the entry of foreigners into Tibet. They [the Wai-wu-pu] were perplexed by the proposal, and especially by the suggested time of three years.¹⁹

Jordan, the British Minister at Peking, and his Russian colleague Pokotilov had by October 1907 decided that this was all that the Chinese were going to say, and there was no point pressing for anything more explicit.²⁰

¹⁷ BD IV, p. 340.

¹⁸ FO 371/382, Grey's minute on Nicolson to Grey, 28 March 1907.

¹⁹ FO 371/382, Jordan to Grey, 22 August 1907.

²⁰ FO 371/382, Jordan to Grey, 12 October 1907.

5. THE LIMITS OF TIBET

There were obvious advantages, when attempting to negotiate the exclusion of British and Russian influences from Tibet, in agreeing to a definition of the geographical term 'Tibet'. The previous treaties and agreements of 1876, 1886, 1890, 1904 and 1906, which had emerged during the course of British relations with and concerning Tibet, contained no statement of the physical limits of that country beyond the article in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 which defined the alignment of the very short Tibetan border with Sikkim. During the Isvolski-Nicolson discussions, while the question of the prohibition of scientific missions was being considered, this uncertainty as to quite how big Tibet was became very apparent. The boundary between India and Tibet, while with the exception of the stretch to the north of Sikkim nowhere laid down by treaty, was still in general outline reasonably clear. It followed the Himalayan range. The northern and eastern boundaries of Tibet, on the other hand, were distressingly vague. Where was the limit of Lhasa control in the north-east towards the Tsaidam swamp and the Kokonor? Where, to the east, was the divide between the authority of the Dalai Lama and that of the Chinese Provincial Governments of Szechuan and Yunnan? These questions Nicolson and Isvolski asked each other; but neither could answer them.²¹ Both sides recognised that there was much territory inhabited by Tibetans which was yet under direct Chinese rule, where, in fact, China was sovereign rather than suzerain.

Isvolski first raised this issue; and it was clear that his impression of the political limits of Tibetan jurisdiction did not entirely coincide with that of Nicolson. Isvolski felt that Kham, in Eastern Tibet, while ethnically Tibetan, was under Chinese administration. Nicolson disagreed, though he accepted Isvolski's conclusion that the territory round Kokonor was definitely outside political Tibet. The Government of India, whose views Nicolson sought, interpreted Tibet in a still wider sense and included within its limits the Tsaidam swamp area.²² It was obvious that neither the Russians nor the British really knew

²¹ FO 371/177, Nicolson to Grey, 20 June 1906.

²² FO 371/177, Minto to Morley, 13 July 1906.

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the answers to the questions which were now being raised; and Isvolski, therefore, proposed this compromise:

Why should we not take Tibet generally as the country considered by the Chinese Government as under that denomination, without endeavouring to define precisely the exact limits and boundaries, which would be a difficult task?²³

The Foreign Office were not too happy about this scheme. Langley, then Senior Clerk, and with considerable experience of Chinese problems, felt that 'the Chinese Government are not to be relied on for accurate information about the boundaries of China, and this applies especially, I should think, to the frontier between Eastern Tibet and Western China'. Hardinge added that it would be dangerous to define Tibet on the basis of Chinese administration: 'It is possible', he minuted, 'that Chinese Administration may make further encroachments in Tibet while geographical limits never change.'²⁴ However, there seemed to be no harm in discreetly finding how the Chinese might define Tibet. In February 1907 Jordan approached T'ang Shao-yi, who should have had some ideas on this subject if any Chinese official did; and T'ang volunteered the rather surprising information that 'there was no map of Tibet later than the eighteenth century in the possession of the Chinese Government'.²⁵ Peking, it seemed, could not, or would not, give a more up-to-date definition. All the same, Nicolson thought, they should be given another opportunity to do so. In March 1907 he suggested, and Isvolski agreed, that the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention should not be in any way delayed by this question, which in any case related primarily to the proposed notes on the prohibition of scientific missions. The notes should make no reference to Tibetan limits; but the Chinese should be asked their views, and if they did at some future date provide a reasonable definition of Tibet, then this should be embodied in a statement with which Britain and Russia would declare they agreed.²⁶

²³ FO 371/177, Nicolson to Grey, 31 July 1906.

²⁴ FO 371/177, Langley's and Hardinge's minutes on Nicolson to Grey, 19 November 1906.

²⁵ FO 371/382, Jordan to Grey, 17 February 1907.

²⁶ FO 371/382, Nicolson to Grey, 28 March 1907.

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In June and July 1907 Jordan and Pokotilov repeatedly tried to extract some definition out of the Wai-wu-pu. The Chinese were very evasive. They said they did not want to talk about Tibet at all until they had seen the full text of the Anglo-Russian Agreement on the subject.²⁷ They noted that the question of the whereabouts of the Tibetan borders was a very difficult one. In October the Wai-wu-pu went as far as it was prepared to go in observing that 'as regards the limits of Tibet, . . . no change has ever been made in them, and the old limits should be regarded as authoritative'.²⁸ By this time, however, Nicolson had convinced the Russians that:

China is evidently unwilling or unable to give a precise definition of the Tibetan frontiers, and it would, I submit, be difficult for the two Governments of Great Britain and Russia to do so on the incomplete and possibly conflicting data in their respective archives. . . . I would venture to suggest that the question should remain dormant.²⁹

It is interesting that the Chinese reacted in 1907 to foreign pressure to define the Tibetan border in almost exactly the same language as that which they had used when approached by the British on this question in 1847. On this earlier occasion, when the British were attempting to demarcate the boundary between Kashmir and Western Tibet, the Chinese, through the Viceroy at Canton, observed that 'the borders of those territories have been 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'.³⁰ Such abstention was still as convenient in 1907; but a definition of Tibetan limits could not be deferred indefinitely. It was to be discussed at great length by British, Chinese and Tibetan delegates during the Simla Conference of 1913-14.

²⁷ FO 371/382, Jordan to Grey, 25 June and 16 July 1907.

²⁸ FO 371/382, Jordan to Grey, 14 October 1907.

²⁹ FO 371/382, Nicolson to Grey, 9 October 1907.

³⁰ BCCA, p. 78. See also Fisher, M. W., Rose, L. E., and Huttenback, R. A., *Himalayan Battleground; Sino-Indian rivalry in Ladakh*, London, 1963, pp. 61-62, for a discussion of the Anglo-Chinese correspondence of 1846 and 1847 on Indo-Tibetan boundary questions.

6. MONGOLIA

While the Nicolson-Isvolski negotiations were in progress the Russians were also engaged in discussions with the French and the Japanese over Far Eastern questions, including the definition of spheres of interest in Manchuria and Mongolia. It became clear to Nicolson right at the start of his mission that Russian interest in Tibet was to a great extent a by-product of Russian interest in Mongolia. Spring-Rice, in April 1906, had already remarked that Russian policy aimed at using the influence of the Dalai Lama to help consolidate Russian influence in Mongolia.³¹ When Isvolski, in June 1906, first asked Nicolson what he thought the geographical limits of Tibet might be, Hardinge concluded that what Isvolski was 'really driving at is to know the limits of Mongolia, to which, I feel quite certain, the Russians, being excluded from Manchuria, have now turned their eyes'.³² In July 1906 Nicolson wrote privately to Grey that he now agreed with Spring-Rice's surmise that the desire of the Russians to

maintain intimate relations with the Dalai Lama, either present or future, or failing a Dalai Lama then with the Tashi Lama, is actuated by the wish to exercise thro' that personage some control or influence over the Mongolian nomads. Their concern for the spiritual welfare and comforts of their Buriat subjects is, I imagine, in second place, tho' they put it forward as their sole object. . . . It seems pretty clear that China, with the indirect assistance of Japan, intends to obtain a firm footing in Mongolia, and this evidently, will not be appreciated by the Russians. The Japanese Minister here . . . [Baron Motono at St. Petersburg] . . . confirmed what the Chinese Minister had told me, and hinted that he hoped the views of Russia towards compensating herself in Mongolia for her Manchurian losses would receive a check.

Nicolson, in conclusion, said that he did not think it 'desirable that we should facilitate or in any way recognise any aspirations Russia may have in the Mongolian direction', and he thought it advisable 'that we should not admit that the Mongolian question should be mixed with that of Tibet'.³³

³¹ BD IV, pp. 327-8.

³² Nicolson Papers (1906), Hardinge to Nicolson, 27 June 1906.

³³ Nicolson Papers (Supp. Vol. 1905-10), Nicolson to Grey, 5 July 1906.

On 9 July 1906, four days after Nicolson had written these words, the Russians made their first serious attempt to mix the Mongolian and Tibetan questions. M. Poklevsky of the Russian Embassy in London called on Hardinge at the Foreign Office. After some discussion of the relations between the Dalai Lama and the Russian Buriats, Poklevsky asked Hardinge what the British Government thought of recent Russian policy in Mongolia. Hardinge commented on the energetic Russian Consul-General at Urga, whose large escort rather suggested that 'the Russian Government contemplated some action in that direction'; and he noted that while the Foreign Office 'felt convinced that Russia had now no desire for a policy of adventure', yet it 'seemed beyond doubt that there was still a certain party in Russia in favour of a policy of the absorption of Mongolia, more especially as Manchuria no longer offered a favourable ground for a forward policy in that direction'. Poklevsky denied that Russia wanted anything more than the 'maintenance of the *status quo* in Mongolia', and she hoped that the British, through their alliance with Japan, would secure the public recognition of this principle. What he meant by this remark was soon clarified. Japan, he said, had agents in Mongolia who were 'encouraging the Chinese authorities to tighten their hold over the Administration', and he felt that 'such a policy would inevitably end in a conflict with the Mongol Princes'. Poklevsky was hinting, in fact, that if the British could persuade their Japanese ally to stop meddling in Mongol affairs the Russians would listen with much sympathy to British claims to a special interest in Tibet.³⁴

To the Indian Government of Lord Minto, which considered that 'Tibet stands in the same relation to us as does Mongolia to Russia', Poklevsky's hints were of great interest.³⁵ Recognition of Russia's ambitions towards Mongolia, it felt, was not too great a price to pay for Russian acceptance of a British free hand in Tibet. The Foreign Office, however, expressed no enthusiasm for proposals of this kind. Any British endorsement of Russian special interest in Mongolia, even if expressed with such vague terms as remarks about the *status quo*, would cer-

³⁴ FO 371/177, Conversation between Hardinge and Poklevsky, 9 July 1906.

³⁵ FO 371/177, Minto to Morley, 24 July 1906.

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tainly result in Chinese protest and would probably upset Britain's Japanese ally. It would, in any event, tend to the confusion of the Anglo-Russian negotiations with those then in progress between the Russians and Japan. The British, having decided to confine discussions to problems relating to the Indian buffer zone, were naturally reluctant to see such a widening of scope which might well produce results less favourable to British interests than would otherwise have been the case. Hardinge, therefore, told Poklevsky that the most the British would be prepared to do in regard to Mongolia would be 'to give diplomatic assistance to get the Chinese Government to recognise the Russian frontier [with Mongolia] and to abstain from interference with it. In this the Japanese Government might also assist.'³⁶

In January 1907 Isvolski formally raised the Mongolia issue when he asked Nicolson 'whether His Majesty's Government would be disposed to make some reference to the *status quo* in Mongolia once the bases of our future agreement had been settled'. Isvolski, however, when he saw that Nicolson did not welcome this proposal, hastened to add that 'it was merely a suggestion on his part'.³⁷ The proposal was given very careful consideration by the Foreign Office, and its implications were explored in a number of conversations between Hardinge and the Russian Embassy. It transpired that what the Russians were really saying was this: in return for Russian recognition of the special British position in Tibet, Great Britain would formally accept the special rights in Mongolia which Russia had acquired by virtue of the *Rules for Russian Land Trade* attached to the Sino-Russian Treaty of St. Petersburg of 1881. These regulations the Russians had interpreted to give to their merchants a virtual monopoly of non-Chinese Mongolian foreign trade. British recognition of the Mongolian *status quo* would also mean the recognition of Russia's right to maintain a garrison at its Consulate-General in Urga (which at the time of the Boxer troubles had had a strength of several hundred Cossacks); and it would imply that Russia could with British approval resist all Chinese attempts to reform the government and administration of Mongolia.³⁸

³⁶ FO 371/177, Conversation between Hardinge and Poklevsky, 9 July 1906.

³⁷ FO 371/382, Nicolson to Grey, 5 January 1907.

³⁸ FO 371/382, FO minutes on Nicolson to Grey, 6 January 1907.

The British Foreign Office, even if it had had no other reasons for wishing to avoid discussion of Russian interests in Mongolia, would never have agreed to any declaration which could be construed to imply British acceptance of the exclusive rights in Chinese Central Asia which Russia claimed on the basis of the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg. This Treaty, by which the Russians had agreed to evacuate part of the Ili district of Chinese Turkestan (which they had occupied in 1871 during the period when Yakub Bey had removed Kashgaria from Chinese control), conferred on the Russians important advantages, political and commercial, in Chinese Turkestan as well as in Mongolia. It confirmed their right to establish a Consulate at Kashgar and it gave their traders there valuable privileges. The Indian Government had for many years been attempting to persuade the Chinese to treat British subjects in Chinese Turkestan on the same footing as the subjects of Russia. The Chinese had consistently refused. British demands that George Macartney, who had been representing British interests at Kashgar since the 1890s, should be recognised as of Consular status, were rejected; and the British arguments that they should share with Russia the most favoured nation treatment afforded by the 1881 Treaty were ignored. Until these demands were met, the British were not going to help Russia in her enjoyment of the advantages which she had won from China in 1881.

Another argument against any discussion of Mongolia was raised by Morley at the India Office, who pointed out that the Russians, while insisting on the maintenance of Chinese authority in Tibet, yet were proposing that the British should agree to the imposition of limits on the Chinese authority in Mongolia.³⁹ Even if the Russians were to offer the British a free hand in Tibet, little would be gained, since by the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 the British had deprived themselves of virtually all room for manoeuvre to the north of the Himalayas. Without the possibility of compensating advantages, Morley thought, why help Russia in her Mongolian plans?

On 5 February 1907, when Poklevsky called at the Foreign Office to enquire once more about British views on Mongolia, Hardinge told him that 'it is quite impossible for us to restrict the action of China or any other Power in Mongolia although

³⁹ FO 371/382, IO to FO, 5 February 1907.

we can always restrict our own'. He observed 'as my *personal* and *private* opinion' that the British could not possibly go farther than 'to say that in view of Russia's geographical position we recognise her special interest in the districts of Mongolia coterminous with the Russian frontier'. Hardinge noted that 'this is more or less what is said of our interest in Tibet, and what we said on a former occasion in relation to Manchuria'.⁴⁰ The Russians evidently thought that a declaration along these lines was better than nothing, so Hardinge wrote to Nicolson on 19 March 1907, since 'both Benckendorff and Poklevsky have repeatedly badgered me' about the suggested Mongolian declaration; and Hardinge, with Grey's approval, had proposed the following formula for that declaration:

Les Gouvernements de la Grande Bretagne et de la Russie, s'étant mutuellement engagés à respecter l'intégrité et l'indépendance de la Chine et animés du sincère désir de voir l'ordre et le développement pacifique se maintenir sur toute l'étendue de leurs frontières avec la Chine, s'engagent à s'appuyer mutuellement pour assurer la paix et la sécurité sur leurs frontières respectives.⁴¹

These were very cautious phrases. They did not commit the British to any recognition of the Russian interpretation of the 1881 Treaty of St. Petersburg. They could not possibly cause offence to the Japanese, who also had some interest in Mongolian questions and whose Ambassador in London, Baron Komura, had been informed of the Russian mention of Mongolia during the course of the Tibet negotiations. Komura at that time said that Mongolia had not been referred to in the Russo-Japanese negotiations then also in progress;⁴² but the Foreign Office may perhaps have suspected that Komura was telling a lie.

Isvolski, when Nicolson communicated the formula to him, thought it was rather 'vague'. What exactly, he asked, did the term 's'appuyer' mean? Did it mean that if the Russo-Mongolian border were disturbed the British would lend Russia material help towards pacification, or merely diplomatic help

⁴⁰ FO 371/382, Hardinge's minute of 6 February 1907.

⁴¹ Nicolson Papers (1907/1), Hardinge to Nicolson, 19 March 1907.

⁴² BD IV, p. 284.

at Peking?⁴³ When Grey clarified the point by declaring that 's'appuyer' meant diplomatic support only, adding sensibly enough that 'we could not give armed support in such a place as the Mongolian frontier', both Isvolski and the Russian Embassy in London appeared to lose interest in the proposed declaration.⁴⁴ By May, Hardinge was telling Nicolson that 'we have heard nothing more of the Mongolian proposal', and asking, 'Do you think this question has been forgotten? I hope so.'⁴⁵ Isvolski, of course, had not forgotten. He had, however, come to terms with the Japanese on Mongolia, and now thought a British declaration of the bland type which Hardinge had proposed to be of very little value. Article III of the secret Russo-Japanese Treaty of 10 July 1907 contained the following statement: 'The Imperial Government of Japan, recognizing the special interests of Russia in Outer Mongolia, undertakes to refrain from any interference which might prejudice those interests.' In return, the Russians accepted Japanese interest in Inner Mongolia. This was negotiated with the assistance of the French, who in the Franco-Japanese Treaty of the same date, 10 July 1907, expressed their approval of the arrangement.⁴⁶ Once the Japanese stopped intriguing against Russia in Outer Mongolia, Isvolski had gained his main objective. With the French also on his side, the views of the British may well have seemed to him superfluous.

Thus no mention of Mongolia is to be found in any of the three sections of the Anglo-Russian Convention concerning Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet which was finally signed by Nicolson and Isvolski on 31 August 1907: nor was Mongolia referred to in any of the notes which were appended to the Convention. The British side, no doubt, was happy with this outcome of the Mongolian discussions. Far Eastern problems had not been allowed to intrude in negotiations concerned solely with the Indian buffer zone. The creation of a diplomatic barrier around the frontiers of the British Indian Empire was uncomplicated by

⁴³ BD IV, p. 284, Nicolson to Grey, 26 March 1907.

⁴⁴ BD IV, p. 285, Grey to Nicolson, 3 April 1907.

⁴⁵ BD IV, p. 286, Hardinge to Nicolson, 2 May 1907.

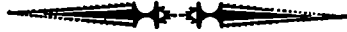
⁴⁶ E. B. Price, *The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 concerning Manchuria and Mongolia*, Baltimore, 1933, pp. 113-14; H. Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Imperial Russia 1855-1914*, London, 1952, p. 335; D. J. Dallin, *The Rise of Russia in Asia*, London, 1950, p. 90.

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other issues. In the long run, however, the British refusal to connect, if only in the vaguest of terms, Mongolia and Tibet was an error of judgment. The two regions, as Nicolson and other British diplomatists well knew, were very closely related in Russian minds. The Russian interest in the Dalai Lama was a product of Russian policy towards Mongolia. Russian ambitions in Mongolia would certainly continue in the future. Had Tibet and Mongolia been in some way equated in Anglo-Russian treaty relations, then the British could have, had they so wished, exploited any Russian advance in Mongolia as a justification for Russian acceptance of an increase of British influence in Tibet. When, in 1912, the British tried to persuade the Russians that Tibet and Mongolia were, in fact, but two facets of the same problem, the Russians had strong precedents in support of their argument to the contrary.

VII

CONCLUSIONS



THE Anglo-Russian Arrangement concerning Tibet, which Nicolson and Isvolski signed on 31 August 1907 along with an Agreement concerning Persia and a Convention concerning Afghanistan, was an instrument with a preamble and five articles. The preamble stated that Britain, 'by reason of her geographical position', possessed 'a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the external relations of Tibet'. In Article I both Britain and Russia agreed to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of that country. Article II acknowledged Chinese suzerainty in Tibet, and bound both Britain and Russia to negotiate with Tibet only through Chinese mediation, except where the British had been permitted special rights by the confirmation of the Lhasa Convention in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906. This Article also provided for Russian and British Buddhist spiritual relations with the Tibetan Church. Article III denied Britain and Russia the right to send representatives to Lhasa. In Article IV Britain and Russia both agreed not to seek commercial concessions in Tibet. Article V stated that neither Britain nor Russia would interfere with Tibetan revenues. Appended to the Arrangement was a British declaration to the effect that once the third instalment of the Tibetan indemnity had been paid, and provided the Tibetans had complied faithfully with the terms of the Lhasa Convention, the British would evacuate Chumbi without further delay. Finally, at the same time as the Arrangement was signed Nicolson and Isvolski exchanged notes in which they pledged their Governments to prevent in so far as they could the despatch of British or Russian exploring ventures into Tibetan territory for

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a period of three years. The full text of the Anglo-Russian Convention is printed here as Appendix V.

The Anglo-Russian Arrangement concerning Tibet did not strengthen politically the hands of the British along their Himalayan border. It was not, indeed, intended to do so. The object (from the British point of view) of the Tibetan Agreement, as it was also in the case of Afghanistan and Persia, 'was to facilitate the defence of India by creating sanitary cordons against "spontaneous infiltration" of Russian influence', so Harold Nicolson has observed.¹ These 'sanitary cordons', the division of Persia into British and Russian spheres separated by a neutral zone, the exclusion of Russian political influence from Afghanistan and Tibet, were created not by force of arms but by treaty. As Sir Edward Grey said;

The cardinal British object in these negotiations was to secure ourselves for ever, as far as a treaty could secure us, from further Russian advances in the direction of the Indian frontier. Russia was to cease threatening and annoying British interests concerned with India. This had been a formidable diplomatic weapon in her hands. She was now, once and for all, to give it up. The gain to us was great. We were freed from an anxiety that had often preoccupied the British Government; a frequent source of friction and a possible source of war was removed; the prospect of peace was made more secure.²

But all these benefits, in the last analysis, depended on Russia keeping her word. Nicolson and his colleagues at the Foreign Office believed that Russia would, in fact, do her utmost to honour the engagements which she had entered into on this occasion. Nicolson felt that the Anglo-Russian Arrangement would lead to at least fifteen years of peace in Asia. It was now in the Russian interest to see that Anglo-Russian tension in the East, where since the Japanese war Russian policy had changed 'from an aggressive one to a defensive one', did not revive.³

The advantages of the Anglo-Russian Arrangement, so apparent at the India Office and the Foreign Office in London,

¹ H. Nicolson, *Lord Carnock*, London, 1930, p. 234.

² Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years 1892-1916*, 2 vols., London, 1928, Vol. 1, p. 253.

³ Nicolson Papers (Supp. Vol. 1905-10), Nicolson to Grey, 8 May 1907.

were not quite so obvious in Simla. Minto had been rather distressed when he was told the terms which Nicolson had been instructed to obtain. He felt, so Morley interpreted him, that 'if we are to enter on an *entente* with Russia, let us bargain with her elsewhere than in Central Asia'. The Indian Government did not believe that the problems of the security of the Indian borders could be solved by talk in St. Petersburg. It thought, indeed, that the kind of talk which Nicolson was authorised to make was actually throwing away positions of strength which the British then occupied. The idea of permitting the Russians any contact with the Afghans at all, for example, even if Russo-Afghan relations were to be confined to non-political matters arising from the existence of a common frontier, was anathema in the Indian Foreign Department. Morley, in fact, had to administer a rebuke to India. As he said to Minto in July 1906, Britain 'cannot have two foreign policies'. The decision to discuss Central Asian questions with Russia had been made, and the Indian Government would have to abide by that decision. 'Be we right or wrong', he declared, 'that is our policy.'⁴ Grey was probably right when he remarked to Campbell-Bannerman, his Prime Minister, that 'without Morley we should have made no progress at all, for the Government of India would have blocked us at every point'.⁵ Even in September 1907, when the Convention had already been signed, Morley still felt called upon to write to Lord Minto that 'it grieves me to the quick that you should attach "no value at all to the Convention" as a contribution to the cause of peace'; and he was disturbed to learn that Minto still insisted on 'predicting incessant Russian intrigue, continued extension and improvement of their line of advance towards the frontier, and so forth'. Morley interpreted the Convention as something of a British triumph, a victory by Nicolson, allied with Stolypin, Isvolski and the Tsar, over a Russian military party quite as hostile to an Anglo-Russian *entente* as Minto seemed to be.⁶

⁴ Morley Papers (D.573/1), Morley to Minto, 6 July 1906; John, Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, 2 vols., London, 1917, Vol. 2, pp. 177-8; J. Buchan, *Lord Minto: a memoir*, London, 1924, pp. 225-7.

⁵ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 261, Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 31 August 1907.

⁶ Morley Papers (D.573/2), Morley to Minto, 19 September 1907.

CONCLUSIONS

Morley had already decided that the Indian Government, if left to its own devices, would tend to involve itself in trans-frontier adventures. The affair of the Panchen Lama's visit to India, the question of Sven Hedin's journey to Tibet, these had been indication enough that Lord Curzon's departure had not resulted in the death of 'Curzonism'. Since the whole policy of *entente* with Russia would be imperilled by any British action on the Indian borders which could be interpreted in St. Petersburg as a breach of the spirit of the 1907 Agreement, based as it was on mutual trust, Morley determined to keep a very close watch on Indian frontier policy. The result, as far as Tibet was concerned, was that the India Office tended to restrict the Indian Government's freedom of action on the Northern Frontier to an even greater extent than a strict interpretation of the letter of the treaties might have indicated.

Even without John Morley, there can be no doubt that the Anglo-Russian Arrangement concerning Tibet further whittled away the gains resulting from the Younghusband Mission.⁷ The British occupation of Chumbi, for example, which had originally been devised as a means of exerting continuing pressure on the Tibetans, had now lost nearly all its force. Before the Agreement the British still had it within their power to decide that, on the expiry of the three-year period, the Tibetans were not entirely honouring their promises in the Lhasa Convention; and the occupation could thus be prolonged. Several Indian officials imagined at one time that this was what would happen. Now, however, though the possibility of an extension of the occupation of Chumbi had not been excluded absolutely, yet it would immediately call for Anglo-Russian consultations the outcome of which would not be difficult to imagine. Similarly, up to 1907 it had been possible, if only in theory, for the prohibitions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention, those relating to mining concessions for instance, to be removed by direct Anglo-Chinese negotiation. Now they would require in addition Anglo-Russian negotiation; and it was unlikely that Russia would agree to any modification of the 1907 Arrangement without some compensation to herself either in Tibet or elsewhere.

⁷ 'As to Tibet . . . it seems to me that we have lost ground there', Minto wrote to Morley on 26 September 1907 after reading the text of the Anglo-Russian Convention. Morley Papers (D.573/12).

This fact became extremely clear during the period of the Simla Conference of 1913-14.

Had the Anglo-Russian Arrangements been as perfect instruments as Sir Edward Grey suggested in the passage from his memoirs quoted above, then the limitations which they imposed on the freedom of action of the Government of India would have been of little significance. In fact, it transpired, as R. P. Churchill noted, that these Arrangements provided 'an unstable solution' to the problems of the Indian buffer zone.⁸ Russia soon concluded that she needed more in Persia and Afghanistan. The Indian Government, faced first with the rapid increase of Chinese power in Tibet, and then, suddenly in 1912, with its virtual disappearance, found that it required a flexibility in policy which the Arrangement concerning Tibet of 1907 denied it. Hardinge, who as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had been to a great extent responsible for the Arrangement, discovered as Viceroy of India that he had to seek for a drastic revision of some of its provisions. During Hardinge's Administration the Indian Government was to propose that the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, or some other British official, be allowed to visit Lhasa, thus reviving the Separate Article of Younghusband's Lhasa Convention; and it was to negotiate directly with the Tibetans what amounted to a British annexation of Tibetan territory.

One factor leading to the instability of the Anglo-Russian Convention had been apparent to Grey while the negotiations were actually in progress. The main Russian objective in the Nicolson-Isvolski discussions, far more important to the Imperial Government than any Persian, Afghan or Tibetan issue, was an alteration of the conditions which had been imposed by the Powers on the Russian access to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The Russians had tried to get the Straits included in the agenda of the Nicolson-Isvolski talks; but they agreed not to press the matter on the tacit understanding that if the settlement of Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet proved satisfactory in practice, the Russians would 'not have trouble with us about the entrance to the Black Sea'.⁹ Russia appreciated that at this time the

⁸ Churchill, *Anglo-Russian Convention*, op. cit., p. 343.

⁹ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 255-60.

CONCLUSIONS

Straits problem could not be solved by Russia and Britain alone; other Powers, France for one, would have to be consulted. It may be supposed, however, that successive Russian Foreign Ministers continued to look on the 1907 Convention as the prelude for a Near Eastern settlement. When, by 1912, it had become obvious that the Convention in all its three parts had failed to satisfy the requirements of one or other of the two signatory Powers, the Russians must have seen that in a British request for revision of any one of its aspects lay an opportunity for raising the issue of the Straits. Thus, in early 1915, in wartime, when the renegotiation of the 1907 Convention was initiated (some aspects of it had been under discussion since 1912) as part of a new general settlement, which included changes in the 1907 terms on Tibet, Afghanistan and Persia, and the possible addition of Chinese Turkestan, it was suggested that Russia should be given after victory Constantinople and some other parts of Turkey.¹⁰ This scheme, for obvious reasons, failed to materialise.

As far as Tibet was concerned, the British were to find the basic incompleteness of the Anglo-Russian settlement of 1907 a major source of diplomatic inconvenience. The modifications in the Tibetan Arrangement which Hardinge was obliged to propose formally in 1914 would probably have been accepted without demur by the Russians had nothing else been involved. As it was, any British request to a change, however minor, in one aspect of the 1907 Arrangements provided an opportunity which Russian statesmen could not be expected to resist to raise issues of the widest implications. It has often been said that since the latter part of the nineteenth century, at least, the main Russian interest in the Indian frontier was as a place where pressure could be exerted if the British attempted to oppose Russian ambitions farther to the west, a policy, in fact, of blackmail. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which was intended to have quite the opposite effect, made in some ways this kind of bargaining easier for the Russians, who could now employ that main principle of judo by which the opponent is defeated through his own exertions. The 1907 Convention

¹⁰ Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, op. cit., p. 541: PEF 1912/82, India Office, Political Dept., Secret Memo. C.142, Revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

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gave the Russians a treaty right to show interest and concern in British Indian frontier policy. British actions on her own borders, without the need of any Russian intrigue or pressure, could provide the occasion for Anglo-Russian negotiations of almost limitless scope. This possibility was to prove a more effective argument against a British forward policy on the Indian frontiers than any purely military or financial considerations.

PART THREE
The Chinese Forward Policy,
1905 to 1911

VIII

LATE MANCHU CENTRAL ASIAN POLICY



DURING the last decade of the Manchu Dynasty's life the Chinese embarked upon a surprisingly energetic policy in Central Asia. Immediately after the Boxer crisis, when China must have seemed to many foreign observers to be on the verge of extinction as a sovereign State, the Peking Government began a project for the strengthening of its control over Mongolia and Tibet. These peripheral regions of the Empire, in which the Chinese position had so deteriorated in late years as to make the establishment of British or Russian protectorates appear almost inevitable, were, it was now proposed, to be brought more firmly under Chinese domination than had perhaps been the case since the days of the great Emperor Ch'ien Lung. Foreign diplomats sometimes found this outburst of Chinese energy on the frontier hard to understand. Why, they asked, should China make such a fuss about remote places like Tibet and Mongolia when she had so many really pressing problems far closer to her capital to occupy her full attention for many years to come? Just such questions, of course, had been asked in the 1870s—by leading Chinese statesmen like Li Hung-chang as well as by European and American observers—when Tso Tsung-t'ang was undertaking the reconquest of Kashgaria from the rebel followers of Yakub Bey.¹

¹ For Chinese official discussion of the proposals to reconquer Turkestan, see Chu, W.-D., 'Tso Tsung-t'ang's role in the recovery of Sinkiang', *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, New Series 1, No. 3, Taipei, September 1958.

I have discussed briefly the Chinese reconquest of Kashgaria in *The China-India Border: the origins of the disputed boundaries*, Chatham House Essay No. 2, London, 1964.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, as also in the 1870s, the explanation for Chinese obsessions with Central Asian questions was simple enough. Throughout Chinese history dynasties had fallen and the countryside had been ravaged because the land defences of the Empire had been breached by Central Asian nomads. No symptom was more diagnostic of dynastic decline than weakness in Chinese Central Asia. The land frontier of China proper, the line of the Great Wall, was only the final works in a defensive system which extended from the Pamirs to the Amur River. The Great Wall was of symbolic as much as of military significance; and history had demonstrated again and again that a Chinese Government which had lost possession of the Central Asian glacis was most unlikely to hold the line of the Great Wall.

By the end of the nineteenth century Chinese public opinion, a force of some considerable significance even in Manchu times, had become extremely sensitive to foreign threats to the Chinese land frontiers. Humiliated by the ease with which the Powers had penetrated China by sea, the Chinese became increasingly determined that in Inner Asia, where in the past they won some of their greatest military triumphs, they would resist imperialist encroachment. Encircled as China was on land by the empires of France, Britain and Russia, and menaced to the north-east by the rising power of Japan, the land frontiers of the Chinese Empire could not, even to the greatest of optimists, have seemed at all secure. Up to the opening years of the twentieth century the mutual rivalries of China's neighbours offered some prospect of delaying the rate of advance, if not of halting it altogether; but by 1907, with Russia, Britain, France and Japan all allied to each other, a dramatic collapse of the landward frontiers seemed imminent. The very survival of China as a sovereign State appeared doubtful. Unless something was done, the peripheral regions of the Empire, already tacitly, if not explicitly designated as French, British, Russian and Japanese spheres of influence, would certainly pass out of Manchu control; and the Dynasty could hardly be expected to survive a territorial loss of this magnitude.

The Manchus had by tradition maintained their influence beyond the Great Wall not by direct Chinese rule but, rather,

by what amounted to a system of Chinese protectorates. Local administration, in Chinese Turkestan, Mongolia and Tibet, was left to the indigenous authorities, the Lamas and feudal families of Tibet and Mongolia and the Moslem tribal chiefs of Turkestan. The Chinese Imperial Resident at Urga and the Military Governor at Uliassutai, the Chinese Military Governor at Kuldja on the Ili, and the Chinese Imperial Resident at Lhasa occupied positions which could in some respects be compared to that of a British Resident in some of the Indian Princely States or in the Unfederated States of Malaya. With the coming of the twentieth century, however, official Chinese policy towards administration beyond the Wall underwent a radical change. Indirect administration gave way to projects for direct rule, some aspects of which, no doubt, had already been anticipated in Chinese Turkestan after Tso Tsung-t'ang's reconquest, when the new Chinese province of Sinkiang, the New Dominion, had been created. Similar 'New Dominions', in effect, the Chinese now set out to build in Mongolia and Tibet.

The implications of this change in policy were first apparent in Mongolia. In 1901 two new Chinese Government departments were created, the Board of Territorial Development (or Colonisation) and the Board of Frontier Defence, concerned with Mongol and Tibetan affairs. In part through these agencies the Chinese initiated projects for settling Chinese colonists on Mongol soil and for encouraging intermarriage between Chinese and Mongols the better to integrate the two races. Plans were drawn up for the economic development of both Inner and Outer Mongolia, including the building of a railway from Kalgan to Urga, the founding of banks, and the encouragement of mining ventures. There were proposals for the opening of Chinese schools, to teach the Chinese language to the Mongols—this had hitherto been forbidden—and to provide them with some military training so that they could form part of a modernised Chinese defensive system. The end result, the Chinese evidently hoped, was that Mongolia would be incorporated into the Chinese Provincial organisation, and the nomad Mongol tribesmen would be settled and absorbed into a Chinese-type rural economy.

This resolve to change radically China's position in Mongolia

created, inevitably, a threat to the survival of both the old Mongal feudal aristocracy and the Mongolian Buddhist Church, so closely allied to that of Tibet. It also threatened the special position in Mongolia which the Russians had been creating since the middle of the nineteenth century. Mongolia had a long common frontier with Russia, which had been the subject of Sino-Russian negotiation since at least the Treaty of Kiakhta in 1727. In 1861 the Russians opened a Consulate at Urga, where a Russian trading firm had already established itself. Russian merchants enjoyed a special status in Mongolian trade, which was considerably improved by the St. Petersburg Treaty of 1881, when the Russians also acquired the right to open other consulates in Mongolia. In April 1899 the British recognised, by an Anglo-Russian exchange of notes, that Mongolia was part of that sphere in the Chinese Empire where Russia could build railways free from British competition,² In 1900 a Russian gold-mining enterprise in Mongolia, *Mongolor*, largely financed by the Russo-Chinese Bank, was founded. By this date at least ten Russian trading firms had established themselves in Urga, and over 200 Russians were carrying on some kind of peddling trade throughout Mongolia. By 1908 just under one-fifth of the internal and external trade of Mongolia was in Russian hands. From the Russian point of view the new Chinese policy in Outer Mongolia implied a two-fold danger. On the one hand it promised to check the growth of a branch Russian trade which had, according to one authority, increased by a remarkable 566 per cent between 1891 and 1908. On the other hand, the extension of direct Chinese administration right up to the Russo-Mongolian frontier might develop into a military threat to Russian territory: and it was possible that the spread of Chinese colonisation, once started, might not be so easily checked by an international boundary which was little more than a line on the map. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Russians during the Isvolski-Nicolson negotiations should have shown themselves so concerned at the trend of Chinese policy in Mongolia.³

² MacMurray, *Treaties*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 204-5. These notes served as a model for the phrasing of some of the provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

³ For an account of Chinese and Russian policy towards Mongolia see P. S. H. Tang, *Russian and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia*,

What the Chinese were trying to do in Mongolia they were also attempting to do in Tibet, as the Indian Government had begun to realise by the end of 1906. Between 1906 and 1910 the pattern of Chinese policy became increasingly clear to British observers. The Chinese, it seemed, were setting out to launch at least four distinct attacks on the problem of their position in Tibet. First: from Szechuan they were endeavouring to extend by military conquest westward into Tibet the area of their direct control. The intention was to create at least two new Chinese provinces out of what had hitherto been Tibetan tribal territory under indirect Chinese rule; and it seemed as if the ultimate aim was to bring the whole of Tibet under this type administration. Second: in Lhasa the Chinese authorities were planning a major overhaul of the traditional machinery of Tibetan government and the replacement of some of the more anachronistic elements by institutions of modern pattern. Third: the Government in Peking had decided by 1908 that it was time that the Dalai Lama was made to acknowledge publicly his subordinate position in the Manchu hierarchy and sent off home to Lhasa to lend his influence in support of Chinese projects. Fourth: along the Indo-Tibetan border Chinese officials began a subtle campaign to undermine what remained of the British prestige in Tibet which the Younghusband Mission had created, and in the process the Chinese lost no opportunity to assert their claims to suzerain status over Bhutan and Nepal. These measures were accompanied by a corresponding Chinese intransigence along the Sino-Burmese boundary, where since 1897 the Yunnan authorities had persisted, with the support of Peking, in claiming territory to the west of the Nmaihsa-Salween watershed which the British regarded as the legitimate frontier line.

The Chinese forward policy in Tibet, reinforced by Chinese pressure along the Burmese border, had by 1910 transformed the nature of the problem of the northern and north-eastern frontiers of British India. The diplomatic barriers of the Anglo-Chinese and Anglo-Russian agreements of 1906 and 1907, designed to keep Russian political influence out of Tibet, were

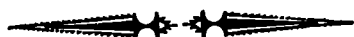
1911-1931, Durham, North Carolina, 1959; G. M. Friters, *Outer Mongolia and Its International Position*, London, 1951.

quite useless to the British when their need was to limit in some way the increase in Chinese power to the north of the Himalayas. When, in February 1910, the Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa before the advance of a Chinese flying column, and set out for asylum in British India, the Government of Lord Minto was virtually powerless to exploit this situation and was unable to accede to the Lama's request for British help.

IX

CHANG YIN-TANG'S CHALLENGE

1906-7



FROM the moment in 1904 when the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa to avoid capture by the Younghusband Mission it had become clear to British observers like Satow that a new Chinese policy towards Tibet was likely to be implemented: but the actual shape of that policy was not fully revealed to the Government of India until late 1906, when Chang Yin-tang made his way from India to Tibet to take up his post as Chinese Imperial Commissioner. Chang's task was to overhaul the Chinese administration in Tibet and, in the process, to destroy what remained of British prestige and influence to the north of the Himalayan range. In this he achieved a considerable degree of success. Chang certainly deserves to be remembered as one of the more effective Chinese officials of the last years of the Manchu Dynasty.

The repudiation by the Home Government of the more forceful aspects of Curzon's Tibetan policy, followed as it was by the negotiating of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 and by the opening of Anglo-Russian discussions on the Tibetan question in St. Petersburg, made Chang's work far easier than it might otherwise have been. The Lhasa Government, once they realised that the British did not intend to establish a protectorate in Tibet, were not overscrupulous in their respect for the engagements they had entered into by the Lhasa Convention: they had concluded that no second Younghusband Mission was likely in the foreseeable future. By the end of 1905 the Tibetans had once more started levying duties at Phari on the Indo-Tibetan trade. They were busy rebuilding those forts

at Gyantse and other points along the main road from Sikkim to Lhasa which the Convention had obliged them to dismantle. They were stopping Sikkim traders from travelling to Khamba-jong. They were even, from time to time, obstructing communication between the Indian Government and the British Trade Agency at Gyantse.¹ Throughout 1905 White had been trying to persuade the Lhasa authorities to honour the first Article of the Convention which provided for the erection of boundary pillars along the boundary between northern Sikkim and Tibet; but, with one excuse after another, Tibetan boundary commissioners never were appointed: and when, in July 1906, Morley decided to abandon demarcation on the grounds that it was the object of British policy 'to avoid all unnecessary causes of controversy with the Lhasa Government', the hands of British officials on the frontier were not strengthened.² In the early summer of 1906 the Indian Government discovered that the authorities in Western Tibet were ignoring the provisions for free access of Indian traders to the Gartok trade mart;³ and up to this date the operation of the Yatung and Gyantse marts could scarcely be described as completely satisfactory.

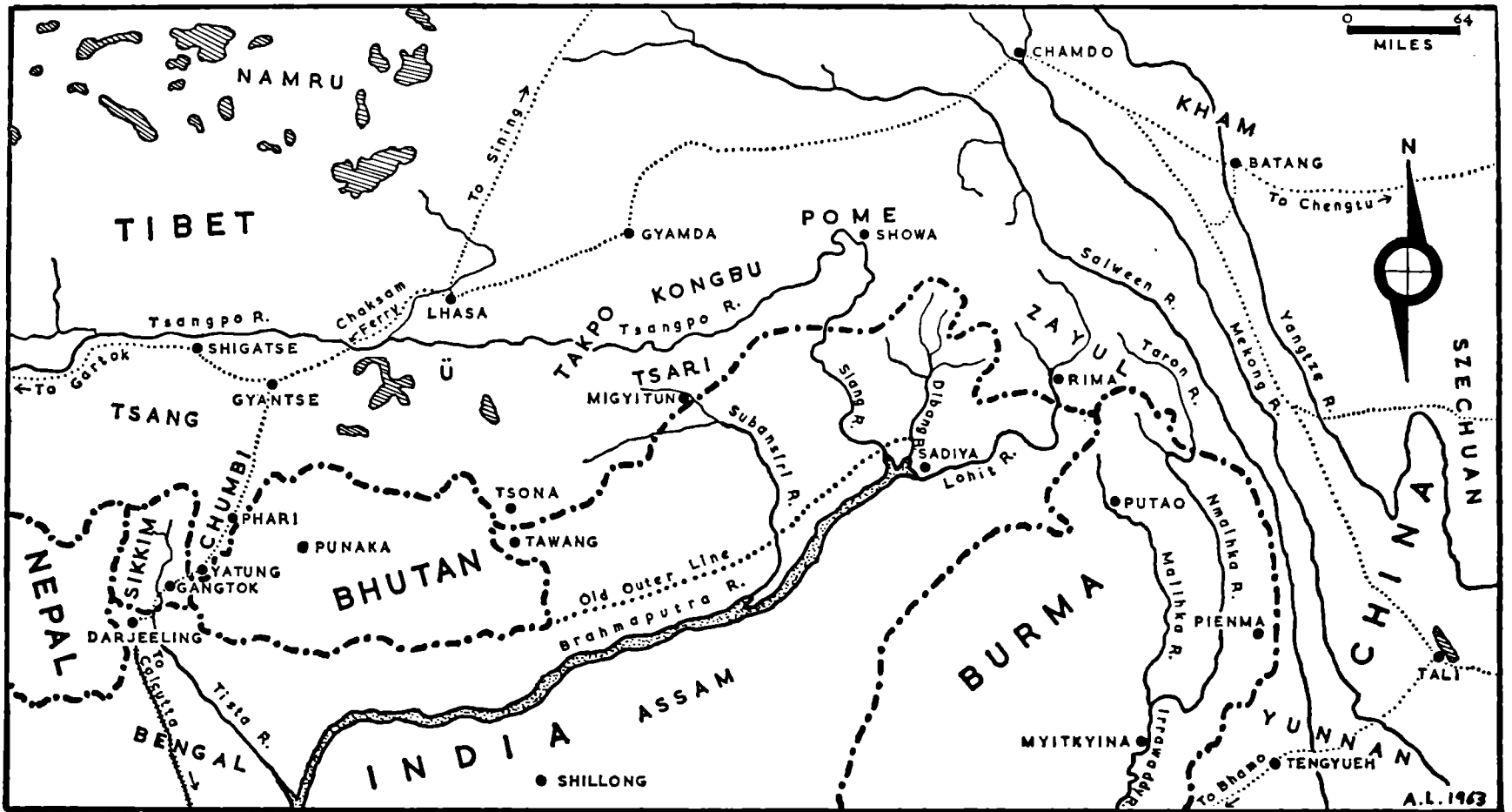
White and O'Connor, of course, protested to Government against every Tibetan 'outrage', no doubt making things sound worse in the reporting than they actually were; but they received very little support from the Viceroy. Minto, for example, described to Morley one of White's attempts to persuade Lhasa to desist from obstructing Indian trade 'as the performance of a stupid man' and an action 'which I shall see that he is pulled up for'.⁴ British frontier officials, in these circumstances, had come to appreciate that in order to preserve what remained of British prestige and influence in Tibet they would have to be somewhat devious in their actions, as perhaps in the case of the Panchen Lama's invitation to visit India, and that they would have to exploit to the best of their ability the few relics of Curzon's forward policy which had survived Amphthill's revision of the Lhasa Convention. Of these there could be no doubt that

¹ FO 535/7, No. 46, O'Connor to Bell, 18 December 1905.

² FO 535/7, No. 146, Minto to Morley, 17 May 1906; FO 535/8, No. 46, Minto to Morley and Morley to Minto, 13 July 1906.

³ FO 535/8, No. 51, IO to FO, 15 August 1906.

⁴ Morley Papers (D.573/8), Minto to Morley, 5 July 1906.



the British occupation of Chumbi was the most useful. Though in theory the British would have to withdraw from Chumbi by early 1908, this withdrawal was by treaty dependent upon the Tibetans showing their good faith over the operation of the trade marts. Since the trade marts were, in fact, not working very well, it was clear to the frontier officers that it would not be difficult, when the time came, for a strong case to be made for the retention of Chumbi. Until, at any rate, the British declaration on the Chumbi occupation which was appended to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, and which made Chumbi an issue of direct Russian concern, it was not unreasonable to believe that the British might well hold on to this wedge of Tibetan territory for a period considerably longer than three years.

C. A. Bell, the first British administrator of Chumbi, devoted much energy to pointing out to his superiors the benefits which the Chumbi people (the Tromowas) derived from British rule, and the danger of Tibetan retribution which they had courted by co-operating with their new masters. He proposed a major revision of the pattern of Chumbi government, which he justified on historical grounds. All Tibetan and Chinese officials should be excluded from any part in the administration of the valley, which was to be left, as far as possible, in the hands of the local village headmen. The practice of forced labour was to be abolished. A fair scale of taxes, which were to be paid to the British, was to be established.⁵ Most of Bell's proposals were implemented, with the result that the British acquired a far more direct rule over the Chumbi people than they had, for example, over the inhabitants of the British-protected State of Sikkim. With a garrison of four companies of Indian infantry and a police force of a dozen or so constables, the ratio of governors to governed in British-occupied Chumbi worked out at about one to three. Bell, and his successor Lieutenant W. L. Campbell, almost certainly felt that all this effort expended in reorganisation would result, as had so often been the case in the history of the British Empire, in a temporary occupation turning into something rather more permanent. The early British administration reports on Chumbi nearly always concluded

⁵ FO 535/7, No. 39, Bell to India, 17 November 1905; Bell, *Tibet*, op. cit., pp. 73-81.

with a forcefully argued case for the British annexation of the district.⁶

In occupying the Chumbi Valley the British had assumed control over about 650 square miles of territory of no great economic value. Its population of approximately 2,500 Tromowas provided Rs. 2,000 or so in revenue per annum, which certainly did not suffice to meet the costs of the British garrison. The main importance of Chumbi, so it was argued in many a British despatch, was political. The valley, though Tibetan, lay on the southern side of the main Himalayan watershed, and through it ran the easiest road from British India to Lhasa. In Tibetan hands Chumbi served as a barrier between British territory and the Tibetan plateau; in British hands it would act as a base from which British influence could make itself felt in the major towns of Central Tibet. Chumbi, it was further argued, could become again, as it had been in the recent past, a bottleneck on the main Indo-Tibetan trade route if the Tibetan authorities were once more permitted to encourage the Tromowas in their claims to a monopoly of the carrying trade between British territory and Phari: British occupation was the only means to ensure the permanent destruction of this monopoly. Finally, it was obvious that if the Tromowas co-operated with the British in Chumbi they would run a real risk of Lhasa retribution if and when the British withdrew. It could be argued on good moral grounds that, once embarked on the Chumbi venture, the British should see it through and not desert their supporters.

Most of the arguments behind the Chumbi occupation had some force; but it is clear that the real reason why Chumbi loomed so large in the minds of British frontier officials was neither political nor economic: rather, it was almost symbolic. It was from Chumbi that in 1886 the Tibetans had marched into Sikkim to fortify Lingtu as a bastion against the advance of the Macaulay Mission, thus setting in motion a chain of events which was eventually to lead to the Younghusband Mission. In 1888, when the Tibetans were finally expelled from Lingtu, British troops camped in the valley for a few days, and several British officers then felt that it should have formed part

⁶ For example, FO 17/1755, IO to FO, 8 August 1905, enc. Report on the Portion of Tibet lying South of the Tang-La, by E. H. C. Walsh.

of the British rewards of victory. It was in Chumbi, at the trade mart of Yatung, that the Tibetans had flouted the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 with their wall right across the Lhasa road, and it was on the Chumbi-Sikkim border that British boundary pillars, erected according to the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, were mysteriously defaced. Since Chumbi was in close contact both with Sikkim and with Bhutan, British humiliations there had an audience along a considerable stretch of the Himalayan border region. By 1904, at all events, the eventual annexation of the Chumbi Valley had become virtually an article of faith among British frontier officials. There can be no doubt that Younghusband's demand in the Lhasa Convention for a seventy-five instalment Tibetan indemnity guaranteed by the British occupation of the valley was a scantily veiled device to bring this annexation about. Of all this the Tibetans and Chinese were well aware. It is not surprising, therefore, that Chang should have selected the valley as the scene for his first demonstration that the Chinese had replaced the British as the major force in Central Tibet. Bell, and Campbell who took over from him in late 1905, had determined that so long as Chumbi remained in British hands no trace of Chinese or Tibetan political influence should be permitted there: thus Bell had denied to the Phari Dzongpöns their traditional rights to fiscal and judicial jurisdiction in the valley and had refused to take any notice of Chinese civil and military officers there. Chang now proposed to make it clear, at least to the local population, that the Chinese, even while the British occupation continued, were the real masters in Chumbi.

In September 1906, accompanied by Henderson of the Chinese Customs, Chang entered the valley on his way to Lhasa. He immediately demanded of the Tromowas free transport, as was the custom of officials travelling on duty in Tibet; and he issued orders to the Chumbi people without consulting Lieutenant Campbell, who, as Assistant Political Officer, Chumbi, could well be considered the legitimate head of the administration there. Henderson, who was acting as a Chinese official, likewise ignored Campbell, and perhaps with some reason, since Campbell had gone out of his way to embarrass this Englishman in Chinese service by locking up the house in Yatung where the Chinese customs officers usually lived.

Henderson, in order to find a bed for the night, had to break into what he considered to be his own house. Chang, once in Chumbi, moved into the Chinese Yamen at Pipitang, which since the 1890s had been the seat of Chinese authority in the valley. He made no attempt to call on Campbell or in any other way to acknowledge his existence. His behaviour suggested that there had been no interruption in the continuity of Chinese government. When Campbell, in an ill-considered attempt to show British mastery, went to call on Chang in full uniform, Chang's servants first tried to make him enter the Yamen by one of the side doors, reserved for the use of subordinates; and, on Campbell's refusal to do so, they said that Chang was not in residence, and turned Campbell away. When Bell, as acting Political Officer in Sikkim, rushed up to Chumbi to find out what all the trouble was about, he, too, was invited to enter the Pipitang Yamen by the side door; and it took all his powers of persuasion to have the great centre gate of ceremony opened to him. On leaving Chumbi for Lhasa, towards the end of October, Chang made a parting gesture by presenting small sums of money to the local headmen. During his stay in the valley, the first step in his Tibetan mission, he had managed to outwit the British in several matters of 'face' and to create much doubt in local minds as to the effectiveness and the duration of the British occupation.⁷

Chang's passage through Chumbi caused considerable alarm among the British frontier officials, who from that moment became extremely sensitive to any Chinese action which might conceivably be interpreted as a challenge to the British position. In early October, for example, Campbell reported that Chang accompanied by Henderson, was about to visit the Panchen Lama at Shigatse. Bell, who was then acting as Political Officer, Sikkim, while White was away on leave, immediately requested Government for permission to go to Shigatse himself, noting that this had been the wish of the Lama, who was very worried about what the Chinese might be planning. Bell pointed out that it would be most undesirable if Europeans in Chinese employ, like Henderson, could visit Shigatse when British officers were denied this advantage. Minto was inclined to agree, and Bell

⁷ FO 535/8, No. 64, Minto to Morley, 2 October 1906, and No. 76, Bell to India, 9 October 1906.

was authorised to make the visit. This was certainly disregarding Morley's orders on the subject, since the India Office had vetoed any direct British dealings with the Panchen Lama, and had as recently as September 1906 refused Bailey, then acting as Gyantse Trade Agent while O'Connor was on leave in England, permission to pay a call on the Lama's Government. By the time that Morley was informed of Bell's project, however, the journey had already been completed. Between 3 and 6 November Bell obtained a number of interviews with the Panchen Lama, who was obviously very frightened that the Chinese were about to punish him for his visit to India. He told Bell that he hoped that Minto would honour his promise to send military aid to Shigatse if the Chinese indeed threatened his safety; and Bell was embarrassed to explain that Minto had promised nothing of the sort. The sole result of Bell's visit to Shigatse, the last official British journey to this place for several years, was probably to convince the Panchen Lama that he had little to hope for from the British and that he had best make what peace he could with the Chinese. Henderson, in the end, never went to Shigatse.⁸

To undermine British influence with the Panchen Lama was certainly one of Chang Yin-tang's major objectives—though it is most unlikely that he would have achieved it quite so easily without the help of Morley's negative Tibetan policy—and this formed part of Chang's scheme for the elimination of those excuses for direct Anglo-Tibetan relations which the Young-husband Mission and the Lhasa Convention had brought about. Chang in Tibet, in fact, was continuing by other means what Chang and T'ang Shao-yi had attempted during the Calcutta negotiations over Chinese adherence to the Lhasa Convention, namely the establishment of the Chinese as intermediaries in every aspect of British official contact with Tibet. The completion of this task, Chang appreciated, would certainly require at some stage further negotiations with the Indian Government on a subject which the British were most reluctant to discuss. From the moment that he entered Chumbi in September 1906, Chang and his Chinese subordinates embarked upon a campaign to so harrass the British officials in Tibet as to make negotiation

⁸ PEF 1908/22, India to Bell, 10 October 1906; Bell to India, 17 November 1906.

seem to the Indian Government preferable to the continuance of the *status quo*.

Chang's offensive was mainly conducted through the agency of the chief Chinese official at Gyantse, Gow (or Kao), who soon became the Indian Government's least-loved Chinese. Gow's strategy was to oppose any action by the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, or by members of his staff, which could in the slightest degree be construed as a breach of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, a document not without ambiguities suited to this purpose. The 1906 Convention, for example, bound the British not to interfere in the internal administration of Tibet; but, in fact, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, and his staff, could hardly move a step without in some degree raising administrative issues. The Trade Agency doctor, for example, had been trying to check the ravages of smallpox, a disease to which Tibetans were exceptionally prone, by vaccinating the population of the Gyantse area. Gow forbade the vaccination of Tibetans on the grounds that it involved an interference in Tibetan internal affairs. Again, the British Trade Agency had been accustomed to lay down the scale of prices at which it would purchase supplies from the local Tibetan villagers: Gow claimed that these prices were ridiculously low—he produced Tibetan petitions to this effect—and, he argued, the British in any case had no right to lay down such price scales; Gow, accordingly, ordered the Gyantse people only to supply the Trade Agency through Gow and at prices which Gow would set. In all this Chang fully supported his subordinate.⁹

Chang and Gow did not content themselves with making the daily life of the Trade Agency at Gyantse difficult. They did their best to make its very operation impossible on its present basis. By January 1907 Chang had issued orders to the Tibetan officials in the Gyantse area forbidding them any contact with the British except through the intermediary of Gow. He denied, in fact, that there even was a legally appointed British Trade Agent at Gyantse at this moment; and he made this point very clear when he informed the Indian Government that Chinese officials had now been appointed to Gartok, Yatung and Gyantse as 'His Imperial Majesty's Trade and Diplomatic Representatives to look after the interests of traders and to settle

⁹ FO 535/9, No. 37, Bell to India, 8 December 1906.

diplomatic affairs of the respective marts', and politely enquired when the British proposed to appoint corresponding officers and what their names might be.¹⁰ In this Chang was arguing that the trade marts, though already established in principle by treaty, could not be said to have come into operation until he, Chang Yin-tang, had personally declared them open and accepted the credentials of British officers appointed to them. Until the British had formally announced their appointment of Trade Agents neither Chang nor Gow were prepared to call on members of the Trade Agency at Gyantse. This question of who should call on whom was to lead to much Anglo-Chinese wrangling during the first half of 1907.

Chang's campaign of attrition against the Gyantse Trade Agent and other British officials in Tibet was but one aspect of a drastic revision of the Chinese position in Tibet. By January 1907 Chang had arrested and sent off to China in chains the old Amban Yu T'ai, whose crime was his failure to prevent the Younghusband Mission. Pro-British or anti-Chinese Tibetan officials were purged. The Panchen Lama was informed that no more British visits to Shigatse would be permitted, and that he would be foolish indeed to rely on British support against the Chinese. The entire structure of Tibetan administration was being overhauled, with corruption and monastic idleness under attack. Boards, on the Chinese pattern, of Mines, Communications, Agriculture, Commerce, War, Revenue, Arts and Crafts, Education and the like, were being set up in Lhasa in rivalry to the traditional anachronisms of Tibetan government. A new Tibetan army, to be some 40,000 strong, was in process of organisation. Were Chang to continue undisturbed, it seemed likely to some British observers that in a few years Tibet would become just another province, or group of provinces, within the administrative structure of metropolitan China. In these conditions the trade marts, in effect, would be converted into treaty ports open to all the Powers; and the special British position in Tibet would have completely disappeared.¹¹

When Chang arrived in Tibet the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, O'Connor, was away on leave and Bailey was acting

¹⁰ FO 371/223, No. 9222, Chang to India, 17 January 1907.

¹¹ FO 535/9, No. 174, O'Connor's Diary, 6 April 1907; No. 47, Minto to Morley, 3 February 1907.

in his place. In January 1907 O'Connor made a rather dramatic return to the Tibetan scene, arriving at Gyantse with two motor-cars. One was a Clement, a vehicle which, along with some dogs, the Indian Government proposed to present to the Panchen Lama; the other, a baby Peugeot, was O'Connor's private conveyance. The cars were manhandled across the passes of Sikkim and Chumbi, but they seem to have made the last stage of their journey, from the Tang La to Gyantse, under their own power along a track which O'Connor had caused to be cleared for this purpose. Perhaps O'Connor, as his Peugeot staggered along in the thin atmosphere of the 'Roof of the World'—in places both driver and passengers had to dismount and walk beside the car, which could thus just move under full throttle—saw himself as a motorised St. George on his way to slay Chang's Chinese dragon; for O'Connor was much distressed by the way things had been going in Tibet during his absence. On his return he began to resist and react to every Chinese attack, real or imagined, on the status of the Gyantse Trade Agency as he felt it had been established by the Lhasa Convention. By so doing his relations with Gow and Chang rapidly deteriorated. A conflict of policy soon turned into a quarrel between individuals. O'Connor deliberately ignored Gow when judging a dispute between a sepoy of the Agency escort and a Tibetan woman, thereby assuming extraterritorial powers which were certainly *ultra vires*. Gow, with some malice, prevented O'Connor from obtaining willow cuttings to plant in the Trade Agency garden.¹²

By the middle of 1907 it was clear in India that the Chinese were becoming more than a match for O'Connor, who stood in great need of diplomatic reinforcement. Chang had managed a number of *coups* by which the British were made to lose 'face', perhaps the most notable of which being the affair of Sven Hedin's visit to Shigatse. It will be remembered that owing to the intervention of Morley at the India Office the great Swedish traveller had been prevented in 1906 from entering Tibet from British territory. In early 1907, after an epic crossing of Western Tibet from Chinese Turkestan, Hedin reached Shigatse, where

¹² FO 535/9, No. 92, O'Connor's Diary, 5 January 1907; FO 228/2564, India to Peking, 28 March 1907; PEF 1908/22, No. 969, O'Connor to India, 27 April 1907.

he was most hospitably treated by the Panchen Lama. He then wrote to O'Connor at Gyantse announcing the last stage of his journey to the Indian border; but he had not counted on Chang. The moment that the report of Hedin's arrival had reached Lhasa, Chang ordered the Chinese at Shigatse to tell the Swede that he must return at once by the way he had come. Hedin, who was not surprisingly much depressed by this development, sought through O'Connor British diplomatic help. The British of course, could do nothing, since they had recently been proposing to the Wai-wu-pu that Tibet be closed to foreign explorers, and the Chinese were now doing just that. In the end Hedin had to turn back and make his way through Western Tibet, commenting as he went that 'of the prestige of England I could not perceive a shadow'.¹³

The situation in Gyantse so exasperated O'Connor that within a few weeks of his return he was driven to propose to the Indian Government a policy almost as far-reaching in its implications as that which Curzon had had in mind when he despatched Younghusband to Lhasa. The Chinese, O'Connor argued on 3 February 1907, had made the position of the British Trade Agency at Gyantse impossible. Indian merchants were not getting to the mart. The Trade Agent was cut off from contact with Tibetan officials, and he was daily being subjected to petty humiliations which were steadily eroding what remained of British prestige. If the Indian Government intended to continue with a Tibetan policy at all, then it should set out on a fresh tack. It should exploit to the full, as O'Connor had been urging since late 1904, the potentialities of the Panchen Lama, who should be supplied with British arms and ammunition (O'Connor thought 400 obsolete Martini-Henry rifles would suffice) with which to equip his own defensive force. Once armed, the Panchen Lama should be encouraged to declare his political independence from Lhasa, which step the British would recognise and, in the process, modify the present Anglo-Tibetan agreements to embrace the existence of two separate Tibetan temporal régimes, one at Lhasa and the other at Shigatse. Finally, the British Trade Agency should be transferred from

¹³ The whole episode is described in full in Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya*, op. cit. See also PEF 1910/19, No. 2709, Minto to Morley, 24 February 1907; FO 228/2564, Grey to Jordan, 9 March 1907.

Gyantse to Shigatse, a move which O'Connor thought would be greatly welcomed by the Panchen Lama and which would also make sense on purely commercial grounds, since Shigatse was a far more important centre of trade than had ever been Gyantse—Shigatse had, for example, ninety-three resident merchants of substance to Gyantse's twenty-two. The Shigatse people, moreover, unlike the inhabitants of Gyantse, were known to be very well disposed towards the British. This was all common sense, O'Connor argued; but there was a moral point involved as well. The Panchen Lama, because of the friendship to the British which he had recently demonstrated, was now in a very difficult position. The Chinese, so evidence recently come to O'Connor's notice would indicate, were determined to make an example of the Lama, and might even take his life as a lesson to other Tibetan dignitaries that it would be wise to steer clear of the British. If the Lama should indeed prove to be in such grave danger, O'Connor felt most strongly, the Indian Government were in honour bound to come to his defence. Accordingly, O'Connor asked for permission to set out immediately for Shigatse to reassure the Lama with the news that British help was on its way.¹⁴

Minto seems to have been quite impressed by O'Connor's ideas. The mention of the plight of the Panchen Lama stirred the Viceroy's conscience, which had long been uneasy at the way in which the Lama might have been invited to India with promises which had since been repudiated. As he noted privately in a telegram to Morley:

Hope you will not think us over-anxious. I have private information from O'Connor that unless Tashi Lama is put in position to defend himself there is good reason to fear Chinese and Lhasa Government may compass his destruction and that the Chinese have not forgiven his visit to India and are waiting pretext to wreak vengeance on him. If violence is done to Tashi Lama we shall be in awkward position. To avoid this it seems to me very necessary to show our teeth at once to Chang and to give all possible indication of friendship to Tashi Lama. Such moral support would, I hope, avert serious trouble. Tashi Lama possesses very few arms. O'Connor suggests sending him

¹⁴ PEF 1908/22, No. 1226, O'Connor to India, 3 February 1907.

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three or four hundred rifles. This could easily be done quietly if you authorise me to do so.¹⁵

Along with this support to the Panchen Lama, which would initially be covert, Minto accepted most of O'Connor's other suggestions. As he put it to Morley on 3 February 1907, the British Government should take five major steps to improve their position in Tibet. First: the strongest of protests should be addressed to the Chinese Government against the actions of Chang and his subordinates like Gow. Second: it should be insisted that the second and third instalments of the indemnity be paid by Tibetans in Gyantse, and that the method of payment of the first instalment, a concession to the Chinese, should on no account be repeated. Third: O'Connor should be allowed to go as soon as possible to Shigatse, perhaps using the presentation of the motor-car, a gift of the Indian Government, as an excuse. Fourth: Chang should be left in no doubt that the Indian Government did not accept the Chinese officials at the trade marts as replacements for the Tibetan officials with whom the Trade Agents had been dealing since the signing of the Lhasa Convention. Finally: the Indian Government should formally inform the Tibetan Government that they still considered, despite the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, the Lhasa Convention to be in full force and binding on the Tibetans.¹⁶

Morley was horrified at these proposals. Tibet was assuming hydra-like properties: no sooner was the head of one forward move lopped off than another arose in its place. He wired to Minto that the Home Government were 'wholly averse both to O'Connor's visit to Tashi Lama and to any despatch of rifles'. He agreed that if the Chinese killed the Panchen Lama, 'it will be an awkward business', but 'so will it be an awkward business if we identify ourselves with him, are drawn into another "mission" (following our 400 rifles), and have endless complications with China, to say nothing of gratuitous trouble between Nicolson and Isvolski'. It was, Morley reminded the Viceroy, 'no part of our policy to *oust* China, so long as she does not violate the Convention'. Of all Minto's suggestions, only the

¹⁵ PEF 1908/22, No. 264, Minto to Morley (private), 2 February 1907.

¹⁶ FO 371/208, No. 4056, Minto to Morley, 3 February 1907.

diplomatic protest to Peking against Chang's actions was fully accepted in London.¹⁷

Neither the Foreign Office nor the India Office, indeed, really believed that the Tibetan situation was anything like so serious as the Indian Government's telegrams, echoing the reports of O'Connor, made out. By 1907 so many alarms had been called on the Tibetan frontier, and so little had actually happened, that observers in Whitehall no longer found it in the least difficult to adhere to policies of masterly inactivity. O'Connor's descriptions of the plight to which Gow's machinations had reduced him, cut off from contact with Tibetan officials, short of supplies, even fearing attack by Tibetan and Chinese forces, aroused in the Foreign Office no more than polite smiles of disbelief. After one such telegram Hardinge minuted that 'it looks as though Captain O'Connor's influence does not make things easier in Tibet'; and Grey observed that O'Connor 'is a very enterprising officer, and his view is that an active policy is necessary unless all that was spent on the Lhasa expedition is to be thrown away. It is not our policy.'¹⁸ On another occasion Grey noted that 'the zeal of his telegrams outruns their consistency'.¹⁹ O'Connor came to be blamed for much of the trouble in Tibet which, so F. A. Campbell of the Foreign Office minuted in August 1907, 'is clearly very much of a personal question. They . . . [Chang and Gow] . . . can't bear Captain O'Connor and will have nothing to do with him.'²⁰

O'Connor's struggle against the 'face-gaining' devices of Chang and Gow produced three results, not all of them entirely to the British Trade Agent's taste. Firstly, it brought about a possible minor British triumph in the removal from Gyantse of Gow. In July, after Jordan had brought the problems of the Gyantse Trade Agency to Chinese notice on a number of occasions, the Wai-wu-pu agreed to recall this official, because, so they told the British Minister at Peking on 10 July 1907,

¹⁷ Morley Papers (D.573/2), Morley to Minto, 8 February 1907; PEF 1908/22, No. 264, IO to FO, 6 February 1903.

¹⁸ FO 371/208, No. 8374, Hardinge and Grey minutes on IO to FO, 14 March 1907.

¹⁹ FO 371/208, No. 9533, Grey's minute on O'Connor to India, 17 March 1907.

²⁰ FO 371/209, No. 29036, minute by F. A. Campbell on IO to FO, 27 August 1907.

they had considered for some time that . . . [Gow] . . . was perhaps unsuitable for the post, and rather than have any more friction between him and Captain O'Connor they would withdraw him. . . . The causes of the friction with the British Trade Agent had always puzzled the Wai-wu-pu.²¹

Gow was thereupon transferred to a more important post in Manchuria. Secondly, O'Connor's resistance to the Chinese greatly assisted Chang in achieving what was certainly one of his main objectives, the reopening of Anglo-Chinese negotiations on the nature of the remaining British privileges in Tibet which had emerged from the Younghusband Mission. British protests in Peking against the way things were going in Gyantse enabled the Wai-wu-pu to point out that conditions would no doubt improve as soon as British and Chinese representatives had thrashed out a new set of Tibet Trade Regulations for which provision had been made in the Lhasa Convention. The opening of Anglo-Chinese negotiations on this matter, which the Indian Government could hardly in the circumstances avoid, provided the occasion for the third result of O'Connor's conflict with the Chinese. It led to O'Connor's recall. In August 1907 O'Connor was summoned back to India to take part in the talks, and he never again returned to Tibet.²² Though the Indian Government took some pains to conceal the fact, there can yet be no doubt that the O'Connor-Gow crisis had brought down the British official as well as the Chinese. This, too, was probably part of Chang's plan. O'Connor, for all his impatience and his obsession with forward policies unpalatable to Morley at the India Office, was still by far the most experienced in Tibetan affairs of British officers then at the disposal of the Indian Government. He was, moreover, a man who had won a great measure of very real respect among the Tibetans. The Panchen

²¹ FO 371/209, No. 28445, Jordan to Grey, 10 July 1907.

²² After the Trade Regulations negotiations, O'Connor tried very hard to obtain, in succession to J. C. White, the appointment as Political Officer, Sikkim. Morley refused this request. In 1908 O'Connor was sent as companion to the Maharajkumar (Heir Apparent) of Sikkim on a journey round the world. He then took up a number of consular posts in Persia. During the First World War, as British Consul in Shiraz, he had the misfortune to be kidnapped for several weeks by German agents. After the war O'Connor at last returned to the Himalayan scene as British Resident in Katmandu, and he then negotiated the Anglo-Nepalese Treaty of December 1923.

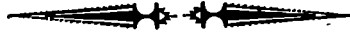
Lama, who continued to correspond with him for many years to come, regarded him as a true friend and was most upset to hear of his departure. Long after O'Connor had gone foreign travellers in Tibet would be told by Tibetans of all classes about the exploits of this man, the last senior member of the Young-husband Mission to remain in direct contact with Tibetan policy. That Chang could cause the downfall of such a person was indeed a feather in the Chinese cap, and we may be sure that it was an event which Chang caused to be widely advertised all over the Tibetan plateau.

In the struggles with Chang Yin-tang the British officers on the Tibetan frontier were endeavouring to oppose the increase in Chinese influence and prestige which was now the unmistakable object of Manchu policy in Central Asia. They were also, however, doing their best to prevent Tibet from becoming once more a region where Russia could intrigue without risk of effective British counter-measures. The Lhasa Convention, which was seen in Peking as implying an unacceptable diminution of Chinese sovereignty in Tibet, had not been directed towards China at all. In British Indian eyes the treaty which Younghusband secured from the Tibetans was, if anything, an anti-Russian measure; and the removal of its teeth, so officials brought up in the traditions of the 'Great Game' could not help feeling, involved a surrender of British interests to the Tsar. During the second half of 1906 and the first half of 1907, while the Isvolski-Nicolson discussions were in progress, many servants of the Government of India, including the Viceroy, Lord Minto, believed that the Home Government had embarked upon a policy of needless appeasement in which hard-won British vantage-points were being abandoned without a fight. Thus men like White, Bell and O'Connor, when they urged closer relations with the Panchen Lama, or a continued British occupation of Chumbi, or a firm resistance to the pretensions of Mr. Gow in Gyantse, were certainly intending to teach a lesson to Sir Arthur Nicolson as much as to Chang Yin-tang. Perhaps, they must have hoped, if they could put up a stout enough stand on the Tibetan frontier, the British Foreign Office might find itself inspired to fight harder over Tibet in the St. Petersburg talks. This was a hope which it was difficult to put into words, implying as it did a questioning by British Civil

Servants of the wisdom of a policy laid down by the Cabinet; and it is not, therefore, given a clear expression in the documents. Its existence, however, cannot be denied. So long as there was a chance that the British frontier officers might influence the course of the Isvolski-Nicolson talks, they did their utmost to do so. The signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention at the end of August 1907, therefore, much disheartened the 'frontier men'. They continued, as they felt in duty bound to do, to kick against the Chinese pricks; but until the outbreak of the Tibetan crisis of 1910-12 they no longer did so with any real hope of influencing the course of British policy. This change of attitude coincided with the beginning of the Anglo-Chinese negotiations over new Tibet Trade Regulations, a fact which doubtless goes far to explain why such Regulations were agreed to at all.

X

THE TIBET TRADE REGULATIONS OF 1908



IN August 1907 British, Chinese and Tibetan representatives met at Simla to begin negotiating Trade Regulations to replace those of 1893. This was a direct result of Chang Yintang's policy of harassing of British officials in Tibet, and it was something of a Chinese diplomatic triumph. The Indian Government, in spite of its resolve to the contrary made as a result of its experiences during the negotiations for Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention, found itself once more obliged to discuss with the Chinese its past treaty relations with the Tibetans.

The 1893 Trade Regulations, which dealt only with the Yatung trade mart established by the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, had never been very satisfactory to the British.¹ Younghusband, when he went to Lhasa, had with him a draft revised set of Regulations, referring to Gartok and Gyantse as well as to Yatung, which it was hoped he would persuade the Tibetan authorities to sign.² The British Mission, however, left the Tibetan capital before there was time to do this; and the matter was postponed for future discussion. Article III of the Lhasa Convention stated that 'the Tibetan Government undertakes to appoint fully authorised delegates to negotiate with representatives of the British Government as to the details of the amendments required' to bring the 1893 Regulations into line with the new situation in Tibet. In late 1904 and in 1905

¹ For the text of the 1893 Regulations, see Appendix II.

² FO 17/1756, IO to FO, 21 November 1904, enc. India to Young-husband, 10 September 1904.

the India Office was requested by at least one City syndicate to obtain new Regulations; but these were, it was hoped, to provide an opening in Tibet for British gold-mining concessions, a subject which had become taboo in both Whitehall and Calcutta. The gold fields of Western Tibet, of which much had been written in the nineteenth century, were probably, so Thakur Jai Chand (the first British Trade Agent at Gartok) reported, quite rich enough to warrant exploitation by European capital. In view of British policy to have as little to do with Tibet as possible, however, this was not good news. As Sir L. Dane remarked, 'A gold rush either from India or still worse from Russia . . . would be a problem of great difficulty.'³ Even if Article IX(d) of the Lhasa Convention could be construed to permit British mining ventures in Tibet, it was most undesirable that any such ventures should be permitted. This was one reason why it seemed best, therefore, to forget about Tibet Trade Regulations for the time being.

With the signing of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 the Indian Government acquired an even more powerful motive to ignore the question of new Trade Regulations, since these would now, in all probability, have to be discussed with the Chinese as well as with the Tibetans. The Chinese could hardly fail to exploit such an opportunity for further attacks on the measure of international recognition of Tibetan autonomy implied by the Lhasa Convention. When, in the summer of 1906, Chang Yin-tang started to prepare for his entry into Tibet, the Indian Government prudently drew up new Regulations which were circulated for comment to the Provincial Governments directly concerned with Indo-Tibetan trade; but it made no proposals for their discussion with Tibet or China, and showed no signs of doing so in the immediate future.⁴ The Indian Government was in no doubt that the Chinese would exploit any discussion of Trade Regulations, just as they had exploited the discussion of Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention, to bring about an 'interposition' of China in as many aspects of Anglo-Tibetan relations as they could.⁵ The Lhasa

³ PEF 1908/13, No. 1148, Dane to Ritchie, 4 January 1906.

⁴ FO 535/7, No. 140, Minto to Morley, 22 June 1906; FO 535/9, No. 91, IO to FO, 8 March 1907.

⁵ FO 535/8, No. 108, Minto to Morley, 27 December 1906.

Convention had stated that new Regulations should be negotiated by British and Tibetan delegates; it made no mention of the Chinese in this context; to allow the Chinese to enter into this particular area of Tibetan foreign relations would imply a further diminution of the force of Younghusband's Treaty.

The moment that the difficulties of the British Trade Agent's position in Gyantse had become a subject of formal British representation to the Chinese Government, however, it became inevitable that some Chinese participation in the discussion of fresh Tibetan Trade Regulations should take place. As the Wai-wu-pu pointed out to Jordan in April 1907, in reply to a series of British protests against the policy of Chang and Gow, a new mart like Gyantse could hardly be expected to run smoothly until rules had been agreed upon for its operation. There were problems at Gyantse which had not arisen at Yatung and to which the 1893 Regulations did not refer. The sooner, so the Wai-wu-pu said, new Trade Regulations were drawn up the sooner would the British Trade Agency cease to feel itself under attack.⁶ The Indian Government, as one would expect, was unhappy about this Chinese move. It urged that no discussions take place until Chang had ceased his pinprick attacks on O'Connor.⁷ In London, however, the Chinese proposal seemed to offer the only peaceful way out of an increasingly tense situation along the Tibetan border which was inducing Lord Minto to make suggestions to his Home Government of a more and more Curzonian tone.⁸

The Home Government had no illusions about the Chinese motives in suggesting that new Trade Regulations be discussed. As Grey minuted in April 1907, 'the Chinese clearly want to substitute themselves for Tibetan officials' in the conduct of relations with the British at the trade marts. The Wai-wu-pu was trying to eliminate that phrase in Article III of the Lhasa Convention which made Trade Regulations a matter for direct Anglo-Tibetan discussion without specifying Chinese participation. The Foreign Office, however, felt that if the British expected to work through China in other aspects of British

⁶ FO 228/2564, Jordan to Grey, 8 April 1907.

⁷ FO 371/208, No. 12470, Minto to Morley, 15 April 1907.

⁸ FO 371/208, No. 12535, Morley to Minto, 16 April 1907.

policy towards Tibet, as they were bound to do by the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, they could hardly ignore the Chinese in this particular instance. It seemed wise, therefore, to agree to talk over Trade Regulations with them, always provided that 'fully authorized' Tibetan delegates also took part.⁹ The India Office agreed. Minto's opinion, that no discussions with the Chinese should begin until Tibetan Trade Agents had been appointed at the marts and allowed free communication with their British opposite numbers, was ignored.¹⁰

The Chinese did not welcome the British insistence that Tibetan delegates should take part in the discussions, but they could hardly avoid some Tibetan participation, because of the terms of the Lhasa Convention to which they had adhered. They tried, however, to minimise the political implications of such participation by an ingenious proposal. O'Connor and Tibetan delegates, they suggested, should meet in Gyantse and talk over the new Trade Regulations. Once a draft had been agreed upon, Chang should come down to India and discuss it with Lord Minto. The final text would be signed by Chang and Minto, the Chinese and British Plenipotentiaries. The Tibetans, while having taken part in the actual negotiations, would not have manifested any treaty-making powers. Chang would have demonstrated that he enjoyed a status equal to that of the Viceroy. The British, however, insisted that discussions, if they took place at all, should take place in India on a tripartite basis with Tibetan as well as Chinese and British delegates; and the Chinese, having proposed the talks in the first place, could only agree.¹¹

On 24 August 1907 Chang Yin-tang, accompanied by the Tibetan delegate, Tsarong Shape, arrived at Simla, where the Trade Regulations talks were to open. The British were represented by Sir Louis Dane, the Indian Foreign Secretary, assisted by E. C. Wilton of the China Consular Service, and by O'Connor. Wilton, who as Consul at Tengyueh had had some experience of Chinese diplomacy on the Burmese sector of the Sino-British border, had been a member of Younghusband's

⁹ FO 371/208, No. 11274, Grey's minute on Jordan to Grey, 8 April 1907.

¹⁰ FO 371/208, No. 14247, IO to FO, 1 May 1907.

¹¹ FO 371/209, No. 18548, IO to FO, 6 June 1907, and Grey to Jordan, 11 June 1907.

staff and had played a prominent part in the Calcutta negotiations of 1905. O'Connor was to advise on Tibetan affairs; but there can be little doubt that one reason for his appointment was to remove him for a time from the Tibetan scene, where his irascibility had not helped the easement of Anglo-Chinese tensions. Morley thought that Dane's appointment was especially important, since there could be no doubt as to the Indian Foreign Secretary's 'loyalty to instructions and to the Tibetan policy of His Majesty's Government'.¹² In these negotiations Morley was determined to avoid the intrusion of Curzonian attitudes. The British aim was to reach settlement, not to create justification for a forward Tibetan policy.

The Trade Regulations negotiations were concerned, on the face of it, solely with the practical details of the conduct of Indo-Tibetan trade. In fact, of course, they involved wide diplomatic issues relating to the Chinese status in Tibet. The Lhasa Convention and the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 were not entirely clear on this point. By these treaties the British claimed the right to have some measure of direct communication with the Tibetan Government. But what was the Tibetan Government? As Sir John Jordan remarked:

The very term 'Tibetan Government' requires to be defined. In the Chinese text of the 1904 Convention it appears only as 'Tibet', and outside of that instrument no Government in that country, other than that of China, is in reality recognized by the Chinese. My short experience of the working of the existing Conventions convinces me that there will always be great difficulty in getting China to recognize the existence of Tibet as a separate political entity, and that the tendency will be more and more to construe the Adhesion Agreement of 1906 as restoring to China her full suzerain powers. The present position is somewhat anomalous. One day we treat some Tibetan questions, Scientific Missions for example, with China exclusively without reference to Tibet, and the next time we insist that, so far as the 1904 Convention is concerned, the co-operation of Tibet is essential to give Chinese action due validity. It is very much as if the United States had made, say, a Fishery Convention independently with Newfoundland and insisted that, while Great Britain was at liberty to regulate

¹² Morley Papers (D.573/2), Morley to Minto, 5 July 1907.

the other foreign relations with the island, she must be associated with the Colonial authorities in seeing that the terms of this particular Convention were duly fulfilled.¹³

The Chinese maintained that by the term 'Tibetan Government', at least in matters pertaining to international relations, was to be understood the Chinese authorities in Tibet. The Indian Government, on the other hand, held, as it had also during the Calcutta negotiations in 1905, that there was indeed a truly 'Tibetan' Government which could negotiate with the British without Chinese participation and whose existence had been confirmed in the Lhasa Convention. From the outset, the Trade Regulations negotiations became a struggle to establish, implicitly if not explicitly, one or other of these two conflicting interpretations of Tibetan status. Attention was focused on two main questions, neither directly related to the actual conduct of Indo-Tibetan trade. Firstly, what was the precise status of the Tibetan representative, Tsarong Shape? Did he have powers equal to those of Sir Louis Dane and Chang Yin-tang, or was he really a kind of adviser to the Chinese side? Secondly, who were going to be the authorities at the trade marts with whom the British Trade Agents would hold communications? Would they be Tibetan officials or would they be Chinese?

The position of Tsarong Shape, which needed definition for the preamble to the new Regulations, caused much Anglo-Chinese argument. Chang wanted Tsarong to be described as acting 'under the instructions' of the Chinese. Dane, and Wilton, who in early 1908 took over as head of the British delegation when Dane was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, insisted that Tsarong was the 'fully authorised' representative of the Tibetan Government. In the end a compromise was reached and Tsarong was put down as Tibet's 'fully authorised representative to act under the directions' of Chang, a formula which, without really clarifying the issue, still somewhat favoured the Chinese position. Similar compromises were made on the question of who were to run the trade marts. The original Chinese draft Regulations made it plain that the trade marts were to be under the control of Chinese officials: the first British draft said Tibetan officials: the final text referred somewhat ambiguously to Chinese *and*

¹³ FO 371/209, No. 31724, Jordan to Grey, 7 August 1907.

Tibetan officials, though elsewhere it was reasonably clear that, where Chinese and Tibetan officials were jointly mentioned, the Chinese enjoyed precedence.¹⁴

Had the Indian Government been given a free hand in these negotiations, it would never have accepted the final text which was signed at Calcutta on 20 April 1908. Lord Minto, however, was throughout under great pressure from London to come to some kind of agreement, and he probably realised that if he permitted the negotiations to break down in India they would only be transferred to Peking or London. As the Indian Government had discovered to its cost after the collapse of the Calcutta negotiation in 1905, resumption of this kind of discussion outside Indian control tended to produce agreements in which Indian interests were overlooked and Indian views ignored. It seemed most unwise, therefore, to break off talks when the Chinese proved obstinate. Another possibility, of meeting Chinese resistance by British pressure, was also ruled out by the policy of the Home Government. When the negotiations opened in August 1907 two means of exerting pressure on Tibet survived from the Lhasa Convention. The Tibetans had yet to pay the final instalment of the indemnity; and British troops remained in occupation of Chumbi. It was still possible, therefore, to make an issue of the indemnity payment and force the Tibetans to find the money for themselves, a device which would certainly have had some impact on the Lhasa Government. Moreover, since the Chumbi occupation was by treaty to be terminated only after the indemnity had been paid and 'the Tibetans had complied with the terms of the [Lhasa] Convention in all other respects', it could be argued that, as the Lhasa Convention had not been complied with in all respects—Minto from time to time compiled impressive lists of the ways in which the Convention had been ignored—the Chumbi occupation should be prolonged.¹⁵ At the outset of the negotiations, it is certain, Lord Minto was sure that he would before long be making some use of these two levers, the indemnity and the Chumbi occupation. He was, however, soon to be deprived of these useful weapons.

Morley did not object to a little fuss about the procedure

¹⁴ FO 371/619, No. 707, FO Memo., 31 December 1908.

¹⁵ FO 371/408, No. 28, Minto to Morley, 29 December 1907.

which the final payment of the indemnity should follow. There would be no repetition of the telegraphic transfer of funds from the Chinese Government to the Indian Treasury which had marked the payment of the 1907 instalment. The Tibetans should hand over the final cheque; but they could not be made to provide the money.¹⁶ Thus, when in late January 1908 Tsarong produced a cheque signed by Chang for the specified sum of the final instalment, the Indian Government had no option but to accept it.¹⁷ With the indemnity fully paid up, it was not so easy to defend the prolongation of the Chumbi occupation which, originally, had been justified as security for this payment. The Chumbi question, moreover, was somewhat complicated by the fact that during the Isvolski-Nicolson talks the British had agreed that if they felt, for some reason, obliged to postpone evacuation of this small wedge of Tibetan territory they would not do so without first consulting the Russian Government. Nicolson, in the opinion of the India Office and Foreign Office, had virtually promised Isvolski that British troops would leave Chumbi on time; and reasons for delay would have to be very good indeed. Minto's lists of Tibetan violations of the Lhasa Convention, impressive as they might be from the Indian point of view, certainly would not suffice to allay Russian suspicions that the British Government were trying to wriggle out of some of the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention. As Morley told Minto privately:

The Convention with Russia makes it more desirable than ever that we should have no fuss with China, and no excuse for prolonging our small entanglements in Tibet. We must be out of Chumbi in January[1908], even though it breaks O'Connor's heart.¹⁸

Of Minto's lists of Tibetan breaches of the 1904 Convention, Morley observed that they made 'a decent and plausible case' for holding on to Chumbi 'if we wanted to hold on in Tibet. But then, we don't want, and don't mean, to hold on.' Morley appreciated that this policy would make Minto's diplomatic fight with the Chinese more arduous, but

¹⁶ FO 371/408, No. 222, IO to FO, 2 January 1908.

¹⁷ FO 371/408, No. 3163, Minto to Morley, 27 January 1908.

¹⁸ Morley Papers (D.573/2), Morley to Minto, 7 September 1907.

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you will fight them none the less effectively if your hands are scrupulously, austere and haughtily clean. Take note, however, that we have bound ourselves not to interfere in the internal administration of Tibet; and for my own part I have a suspicion that some of your proposals come perilously near internal administration.¹⁹

Above all, Morley warned, Minto must not give Russia any excuse to get 'a finger in the Tibetan pie'; and projects for the continued British occupation of Chumbi could only lead to just this. Thus Minto had no alternative but to order the evacuation. On 8 February 1908 the British garrison marched out of Chumbi into Sikkim, and the Tibetans were told that British administration in the valley had now ceased.

The final text of the Tibet Trade Regulations, which Wilton, Chang and Tsarong Shape signed at Calcutta on 20 April 1908, shows clearly the weakness of the Indian Government's diplomatic position, unsupported as it was by the Home Government.²⁰ The Regulations, indeed, settled a number of the administrative problems arising from the day-to-day working of the trade marts; but they left little doubt that the Chinese had now become the ultimate authorities in Tibet. Regulation No. 3, for example, stated that while 'the administration of the trade marts shall remain with the Tibetan officers', yet those officers were 'under the Chinese officers' supervision and directions'. This same Regulation specified that questions which could not be settled between the Indian Government and the 'Tibetan High Authorities at Lhasa' should be referred to Peking. Regulation No. 5 described the Tibetan authorities as acting 'in obedience to the instructions of the Peking Government' in having 'a strong desire to reform the judicial system of Tibet'. Regulation No. 6 specified the circumstances under which the British-built telegraph and rest houses in Tibet would eventually be handed over to the Chinese.²¹ Regulation No. 12 stated that

¹⁹ Morley Papers (D.573/3), Morley to Minto, 3 January 1908.

²⁰ The text of the 1908 Regulations is printed here as Appendix VI.

²¹ The eleven rest houses between Sikkim and Gyantse were sold to the Chinese in 1909 for Rs. 22,778. The British, however, continued to use them, leasing them from the Chinese Government; but it was understood that the Chinese would take over at least half of each of the rest houses as soon as the British had handed over control of the Gyantse telegraph. In theory the rest houses had originally been constructed for the use of linesmen on the

as soon as the Chinese were able to police effectively Central Tibet the escorts of the British Trade Agents would be withdrawn, 'so as to remove all cause for suspicion and disturbance among the inhabitants'. Regulation No. 15 arranged for the text to be ratified in London and Peking, but not in Lhasa, and it distinguished between the two *Plenipotentiaries*, Wilton and Chang, and the Tibetan *Delegate*, Tsarong Shape. This kind of admission of Chinese suzerain rights in Tibet the Indian Government had tried to avoid during the Calcutta negotiations of 1905 and in their attitude towards Chang Yin-Tang's Tibetan policy of 1906-7. It is reasonable to suppose that without Morley's constant watchfulness Minto would never have made such admissions in April 1908. Dane, in a classic understatement, once remarked that 'we are not very keen about Trade Regulations';²² and, to anyone at all sympathetic to the aims of the Younghusband Mission, these particular Regulations would have appeared to have been acquired at an excessively high price.

For those, however, who were not seeking to maintain British prestige in Tibet and to combat that of China, a category in which Morley must be counted, the 1908 Trade Regulations had much to recommend them. They defined exactly what the physical limits of the Gyantse trade mart were, and the rights of British subjects wishing to trade there (Regulation No. 1). They conferred on the British Trade Agent, at least for the immediate future, extraterritorial powers so that he could preside over or be present at trials involving British subjects in Tibet (Regulation No. 4). There were provisions for the collection of debts at the marts (Regulation No. 7), and for the protection of the Gyantse Trade Agent's lines of communication with British India (Regulation No. 8). The local Tibetan authorities at the trade marts were to investigate losses by theft suffered by British or Indian traders on the road to and at the marts, and to bring the culprits to rapid trial (Regulation No. 10). British subjects

²² PEF 1908/22, Dane to Ritchie, 25 September 1907.

telegraph, though in practice they proved very convenient for the Trade Agent and other British subjects travelling between Gyantse and India. See FO 228/2568, Jordan to Wai-wu-pu, 11 January 1909, and FO 371/620, IO to FO, 11 September 1909.

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could trade freely at the marts, and buy and sell for cash or by barter provided that they respected local customs and usage (Regulation No. 12). The new Regulations were to remain in force for ten years, at which time they could either be revised or be permitted to continue unchanged for a further ten years, when, and at the end of successive ten-year periods, revision would again be possible (Regulation No. 13). From a purely commercial point of view, the main weaknesses of these Regulations was their failure to make any provision for the sale in Tibet of Indian tea. This question, which had been postponed for further consideration in the 1893 Regulations, was raised during the negotiations; but Anglo-Chinese agreement on it proved impossible, and its final settlement was again put off to some future time.²³ Otherwise, the 1908 Regulations provided a reasonable enough basis for Indo-Tibetan trade at the trade marts.

The Chinese, like the Indian Government, were not particularly interested at this time in the foreign trade of Tibet. They looked on the Trade Regulations negotiations as a means to secure political objectives. The British were the only Power which could offer effective opposition to the Chinese policy of establishing a more direct control over the internal administration of Tibet; and the Chinese were trying to negotiate away those aspects of previous Anglo-Tibetan relations which the Indian Government could possibly exploit to justify such opposition in the future. With the indemnity paid and with Chumbi evacuated, the only remaining practical lever by which the Indian Government could apply pressure within Tibet was the British Trade Agent at Gyantse and his escort. Were the Trade Agent to argue, in some future crisis, that he found himself in imminent danger of physical attack by the local population, then the Indian Government would have grounds for sending him reinforcements and thus find the excuse for stationing a significant British force far inside Tibetan territory. During the negotiations of 1907-8, therefore, Chang Yin-tang challenged the right of the Gyantse Trade Agent to maintain an armed guard, a practice authorised by no previous treaty

²³ The Chinese draft Regulations stated that Indian tea should be excluded from Tibet for six years after ratification. In the final draft this provision was dropped. See FO 535/10, Wilton to Butler, 20 April 1908.

and, in fact, an incidental by-product of the Younghusband Mission. Lord Minto and his advisers attached great importance to the Gyantse Guard; but they failed to convince Morley. Chang, accordingly, was able to insert the following phrases into the final text of the Regulations:

It being the duty of the Police and Local Authorities to afford efficient protection at all times to the persons and property of the British subjects at the marts, and along the routes to the marts, China engages to arrange effective police measures at the marts and along the routes to the marts. On due fulfilment of these arrangements, Great Britain undertakes to withdraw the Trade Agents' guards at the marts and to station no troops in Tibet.²⁴

Almost exactly two years after the new Tibet Trade Regulations were signed the Chinese were able to point to these words in justification of their military occupation of Central Tibet. When the Chinese, moreover, could show that they were effectively policing the marts, the Regulations also obliged the British to hand over to China the eleven rest houses which they had built on the road between Sikkim and Gyantse, the British retaining the right, if they wished, to hire back one half of each of these buildings for their own use. Finally, the Regulations stated that the Gyantse telegraph, the crucial link between the Gyantse Trade Agency and India, should be made over to China as soon as Gyantse had been connected with the Chinese telegraph system.²⁵ These provisions, whenever they should be implemented, would place the Gyantse Trade Agent very much at the mercy of the Chinese. With the Gyantse Trade Agent neutralised, the last remnants of that British prestige in Central Tibet which Younghusband had established could be said to have been swept away. This eventuality, which much alarmed Lord Minto, did not disturb Morley in the least. 'Prestige with the Tibetans!', he remarked, 'What was it ever worth, and was it worth a pin more the day after the Younghusband Mission than it was the day before?'²⁶

²⁴ Regulation No. 12.

²⁵ Regulation No. 6. While the British retained this telegraph, the Regulation stated, they would transmit along it Tibetan and Chinese messages. In 1912 the British decided to disregard this provision and to deny the Gyantse telegraph to the Chinese.

²⁶ Morley Papers (D.573/3), Morley to Minto, 24 January 1908.

The main details of the Trade Regulations were agreed by Dane and Chang on 6 February 1908; and there only remained the question of the role which Tsarong Shape, the Tibetan delegate, should play in the final signature, an issue of 'face' which was eventually settled by Jordan and the Wai-wu-pu in Peking.²⁷

On 7 February, Liu, Chang Yin-tang's private secretary, made a rather surprising proposal to Wilton which may possibly place the Chinese attitude towards these negotiations in a fresh light. Liu said that, once the Trade Regulations had been settled, Chang was empowered to negotiate a 'secret defensive alliance between China and Great Britain for the guarantee of the possessions of both nations in Asia'. The British would guarantee the Chinese possession of Outer Mongolia and lend their diplomatic support for the exclusion of Russia from that region. In return, the Chinese would help in every way they could to make the Tibet trade marts the centres of prosperous Indo-Tibetan commerce. Liu emphasised that this was a very secret proposal, and that it should not be recorded on paper.²⁸ Morley, when he learnt of the scheme by private and secret telegram from Minto, rejected it out of hand. The British, he said, did not make defensive alliances, and, even if they did, negotiations of this kind should be carried out in Peking or London, and certainly not in Simla.²⁹ Liu's proposal indicates clearly enough that the Chinese still considered, as they had in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the problems of Tibet and Mongolia to be but two faces of the same coin. It should be compared with the Russian offer, made by implication on several occasions during the discussion of the Anglo-Russian Convention, of a free hand for the British in Tibet in exchange for British support for Russian ambitions in Mongolia. How seriously Liu's proposal was intended, it is hard to say. Probably it was no more than a *ballon d'essai*, a test of British reactions. Neither Liu nor Chang, in any case, raised the matter again.

²⁷ FO 371/619, No. 707, FO Memo., 31 December 1908.

²⁸ Morley Papers (D.573/29), Private Tel. Minto to Morley, 7 February 1908.

²⁹ Morley Papers (D.573/29), Private Tel. Morley to Minto, 24 February 1908.

O'Connor summed up the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1908 as an agreement in which the British gave 'a very complete and formal recognition to China's authority over the Tibetans' in exchange for some Chinese promises to co-operate in the operation of the trade marts.³⁰ How valuable, from a strictly commercial point of view, did these promises prove in practice to be? Once O'Connor, Chang Yin-tang and Gow had left the scene, the relations of the Gyantse Trade Agent with the local authorities improved somewhat: but it could hardly be said that a free communication between British and Tibetan officials thereupon existed. The Tibetan officers at the trade marts were all too well aware of the rising power of China, and were very anxious not to run the risk of Chinese displeasure. They were neither willing nor, in all probability, able to do anything about the obstacles in the way of free Indo-Tibetan trade which the British Trade Agent from time to time brought to their attention.

Neither the 1893 nor the 1908 Trade Regulations specified the duties which the Tibetans could charge on goods being imported into their country from India. The 1893 Regulations stated that up to the end of 1898 the Indo-Tibetan trade, except for a few prohibited articles including tea, should be free, and that a mutually agreed tariff should then be instituted. In 1904 this tariff had still not been determined, the Lhasa Convention postponing the issue with the phrase 'the Tibetan Government undertakes to levy no dues of any kind other than those provided for in the tariff to be mutually agreed upon' (Article IV). When the 1908 Trade Regulations also omitted discussion of the tariff problem, the Indian Government naturally assumed that the Tibetan Government would continue to abstain from levying dues according to this Article. The Tibetans appear to have taken a different view, and to have argued that until a definite tariff was agreed upon the traditional system of duties on imports into Tibet should remain in force. Thus in 1908 and 1909 the Indian Government discovered that Indian traders were being charged 10 per cent *ad valorem* duties by Tibetan officers at Rudok and Demchok near the Ladakh border, at points on the main routes from the Punjab to the Gartok mart,

³⁰ FO 535/11, IO to FO, 21 September 1908, enc. O'Connor to India, 13 March 1908.

and at Phari on the road from Sikkim to Gyantse.³¹ The British had first protested against this particular category of impost in 1894. It was a bit depressing for the Indian Government to find that, in this respect at least, fourteen years of diplomacy had resulted in no progress at all. The 10 per cent duty at Phari, which Curzon had used as one of his arguments in support of the Younghusband Mission, seemed to be an obstacle beyond the power of the British Empire to dislodge.

In addition to the 10 per cent duties, which were certainly a long-established practice in Tibet, the Indo-Tibetan trade in the years immediately after the signing of the 1908 Regulations continued to be impeded by a variety of other Tibetan actions, most of which, no doubt, were equally sanctified by tradition. The Lhasa authorities had long been accustomed to grant to individuals monopolies of various aspects of Tibetan trade; and after 1908 they continued to do so. In the autumn of 1909, for instance, the Indian Government discovered that such a monopoly had been placed on the export trade in Tibetan wool and yak tails, the latter article much sought after in India as fly whisks.³² In late 1908, as a result of ill-feeling which dated back to just before the Younghusband Mission, the Tibetans perpetrated what the Indian Government considered another clear breach of the Lhasa Convention by totally prohibiting the inhabitants of the Lachen and Lachung districts of Sikkim from trading in Tibet, and preventing Tibetan merchants from visiting this part of Sikkim.³³ At about the same time it was reported that the authorities at Phari had banned the sale at that town of rice, paper and gur, all commodities imported from India.³⁴ These incidents were duly noted by the Indian Government; but they produced no protests to compare with those of the O'Connor era. Lord Minto knew all too well that his Home Government had had its fill of Tibetan crises.

On one question Minto would very much have liked to apply some pressure on the Chinese and Tibetan authorities. In the latter part of the nineteenth century Tibet had been

³¹ PEF 1908/24, No. 364, Punjab to India, 9 December 1908; No. 822, Younghusband to India, 13 March 1908.

³² FO 371/617, No. 40526, Manners Smith to India, 17 September 1909.

³³ FO 371/620, No. 21676, Bell to India, 22 March 1909.

³⁴ FO 371/620, No. 934, Bell to India, 29 October 1908.

considered a market of great potential value for the sale of Indian tea. The Chinese, who had a monopoly of the Tibetan tea trade, had managed, during the negotiating of the 1893 Regulations, to postpone the Tibet tea issue. During subsequent negotiations the Indian Government, with its eye on political objectives, had not pressed the point. By the end of 1908, therefore, it was still not clear whether Indian tea could, by treaty, be sold in Tibet, or whether the Tibetan authorities were justified in excluding all but the Chinese product. At this date a certain quantity of Indian tea was, in fact, making its way northward across the Himalayas, one Indian producer at least, Mr. Bellairs of Berenag in Kumaon, having mastered the Chinese secret of tea-brick manufacture. In 1906 Bellairs sold to Tibet some 12,000 lb. of this brick, carefully wrapped in scarlet and yellow paper in the Tibetan manner.³⁵ Small amounts of Indian tea were also beginning to trickle in by the Sikkim-Chumbi route through Yatung, sent by one of the very few Indian merchant houses which had attempted to make use of the new trade marts, Dhirajlal and Natwarlal. In September 1908, however, the Chinese decided to stop this trade. Four boxes of tea belonging to Dhirajlal and Natwarlal, weighing 240 lb. in all, were confiscated by the Chinese customs officer at Yatung on the grounds that Indian tea was not permitted entry into Tibet.³⁶ Minto, as soon as he heard of this, asked that Anglo-Chinese discussion of the tea question begin at once in Peking; and he proposed sending O'Connor there as his delegate.³⁷ Jordan, who was 'scarcely of the opinion that the negotiations would be rendered easier by the presence of Major O'Connor in Peking', was opposed to the idea. The moment was not opportune.³⁸ The India Office agreeing, Minto had to let the matter drop.³⁹

The 1908 Regulations, while they removed much tension from Anglo-Chinese relations on the border between India and Tibet, do not seem to have brought about a radical improve-

³⁵ FO 66 Conf. China: Tibet Various Papers (FO Library), W. S. Cassels, Assistant Commissioner, Almora, to U.P., 23 September 1907.

³⁶ FO 371/619, No. 19268, IO to FO, 21 May 1909.

³⁷ FO 371/619, No. 6709, Minto to Morley, 10 February 1909.

³⁸ FO 371/619, No. 7192, Jordan to Grey, 22 February 1909.

³⁹ FO 371/619, No. 12251, Morley to Minto, 30 March 1909.

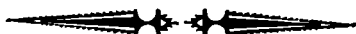
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ment in the conditions under which Indo-Tibetan trade took place: nor do they seem to have much affected the value of that trade. The figures for trade between Tibet and Bengal passing through the Yatung mart show no changes which of necessity relate to the 1908 Regulations. In 1902-3, on the eve of the Younghusband Mission, the total value of the trade between Tibet and Bengal was officially reported to be Rs. 19,06,835. In 1905-6 the figure had risen to Rs. 30,28,378; 1908-9, the first year of the Trade Regulations, saw a miniscule rise to Rs. 30,77,646. In the following year, 1909-10, this trade had declined to Rs. 15,38,082, increasing slightly in 1910-11, the first full year of the Chinese military occupation of Central Tibet, to Rs. 20,04,351.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ FO 371/1611, No. 28928, Bell to India, 13 May 1913, enc. a report on the trade of Tibet.

XI

CHANG YIN-TANG AND THE HIMALAYAN STATES



MORLEY was inclined to scoff at the value which the Indian Government attributed to the maintenance of British prestige in Tibet. 'I cannot', he told Lord Minto, 'for the life of me see what we gain in substance by this long-drawn battle over a shadow.'¹ Morley, however, had failed to appreciate the Indian Government's point, which was not so much that Tibet in itself was of any particular importance, but rather that Tibet provided access from the north to the Himalayan States of Bhutan and Nepal, whose loyalty to the British was well worth the preserving. In Curzon's day the fear had been that Russia might use Tibet as a base whence to intrigue with the Nepalese and to 'cause unrest all along the N.E. frontier'. By late 1907 Russia was no longer considered such an immediate danger in this respect; but with Chang Yin-tang's arrival in Tibet the Chinese seemed to be rapidly acquiring a position from which to do all that it was once anticipated the Tsar's agents would try to do. With a powerful China directly to their north, the Nepalese might well take more seriously that Chinese tributary status which they had accepted in 1792. With the Chinese so close at hand, the rulers of Bhutan might not be so eager to demonstrate their friendship towards the Indian Government. The British struggle to preserve what they had gained in Tibet by the Lhasa Convention was intended to impress the Nepalese and Bhutanese as much as the Tibetans. When Chang Yin-tang began in 1907 to show a close interest

¹ Morley Papers (D.573/3), Morley to Minto, 24 January 1908.

in Nepalese and Bhutanese affairs the Indian Government became increasingly alarmed.

In early 1907 Chang Yin-tang informed the Nepalese Durbar that he proposed in the near future to visit Katmandu. It was rumoured at the time that he was considering a request to the Nepalese for the loan of an unspecified sum of money to help the Chinese in their project of administrative reform in Tibet, and, also, that he was seeking Gurkha help in the training of a modern Tibetan army. He also intended, it was said, to rebuke the Nepal Durbar for the help it had given the Indian Government during the Younghusband Mission.² One point Chang certainly had in mind when he approached the Nepalese. In 1907 a Nepalese Tribute Mission, which, it was to transpire, would be the last of the quinquennial embassies which dated back to 1792 and the Chinese intervention in the Tibeto-Nepalese war, was about to set out for Peking. Chang appreciated that a visit by a senior Chinese official to the Nepalese capital at this juncture would add further emphasis to that Nepalese status as Chinese tributary which the tribute missions implied.

The Nepalese authorities did not welcome Chang's suggestion, and the visit to Katmandu never took place. The Nepalese Tribute Mission to China, moreover, which was received by the Empress Dowager in May 1908, could hardly be described as a triumph of Chinese diplomacy. It was treated with scant courtesy by the Chinese local authorities during its long overland journey to Peking and back. Its head, Bhyrub Bahadur, confided to Sir John Jordan that he felt these missions had long outlasted their utility: in the past the Nepalese had put up with petty humiliations at Chinese hands because by so doing they could make a good trading profit from the goods which they sent along with the mission, but in recent years there had been no profits. While in Peking the Nepalese envoy and his staff avoided admitting that they were Chinese dependents. They remained in close contact with the British Legation and they refused to receive calls from other Legations, turning away, for example, the Russian Military Attaché, Colonel Kornilov.³

By 1908, in fact, the Indian Government had no real cause to

² FO 535/9, No. 116, Minto to Morley, 23 March 1907.

³ FO 371/424, No. 20528, Jordan to Grey, 29 April 1908; No. 25994, Jordan to Grey, 5 June 1908.

fear that Nepal would fall under Chinese influence. Rather, it had valid grounds for anxiety lest the increase in Chinese influence in Tibet would result in Sino-Nepalese tension. The Nepal Durbar, once the British had checked its ambitions for territorial expansion to the east, west and south, had given frequent thought to conquest northwards at the expense of the Tibetans. In 1854-6 it had fought with the Tibetans and obliged them to pay an annual indemnity. During the second half of the nineteenth century there were periods of crisis along the Tibeto-Nepalese border which, it sometimes seemed, could hardly fail to lead to war. Nepalese commercial relations with their northern neighbour were also, during this period, frequently strained. Nepalese merchants, who since 1856 had enjoyed a special status in Tibet, were not particularly loved by the Tibetans; and from time to time anti-Nepalese riots broke out in Lhasa.⁴ The Nepal Durbar was much tempted to exploit incidents of this kind to justify the enlargement of its boundaries into Tibet; but it had always, at the last moment, been deterred by its knowledge of British disapproval of frontier disturbances. The Nepalese army depended upon the British for its arms and ammunition, and the Nepalese economy had become inextricably bound up with the export of Gurkha mercenaries to serve in the Indian army. There was a point beyond which the Durbar could not afford to flout the wishes of the Indian Government as expressed by the British Resident at Katmandu. The Nepalese, therefore, were constantly on the watch for arguments in support of their Tibetan policy which the British could not deny. Any change in the political situation in Tibet was grist to their mill. Thus, on the eve of the Younghusband Mission the Durbar had expressed great anxiety at the increase of Russian influence in Lhasa; and there can be no doubt that one of the main reasons why a British army was sent to Tibet in 1903-4 was to remove the excuse for the Nepalese to send an army of their own.

With Chang Yin-tang's arrival in Tibet the Durbar was able to argue that the political situation to the north was indeed undergoing a change which might well threaten the legitimate interests of Nepal. As the Nepalese Prime Minister, Chandra Shamsher Jang, pointed out to the British Resident, Manners Smith, in April 1907, if Chang insisted on paying a state visit to

⁴ See, for example, BCCA, pp. 153-5.

Katmandu, and if the Nepalese refused to receive him, then the Chinese might retaliate by imposing a ban on Nepalese trade in Tibet and by sending home the Nepalese Resident at Lhasa. In these circumstances the Nepalese would probably have to fight to defend their interests. What would the British attitude be?⁵ In September 1908 Chandra Shamsher Jang stated that if the Chinese were to attack Nepal he would expect British help.⁶ In both cases the Indian Government felt, as Lord Kitchener put it, that the Nepalese Prime Minister 'is spoiling for a fight' against Tibet and that he was trying to obtain British support for this in advance. So long as the Chinese continued to upset the old state of affairs in Tibet, the Nepalese would be able to find some justification for their claim that they were endangered from the north. And, as Minto remarked, the British would be 'in a terrible difficulty' if the Nepalese took

hasty action in Tibet,—for we should at once become compromised in respect to the Anglo-Russian Convention, whilst the last thing we wish to do is to bring force to bear on Nepal with the risk of a serious fight and the loss of Nepalese friendship.⁷

In other words, if the British supported the Nepalese in any campaign against Tibet, however justified it might seem because of Chinese threats, Russian diplomatic intervention could hardly be avoided. The 1907 Convention bound the British, in effect, to take no positive steps towards Tibet without consulting St. Petersburg. In any such consultation there was always the risk that the Russians might conclude that the British were trying to wriggle out of commitments which Sir Arthur Nicolson had made, thus diminishing the value of the Anglo-Russian Convention which, so both Morley and Grey were convinced, depended on the maintenance of mutual Anglo-Russian trust. On the other hand, if rather than risk an approach to Russia the British decided to restrain the Nepalese, the outcome would certainly be strained Anglo-Nepalese relations and might possibly be a major crisis. In these circumstances the best policy would be to try to avoid any situation arising which the Nepalese could exploit. This, it may be supposed, was a point which Chang Yin-tang was making

⁵ FO 535/9, No. 184, Manners Smith to India, 23 April 1907.

⁶ FO 228/2568, India to Resident in Nepal, 8 April 1909.

⁷ Morley Papers (D.573/20), Minto to Morley, 7 April 1909.

when he proposed his visit to Katmandu. 'If', he might almost have been saying, 'you British persist in opposing China's attempts to restore her legitimate status in Tibet, I will make your position on the border far more difficult than it is now.'

The same lesson could probably be read into the secret correspondence which Chang, from the moment he entered Chumbi in 1906, had been carrying on with the rulers of Sikkim.⁸ It was also implied in Chang's relations with Bhutan, to which country he sent a Chinese mission in early 1908. Bhutan was far more vulnerable to Chinese pressure than Nepal. The Gurkhas in the early twentieth century were well able to cope with any military force that China might send against them, while Bhutan could hardly be described as a military power at all. The Nepalese tributary relationship to China, while of some possible diplomatic use to the Durbar in its dealings with its two neighbours, had no real emotional appeal to the Gurkha ruling families. The Bhutanese relationship with Tibet, on the other hand, was both ancient and cemented by religious bonds of great strength. The Bhutanese authorities belonged to the world of Tibetan civilisation, and events in Lhasa impressed them far more than events in Simla or Calcutta. It was well within the realm of practical politics for the Chinese to hope to gain a prestige in Bhutan competitive with that of the Government of India.

In the early nineteenth century the Bhutanese had been a continual threat to the peace of the northern frontier of India; but in 1865, after the British had found themselves obliged to campaign in the Bhutanese foothills, the country had quietened down and its rulers had been pacified by the payment of British subsidies. Towards the end of the century, with the rise in power of the Tongsa Penlop, Bhutan had acquired a measure of internal political stability which had been conspicuously absent in earlier times when the two main chiefs in the land, the Tongsa and Paro Penlops, waged continual civil war with each other or against their nominal superior the Deb Raja. The Tongsa Penlop, Ugyen Wangchuk, became a figure of considerable importance in the politics of the Himalayan frontier. During the Young-husband Mission he had much helped the British, acting at times as an intermediary between the Indian Government and the

⁸ FO 535/11, IO to FO, 21 September 1908, enc. Wilton's Note on the N.E. Frontier of India, 9 March 1908.

Lhasa authorities. As a reward, and 'in order to show the frontier that he is our protégé', he was invited to Calcutta in late 1905 to meet the Prince of Wales at the same time that the Panchen Lama made his visit to India, and he was awarded the K.C.I.E.⁹

Before 1865 there had been a few attempts by the Indian Government to establish direct diplomatic relations with the Bhutanese Government, and British envoys had made their way to Bhutan. The results, however, were unsatisfactory. Between 1865 and 1905 British officials kept out of Bhutanese territory. The Bhutanese maintained a *Vakil*, or representative, at Darjeeling who acted as the channel of communication with India. This arrangement worked well enough so long as nothing more than the payment of the Bhutanese subsidy and the discussion of minor boundary disputes was involved. The 1865 British treaty with Bhutan, the Sinchula Treaty, gave the Indian Government the right to mediate in disputes between Bhutan and her British-protected neighbours Sikkim and Cooch Behar.¹⁰ Neither the 1865 treaty, however, nor the existing mechanism of Anglo-Bhutanese relations was adequate to combat a serious Chinese attempt at establishing an influence in Bhutanese affairs. When, in 1908, Chang Yin-tang demonstrated that such an attempt formed part of his policy the Indian Government saw that something needed to be done.

The danger had been anticipated to some extent from the time of the Younghusband Mission by J. C. White, the Political Officer for Sikkim, who also had charge of Bhutanese affairs. White had visited the Tongsa Penlop in Bhutan in 1905, when he brought the insignia of the K.C.I.E. and invited the Bhutanese chieftain to Calcutta, and again in 1906 when he went to settle some minor questions arising from the problems of administration of the Indo-Bhutanese border.¹¹ As a result of these visits, and of his appreciation of the rising power of the Chinese in Tibet, White

⁹ FO 17/1754, IO to FO, 7 March 1905, enc. White to India, 20 January 1905; PEF 1912/25, No. 474, Minto to Morley, 21 February 1907.

For brief accounts of Bhutanese political evolution, see Karan, P. P., and Jenkins, W. M., Jr., *The Himalayan Kingdoms: Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1963; Karan, P. P., 'Geopolitical Structure of Bhutan', *India Quarterly*, XIX, No. 3, 1963; Patterson, G. N., *Peking Versus Delhi*, London, 1963, Ch. 13.

¹⁰ For a note on the Sinchula Treaty of 1865, see Appendix VII.

¹¹ PEF 1912/25, No. 1628, White to India, 19 July 1906.

became convinced that the structure of Anglo-Bhutanese relations should be overhauled and the treaty of 1865 revised. In December 1906 he pointed out that the Chinese could not fail to exploit the British evacuation of Chumbi to increase their influence in Bhutan. Long-standing disputes existed over the Chumbi-Bhutan border. These had resulted in armed clashes in the past, and would no doubt do so again. The Chinese, once in control of Chumbi, would certainly use the next such crisis as the excuse to repeat their claim to suzerainty over Bhutan and to give effect to it by mediating between the Bhutanese and the Chumbi people. To prevent this, White urged that the Sinchula Treaty be modified so as to give the British some control over all Bhutanese foreign relations, not merely over questions involving Sikkim or Cooch Behar. He suggested that he be sent to Bhutan for this purpose in 1907, exploiting the opportunity provided by the election of the Tongsa Penlop as Maharaja of Bhutan. He could bring the congratulations of the Indian Government, and he could argue that this change in the Bhutanese constitution necessitated a modification of the old Anglo-Bhutanese treaty. The Indian Government, White added, might mark the occasion by offering to double the British subsidy to Bhutan.¹²

White was allowed to attend the Tongsa Penlop's installation as Maharaja; but he was refused permission to suggest a treaty revision. Minto felt that the coincidence of treaty revision with the Maharaja's installation might be interpreted in Bhutan as a British guarantee of Ugyen Wangchuk's dynasty, the stability of which was still considered to be rather doubtful. The last thing Minto wanted was to find his Administration involved in a Bhutanese civil war.¹³ White's scheme, moreover, ran counter to India Office policy towards the Himalayan States. Just before the Younghusband Mission had set out Lord Curzon had taken away the conduct of British relations with Sikkim and Bhutan from the hands of the Bengal Government. Morley, soon after he arrived at the India Office, resolved to reverse this measure on the grounds, it would seem, that central control of Sikkimese and Bhutanese affairs tended towards a more forward frontier

¹² PEF 1912/25, No. 1048, White to India, 18 December 1906.

An account of White's views on Bhutan and of his travels in that country is to be found in J. C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan*, London, 1909.

¹³ PEF 1912/25, No. 981, Minto to Morley, 8 June 1907.

policy than that which the local Government would dare advocate.¹⁴ A policy of decentralisation accorded ill with proposals for the increase of British control over Bhutanese foreign relations. The result was that when White visited Punakha, the Bhutanese capital, in December 1907 he was unable to exploit what was undoubtedly an excellent opportunity to gain for the British the treaty right to shield Bhutan from Chinese influence.¹⁵ Chang Yin-tang promptly availed himself of this omission.

In April 1908, through the Bhutanese representative in Darjeeling, Ugyen Kazi, C. A. Bell, who had taken over from White in Sikkim, obtained copies of two letters which the Bhutanese Government had just received from the Chinese in Tibet.¹⁶ One was from the Amban. It stated that Bhutan, the 'Southern Gate of the Chinese Empire', was under Chinese suzerainty and that the Amban proposed sending a Chinese officer there to report on the state of the country. The second letter was from one Ma Chi-fu, a Chinese official just appointed to take charge of the Chumbi Valley, who requested the Bhutanese to prepare for his forthcoming visit to their country. The Bhutanese, Ugyen Kazi said, had never been Chinese tributaries;¹⁷ though he did admit that, a few years before, the present Maharaja, Ugyen Wangchuk, when he was still Tongsa Penlop, received from the Lhasa Amban the badges of Chinese official rank, a seal, a hat, a button of imitation coral and a peacock feather. These insignia he had never used: he had put them carefully away in a box. The hat and the feather had since been eaten up by insects. Ugyen Kazi, for all his denials of the validity of the Chinese claims, was clearly very worried by the impending visit; and, he implied, British aid in resisting it would be welcome in Punakha. Without that aid, the Bhutanese did not feel they could stop Ma Chi-fu from coming. Bell reported all this to Government; but before any

¹⁴ PEF 1912/25, No. 474, Morley to Minto, 3 May 1907.

¹⁵ PEF 1912/25, No. 522, White to India, 17 January 1908.

¹⁶ FO 371/410, No. 20742, Bell to India, 19 April 1908.

¹⁷ The Chinese had, in fact, intervened in Bhutanese affairs on a number of occasions in the not too distant past. In 1884, for example, they had mediated in a dispute between the Paro and Tongsa Penlops and the Deb Raja and had forced the Penlops to accept their settlement. See BCCA, p. 178.

decision could be taken on the report Ma Chi-fu, accompanied by some twenty Chinese soldiers, had already made his trip to Bhutan. It was brief. He got no farther than Paro, a Bhutanese centre quite close to the Chumbi frontier, and he returned to Tibet with no obvious gains. His journey, however, convinced Lord Minto that the British could no longer afford to ignore Bhutan, and that the Chinese, having won a number of points in the recently concluded Trade Regulations negotiations, were now directing their attention towards another area of British weakness. 'The time has come', Lord Minto told John Morley, 'to frustrate the evident designs of China on Bhutan.'¹⁸

In October 1908, just after Chang Yin-tang had left Tibet for a post in the Wai-wu-pu at Peking, Minto presented the Home Government with the conclusions which he had derived from Chang's overtures to Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. They seemed, he thought, to indicate that China had embarked on a second stage of her Tibetan policy, the first stage being the consolidation of Chinese control over Tibet itself. The new development, it appeared, might be the beginning of a Chinese attempt to create a Chinese-dominated 'Greater Tibet', a confederation of Tibet and the Himalayan States of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, even, perhaps, Ladakh, and aimed against the British. A Chinese newspaper which the Amban Lien Yü had caused to be published in Lhasa was printing editorials in this sense during August and September 1908.¹⁹ Minto noted that

the portion of Tibet bordering on India is cold and infertile, incapable of supporting any considerable number of troops. The States intervening between Tibet and the plains of India are, on the other hand, temperate and fertile countries capable now or in the near future of supporting troops in large numbers. . . . The Chinese evidently realise the importance of obtaining a footing in these countries. When, in a figure of speech, Chang [Yin-tang] . . . likened the union of China, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan to the blending of the five colours, and compared the position of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan to that of molar teeth side by side in a man's mouth, he doubtless gave expression to Chinese aspirations.²⁰

¹⁸ PEF 1912/25, No. 1921, Minto to Morley, 1 October 1908.

¹⁹ PEF 1908/23, No. 654, Bell to India, 25 February 1909.

²⁰ PEF 1912/25, No. 1921, Minto to Morley, 1 October 1908.

Did all this imply that China entertained designs for an armed attack on British India? E. C. Wilton probably summed up the prevailing British view on this point when he said, just before the Trade Regulations had been signed, that

there are Chinese officials at Peking and elsewhere who cherish the hope that India may be invaded one day through Tibet, but I do not suppose that this idea has at present any hold on the responsible Chinese mind.²¹

It was more likely, Wilton thought, that the Chinese were following a policy which T'ang Shao-yi had once advocated, namely the building up of barriers, political, administrative, diplomatic and military, between Chinese Tibet and British India so as to prevent a repetition of the Younghusband Mission. However, be it aggressive or defensive, Chinese penetration into the Himalayan States could not be tolerated by the Indian Government. White's scheme for a revised Anglo-Bhutanese treaty and an increased British subsidy to Maharaja Ugyen Wangchuk, turned down in 1907, was now accepted by Minto and by Morley.²² In late 1909 Bell went up to Punakha to begin secret negotiations; and on 8 January 1910 a new Anglo-Bhutanese treaty was signed which, so Morley remarked, 'would adequately achieve the purpose for which it was intended, viz. the security of that part of the Indian frontier from external aggression and intrigue'.²³ The new treaty obliged Bhutan 'to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations'; and it provided for the doubling of the British subsidy to Bhutan, from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 per annum.²⁴

It cannot be said that Chang Yin-tang's diplomatic probing towards Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan was particularly fruitful: in the case of Bhutan it stirred the British to make a counter-move which must have come as something of a surprise to the Chinese, accustomed as they had become to British surrender

²¹ FO 535/11, IO to FO, 21 September 1908, enc. Wilton's Note on the N.E. Frontier of India, 9 March 1908.

²² PEF 1912/25, No. 3343, Morley to Minto, 25 June 1909.

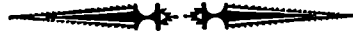
²³ PEF 1912/25, No. 530, Morley to Minto, 15 April 1910. See also PEF 1912/25, No. 472, Bell to India, 25 January 1910; and Bell, *Tibet*, op. cit., pp. 99-106.

²⁴ See Appendix VII.

on so many points arising from the operation of the Lhasa Convention. However, it is unlikely that Chang and his colleagues had great hopes of creating at this stage a belt of Chinese influence south of the Himalayan watershed. The manoeuvres of 1907 were probably little more than *ballons d'essai* intended to test the reactions of the British and the rulers of the Himalayan States; and from them the Chinese must have derived much food for thought. In the first place, the British response to the Bhutanese venture of Ma Chi-fu indicated how extremely sensitive the Indian Government now were to Chinese pressure in this area and suggested that in the ability to create such pressure the Chinese had acquired a bargaining card of some power. In the second place, the rulers of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan had probably not been quite so adamant in the face of Chinese diplomacy as they tried to make the Government of India believe. The Chinese may well have concluded that once they were in a more commanding military posture in Central Tibet, which they expected would be in the near future (already in 1908 Chinese armies were advancing westwards from the Szechuan border in the direction of Lhasa), the Himalayan States would be less sure that the British were the safest power with whom to align themselves. Finally, the very fact that the British had reacted so quickly to Ma Chi-fu's trip to Bhutan, which was certainly well known all along the Himalayas, did no damage to Chinese prestige. If the British were so worried about a minor Chinese official and twenty soldiers, it may well have been thought, what would they feel if a really large Chinese army appeared on the scene? When, in February 1910, Chinese troops from Szechuan finally entered Lhasa this became a question which was doubtless asked everywhere along India's northern frontiers.

XII

THE DALAI LAMA RETURNS TO LHASA



By the time Chang Yin-tang left Tibet in the autumn of 1908 the Chinese had made considerable progress not only in disposing of the remnants of British prestige on the Tibetan plateau but also in laying the foundations of a new, Chinese-dominated, administrative structure in Central Tibet. All this, it was already becoming clear to observers in British India, was the prelude to two steps which would mark the virtual completion of the new Tibetan policy of the Manchu Dynasty directed towards the eventual incorporation of this region of Central Asia within the provincial structure of metropolitan China. The work of Chang Yin-tang, and of his colleague at Lhasa, the Amban Lien Yü, was paving the way for the return, under Chinese tutelage, of the Dalai Lama to his capital and for the extension of Chinese military domination from the Tibetan Marches on the Szechuan border to the towns of Central Tibet.

The Indian Government, as one would expect, paid especial attention to those aspects of Chang Yin-tang's policy which affected the British position in the trade marts and British relations with the Himalayan States: it was not so much concerned with the Chinese reform of Tibetan administration which accompanied these measures; and, seeing Tibet and the frontier through the eyes of men like O'Connor, White and Bell, it must have felt at times that Chang had no thought in mind but the humiliation of the British. In fact, of course, while Chang, as a Chinese patriot fairly typical of his age, may well have enjoyed twisting the tail of the British lion, he only did so as part of his

diplomatic campaign to secure British acceptance of Chinese authority in Tibet, an authority which he was striving to make effective in several other ways. From the Chinese point of view it is probable that the greatest obstacle in the way of the twentieth-century Manchu Tibetan policy was the conservatism of the Tibetan theocracy rather than the opposition of the British. The Tibetan Buddhist Church, with the Dalai Lama at its apex, was the key to Tibetan survival as an autonomous State and a distinct culture. In the past the Manchus had cultivated the support of Tibetan Buddhism. After the Young-husband Mission the Chinese set out to undermine its influence.

Soon after his arrival in Tibet in late 1906 Chang began the secularisation of the machinery of Tibetan government, creating lay government boards to supersede the anachronisms of the Dalai Lama's bureaucracy and a modern drilled army to replace the traditional Tibetan feudal levy. All this was accompanied by a policy of sinification which was put in motion by the Amban Lien Yü, who in 1907 took over from Yu T'ai, the Amban of Younghusband's day whom Chang had dismissed and sent back to Peking in chains. As Lien Yü memorialised the Throne in June 1908;

The Tibetan people have been cut off from the outer world, and it has been found impossible to develop their minds until they have a knowledge of Chinese characters and books.¹

In 1907 he founded a Chinese school at Lhasa; and he acquired at that time printing machinery from India for the production of Tibetan translations of the Chinese classics: 'The gradual dissemination of this literature', he noted, 'will help to influence the habits and customs of the people.' By the middle of 1908 he had also established a military college at the Tibetan capital where fifteen Chinese and two Japanese instructors were to train young Tibetans as the nucleus of a modern Chinese-pattern officer corps, and also, it was hoped, to train a few young Mongols and Gurkhas as well.²

Chang Yin-tang and Lien Yü did not overlook the economic development of Tibet. Proposals were made for the improve-

¹ FO 371/426, No. 25999, Jordan to Grey, 10 June 1908, enc. Memorial by Lien Yü published in Peking on 2 June 1908.

² Loc. cit.

ment of Tibetan agriculture; and the possibility of bringing in Chinese settlers was considered. Roads were planned. A Board of Mines was set up in Lhasa, to exploit the country's resources in coal and gold. A project was drawn up for the construction of a telegraph line from Batang in Eastern Tibet, which was then the terminus of the line from China, through to Lhasa; and a Danish engineer, Ericksen, was hired to supervise the work.³ Money from the Szechuan provincial treasury was diverted to Tibet to finance some of these schemes.⁴ The Chinese even undertook the reform of the Tibetan currency, introducing to Central Tibet the silver Chinese rupee, a coin of comparable weight and purity to the Indian rupee.⁵ All these measures, the Chinese appreciated, would arouse the opposition of the Tibetan ruling classes, the old feudal families and the monks. It was probably to win compensating support among the Tibetan masses that the Chinese appointed as Assistant Amban a young man of rather more liberal views than were then normal in the Mandrinat, Wen Tsung-yao.⁶

There was undoubtedly a measure of idealism and intelligence behind Chinese policy in Central Tibet at this period. Even O'Connor could not escape detecting some grain of sincerity in the projects of his *bête noire* Chang Yin-tang; but O'Connor, like most officials of the Indian Government of his day, could not really bring himself to take the Chinese very seriously. O'Connor's estimate of Chinese reforms in Tibet, therefore, is perhaps worth quoting at length: while it does not increase our admiration of O'Connor as a political observer, it at least helps explain why his fellow Indian Civil Servants, many of whom shared to some extent his opinions, so often failed at this period to see

³ PEF 1908/25, No. 2872, Jordan to Grey, 6 January 1908. The Indian Government protested against the employment of Ericksen on the grounds that the Chinese had agreed in the note appended to the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 not to employ foreigners in Tibet after April 1907. Jordan sent a note to this effect to the Wai-wu-pu in March 1908, and the Chinese then decided to postpone the construction of the Batang-Lhasa telegraph, since they found that Ericksen's services were essential to the project. PEF 1908/25, No. 2958, Jordan to Grey, 19 March 1908.

⁴ FO 371/426, No. 14851, Jordan to Grey, 9 April 1908.

⁵ FO 371/618, Memoranda of Information regarding the affairs of Arabia, the North-East Frontier and Burma, November 1908.

⁶ FO 371/426, No. 35632, Jordan to Grey, 21 September 1908.

quite what the Chinese were trying to do in Central Asia. O'Connor noted in his diary of 6 April 1907 that

it is not the least absurd side of the political situation in Tibet that the senior Chinese officers are inspired by a real desire to undertake some useful work as an off-set to their centuries of neglect and corruption; but, unfortunately, with the best will in the world, they are themselves so ignorant, and so little removed above the Tibetans in their civilization and their accomplishments, that it is a case of the blind leading the blind, and both are in danger from the proverbial ditch. There can, I think, be no doubt that a part at least of the hostility and bitterness displayed towards us by the Chinese officials in . . . [Tibet] . . . is due to jealousy. They recognize that we are their superiors in honesty and science, and they naturally resent our presence amongst a servile people accustomed to regard the Chinese as the acme of wisdom and fashion.⁷

By the middle of 1908 the Chinese had so consolidated their position in Central Tibet that they could consider with equanimity the return of the exiled Dalai Lama to his capital. His reappearance on the Tibetan scene, provided that no doubt existed as to his subordinate relationship to the Manchu Dyansty, would now much assist Chinese policy. In the first place, it would put, as it were, a seal of legitimacy upon the reforms and changes which Chang Yin-tang and Lien Yü had brought about. In the second place, the Lama's support might be of crucial importance in keeping Tibet calm when the Chinese forces in Eastern Tibet at last succeeded in battering their way through to Lhasa from the Tibetan Marches. Since 1905 Chinese troops had been engaged in a struggle to subdue the tribesmen of Eastern Tibet. By 1908, thanks to the energetic leadership of Chao Erh-feng, all of the Marches from Batang to the Szechuan border near Tachienlu appeared to have been pacified, and the final advance to Lhasa seemed imminent. With Lhasa occupied, and with the Dalai Lama turned into a Chinese puppet, there could no longer be any doubt that the Manchu Dynasty was again in control of Tibet and more powerful there than it had been even in the time of the great Emperor Ch'ien Lung. Chao Erh-feng's campaigns in Eastern Tibet, the outcome of which was so drastically to modify the

⁷ FO 535/9, No. 174, O'Connor's diary, 6 April 1907.

British attitude to the northern frontier of India, will be discussed in detail in a later chapter.

When the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa in 1904 to escape the Younghusband Mission the Chinese declared that he had forfeited his temporal powers. During his exile, first in Mongolia and then at Kumbum Monastery near Sining in Kansu, the Lama had not given up all hope of restoring his fortunes. Up to the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention he appears to have continued to look to Russia for salvation; though this did not prevent him from attempting to reach some compromise with the Chinese and, even, from seeking the mediation of the United States of America. In August 1905, for instance, he sent an envoy to call on W. W. Rockhill, the famous Tibetan explorer who was then American Minister in Peking.⁸ With the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention, the Lama's faith in foreign help began to waver—though it did not, as we shall see, quite disappear—and he decided to make a more serious effort to come to terms with the Chinese. He made up his mind to pay his respects to the Manchu Dynasty in Peking. In early 1908, accompanied by a vast and rapacious entourage, the Lama arrived at the Buddhist centre of Wu-tai-shan in Shansi, whence he sought permission to go on to the Chinese capital. His progress towards Wu-tai-shan had not endeared him to the local Chinese population. For one thing, his escort had been pulling down arches and gateways across his route on the grounds, so Jordan noted, that 'as there is nothing on earth above His Holiness, so there *must* be nothing'.⁹

The Dalai Lama spent several months at Wu-tai-shan, his stay costing the Shansi Government vast sums of money which they disbursed with ever-increasing reluctance. Here he was visited by foreign diplomats, including Rockhill¹⁰ and a member of the German Legation, and also by R. F. Johnston of the British Colonial Service, District Officer at Wei-hai-wei.¹¹ In July 1908, when his expenses had become more than the local

⁸ FO 17/1755, Satow to Lansdowne, 24 August 1905.

⁹ PEF 1908/21, No. 3207, Jordan to Grey, 17 March 1908.

¹⁰ W. W. Rockhill, 'The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644–1908', *T'oung Pao* XI, 1910, p. 91.

¹¹ PEF 1908/21, No. 3810, Jordan to Grey, 9 July 1908; No. 3859, Jordan to Grey, 21 July 1908.

Shansi authorities could bear, he was summoned to the presence of the Empress Dowager; and in September he at last set out for T'a-yan-fu, where he and his army of companions boarded the train for Peking. At the Peking railway station he was welcomed by the Grand Secretary Na-t'ung, Duke Yu-lang and Chang Yin-tang, who had just taken up an appointment with the Wai-wu-pu. The Lama then got into a sedan chair carried by sixteen men, and, escorted by numerous Chinese officials, a Chinese military guard of honour, hordes of mounted Tibetan monks, trumpeters and other musicians, standard-bearers and footmen carrying placards bearing his titles in Chinese and Tibetan, he made his ceremonial entry through the Ch'ien Men gate into the Chinese capital. He took up residence at the Yellow (Huang Ssu) Temple, where, in 1653, the fifth Dalai Lama had stayed when he came to pay his respects to the newly established Manchu Dynasty.¹²

The Dalai Lama's arrival caused some little problems of protocol to Jordan, the British Minister, and to Korostovetz, the Russian Minister. In the old days they would have intrigued busily against each other to obtain the Lama's ear; but now, after the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention, it seemed desirable that the British and Russians should present a united front in their dealings with the Tibetan theocrat. Jordan and Korostovetz decided to keep each other informed on their talks with the Lama, and to discuss no political matters with him.¹³ Some such agreement seemed all the more necessary since included in the Lama's suite was none other than Dorjiev, the Russian Buriat monk whose travels in the first years of the century had played such a part in the sending to Lhasa of Francis Younghusband. Dorjiev called on Korostovetz and Rockhill almost as soon as he arrived, and he was clearly seeking international support for the Lama, whose full confidence he seemed still to enjoy.¹⁴

Korostovetz was first to pay a formal call on the Lama at the Yellow Temple. A few days later, on 20 October, Jordan followed suit.¹⁵ Accompanied by his full diplomatic and consu-

¹² PEF 1908/21, No. 4196, Jordan to Grey, 30 September 1908.

¹³ PEF 1908/21, No. 2798, Jordan to Grey, 12 October 1908.

¹⁴ PEF 1908/21, No. 4277, Jordan to Grey, 25 October 1908.

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

lar staff, and ushered in by Chang Yin-tang, Jordan presented the Lama with a ceremonial silk scarf. Through an interpreter whom the Chinese had provided, Jordan and the Lama then exchanged compliments, and the Lama said he hoped that the unfortunate events of Lord Curzon's day were now forgotten. He told Jordan that

some time ago . . . events had occurred which were not of his creating; they belonged to the past, and it was his sincere desire that peace and amity should exist between the two neighbouring countries;

and he hoped that Jordan would convey these sentiments to King Edward VII. He also gave Jordan a ceremonial scarf to present to the King.¹⁶ Finally, he handed over to the British Minister as a personal gift 'a pound of "longevity" jujubes'; and the interview, which had lasted no more than eight minutes, came to an end. Of the Dalai Lama, that former British adversary now face to face with a senior British official for the first time—but not, if was to transpire, for the last time—S. F. Mayers, Jordan's Chinese Secretary, who was present on this occasion, wrote:

The Dalai Lama in appearance is of normal Tibetan type, 35 years old, slightly pock-marked, swarthy complexion, small black moustache, prominent and large dark brown eyes, good white teeth. His arms, which were bare nearly to the shoulder, and his hands which were slender, were either stained brown or exceedingly dirty. His fingers worked nervously the whole time. His head had not been shaved for about ten days. His loose robe was maroon and yellow in colour, and looked new and clean. The whole proceedings were carried out with perfect dignity. . . . The attitude of the Chinese officials was supercilious throughout.¹⁷

Shortly after this ceremonial visit had been made the Dalai Lama began in earnest to seek foreign help against the Chinese.

¹⁶ The Dalai Lama's message and gift to King Edward VII presented some problems to the Foreign Office. Could the British acknowledge them directly to the Lama, or would they have to do so through the Chinese? In the end it was decided to inform the Amban that a message had been sent to the Dalai Lama, but not to show him the text of the message. PEF 1908/21, No. 3188, FO to IO, 31 March 1909.

¹⁷ PEF 1908/21, No. 4277, Jordan to Grey, 25 October 1908.

His envoy was Dorjiev, who in late October had long talks with Korostovetz, Rockhill and O'Connor, the latter being providentially in Peking in company with the Maharajkumar (Heir Apparent) of Sikkim, whom he was escorting on a tour round the world.¹⁸ Dorjiev's point was that a Chinese advance from the Marches into the heart of Central Tibet was now imminent, and the present moment was probably the last occasion on which the Dalai Lama would have an opportunity to negotiate with China for the retention of some vestiges of Tibetan autonomy. When Chao Erh-feng and his Szechuan-based troops did at last reach Lhasa, Tibet would probably fall under the control of the Szechuan provincial government and the Dalai Lama's political influence would completely disappear. This development, however, might be avoided if, firstly, the Lama could now persuade the Chinese to acknowledge the fact that his office antedated Chinese control in Tibet, thus conferring on him, as it were, the status of Chinese-protected ruler rather than that of a Chinese nominee, and, secondly, if the Chinese would grant him the right to memorialise directly the Throne. To this second point the Lama attached the greatest importance, since its concession would enable him to preserve something of the fiction that he enjoyed a special status within the political framework of the Chinese Empire.¹⁹ Dorjiev was clearly hoping that the British, Russian and American Ministers at Peking would use their influence to persuade the Chinese Government to agree to these two points.

Dorjiev first approached Rockhill, and found that the American, while sympathetic, felt himself unable to help. The Dalai Lama, he said, would have to accept whatever terms the Chinese chose to offer. Rockhill was rather impressed by Dorjiev, whom he did not consider a sinister *emminence grise* in Tibetan politics. As he reported to President Theodore Roosevelt:

I found him a quiet, well-mannered man, impressionable like all Mongols, and apparently but very little less ignorant of politics and the world in general than the Tibetans, though he

¹⁸ O'Connor and the Maharajkumar had already called on the Dalai Lama when he was still at Wu-tai-shan. O'Connor, *On the Frontier*, op. cit., p. 123.

¹⁹ PEF 1908/21, No. 4277, Jordan to Grey, 25 October 1908.

has travelled over Asia and Europe. He is evidently devoted to his religion and to the Head of his Church, the Dalai Lama, whom he has sought to assist the best he could. It was natural for him to turn to Russia for advice, being a Russian subject and having received his early education in that country, but I do not think he was, or is, more of an intriguer than any Asiatic would be when confronted for the first time with, to him, such a new and intricate question as Tibet's policy in Central Asian politics, and in relation to the two great Empires its neighbours.²⁰

Rockhill thought that it was now far too late for either Dorjiev or his master the Dalai Lama to do anything about a situation which 'probably marks the end of the temporal power of the Dalai Lamas'. The point of no return, he decided, had been reached in early 1908 with the signing of the Tibetan Trade Regulations. 'It seems to me a great pity', he concluded his report to the President,

that the British Government did not secure the right to station a Trade Officer at Lhasa when it was negotiating the Regulations for trade between India and Tibet. His presence there would have a restraining influence on the Chinese and Tibetans, and might otherwise assist in a peaceful change in the administration of the country, and prevent occurrences which may again endanger British interests in that country. Of course, Russia would have asked for the same privilege, but I can see no reason against her having it, and many are in favour of it, especially as Great Britain and Russia have already concluded an Agreement concerning Tibet.²¹

Anglo-Russian collaboration in Tibet might indeed have sufficed to preserve some measure of Tibetan autonomy in the face of Chinese expansionist policy; but, as Dorjiev soon found, neither the Russians nor the British had the least desire to exert themselves, either singly or in alliance, in this particular quarter. Korostovetz, the Russian Minister, told Dorjiev that by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 the Tsar's Government had abandoned all intention of interfering in Tibetan affairs. When Dorjiev then remarked that if Russia would not

²⁰ FO 371/619, No. 738, Bryce to Grey, 17 December 1908, enc. Rockhill to Roosevelt, 8 November 1908.

²¹ Loc. cit.

help he had no choice but to turn to the British, Korostovetz pointed out that the British, too, had resolved not to intervene in disputes between the Tibetans and the Chinese.²² When Dorjiev met O'Connor, first at dinner at the Russian Legation and then at tea at the British Legation, he discovered that Korostovetz had correctly diagnosed the British attitude.²³ Dorjiev, indeed, in these diplomatic excursions cut a rather pathetic figure. O'Connor quite forgave him for all the fuss and bother he had caused during the Curzon era; and the London *Times* as usual aptly summed things up with the observation that

it is difficult to realize that this religious, simple-minded abbot of 55 lives in history as a deep intriguer whose schemes in Central Asia required a British military expedition to frustrate them.²⁴

Dorjiev having failed in enlisting foreign aid, the Dalai Lama had no choice but to throw himself on the mercy of the Empress Dowager, whose audience he had managed to postpone throughout October by quibbling over protocol. On 3 November the Empress Dowager received the Lama in audience.²⁵ He managed, it appears, to avoid the 'kow-tow', and he confined himself to congratulating the formidable old lady on attaining her seventy-fifth birthday. The Empress conferred on the Lama the title of 'Our Loyal and Submissive Vice-Regent', awarded him a stipend of Tls. 10,000 to be paid quarterly by the Szechuan treasury, and instructed by Decree that

when His Holiness has returned to Tibet, he must be careful to obey the laws of the Sovereign State China, and he must promulgate to all the goodwill of the Court of China. He must exhort the Tibetans to be obedient and to follow the path of rectitude. He must follow the established custom of memorialising Us, through the Imperial Amban, and respectfully await Our Will.²⁶

²² PEF 1908/21, No. 4277, Jordan to Grey, 25 October 1908.

²³ O'Connor, *On the Frontier*, op. cit., pp. 125-6.

²⁴ *The Times*, 4 December 1908.

²⁵ PEF 1908/21, No. 2894, Jordan to Grey, 11 November 1908.

²⁶ E. Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Official in Eastern Tibet together with a history of the relations between Tibet and India*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 14-15.

This was one of the last official acts in the Empress Dowager's long career, for she died a few days after she had seen the Lama.

Foreign observers had no doubt as to what the Dalai Lama's visit to Peking implied. The British Foreign Office was certain that by the time the Dalai Lama got back to Lhasa he 'will find that his wings have been fairly well clipped'. Sir Edward Grey thought 'the Dalai Lama has made a mess of it', and, with a certain amount of satisfaction, observed that if he 'had kept on good terms with us, there would have been no British expedition to Tibet and he would not now have been a suppliant vassal of China'.²⁷ Bryce, historian of the Holy Roman Empire and British Ambassador in Washington, who was shown Rockhill's reports by President Roosevelt, discovered a Medieval European parallel for this 'triumph of the secular over the spiritual power' in the 'famous occasion' in 1111 when the Emperor Henry V seized Pope Paschal II and kept him prisoner until he accepted Imperial terms. The Dalai Lama's humiliation, Bryce felt, was a direct consequence of a chain of events initiated by the Younghusband Mission, a venture which had achieved nothing beyond replacing, on the northern frontier of India, 'the feeble and half-barbarous Tibetans' by the Chinese, 'a strong, watchful and tenacious neighbour which may one day become a formidable military power'.²⁸

The Dalai Lama delayed in Peking until the end of December 1908, in mourning for the Empress Dowager's death and still hoping that the Chinese might at the eleventh hour relent and grant him the right of directly memorialising the Throne. The Chinese not relenting, the Lama moved by slow stages to Kumbum Monastery in Kansu.²⁹ Dorjiev did not on this occasion remain with his master, but made his way once more to St. Petersburg to discuss, so he said, Buddhist religious business with the Russian Government; perhaps he was attempting a last plea for Russian support for the Lama.³⁰ In the late summer of 1909 the Dalai Lama left Kumbum on the final stage of his return from exile, still travelling very slowly. In

²⁷ FO 371/410, No. 45134, Minutes by Alston and Grey on Jordan to Grey, 11 November 1908.

²⁸ FO 371/619, No. 738, Bryce to Grey, 17 December 1908.

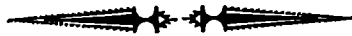
²⁹ *The Times*, 22 and 24 December 1908.

³⁰ PEF 1908/21, No. 2983, Jordan to Grey, 23 December 1908.

October, while staying in a monastery in North-Eastern Tibet, he received the Panchen Lama, who, terrified that he would now at last be punished for his ventures in independent foreign policy, hastened to make his peace with his Lhasa colleague. On Christmas Day 1909, after an absence of over five years, the Dalai Lama entered once more his capital and took up residence at the Potala.

XIII
CHAO ERH-FENG'S
ADVANCE TO LHASA

1905-1910

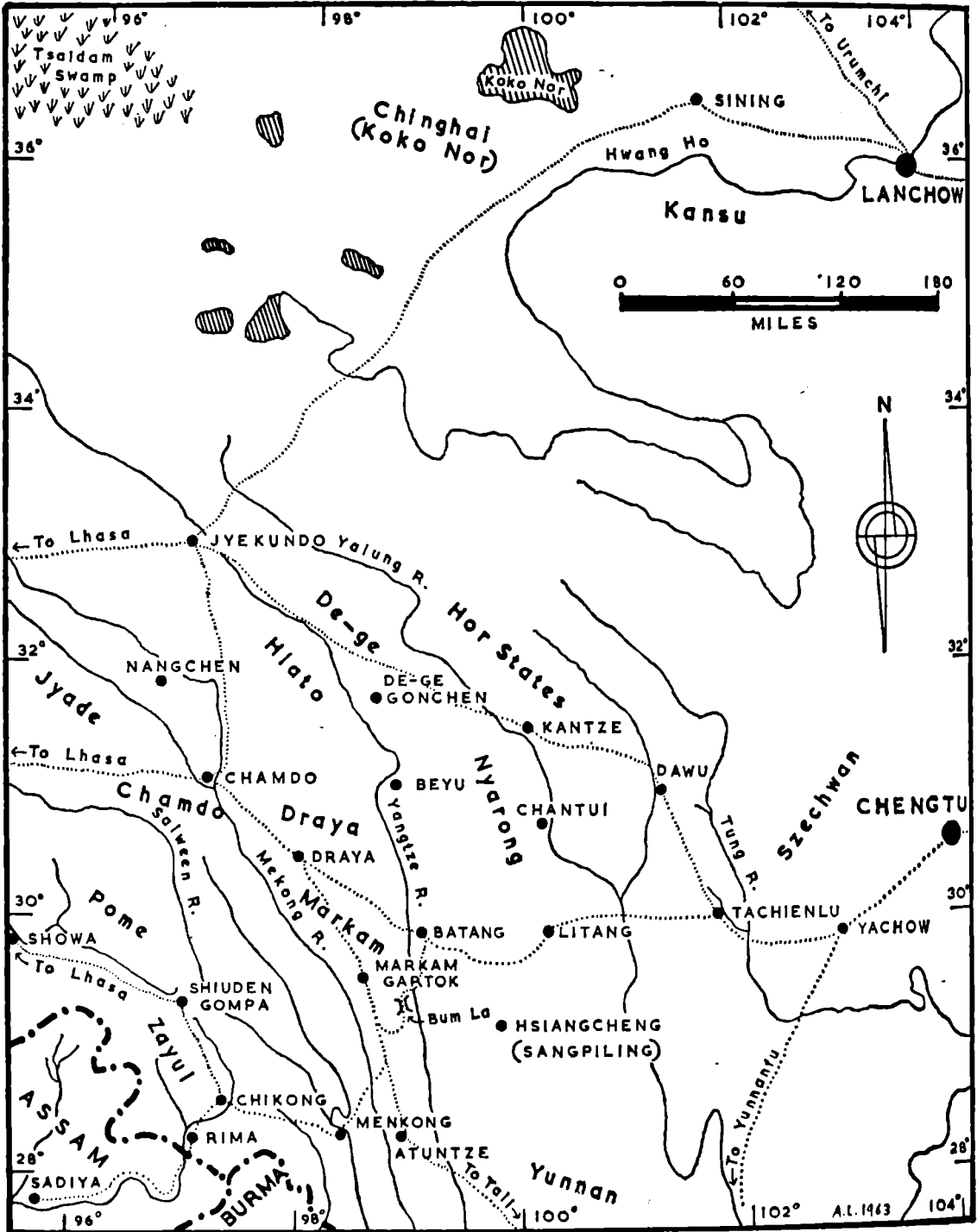


CHANG YIN-TANG, Lien Yü and other Chinese officials in Central Tibet exerted an influence quite out of proportion to the rather feeble military power at their disposal. Apart from the Amban's escort, a small body of men accustomed to purely ceremonial duties, there were in the first decade of the nineteenth century no significant Chinese forces in the Lhasa region. There was a Tibetan army, which in times of crisis could be expanded into an unwieldy mass of untrained and ill-officered monks and peasants, to defend Tibet against external attack; though its inefficiency in this role was demonstrated clearly enough during the Younghusband Mission. There was not, however, a Chinese army sufficient to maintain Manchu authority in Central Tibet in the face of a serious Tibetan revolt. The reforms of Chang Yin-tang and Lien Yü were backed by little more than Chinese prestige; and there was a limit to what they could achieve without provoking a general uprising.

Central Tibet, in fact, was a long way away from the nearest large centres of Chinese population. Between Lhasa and the boundaries of the Chinese Provinces of Kansu, Szechuan and Yunnan stretched roads crossing some of the most formidable terrain in the world and passing through regions inhabited by nomads only too eager for any excuse to raid and plunder. A Chinese army coming to the relief of the Chinese administration in Lhasa would have to make its way through this tribal belt,

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a task which might take a very long time if it proved to be possible at all. By the end of the nineteenth century Chinese officials had found it more comfortable, safer and quicker to go from Peking to Lhasa by way of Shanghai, Calcutta and Darjeeling than by the overland route through the Tibetan Marches.



When, in 1909, the Chinese were about to send an army into Central Tibet, they tried first to obtain British permission to move it by way of India, a request which the Indian Government found no difficulty in refusing.¹ It was clear that the Chinese could not hope to establish beyond all challenge their command of Lhasa and Shigatse until they had acquired secure control of the direct lines of communication linking Central Tibet to metropolitan China.

There were three main routes from China to Lhasa. One started from Tali in Yunnan; another from Tachienlu on the Szechuan border; and a third from Sining in Kansu near the Kokonor lake. Of these routes, the one by way of Tachienlu was by far the most important. It connected Lhasa to the Szechuan capital at Chengtu, the seat of that Provincial Government with the most responsibility for Tibetan affairs. It was the road along which the bulk of Sino-Tibetan trade was carried, and it gave access to the main centres of habitation in Eastern Tibet. All three routes passed through extremely rugged country, and it required a considerable military effort to keep the roads open in the face of a hostile population. Both the Lhasa Government and the Chinese Provincial authorities found the control of districts in Eastern Tibet to be a most difficult task. Unlike Central Tibet, where the authority of the Dalai Lama's Government (even when it existed only as a Chinese puppet régime) was in general unchallenged, Eastern Tibet was a region of ill-defined sovereignties. The country between the upper reaches of the Salween and the Chinese provincial boundaries was divided up into a large number of small states, a few of which, like Nyarong for example, were under Lhasa sovereignty (if rather nominally), and the majority were politically subordinate in a varying degree to the Yunnan, Szechuan or Kansu authorities. In much of Eastern Tibet by 1905 both Chinese and Lhasa authority had declined greatly from what it had been in the first half of the nineteenth century; and in some districts it had to all intents and purposes disappeared.

The distinction between Central and Eastern Tibet, between the Dalai Lama's domain and that collection of either virtually independent or Chinese-influenced states on the upper reaches

¹ PEF 1908/24, No. 4232, Jordan to Grey, 12 November 1909, and No. 1631, Minto to Morley, 22 November 1909.

of the Mekong, Salween and Yangtze rivers was clear enough in principle. It was not so easy, however, to define on the ground. The Sino-Tibetan arguments as to the whereabouts of the border between Lhasa territory and Eastern Tibet, which resulted in the breakdown of the Simla Conference of 1913-14, were of great antiquity. The Dalai Lama's eastern boundary had fluctuated considerably with the shifting sands of Central Asian history, and a judicious selection of records could produce historical justification for a wide range of possible alignments. Early in the eighteenth century, when the Manchu Dynasty undertook the task of bringing all Tibet under Chinese protection, an attempt was made to define a boundary between those territories which owed allegiance to China through the Dalai Lama and those which did so through direct relationships between local chiefs and the Chinese authorities. In 1727 the Chinese erected a boundary stone on the Bum La (pass) to the west of Batang which indicated that they regarded this border as more or less following the Mekong-Yangtze watershed. To the east of this line they established at that time a system of protected states, under the general supervision of the Szechuan Government, which acted as a buffer region between Central Tibet, where the Chinese interest was watched over by the Lhasa Amban, and China proper. To the north-east a similar demarcation appears to have been made between Lhasa and the Chinese Amban at Sining in Kansu, and to the south-east between Lhasa and the Yunnan Government. From the outset Chinese control over the Tibetan districts on the eastern side of this line tended, except along the main roads, to be little more than nominal. In the second half of the nineteenth century, with the decline in Chinese military power at the periphery of the Empire, even the main roads were at times blocked by Tibetan rebels, as happened in the 1860s and again in the 1890s.²

In Eastern Tibet the Chinese forward base was Batang, the outpost of Chinese influence in the Tibetan Marches. Here, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries had been permitted by the Szechuan authorities to establish

² By far the best account of the political situation in Eastern Tibet is to be found in Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit. Teichman, of the British Consular Service in China, visited the Tibetan Marches in 1918 to mediate between the Chinese and Tibetans.

themselves; and this town on the upper Yangtze usually marked the most westerly point reached by European travellers attempting to enter Tibet from China and equipped with Chinese passports. Even at Batang during the nineteenth century the Chinese did not undertake direct administration. The Tibetan peoples of the Marches, many of them nomads, remained under the immediate authority of their petty kings, lesser hereditary chieftains, and minor Lama Incarnations. The Chinese maintained a number of small garrisons along the major routes; but in the hinterland they depended upon the loyalty of the local rulers. The Chinese position was supported more by diplomacy than by military might. The Szechuan provincial authorities, whose responsibility it was to keep the peace in the greater part of the Marches, showed remarkable skill in playing one chief off against another. They were aided, of course, by the moral support of the Lhasa Government, which, at least until the majority of the thirteenth Dalai Lama right at the end of the century, generally co-operated with its Chinese suzerain in matters of this kind.

The structure of Chinese power in the Marches satisfied the basic requirement of a reasonable degree of tranquillity at a tolerable cost so long as the Chinese retained their prestige with the tribesmen which had been established in the great days of the eighteenth century and so long as their control of Central Tibet was not seriously challenged. Occasional crises in the Marches could usually be dealt with by the despatch of special military expeditions from Szechuan. There was no real need for the Chinese to undertake a permanent military occupation of the entire border region. By the very end of the nineteenth century, however, with the evolution of the thirteenth Dalai Lama's plan to create something approaching an independent Tibet, the situation changed radically. Lhasa influence commenced to foment anti-Chinese rebellion in the Marches at a moment when, following the unhappy outcome of the Sino-Japanese War, Chinese martial prestige was at a very low ebb. The Chinese began to appreciate that they would not be able to bring their full weight to bear on Central Tibet unless they were in more secure possession of their lines of communication from Tachienlu to Lhasa. On the eve of the Younghusband Mission, with Russian influence apparently

waxing in Central Tibet and the British evidently preparing to send an army across their Himalayan frontier, the Chinese at last resolved to strengthen their position in the Marches. In the summer of 1904, while Younghusband was on the road to the Dalai Lama's capital, the Chinese acted. A new post was created, the Assistant Amban at Chamdo, responsible for the consolidation of Chinese control over Eastern Tibet, and it was entrusted to a certain Feng Ch'uan.

Feng Ch'uan established his headquarters at Batang (Chamdo, his nominal seat, was, in fact, at this time beyond the limits of effective Chinese power), and began with high-handed energy to create the nucleus of a direct Chinese administrative system which would, he hoped, eventually be extended throughout the Marches. He immediately proposed an ambitious scheme for bringing Chinese settlers into the Marches and suggested that at least 10,000 barren acres in the Batang region should be reclaimed by skilled Chinese peasants from Szechuan. He appreciated that his main enemy in any reforms, agrarian and administrative, was the Tibetan Buddhist Church. In Eastern Tibet just as in Central Tibet the monasteries enjoyed enormous wealth and power and constituted a conservative force obstructing the path of change. He proceeded, therefore, to attack the vested interests of the monks; but he omitted to wait until he had the military strength to quell their inevitable resistance. At the end of 1904, according to one European observer, there were not more than 160 Chinese troops in the districts of Batang and Litang.³ As C. W. Campbell, the acting British Consul-General in Chengtu, observed in February 1905, 'Feng *Tajen* is headstrong, and it is evident that his plans must create serious disturbances unless the Chinese garrisons in East Tibet are strengthened.'⁴

In late March 1905 the expected 'serious disturbances' began. Feng Ch'uan had just issued decrees to reduce the number of monks at present residing in the monasteries of Eastern Tibet and to forbid the recruiting of new monks for a period of twenty years. Together with his decision to grant a plot of land to the French Catholic Fathers at Batang, dedicated enemies of the

³ FO 17/1754, Satow to Lansdowne, 23 January 1905, enc. Hosie to Satow, 21 December 1905. Alexander Hosie was then British Consul-General at Chengtu.

⁴ FO 17/1754, C. W. Campbell to Satow, 20 February 1905.

Lamas, this sufficed to bring the great Batang monastery to the point of rebellion. On 26 March a party of armed monks fired on a small body of Chinese troops engaged in marking out land near Batang for Chinese settlement. A day or so later Feng Ch'uan found himself besieged in his Yamen. On 2 April the Roman Catholic Mission at Batang was destroyed. On 5 April Feng Ch'uan decided that his position in the Batang Yamen was hopeless, and he managed to persuade the monks to give a safe conduct to himself and his escort of some twenty Chinese soldiers. He then withdrew towards Litang; but a few miles outside Batang was attacked by Tibetan tribesmen and killed along with the rest of his party.⁵ At about the same time two of the French priests at Batang, Fathers Musset and Soulié, were murdered.⁶ These events gave the signal for risings against the Chinese in the Marches, during the course of which two more French priests, Fathers Dubernard and Bourdonné, at the Tsekou Mission on the Mekong near the Yunnan border, lost their lives.⁷

The Szechuan and Yunnan provincial authorities reacted with unaccustomed speed. The Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese army in Szechuan, General Ma Wei-ch'i, set out at once for Batang, which he soon recaptured, destroying in the process the rebellious monastery. Another force, based on Atuntze, was sent into the Marches by the Yunnan Government. The Szechuan Viceroy, Hsi Liang, as soon as the news of the rising reached him at Chengtu, appointed a replacement to the murdered Feng Ch'uan, and by so doing initiated a chain of events which was in just under five years to bring Chinese forces to the gates of Lhasa.⁸ Feng Ch'uan's replacement was a Chinese Bannerman, Chao Erh-feng, at that time Director of the Railway Bureau. Chao Erh-feng, who came from an influential family—his brother, Chao Erh-hsün, had at one time been Minister of Finance and was then holding an important military command at Mukden in Manchuria—was given wide powers to supervise the pacification of the Tibetan Marches. He was the ideal choice for this task. Energetic, honest, ruthless to his enemies and

⁵ FO 17/1754, Satow to Lansdowne, 30 May 1905 and 6 July 1905. See also Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit., p. 20.

⁶ FO 17/1754, Williamson to Satow, 28 April 1905.

⁷ FO 17/1756, Satow to Lansdowne, 2 November 1905.

⁸ Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit., p. 21.

intolerant of incompetence or misbehaviour on the part of his subordinates, indifferent to personal hardship, Chao Erh-feng galvanised the Chinese troops in Eastern Tibet to efforts which astounded foreign observers. In five years he created a small army (perhaps 6,000 men in all) of veteran soldiers who brought to China a greater power in Tibet than she had possessed since the 1790s or was to achieve again until the coming of the Chinese Communists in the 1950s.

The reoccupation of Batang did not put an end to the rising. Chinese reprisals of great severity only served to increase Tibetan hostility. Monks who escaped from Batang made their way to the district of Hsiang-ch'eng (or Chantreng) where the large Sangpiling monastery became the focus of opposition to the Chinese and the gathering place of armed Tibetan nomads. Hsiang-ch'eng is a region so little known that it still occupies a blank space on most maps. It lies in the mountains to the south of the main Tachienlu-Batang road, and from it parties of Tibetans could sally forth to cut the Chinese line of communications between Szechuan and Batang. Its capture was Chao's first priority. In January 1906, with some 2,000 modern-drilled Szechuan troops, equipped with German rifles and supported by four field guns of Krupp manufacture, Chao began the siege of Sangpiling monastery. With walls over 4 feet thick and 20 feet high, and defended by over 2,000 monks, the monastery was a formidable fortress. By June Chao had failed to breach its defences, though he had managed to cut off most of its water supply. He probably would have had to give up the siege had he not been able to trick the defenders into opening the gates to a party of his supporters disguised as the vanguard of a relieving Tibetan force. Thus deceived, the defenders were overwhelmed on 19 June. Nearly all the monks were slaughtered by Chao's troops. The monastery was demolished.⁹

The fall of Hsiang-ch'eng, while it did not end Tibetan resistance elsewhere, at least gave Chao the opportunity to carry out administrative reforms which he had been planning over the last few months. These were first applied in the Batang area. They were embodied in regulations drawn up in April

⁹ Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit., p. 22; J. Bacot, *Le Tibet Révolte*, Paris, 1912, pp. 134-9; FO 535/11, No. 55, Fox to Jordan, 25 November 1907.

1906, but not implemented until the following December.¹⁰ The Batang regulations, a peculiar mixture of the general and the particular, were characteristic of what the Chinese now had in mind for the Tibetans. They contained fifteen points, as follows:

1. All the inhabitants of the Batang area, Tibetan tribesmen and monks, were now subjects of the Chinese Emperor and subject to the jurisdiction of a Chinese magistrate.

2. All taxes were to be paid to the Chinese.

3. Traditional dues and gifts to the Tibetan tribal chiefs and the monasteries were now abolished.

4. All the inhabitants, whatever their race, were now subject to Chinese law.

5. Monks were no longer to play any part in the local administration.

6. The traditional Tibetan method of disposal of the dead by dismemberment was now abolished, since in China only deceased criminals were so treated.

7. No monastery could have more than 300 monks.

8. In the very near future a Chinese school would be opened at Batang for the instruction of the local Tibetans.

9. All the male inhabitants of Batang must now shave their heads and wear the pigtail, and 'no one will be permitted to have his hair in the dishevelled state hitherto the custom, which makes men resemble living demons'.

10. The people of Batang should be clean in their personal habits and adopt the Chinese style of dress.

11. Each Tibetan family in the Batang area should select a Chinese surname.

12. The institution of slavery was abolished.

13. The local inhabitants were warned of the dangers of smoking opium.

14. The streets of Batang town should be kept clean.

15. In the near future public urinals and privies would be erected at various convenient sites in Batang town.

Batang, in fact, was to become just another Chinese district. The traditional rule of two hereditary Tibetan chieftains and the Lama Incarnation of Batang monastery was brought to an end. The people were to adopt Chinese names and Chinese

¹⁰ FO 535/9, No. 110, Goffe to Jordan, 29 December 1906.

customs. They were to absorb Chinese culture. In order to expedite the sinification of Batang, moreover, Chao decided to continue Feng Ch'uan's plan to encourage Chinese settlers to come to the district. In early 1907 a poster announcing that Batang and other parts of Eastern Tibet were now open to Chinese colonisation appeared in public places in Chengtu and the principal town of Szechuan. It pointed out that in the Marches there was excellent land available which the Tibetans, in their ignorance, did not know how to cultivate properly. The region, the poster admitted, was cold; but the low temperatures were due to bad cultivation and sparse population. 'If the ground were reclaimed and planted with trees,' it stated, 'this would set free the exhalations from the soil, and consequently produce greater warmth.' The poster went on to declare that Chinese settlers in the Marches would be protected, that land was free and would become the colonist's property once he had brought it under cultivation, and that all who were not criminals or opium smokers, and who were willing to post a cash bond that they would not give up as soon as they reached Tibet, were welcome. Prospective settlers were offered their travelling expenses to Tibet, and the Government would help them start up by giving them tools and seed. The cost of living in Tibet, the poster went on, was low. Bachelors would find no shortage of tribal women to marry, and they should note that, while Tibetan men were notoriously lazy, Tibetan women were extremely hard working. The poster concluded with this exhortation: 'The overpopulated state of Szechuan renders the struggle for existence very difficult. Why then do you not hasten to this promising land?'¹¹

The scheme for Chinese colonisation in Eastern Tibet was taken very seriously by Chao Erh-feng and by the Szechuan provincial authorities. Chinese officials were sent out to round up potential settlers. An office was set up at Tachienlu on the edge of the Marches to look after the colonists and see them to their new homes. But, it would seem, very few Chinese peasants were willing to take the plunge. The Chinese, it is often noted, are no fools; and it is probable that Szechuan cultivators were not taken in by the theory that agriculture generated climatic warmth. By 1909 only some 200 Chinese had been settled in the

¹¹ FO 535/9, No. 165, Fox to Jordan, 23 February 1907.

Batang region. A year later, however, about eighty of these had died and about 100 had despaired and gone back to China. The remaining twenty or so were hardly prospering, so one European observer wrote, and would probably give up soon. In fact, the Chinese had hopelessly overestimated both the fertility of the land and the area available for cultivation. The Chinese settlers discovered that the best land was already occupied. For example: in the Hsiang-ch'eng area, in theory, there was nobody living at all after Chao Erh-feng's conquest; but somehow in 1907 it had just about as many Tibetans as it had had in 1905. Chinese 'official extermination' of tribal peoples was rather more effective on paper than it was on the ground.¹²

Chao Erh-feng had other ideas for the development of Batang and other districts in the Marches. He established a tannery in Batang which he hoped would turn the sheep and cattle of the Tibetan hillsides into the raw material for the manufacture of shoes. He imported mulberry trees and tried to establish sericulture. He proposed a number of schemes for building roads and opening mines. None of these projects were particularly successful. The climate, the terrain and the local population all provided obstacles which required much time to surmount. Foreign observers like the Protestant missionaries in Eastern Tibet, mostly Americans, had no doubt, however, that Chao Erh-feng or his successors would win through in the end. As J. H. Edgar, one such missionary and an eyewitness to much of Chao Erh-feng's Tibetan career, wrote in 1910:

Notwithstanding the difficulties, China will succeed some time, somehow, in her policy of absorbing the Marches, unless Halley's or someone else's friendly comet (or something else) shall complicate matters against her.¹³

The missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, of course, were predisposed towards Chao Erh-feng, because they shared with

¹² FO 371/855, No. 41913, Max Müller to Grey, 1 November 1910. See also PEF 1910/16, No. 1918, Bailey to India, 19 September 1911; F. M. Bailey, *China, Tibet, Assam: a Journey, 1911*, London, 1945, p. 67.

¹³ FO 371/855, No. 41913, Max Müller to Grey, 1 November 1910. Edgar belonged to the China Inland Mission and came to Batang in 1908. The American Christian Mission also established a mission at Batang in the charge of Dr. Shelton. See Flora B. Shelton, *Shelton of Tibet*, New York, 1923.

him a passionate loathing for those Tibetan monks who were just as much opposed to the spread of Christianity as they were to the increased political influence of China.

Once his administrative reforms in the Batang area were well under way Chao Erh-feng hoped to continue his work of military pacification. In the spring of 1907, however, he became acting Viceroy of Szechuan Province; and it was not until March 1908 that he could begin campaigning again in earnest. At that time his brother, Chao Erh-hsün, was appointed Szechuan Viceroy, while Chao Erh-feng became Imperial Commissioner for the Tibetan Marches (or Warden of the Marches) with the rank of the President of a Government Board at Peking. Chao Erh-feng was now in a very strong position to complete the work of reducing the Marches to direct Chinese control. His rank, and, in consequence, his prestige, had been greatly increased; and with his brother at Chengtu he was guaranteed the full support of the Szechuan Government. In 1908 Chao Erh-feng brought De-ge, the largest, wealthiest and most important of the Tibetan states in the Marches, firmly under direct Chinese administration. By December 1909 he had a force of perhaps some 6,000 men, many of them veterans of his earlier campaigns, ready to attack Chamdo, the last barrier between the Marches and the Dalai Lama's territories in Central Tibet. As the year 1910 opened Chamdo was occupied by the Chinese and the way to Lhasa lay clear.¹⁴

Up to the end of 1909 the Chinese advance into Eastern Tibet had been helped to some extent by the absence from Lhasa of the Dalai Lama. The anti-Chinese risings in the Marches had certainly the moral support of the Dalai Lama's party, but this was of relatively little significance so long as its chief was still in exile and the Amban Lien Yü was able to keep the authorities at the Tibetan capital in check. Just as Chao Erh-feng was preparing to move into Chamdo the Dalai Lama was on the last stage of his return to Lhasa. This development, while the product of Chinese policy, still threatened to complicate Chao's plans. In theory the Dalai Lama had now humbled himself before the Manchu Dynasty and promised to obey its instructions. In fact, of course, he might well at the last moment decide to resist the Chinese and try to raise Tibet against them. It was

¹⁴ Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

important to Chao Erh-feng, therefore, to get some Chinese troops into Lhasa as quickly as possible. In November 1909, at Chao's request, the Wai-wu-pu astounded Jordan by enquiring whether the Government of India would let two or three thousand Chinese soldiers enter Central Tibet by way of Calcutta and Darjeeling. This proposal, to which reference has already been made, was rejected out of hand by the Indian Government.¹⁵ With the Indian route closed, Chao Erh-feng hastened to send a flying column from Chamdo to Lhasa under the command of Chung Ying, a young officer who was shortly to play a significant role in Tibetan affairs. The need for the speedy Chinese military occupation in strength of Lhasa was becoming increasingly urgent. The Dalai Lama, much alarmed by the Chinese capture of Chamdo, had been sending desperate appeals for help to the British, the Russians and to the United States of America (by way of W. W. Rockhill). There was a distinct possibility that the Indian Government, at least, might come to the Lama's rescue.

Chung Ying's force consisted of 2,000 modern-drilled troops; and Amban Lien Yü exerted his utmost diplomatic wiles to persuade the Lhasa authorities to permit them to enter Lhasa without a fight. He assured the Dalai Lama that only 1,000 men would be coming, and that their purpose was not to repress the Tibetans but to provide the police protection at the trade marts specified in the 1908 Trade Regulations so as to oblige the British to withdraw the Gyantse Trade Agent's escort. The Lama, on this understanding, agreed to let the Chinese come in to his capital. In early February, however, he discovered the real size of the Chinese force; and was much alarmed. The Assistant Amban, Wen Tsung-yao, whom the Tibetans trusted to some extent and who had pledged his word that no more than 1,000 Chinese were on their way, appears also to have only discovered at the last moment what Lien Yü's real intentions were: he promptly resigned.¹⁶ The Dalai Lama, feeling himself to have been tricked by the Chinese, and deciding that it was now too late to organise an effective resistance to them, resolved to take flight to India rather than allow himself to become a

¹⁵ PEF 1908/24, No. 4232, Jordan to Grey, 12 November 1909 and No. 1631, Minto to Morley, 22 November 1909.

¹⁶ Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit., p. 28.

puppet in the hands of Chao Erh-feng. On 12 February 1910, as Chung Ying's vanguard of forty cavalry and 200 infantry entered Lhasa by one gate, the Lama secretly left by another. As soon as the Chinese had discovered that the Dalai Lama had gone they organised a pursuit. At the Chaksam ferry over the Tsangpo they nearly caught up with the Lama, who was only able to escape through the gallant rearguard action of a young Tibetan, Tsensar Namgyal, who was later, under the name Tsarong, to become one of the Lama's most influential advisers. Namgyal and a small band of companions held off the Chinese while all the boats were sent over to the south bank. He then managed to evade the Chinese, and made his way eventually to the British border disguised as a mail runner for the Gyantse Trade Agency. On 20 February the Dalai Lama reached Yatung, where he took refuge with the British Trade Agent, David Macdonald; and on the following day, having ignored the advice of the Chinese officials in Chumbi that he remain in Tibet, the Lama crossed over into British territory and reported to the telegraph office at Gnatong. Two very surprised British telegraphists invited the 'Dally Larmer' in for a cup of tea, thus ushering in a new era of Anglo-Tibetan relations.¹⁷

The advance of Chao Erh-feng's troops to Lhasa—Chao himself never visited the Tibetan capital—marked a fundamental change in the Tibetan situation. A great deal remained to be done by the Chinese, and Chao Erh-feng had yet to complete an administrative structure to consolidate his conquests; but in February 1910 there could be no doubt that the Chinese were the masters of Central Tibet. Where in the past men like Chang Yin-tang and Lien Yü had mainly based their influence on their diplomatic skill, now the Chinese in Lhasa could afford to ignore entirely, if it suited their policy, the sentiments of the Tibetans. Tibet had ceased to be a buffer between British India and China. The Chinese frontier now ran along the Himalayan range. This development could hardly fail to influence British policy. As the *Morning Post* declared in an editorial of 28 February 1910:

¹⁷ David Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, London 1932, pp. 67-74; F. Spencer Chapman, *Lhasa: the Holy City*, London, 1938, p. 80; Major-General P. Neame, 'Tibet and the 1936 Lhasa Mission', JRCAS XXVI, 1939, p. 245.

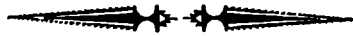
A great Empire, the future military strength of which no man can foresee, has suddenly appeared on the North-East Frontier of India. The problem of the North-West Frontier thus bids fair to be duplicated in the long run, and a double pressure placed on the defensive resources of the Indian Empire.

The men who advocated the retention of Lhasa have proved not so far wrong, whatever their reasons for giving the advice. The evacuation of Chumbi has certainly proved a blunder. That strategic line has been lost, and a heavy price may be extracted for the mistake. China, in a word, has come to the gates of India, and the fact has to be reckoned with. It is to be hoped that the Indian Government will do what they can to retrieve the position, and use the presence of the Dalai Lama [in India] as a lever for securing from the Chinese Government some concessions in frontier rectification.

Both the Indian Government and the Home Government eventually came to something very like these conclusions, though by no means as speedily as had the *Morning Post*.

XIV

THE DALAI LAMA, NEPAL, THE TIBET TRADE AGENCIES, AND OTHER PROBLEMS, 1910-11



IN February 1910 the Chinese acquired a position of greater power in Tibet than they had possessed since the end of the eighteenth century. Had their work of consolidation not been undermined by the outbreak of the Chinese Revolution in late 1911, both Central and Eastern Tibet would almost certainly have been absorbed into the structure of Chinese provincial administration, and the British probably would have had to face the same kind of Sino-Indian confrontation in the Himalayas which is now such a trial to the Indian Republic. As it was, the brief period of Chinese mastery in Lhasa sufficed to cause the Government of India much anxiety and to lead it to consider a drastic revision of its policy towards the northern frontier. From the moment that Chao Erh-feng's flying column under Chung Ying entered Lhasa and put the Dalai Lama to flight, the vestigial British gains from the Lhasa Convention of 1904 were threatened, the value to the Indian Government of the 1908 Trade Regulations was much reduced, and the Chinese appeared to be established in a vantage-point whence they could challenge British influence in Nepal and Bhutan. The most pessimistic British interpretation of the Tibetan situation in early 1910 was indeed gloomy; and even the optimists expected that the increased Chinese influence on the Indo-Tibetan border, combined with misunderstandings arising from the embarrassing presence of the Dalai Lama on British soil, would lead to much tension and uncertainty in the Himalayas.

As in earlier crises in Anglo-Tibetan relations, the Indian Government's first anxiety was the attitude of Nepal. Would the Gurkhas take this opportunity, before the Chinese had been reinforced and while the situation was still disturbed, to interfere, as they long had wished to do, in Tibetan politics, perhaps gaining some Tibetan territory in compensation: or, which was even more horrible to contemplate, would they be so impressed by Chinese power as to depart from their traditional friendship for the British? The supply of Gurkha recruits, 'whose quality as soldiers is not more essential to the Indian native army than their detachment from Indian politics and religious disputes, and their loyalty', might dry up.¹ The Chinese, indeed, might start raising their own Gurkha battalions: the Amban had already approached the Nepalese Durbar to this effect in late 1909.² If the Nepalese decided to oppose the Chinese advance, then the Indian Government, bound by treaty to consider Nepal's enemies as its own, might find itself involved in a frontier war with the Chinese Empire. If, on the other hand, the Nepalese decided at this moment to take seriously their traditional allegiance to China, it would be hard for the British to show them the error of their ways without further alienating them. 'Nepal', so the India Office observed, 'stands apart from the Indian protectorates, and is very jealous of any interference.'³

¹ FO 371/853, No. 3543, Minto to Morley, 31 January 1910, and FO minutes.

² FO 371/853, No. 5426, Manners Smith to India, 3 January 1910.

³ FO 371/853, No. 4722, IO to FO, 9 February 1910.

One result of this crisis was to make the Indian Government investigate very closely the precise nature of the Nepalese relationship to China. It hopefully concluded that the Gurkhas could not really be said to be Chinese tributaries. One piece of evidence to the claim that Nepal was dependent upon China was the Tibeto-Nepalese Treaty of 1856. This, as printed in the 1909 Aitchison, contained the following phrases:

Preamble: We further agree that the Emperor of China is to be *obeyed* by both States as before.

Article 2: The States of Gurkha and Tibet have both *borne allegiance* to the Emperor of China up to the present time.

This version, the translation made by Colonel Ramsay in the 1860s of the Nepalese text, was now felt by the Indian Government to be misleading. In 1910 O'Connor produced a fresh translation, which has found its way since

Another worry, in those days when Morley's policy of non-intervention held sway at the India Office in London, was lest the British, however reluctantly, found themselves involved in the Sino-Tibetan struggle which, in February 1910, still seemed a probable outcome of the Chinese advance into Central Tibet. Could the British remain neutral in such a conflict so close to their northern border? What, for example, should the British Trade Agent at Gyantse do if either Chinese or Tibetan officials and troops attempted to seek asylum within his compound? How, if he sheltered members of one party, could he defend himself against attack by the other?⁴ Minto, with such questions in mind, urged that the British representative in Peking should immediately protest to the Wai-wu-pu against the Chinese advance, which constituted an unwarranted alteration in the *status quo* in Tibet, and warn them that if the advance continued the Indian Government could not promise to restrain Nepal from coming to the aid of the Dalai Lama. At the same time, both as an insurance against attack and as a demonstration of strength, the Gyantse Trade Agent's escort should be at once reinforced.⁵

Minto's proposals were promptly referred to Max Müller,

⁴ FO 371/853, No. 5558, Minto to Morley, 15 February 1910.

⁵ FO 535/13, No. 4, Minto to Morley, 31 January 1910.

then into the 1929 Aitchison, Vol. XIV, p. 49, and which rendered these crucial phrases thus:

Preamble: We further agree that both States *pay respect* as always before to the Emperor of China.

Article 2: The States of Gurkha and Tibet have both *respected* the Emperor of China up to the present time.

(In both sets of quotations the italics are mine.)

See India Office, Political and Secret Department Confidential Memoranda, B.176, *Historical Note on relations between Nepal and China*, dated 4 November 1910. This document, which was compiled by Sir Arthur Hirtzl, places the best possible interpretation (from the British point of view) on the question, and is really a remarkable example of special pleading. The British were never entirely able to convince themselves that there was nothing in the Chinese claim to suzerainty over Nepal.

As a result of the Tibetan crisis of 1910 the British, through Jordan in Peking, at last made a formal denial to the Chinese of Nepalese tributary status, and thereby brought to an end the quinquennial missions which had continued, with few interruptions, for more than a century.

Chargé at Peking in Jordan's absence, who did not consider that there was much in the present situation which he could, in fact, protest about. He might possibly suggest to the Chinese that they should be careful not to do anything in Tibet which might provoke the Nepalese. But, he noted,

neither the facts as at present known to us, nor the terms of the Convention of 1906 would warrant our making a protest against a possible change in the *status quo*, or infringement of the spirit of our agreements with China or Tibet. We have long been aware of the objects of the Chinese expedition, and I would therefore deprecate these arguments as being somewhat belated.⁶

The time for such protests, indeed, would have been before Chao Erh-feng had taken Chamdo. The Chinese had made no secret of their intentions. In September 1909 Amban Lien Yü had already posted a proclamation in Lhasa to the effect that Chinese troops were on their way there, their purpose being to 'police' the trade marts and to 'guard' the Dalai Lama on his return. It was hard to object to a Chinese attempt to carry out those 'police' duties at the marts which the British had accepted in the 1908 Trade Regulations as a Chinese responsibility.

The Chinese made their position clear enough in the Imperial Decree of 25 February 1910 which proclaimed the second deposition of the Dalai Lama (the first being in 1904). Ever since his return to Tibet, the Decree announced, the Dalai Lama had been 'proud, extravagant, lewd, slothful, vicious and perverse without parallel, violent and disorderly, disobedient to the Imperial commands, and oppressive towards the Tibetans'. In other words, he had shown signs of disinclination to accept the role of puppet in which the Chinese had cast him. On his way back to Tibet from Peking, the Decree continued, the Dalai Lama had 'loitered and caused trouble'. For these and other weighty reasons, therefore,

Szechuan troops have now been sent to Tibet for the special purpose of preserving order and protecting the Trade Marts. There was no reason for the Tibetans to be suspicious of their intentions. But the Dalai Lama spread rumours, defamed the Amban, refused supplies, and would not listen to reason.

⁶ FO 535/13, No. 7, Max Müller to Grey, 15 February 1910.

He had now fled from Lhasa, so the Decree went on, and 'at present his whereabouts are unknown'. The Dalai Lama, the Decree concluded, had

been guilty of treachery and has placed himself beyond the pale of Our Imperial favour. He is not fit to be a Reincarnation of Buddha. Let him, therefore, be deprived of his titles and his position as Dalai Lama as a punishment. Henceforth, no matter where he may go, no matter where he may reside, whether in Tibet or elsewhere, let him be treated as an ordinary individual. Let the Imperial Amban at once cause a search to be made for male children bearing miraculous signs.⁷

These powerful words, which left no doubt as to what the Chinese thought of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, were communicated on 26 February to the British Legation in Peking and to the Foreign Office in London.⁸

At the moment when his deposition was thus being announced by the Chinese, the Dalai Lama had taken up temporary residence in Darjeeling, and had informed Lord Minto that 'I now look to you for protection, and I trust that the relation between the British Government and Tibet will be that of a father to his children'. Charles Bell had been instructed to go to call on the Lama at once, to find out exactly what had happened and precisely what the presence of the Incarnation on British soil might portend. Minto, moreover, had already decided to bring the Lama down to Calcutta as soon as it could be arranged, and to show him every mark of respect, putting him up along with his suite at Hastings House.⁹ When Bell called on him, the Lama gave a graphic account of the circumstances which had obliged him to fly his capital, and warned that the Chinese, once established in Central Tibet, would go on to spread into Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Eventually, he thought, they would penetrate into India itself unless someone stopped them.¹⁰

⁷ Teichman, *Eastern Tibet*, op. cit., p. 16.

⁸ FO 535/13, Nos. 21 and 21a, Chinese Minister to FO and Max Müller to Grey, 26 February 1910.

⁹ FO 535/13, No. 15, Minto to Morley, 22 February 1910.

¹⁰ FO 535/13, No. 37, Minto to Morley, 3 March 1910. On this occasion the Dalai Lama cleared up a mystery which had perplexed British officials since 1901. In that year Lord Curzon sent a letter to the Dalai Lama to be

On 14 March 1910 the Dalai Lama called on Lord Minto at Government House in Calcutta. Bell interpreted. The Lama was very anxious to clear up any Anglo-Tibetan misunderstanding which might have arisen in the past, all of which he blamed on the Chinese. What he now wanted was British support to restore him to Lhasa and to expel the Chinese, so that he could rule Tibet with the powers which had been exercised by the fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century, which was tantamount to declaring Tibet an independent state. He could not, he emphasised, ever accept the Anglo-Chinese treaties relating to Tibet of 1890 and 1906, in neither of which the Tibetans had participated; but, once back in power, he would welcome direct relations and a close friendship between the British and his Government. He repeated the warning about Chinese designs on the Himalayan States. He described Dorjiev, when Minto mentioned this Russian Buriat whose movements had caused so much trouble in the past, as no more than one of his spiritual advisers. When asked about his own present constitutional position, the Lama said that he had brought away with him his seals of office, but that he had left behind in Lhasa a Regent to act on his behalf; the Chinese, however, were now trying to isolate him from communication with Tibet, searching every traveller on the frontier, and he could only keep in touch with his Government through smuggled letters the transmission of which was becoming increasingly difficult. Lord Minto listened to the Lama with courtesy and interest, but was very careful not to commit his Government to

delivered by Ugyen Kazi, the Bhutanese representative at Darjeeling. The Dalai Lama never replied, and Curzon suspected that Ugyen Kazi, in fact, had never handed the Viceroy's letter to the Lama. Of Ugyen Kazi, Lord Curzon then wrote that 'I believe him to be a liar, and, in all probability, a paid Tibetan spy'; and he refused to accept Ugyen Kazi's assurances that he had fulfilled his commission. Bell, who knew Ugyen Kazi well—the latter had played a part in the negotiation of the new Bhutanese treaty—was naturally curious to learn the truth about Curzon's letter: one of the first questions he asked the Lama was whether he had ever received it. Bell was much relieved to learn that Ugyen Kazi had done what he had said he had done, and that the letter had, in fact, passed into the Lama's hands. The Lama, so he now declared, had accepted the letter, but had not opened it, since he had agreed to have no contact with foreign States except through the Amban. See BCCA, p. 251.

any intervention in Tibet.¹¹ Of this occasion Lady Minto could not help confiding to her diary that 'it is curious that five years ago he fled to China to avoid the English; now things are reversed, and he is seeking shelter from the Chinese in British territory'.¹² Minto was much relieved that only the Dalai Lama had turned up. There had been a report, now proved to be unfounded, that the Panchen Lama was also on his way to India, and the Viceroy had wondered 'What shall I do with such a surfeit of Lamas?'¹³

By the end of March 1910 Lord Minto had derived a sufficiently clear picture of the situation in Tibet to enable him to formulate some definite policy. From what he had learned from the Dalai Lama and other sources, Minto concluded that there was not, at this particular moment, any real danger of a Chinese invasion of either British India or the Himalayan States, the latter, in all probability, still adequately protected by their treaties with the Indian Government. 'Still', Minto thought, 'it is disagreeable having this great increase in Chinese strength in close proximity to our frontier Native States', and the British should certainly try to induce the Chinese to keep their Tibetan forces to a minimum. The Dalai Lama should go back, if possible, to Tibet: Minto suggested that the British might mediate on the Lama's behalf with the Chinese. He believed, in fact, that the Chinese, faced with continual unrest among their Buddhist subjects, would soon be crying out for the Lama's return; and, therefore, 'the presence of the Dalai Lama in India may possibly be a good card in our hands'. Another useful card would be some British control over Nepalese relations with China, which hitherto had been ignored in Anglo-Nepalese treaties. The Durbar had indicated that, in return for some British guarantee that the Chinese advance into Central Tibet would not be permitted to affect the established special position of Nepalese interests there, it would be prepared to refer all matters arising from its Chinese tributary status

¹¹ Morley Papers (D.573/23), Minto to Morley, 17 March 1910; FO 535/13, No. 46, Minto to Morley, 17 March 1910; Sir Charles Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946, pp. 93-96.

¹² Mary, Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley 1905-1910*, London, 1934, p. 387, Lady Minto's Journal, 14 March 1910.

¹³ Morley Papers (D.573/23), Minto to Morley, 10 March 1910.

(which status, of course, it denied had more than symbolic significance) to the Indian Foreign Office.¹⁴

In order, mainly, to show the rulers of the Himalayan States that the presence of the Chinese in force did not mean that the British had lost all influence on the frontier, Minto proposed that in the months to come the Indian Government should insist on the strictest observance of the 1908 Trade Regulations and the residual provisions of the Lhasa Convention. Since April 1908 the Chinese and Tibetans at the trade marts had persisted in disregarding some of the terms of these agreements. The British Trade Agents often found it hard to get in touch with Tibetan officials. Trade was still taxed and subject to monopolies. The British officers on the frontier had continued since the signing of the Trade Regulations to compile lists of these alleged treaty breaches, lists which the Indian Government had usually filed without comment. Now, Minto suggested, every Chinese or Tibetan act which could be protested against, should be protested against.

Minto also attempted to produce a case to the effect that the very increase in Chinese power in Tibet was actually prohibited by the treaties. The Chinese, he noted, justified their occupation of Central Tibet on the grounds that they were now 'policing' the trade marts as required by the 1908 Regulations. But, he argued, Regulation No. 3 implied that the policing should be done by Tibetans, not Chinese; which was a rather feeble point, since Minto ignored the phrase in Regulation No. 12 which stated that 'China engages to arrange effective police measures at the marts and along the routes to the marts', and made no mention of Tibetans in this respect. Minto continued with a second line of attack. By the Lhasa Convention the British had recognised the existence of Tibet as a political entity. By the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, in which China accorded some validity to the Lhasa Convention, that same political entity was accepted. Now, by virtually annexing such Tibetan districts in the east like Draya and Chamdo, the Chinese had, as it were, redefined the term 'Tibet' and thereby modified unilaterally the 1904 and 1906 agreements. This was a subtle

¹⁴ Morley Papers (D.573/23), Minto to Morley, 17 March 1910; FO 535/13, No. 46, Minto to Morley, 12 March 1910, and No. 54, IO to FO, 31 March 1910.

line of reasoning which the Indian Government was to employ again on more than one occasion in the years to come. It did not, however, bear particularly close examination. Neither the Lhasa Convention nor the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 had contained any clause defining the geographical limits of Tibet, and Minto was unable to demonstrate convincingly that places like Chamdo and Draya had in recent years been, in fact, under the control of the Lhasa Government. In the end, during the Simla Conference of 1913-14, the Indian Government thought it necessary to attempt to bring about some treaty definition of Tibet as a geographical term before it could begin to negotiate realistically about the nature of Chinese power and influence there.

Because the spirit of the 1904 and 1906 treaties had been disregarded by the Chinese, Minto felt, the British would be justified in seeking from the Peking Government a number of assurances as to future Chinese conduct in Tibet. First: the Chinese should be asked to agree that their garrison at Lhasa and other Central Tibetan towns would be no larger than the needs of an adequate maintenance of law and order demanded. Second: the Chinese should promise that a real Tibetan Government would continue in being and that the Chinese would not undertake direct control of Tibetan internal administration. Third: that the Chinese should permit the actual policing of the marts to be carried out by Tibetans, though, if necessary, under the supervision of Chinese officers. Fourth: Amban Lien Yü should be replaced by someone less hostile to the British. Finally: the Chinese local officials in Tibet should be told to co-operate with the British Trade Agents and to cease hindering them from direct contact with Tibetan officials. These requests should be supported by the following threat: 'The Chinese Government', Minto urged, 'should be informed that the British Government must reserve the right to retain and increase escorts at Yatung and Gyantse, if necessary, in view of the change of *status quo*, the unfriendliness of local Chinese officers, and the disturbed state of Tibet.' This phrase, the *status quo*, was the key to Minto's whole line of argument. The 1904 and 1906 Conventions and the 1908 Regulations had dealt with Tibet in a political situation which now, by virtue of Chao Erh-feng's move and the flight of the Dalai Lama, was on the point of being changed fundamentally.

Minto maintained that the Chinese could not, by treaty, make such a change without British agreement.¹⁵

Neither the Foreign Office nor the India Office quite saw things in this light. Grand Councillor Na-t'ung of the Wai-wu-pu repeated to Max Müller on a number of occasions in March 1910 that the Chinese were only trying to fulfil their treaty obligations in Tibet by providing adequate police protection at the marts. He observed that often in the past the Chinese Government had been reproached for its failure to control the Tibetans: now that it was, in fact, controlling the Tibetans, he was surprised that the British attitude was not one of gratification. He also pointed out that the British were fortunate that the Dalai Lama had fled to India, and not to Russia; and he seemed to know that the Lama, on the event of the Chinese advance, had appealed, by way of Dorjiev, to the Tsar for help. Max Müller could not help feeling that the Wai-wu-pu had good arguments on its side.¹⁶ The India Office went further: 'We may or may not like the Chinese,' was the opinion of the Political Department, 'but it cannot be denied that their case is unanswerable.' It was hard, in London, to see quite why Lord Minto was so upset. 'The Government of India speak of Chao Erh-feng's appearance at Chamdo as if it were a bolt from the blue. But his operations in that region began in 1905.' Sir William Lee-Warner, a member of the Council of India, minuted thus: 'I do not see how we can blame China for making her control effective. The Tibetan Government has proved a bad neighbour to us . . . [and] . . . we ought to welcome a better and stronger administration.'¹⁷ Morley summed up the attitude of his Department in a private letter to Minto which deserves quotation at length. Morley said:

I am convinced that it will be a disastrous error if at this critical and initial stage we allow China to take the place of Russia as the standing bogey. Looking at the correspondence . . ., I feel as if your Foreign Office were prejudiced against China, and prejudice is obviously a very dangerous mood in affairs of this magnitude.

¹⁵ The arguments and proposals are first formulated in FO 535/13, No. 46, Minto to Morley, 12 March 1910.

¹⁶ FO 535/13, No. 40, Max Müller to Grey, 6 March 1910, and No. 50, Max Müller to Grey, 14 March 1910.

¹⁷ PEF 1908/21, No. 382, minutes on Minto to Morley, 5 March 1910.

The buffer-state idea is all very well; it stands for what seems a sound doctrine, a better state of things than contact with stronger and more highly organised neighbours. As it has been put, by a man who is thoroughly cognisant of Chinese affairs at the present hour, China is awakening, and is beginning to have increased knowledge of, and interest in, the geography of her dependencies. So we have no right to be surprised if China seeks to render more effective the shadowy control she has always possessed in Tibet, and which we vehemently blamed her for not exercising more effectually in practice. . . .

I am, therefore, in view of the new strength and new spirit of China, convinced that we should not enter on a policy of pin-pricks such as is indicated in the final suggestions of your long telegram . . . [of 12 March 1910]. . . . His Majesty's Government will have to stand up to China with large and broad assertions of our position, and the claims of our border states.¹⁸

What were these 'large and broad assertions of our position'? By the end of March the India Office had decided that there were two issues involved over which the British could take a strong stand. Firstly, with the Chinese firmly in control of Lhasa the Indian Government could reasonably expect that the day-to-day running of the relations between India and Tibet, the operation of the trade marts, the freedom of Indo-Tibetan commerce, and the like, would now follow closely the pattern laid down in the treaties. The Chinese could no longer claim that the Tibetans were refusing to obey their instructions, an excuse which they had exploited so often in the past. Secondly, the Indian Government could insist that the Chinese had no business with the affairs of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, all three British-protected states whose foreign relations were very much the concern of the Government of India. On this last point the Foreign Office was a trifle worried. The status of Sikkim was, of course, beyond doubt since the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890. Bhutan, since January 1910, had surrendered control of its foreign affairs to the Indian Government. Nepal, however, presented some problems. It did, after all, have its own treaties with both China and Tibet, treaties which had been negotiated without British participation. A British announcement that

¹⁸ Morley Papers (D.573/5), Morley to Minto, 23 March 1910.

Nepalese foreign relations had now passed under the control of the Government of India could well be construed as an admission that at one time the British did not possess such control, and, hence, that the Chinese claim that Nepal was her tributary might have had some validity. The Chinese, in fact, might well argue that the *status quo* in Nepal was now being changed as a counter to any British contention as to such a change in Tibet. Perhaps it would be as well to make no mention of Nepal at all at this stage. Grey, however, decided in the end that the Nepalese issue could not be avoided. 'I don't shrink', he minuted, 'from the sentence about Nepal. If, as appears to be the case, Nepal looks to us, we must not be backward.'¹⁹

In April 1910, therefore, Nepal was mentioned in memoranda on the Tibetan situation which Grey sent both to the Wai-wu-pu in Peking and to the Chinese Legation in London. The Chinese were told that His Majesty's Government expected that all the existing arrangements for Indo-Tibetan trade and relations would be 'scrupulously maintained'. The British, moreover, would not tolerate any changes in Tibetan administration which might affect the integrity of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim; and, if the need for it arose, these Himalayan States could count on British protection. It was hoped that the Chinese in Tibet would not try to prevent co-operation at the marts between the British Trade Agents and the local Tibetan officers. Finally, the Chinese were warned that the stationing of numerous bodies of troops in Central Tibet was not welcomed by the Indian Government, which did not believe that the 'simple police duties' specified in No. 12 of the 1908 Trade Regulations called for the presence of a large Chinese army. The Indian Government might well feel, the memoranda concluded, that the size of the Chinese forces on its frontier would have a disturbing effect on the local population, and that it might be obliged to assemble on its own side of the border comparable forces in order to guarantee the preservation of a state of tranquillity.²⁰

To many British officials in India the tone of these memoranda seemed terribly weak. C. A. Bell, the Political Officer in Sikkim,

¹⁹ FO 535/13, No. 54, IO to FO, 31 March 1910; FO 371/853, No. 11015, Minutes by Alston, Campbell and Grey.

²⁰ FO 371/853, No. 11905, Grey to Max Müller, 8 April 1910 and No. 13272, Grey to Chinese Minister in London, 14 April 1910.

whose knowledge of the Tibetan language and experience of Tibetan politics made him to a considerable extent the spokesman of the 'frontier men', just as O'Connor had been in the period immediately before the signing of the 1908 Trade Regulations, declared that the British, in their own self-interest, should give the Dalai Lama every help they could. The recent increase in Chinese power in Tibet, he argued, was to a great extent the outcome of the policy which Morley had obliged Minto to follow. 'We may, therefore,' Bell wrote, 'be deemed to have incurred a moral obligation to prevent that [Chinese] power from being used to oppress the natives of the country.' The object of British policy in the present situation, he declared, was to attempt to maintain in being as much of the traditional structure of the Dalai Lama's Government as possible. British diplomacy should try to bring about a cancellation of the Lama's deposition. The Chinese should be persuaded to limit the number of their troops in Central Tibet to that which the Amban had had at his disposal in the period before the Younghusband Mission of 1904, a figure which was eventually fixed at 300 men. Bell clearly approved of the Tibetan request that a British officer should be sent to Lhasa to look after the Lama's interests, a suggestion which, Bell claimed, the Dalai Lama himself had made. Bell presented yet another list of Chinese and Tibetan breaches of the Lhasa Convention and 1908 Trade Regulations. He reported the anxious interest which Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, the Maharaja of Bhutan, had been taking in the events to his north, and forwarded a Bhutanese request that a British officer go to Lhasa and that the Chinese reduce the size of their army in Tibet. He pointed out that the very person of the Dalai Lama was now in danger, the Amban having offered large rewards for the assassination of any Tibetan officials in exile in India. He described to his superiors in considerable detail the way in which the Amban was now behaving in Lhasa, closing the Tibetan arsenals and mints, confiscating rifles in Tibetan possession, preventing the Regent from performing his religious duties, breaking open the sealed doors of the Dalai Lama's Norbu Lingka palace just outside the limits of Lhasa, and depriving those officials who had accompanied the Dalai Lama into exile of their ranks and offices and placing guards in their houses. Bell's point, to which all these details were intended to lead, was that the Indian Government

should assist the Lama against his enemies.²¹ In support of this policy Bell had one final, and, he no doubt thought, decisive argument. He reported that

the Dalai Lama has stated to his entourage that some of the Foreign Ministers in Peking held out to him hopes of assistance against China, should necessity arise for this. It seems not improbable that, if the Government does not afford him some assistance, he will apply for help to other Powers, offering them a protectorate over Tibet in return for such assistance. It would similarly, I think, be possible for us to obtain a protectorate over Tibet now, were such considered desirable and were we not debarred by our Treaty obligations. The Lama and his ministry may first make especial efforts with Japan and Russia, and should these fail them, afterwards perhaps with others. He has all the seals of the Tibetan Government with him, so that his constitutional position with any Power that does not acknowledge the suzerainty of China over Tibet, would be a strong one. As is known, the Lama and his ministers do not acknowledge this suzerainty.²²

These views were echoed by other British officials with Tibetan frontier experience. Even O'Connor, though now removed from Himalayan politics to a consular post in Persian Seistan, was moved to advise Lord Minto that the British Trade Agent at Gyantse should be moved immediately to Lhasa: 'Only at Lhasa', he said, 'will his influence serve to deter the Chinese from intriguing with the frontier states, and to convince both Chinese and Tibetans that our interests, rights and wishes have to be treated with respect and consideration.'²³

In London there was no difficulty in disregarding the views of men like Bell and O'Connor; expressions of alarm by 'frontier men' had become all too familiar in the years since the Younghusband Mission. The answer to proposals for the despatch of a British officer to the Tibetan capital presented no difficulty: as Grey minuted in April 1910, 'we cannot stir up the Anglo-Russian Agreement by sending an officer to Lhasa'.²⁴

²¹ FO 371/853, No. 13351, Bell to India, 26 March 1910; FO 371/854, No. 14521, IO to FO, 27 April 1910.

²² FO 371/854, No. 19526, Bell to India, 30 April 1910.

²³ FO 371/854, No. 15282, O'Connor to India, 20 March 1910.

²⁴ FO 371/854, No. 12471, Grey's minute on Minto to Morley, 11 April 1910.

Nor did Bell's suggestion that the Dalai Lama, refused help by the British, would turn to other Powers, carry much conviction. The Russians, so the Foreign Office firmly believed, had offered the Lama no help during his Peking visit in 1908. More recently, in March 1910, Isvolski had told Nicolson of the receipt of an appeal from the Lama and declared that while the Russians sympathised with the Lama's difficulties, and, because of their Buriat subjects, were interested in developments in Tibet, they would certainly do nothing in this direction without fully consulting the British.²⁵ The Japanese, it was true, had been showing considerable interest in Tibet of late—they were, after all, a Buddhist nation—but the Foreign Office did not think that Japan would disregard the interests of her British ally in this quarter.²⁶ If Russia and Japan refused to help, who else was there that the Lama could turn to?

Thus Lord Minto, perhaps more concerned about the Himalayan situation than his masters in London, but still reluctant to embrace Curzonian solutions, had no difficulty in resisting the more extreme proposals of the 'frontier men'. One of Bell's arguments, however, he felt obliged to accept as being of some considerable force. In May 1910, when the India Office formally decided to reject Tibetan appeals for British aid, it clearly became necessary to inform the Dalai Lama that he had nothing to hope for from India at this time. Bell pointed out that when this fact became public, as it inevitably must, the supporters of the Dalai Lama still in Tibet—the majority of the Tibetan people, so Bell claimed—would seek alternative measures for their liberation. Hitherto they had not offered armed resistance to the Chinese in the belief that bloodshed was needless and that the British would soon put things to rights. Now, considering themselves betrayed by the Indian Government, they would rise against the Chinese; and some of their hostility would also, in all probability, be directed against the British. The Trade Agent in Gyantse, in fact, might well find himself in the near future besieged by mobs of angry Tibetans. It would be wise, therefore, to increase the Gyantse escort while there was still time to do so. David Macdonald, the

²⁵ FO 535/13, No. 47, Nicolson to Grey, 20 March 1910.

²⁶ FO 371/854, No. 15282, Grey to MacDonal, 3 March 1910.

British Trade Agent at Yatung, agreed with this reasoning.²⁷

It is most unlikely that Minto really believed that the Tibetans would suddenly attempt to take the Tibet Trade Agencies by storm. He was not, however, as he put it to Morley, 'in a position to discredit' the opinion of his subordinates on the spot. He therefore, after consulting his military advisers, recommended that the Trade Agency escorts be reinforced and that one battalion of native infantry, two sections of mountain infantry and a section of the Sappers and Miners be sent to supplement the British forces in Tibet, which at this time consisted of one officer and forty-nine men at Gyantse, twenty-four men at Yatung, and two telegraph operators at Phari, supported by a reserve force at Gangtok in Sikkim of two officers and 133 men. The reinforcement of these very weak Trade Agency guards, Lord Minto considered, could hardly do any harm, and might be of great value in reassuring Nepal and Bhutan that the British were still a military power.²⁸

By June 1910, when Minto's proposal reached the India Office, Morley was slightly better informed on the realities of the frontier situation than he had been earlier on, for he had had the chance to question F. M. Bailey, who had been in Gyantse off and on since Younghusband's day, and who was now in England on leave. Bailey, unlike many British officers who served on the remoter parts of the Indian frontier, was never infected by that almost mystical lack of reality which we can detect in some of the despatches of men like Younghusband, Bell and O'Connor. He was, and at the moment of writing still is, as sensible a man as one is likely to meet, which no doubt explains why he has been, at various times, such a successful diplomat, explorer, secret agent, lepidopterist and botanist. Bailey told Morley that a Tibetan attack on the Trade Agencies was 'the most unlikely thing', and Morley, believing him, knew what to say about the strengthening of the Trade Agency escorts. Minto could make preparations for the reinforcement,

²⁷ FO 371/854, No. 19526, Bell to India, 30 April 1910, and No. 20646, Minto to Morley, 9 June 1910.

²⁸ FO 371/854, No. 20646, Minto to Morley, 9 June 1910.

In addition to the forces to be concentrated at Gnatong, Minto ordered the move of a Gurkha battalion from Almora to Darjeeling. See PEF 1908/23, No. 834, Minute by Lieutenant-General Sir Beauchamp Duff, 9 June 1910.

issuing warning orders to the units concerned; but no more British troops were to cross into Tibet unless the danger to the Trade Agents was such 'that no alternative is left'. This left Minto with very little freedom of action, since in a private letter Morley made his view of the present situation on the Tibetan border as clear as it could possibly be. He told Minto on 30 June 1910 that,

of course, we cannot run any risks of the escorts [at the Trade Agencies] being knocked on the head. On the other hand, in taking measures for their protection, we must not (if we can help it) allow the Tibetans to suppose that we mean to back them in a quarrel with China. If Common Sense prevailed in the world, we should bring the escorts away, and leave the Tibetans and Chinese to fight out their own battles. But political superstitions often in these things get the best of Common Sense, and, apart from idle chatter about Prestige, I do not for a moment forget the possible effects of any action or inaction of ours upon Nepal. On the prospect of an attack on our agency, my own surmise would be against its probability. The Tibetans must know that an attack would be followed by vigorous reprisals from us, and they would then have to fight the English as well as the Chinese. I demur to your proposals about collecting large supplies at Gnatong,²⁹ but for the very reason indicated by your own phrase about the Tibetans placing 'a favourable interpretation' on such proceedings. Every step taken should tend to disabuse their mind of the idea that we shall pick a quarrel with China to restore their precious Dalai Lama. I should be sorry if this were not clearly understood. The Dalai Lama is a pestilent animal, as he proved himself to the Chinese in Peking, and he should be left to stew in his own juice.³⁰

The most that Morley would authorise at this stage was some augmentation of British reserves in Sikkim, and this most reluctantly.

By the end of June the Indian Government had begun preparations for the reinforcement of the Trade Agency guards should the situation demand it. The plan adopted was to concentrate a force at Gnatong, just on the British side of the border, of at least two battalions of native infantry with sapper

²⁹ But, as will be seen, Morley could not stop Minto from giving instructions for the gathering of *some* troops and supplies at Gnatong.

³⁰ Morley Papers (D.573/5), Morley to Minto, 30 June 1910.

and artillery support, complete with all necessary stores, ready to advance to Gyantse when the crisis broke. As Sir Beauchamp Duff, Military Secretary at the India Office, noticed, this plan made some political sense in that British troops were, as it were, displayed as near to Tibet as was possible without actually crossing the frontier. It made, however, little military sense, since, if the Trade Agent at Gyantse was indeed in such a precarious position, he would have long fallen beneath the Tibetan onslaught before British troops could advance across the 100 miles or so of high plateau between Gnatong and Gyantse. Duff thought that it would be more sensible, from a military point of view, to send a much smaller body of reinforcements to Gyantse right away. This, of course, Morley would not accept. The Gnatong concentration was as far as he would go at present.³¹

Morley regarded the fuss about the risk to the Gyantse Trade Agent with considerable suspicion. Was it, he wondered, another 'Curzonian' device, the first stage in a carefully engineered chain of events which, as in the Younghusband era, would eventually lead to a British army being sent deep into Tibetan territory? He had little confidence that frontier officers like Bell, if they found the right opportunity, would adhere rigidly to his policy of non-intervention. In early July Morley put the problem before the Cabinet, which found itself, no doubt with prompting from Morley, rather attracted by a fresh solution to the question of the Trade Agents' safety. If they were really in such danger, why not withdraw them until things had settled down? In the end a compromise was agreed upon. A force was to remain in readiness at Gnatong. The moment danger threatened it would dash up to Gyantse to rescue the Trade Agent, Captain Weir, and escort him back to India. There would be, at all events, no gallant defence of the Gyantse Trade Agency if Morley could help it. He had not forgotten that the last time a British party was besieged in Gyantse, in the same house, indeed, which Captain Weir now occupied, the result had been Younghusband's advance to Lhasa.³²

³¹ PEF 1908/23, No. 925, Minute by Beauchamp Duff, 28 June 1910.

³² Morley Papers (D.573/5), Morley to Minto, 8 July 1910; PEF 1908/23, No. 974, Political and Secret Dept. minute of 11 July 1910; FO 371/854, No. 25573, IO to FO, 14 July 1910.

Minto was horrified at the idea of any withdrawal, even under a heavily reinforced escort, of the Gyantse Trade Agent. Such a step would be most damaging to British prestige, and, in any case, would not be necessary: the Trade Agents, after all, were not in any immediate danger, and previous reports had, perhaps, been a trifle alarmist in tone. The Foreign Office in London, which had observed closely Minto's struggle to retain some foothold in Tibet in the face of attack not by Tibetans or Chinese, but by Morley, was greatly diverted. Hardinge, who would soon be standing in Minto's shoes and struggling himself with Tibetan problems, guessed that 'we shall probably hear little more of the proposed expedition to Gyantse': and Grey observed with fine irony that 'it is interesting to see how the danger to this post is thought to be great when there is a question of strengthening it and slight when there is a question of withdrawing it'.³³ One Foreign Office man summed it all up in these words: 'It has always seemed to me that Indian frontier officials have been inclined to exaggerate the dangers of the situation', to which Hardinge added, 'I have thought so all along.'³⁴

Minto, who could hardly have failed to realise that he was being a bit ridiculous over the question of the escorts, and who was being treated to a series of moral lectures by Morley, hastened to defend himself. He told Morley on 21 July that

I do not place much reliance on Bell and cannot help suspecting that in addition to lack of judgement he is biassed in favour of the Dalai Lama and may possibly be not disinclined to hope that the troops he asks for may benefit the Dalai Lama's interests. Personally I do not believe that our escorts are likely to run any serious risks. But we are not justified in disregarding warnings of danger, neither can we ignore the certainty of a justifiable public howl if after those warnings we had not taken reasonable precautions to deal with emergencies.³⁵

By this time, however, the Gnatong troop concentration had disintegrated into a fiasco. As Minto remarked, 'the military

³³ FO 371/854, No. 26989, Minto to Morley, 23 July 1910, with minutes by Hardinge and Grey.

³⁴ FO 371/854, No. 25551, IO to FO, 14 July 1910, with minutes by R.N.S. and Hardinge.

³⁵ Morley Papers (D.573/25), Minto to Morley, 21 July 1910.

authorities have blundered'. They suddenly found what Duff had already noticed, that a rapid relief of Gyantse from Gnatong was a logistic impossibility, and that an advance base at Phari would be required. 'This', Minto said, 'is of course sheer nonsense'; but by the time he had persuaded the military to think again, further setbacks had occurred. Bad floods cut the railway to Darjeeling and made troop movements up to the frontier quite impossible. When the line was finally reopened, in September, the arguable danger to the Trade Agents had dwindled to such an extent that the need for their reinforcement could no longer be defended seriously. The Gnatong concentration was accordingly abandoned; but not before reports of it had reached the Press and inspired rather pointed Russian enquiries about the British army now preparing to enter Tibet.³⁶

The concentration of British troops at Gnatong, of course, was not the only counter to the Chinese that the British had been able to devise. Minto had been advocating since the beginning of the year a diplomatic campaign against the many Tibetan breaches of the Lhasa Convention and the Trade Regulations, like the creation of a yak-tail monopoly and inevitable 10 per cent duties at Phari. The idea was that the British should address their protests to the Tibetan authorities in Lhasa, informing the Chinese of this action, thus demonstrating that in British eyes a Tibetan, as distinct from Chinese, Government still existed. Minto also hoped to start negotiations, with the same ulterior motive, with the Tibetans over the admission into Tibet of Indian tea.³⁷ In late March, moreover, the Chinese gave Minto an opportunity to show that the British, if not conspicuously powerful in Tibet at present, still possessed some nuisance value and were, if only for this reason, well worth humouring. A group of three Chinese army officers turned up at Darjeeling *en route* for Tibet. The Indian Government proposed that they be turned back on the grounds that British India was neutral in the hostilities then in progress between

³⁶ FO 371/855, No. 39819, Viceroy to IO, 31 October 1910; FO 371/854, No. 27682, Grey to Nicolson, 2 August 1910; FO 535/13, No. 112, Nicolson to Grey, 1 August 1910.

³⁷ FO 371/854, No. 14819, IO to FO, 29 April 1910. On the advice of the Foreign Office the tea question was not, in fact, raised at this time.

China and Tibet, and that it could not, therefore, permit belligerent troops to pass through its territory. The Home Government approved the action, but disliked the public explanation of it, since it implied that there was a war in Tibet, which was not really the case. In the end the three Chinese were refused permission to cross the border on the basis of the Inner Line Regulations (Bengal Frontier Crossing Regulations), which gave the local authorities the right to close the frontier to individuals without explanation.³⁸ The Chinese gave no sign that they were impressed by this demonstration of British ability to deny them access to the quickest route between Peking and Lhasa. The precedent established on this occasion, however, was in 1912 to become an element of British policy, when the Chinese were informed that the Indo-Tibetan border would be closed to their officials and their communications until they had accepted British terms.

By the middle of 1910 it was becoming increasingly clear to Lord Minto that the Chinese were in Central Tibet to stay, and that no permanent settlement of the Indo-Tibet frontier was likely until some solution could be found for the problem of that 'pestilent animal', as Morley called him, the thirteenth Dalai Lama, who had been living since his visit to Calcutta in a house which Bell had rented for him in the outskirts of Darjeeling. Once the Lama had become convinced that the Indian Government were not going to help him, he naturally began to consider alternative means of support. He appears for a while to have thought of making his way to Siberia and settling down among the Russian Buriats, no doubt remembering the affair of the Buriat guard in 1906.³⁹ By July 1910, however, he seems to have decided that he had had enough of exile and that his best step would be a return to Tibet. This possibility rather worried Minto. If 'that tiresome person the Dalai Lama' should take it in his head to 'try to bolt', the Viceroy told Morley, 'he might be able to play the mischief' by stirring up a Tibetan revolt which would only unsettle further an already unstable situation, and might provide an occasion for that Nepalese intervention which seemed so undesirable. He issued orders, therefore, that

³⁸ FO 371/853, No. 10738, Viceroy to IO, 26 March 1910, and No. 10838, IO to FO, 30 March 1910.

³⁹ Bell, *Dalai Lama*, op. cit., pp. 101-2.

the Lama should be discreetly watched and, if the need arose, be restrained from any move to the north.⁴⁰ Minto, however, appears to have misread the Lama's mind. Far from hoping to raise the standard of revolt, the Lama was becoming so discouraged that he had more or less decided to try to come to some terms with the Chinese authorities who were so rapidly undermining the traditional basis of his Government.⁴¹ He was no longer receiving funds from Lhasa.⁴² His supporters in Tibet, and in particular one Liushar who, together with the Regent, the Ti Rimpoche, provided the leadership of his faction in Lhasa, had been arrested.⁴³ There was a distinct possibility that the Chinese would build up the Panchen Lama, his timid adversary, to take over the temporal functions of the Dalai Lama's office, which might then virtually become extinct.

By August the Chinese also appear to have decided that they would benefit from the return of the Dalai Lama. The Amban Lien Yü found that it was not so easy to discover a new Incarnation to replace a living Lama, as he had been instructed to do by Imperial Decree. The presence of the deposed theocrat in Darjeeling, so near the border, was extremely unsettling to the Tibetan people, who were becoming increasingly resentful of Chinese attempts to change the traditional pattern of Tibetan life. Moreover, Lien Yü feared that so long as the British had possession of the Dalai Lama's person there remained a risk that they might succumb to the temptation to use him as an excuse for another mission to Lhasa. Amban Lien Yü, therefore, decided to try to persuade the Lama to return to Tibet, and despatched his Secretary, Lo Ch'ing-ch'i, to Darjeeling for this purpose. On 17 September Lo arrived. He promptly called on Bell to explain his offer. The Dalai Lama, he said, would not be punished if he returned to Tibet; and, after a probationary period, the Chinese would probably restore him to his spiritual offices. He would receive an allowance from the Chinese, and be permitted to live in the Potala Palace. He would not, Lo made it clear, become once more the supreme temporal authority in Tibet: this role the Chinese had reserved for

⁴⁰ Morley Papers (D.573/25), Minto to Morley, 28 July 1910.

⁴¹ FO 371/854, No. 19526, Bell to India, 30 April 1910.

⁴² FO 371/854, No. 25054, FO to IO, 18 July 1910.

⁴³ FO 371/854, No. 23790, Viceroy to IO, 1 July 1910.

themselves.⁴⁴ The Panchen Lama wrote to advise acceptance of these terms. A delegation sent by the Tsongdu, the Tibetan National Assembly, had already come down to Darjeeling to tell the Lama that his return to Tibet would be welcomed by all his subjects, even if it did involve coming to terms with the Chinese. A Mongolian prince, apparently at the request of Lien Yü, also advised the Lama in this sense.⁴⁵ The Indian Government did not regard these communications with disfavour. Lord Minto, though under strict orders not to try in any way to persuade the Lama to return, very much hoped that he would come to terms with the Chinese; and the Foreign Office in London thought the same. As Hardinge once said, the Dalai Lama's 'return to Tibet with the consent of the Chinese would be the best possible solution'.⁴⁶

On 12 October Lo Ch'ing-ch'i had a short interview with the Dalai Lama and put his case. The Lama rejected it. He had changed his mind about the desirability of putting himself into the power of the Chinese, perhaps on advice from the Nepalese whom he had consulted on this point. Bell, we can be sure, did not recommend his return. By the beginning of November Lo Ch'ing-ch'i saw that his further stay in Darjeeling would be pointless, and asked Bell to arrange for him an interview with the Viceroy at Simla. It is probable that his instructions provided for some investigation of the possibility of an Anglo-Chinese settlement without the Lama's return to Tibet, perhaps on the lines that the Wai-wu-pu had recently suggested, with the Lama going off to Peking, where he could reside in harmless state and ceremony as the formal Head of the Tibetan Buddhist Church. But Lo's request was turned down; and on 15 November he set out for Lhasa.⁴⁷

At this moment a new idea occurred to the Dalai Lama. If the Indian Government would not help him, perhaps the British Home Government would. Two days before Lo's

⁴⁴ FO 371/855, No. 34322, Viceroy to IO, 21 September 1910.

⁴⁵ FO 371/854, No. 29010, Viceroy to IO, 8 August 1910. FO 371/855, No. 33798, Viceroy to IO, 16 September 1910.

⁴⁶ FO 371/854, No. 25105, Hardinge's minute on Viceroy to IO, 9 July 1910.

⁴⁷ FO 371/855, No. 41651, Bell to India, 18 October 1910, and No. 42038, Viceroy to IO, 17 November 1910, and No. 34654, Max Müller to Grey, 8 September 1910.

departure the Lama told Bell that he now planned to go in person to England to lay his case before King George V, and asked Bell to go with him. Did Bell put this idea into the Lama's head? We do not know. The Lama's belief was that the lack of British sympathy to his case was due largely to the intrigues of the Chinese Legation in London. The only way he could counter this was to go to London himself. He sent secretly to Tibet for supplies of silver with which to defray the expenses of the journey, and announced that he intended to leave in December 1910 or January 1911. The Indian Government, however, vetoed the plan. The Dalai Lama then proposed, instead, that he make a tour of the Buddhist holy places of India and, perhaps, a visit to Nepal.⁴⁸

In the second half of 1910 the Indian Government had failed to find any particularly promising policy towards Tibet. The Dalai Lama remained on their hands and the Chinese continued to erode away the signs and symbols of Tibetan autonomy. The Trade Agent at Gyantse found that, despite the provisions of the 1908 Trade Regulations, it was not easy to establish personal communication with his Tibetan colleagues.⁴⁹ The Amban Lien Yü, despite Jordan's protests in Peking, could not be induced to cancel a decree which he had issued in March 1910 forbidding Tibetan monks from all contact with foreigners.⁵⁰ In September the Panchen Lama sent a messenger to the Gyantse Trade Agency with a letter offering his condolences

⁴⁸ FO 371/855, No. 44262, Bell to India, 13 November 1910, and No. 44559, Viceroy to IO, 6 December 1910, and No. 46899, Bell to India, 26 November 1910; PEF 1908/21, No. 311, Bell to India, 21 January 1911; FO 371/1078, No. 10420, India to Bell, 23 January 1911.

The Indian Government with tact managed to persuade the Dalai Lama not to go to Nepal.

⁴⁹ FO 371/855, No. 38838, IO to FO, 24 October 1910.

⁵⁰ PEF 1908/24, No. 4181, Jordan to Grey, 9 August 1910.

Lien Yü's decree of 16 March 1910 was publicly posted in two versions, Tibetan and Chinese. The Tibetan version ordered the monks to abstain 'from holding any communication with foreigners whether on state or private affairs'. The Chinese version, to which, of course, the Wai-wu-pu referred, was milder: it forbade the Lamas 'from sending a letter to any foreigner without first submitting it to the nearest Chinese officer'. The Tibetans, presumably, only saw the Tibetan version. This use of two texts with rather different wording and implications was quite common in late Manchu practice.

to King George V for the death of his father, Edward VII; but the chief Chinese officer at Gyantse, Ma Chi-fu, intercepted the messenger and took the letter from him, insisting that a communication of this sort should only reach the British through Chinese hands.⁵¹ The Chinese, for all their claims to Tibetan authority, moreover, seemed somehow unable to act on British requests for the removal of Tibetan-imposed obstacles on the India trade, such as the 10 per cent *ad valorem* duty imposed at points on the Tibetan side of the border from Demchok in the west to Phari on the Chumbi-Lhasa road. However, when the Indian Government, following the policy formulated earlier on in the year, tried to address its protests on such matters directly to the Tibetan Regent at Lhasa, the Ti Rimpoche, thus attempting at one stroke to improve Indo-Tibetan trading conditions and to demonstrate that a Tibetan, as opposed to Chinese, Government still existed in Tibet, it was always the Amban Lien Yü who answered.⁵²

The Chinese advance into Central Tibet and its consequences did not go unremarked in England. Those who had supported the policy behind the Younghusband Mission of 1904 were quick to point out that had Curzon's intention not been disregarded, and had a British Residency then been established at Lhasa, the Dalai Lama might well not have been forced to escape to India and the Chinese might have been prevented from becoming as great a threat to the Indian Himalayan frontier as had ever been the Russians in the days of the Dorjiev missions to the Tsar. Men like O'Connor, still in Government service, could only express their opinions in private letters.⁵³ Younghusband, the greatest frontier man of them all, however, was now free in his retirement to speak his mind; and he did not let the opportunity pass to justify his own past Tibetan policy. In such forums as *The Times* and the Central Asian Society, as well as in his recently published book, *India and Tibet*, he was declaring in late 1910 that ever since 1905 the British had been seriously mistaken in their approach to the Tibetan problem. In

⁵¹ PEF 19108/24, No. 1565, Bell to India, 26 September 1910.

⁵² FO 371/855, No. 40687, India to Ti Rimpoche, 16 September 1910; PEF 1908/24, No. 1909, Bell to India, 4 December 1910.

⁵³ FO 371/855, No. 37888, O'Connor, Consul in Khorasan, to India, 5 August 1910.

consequence, the Indian Government was quite unprepared to face the Chinese awakening now in progress. 'All down our North-East Frontier, in Tibet and Yunnan, bordering on Burma, the wider awake the Chinese are,' Younghusband told the Central Asian Society, 'the wider awake we ourselves must be.' What should the British do? Younghusband had no doubt that the long-term answer, at least in as far as Tibet was concerned, was the establishment of a joint Anglo-Russian mission in Lhasa.⁵⁴ Proposals such as this, which involved a drastic revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, were regarded by the Liberal Cabinet, so Morley told Minto, as 'the "knavish tricks" of the Younghusband party';⁵⁵ and they had already provoked the publication of a Blue Book on the origins of the present crisis, a document which required careful editing so as to avoid reference to such dangerous matters as the nature of Chinese suzerainty over Nepal.⁵⁶ The best answer to the English critics of his Tibetan policy, Morley thought, was a tranquil Indo-Tibetan border. Projects for joint Anglo-Russian intervention should, in any case, be sedulously avoided; and in this the Indian Government and most of the 'frontier men' joined in whole-hearted agreement.

By August 1910 one possibility already existed for some measure of joint Anglo-Russian intervention in Tibet within the established framework of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The notes by which the British and Russian Governments agreed to prevent the departure of scientific exploring ventures into Tibet ceased to be binding on 31 August. The Foreign Office decided not to seek their renewal, and the Russian Government agreed to allow them to lapse.⁵⁷ It was inevitable, however, that someone would sooner or later suggest that the whole Tibetan problem could be solved by a joint British and

⁵⁴ FO 371/855, No. 46899, IO to FO, 28 December 1910; Sir F. Younghusband, 'Our Position in Tibet', *Proceedings of the Central Asian Society*, 2 November 1910, p. 3; Sir F. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, 1910, p. 421.

⁵⁵ Morley Papers (D.573/5), Morley to Minto, 1 September 1910.

⁵⁶ The Blue Book, Cd.5240, *Further Correspondence Relating to Tibet*, was published on 15 July 1910. See Morley Papers, (D.573/5), Morley to Minto, 15 July 1910.

⁵⁷ FO 371/855, No. 31496, IO to FO, 26 August 1910, with minutes by Langley and Grey.

Russian mission to Lhasa, complete with escorts, disguised as a scientific exploring project. W. W. Rockhill, now the Ambassador of the United States of America in Russia, seems to have been the first person to put the idea into words, during a conversation in January 1911 with Mr. Kidston, Second Secretary at the British Embassy in St. Petersburg. After discussing the nature of the Indian frontier problem, now that China was trying to establish her influence in Nepal and Bhutan, Rockhill wondered how Great Britain could possibly stand by and watch. Why not, he suggested, send a British scientific mission to Lhasa? Or, he went on,

Better still! Why not an Anglo-Russian scientific mission? Kozloff might be the Russian chief, and there are plenty of men of science in Great Britain who would be only too glad to go. Let such a mission be established in Lhasa for a year with an adequate following, and the world would hear little more of Chinese encroachment, while the benefits to scientific research would be enormous.⁵⁸

This was not unlike a suggestion which Younghusband had recently made in a letter to *The Times*, that there should be Anglo-Russian representation at Lhasa, and which had won the Dalai Lama's approval: but Younghusband had not proposed the subterfuge of the scientific mission.⁵⁹ Rockhill's idea was certainly attractive, particularly in view of the developing Chinese threat to the stability of the long border in the Assam Himalayas; but, as one official in the Foreign Office minuted, 'this would of course imply the tearing up of the Anglo-Russian Agreement and may be dismissed as impractical politics'.⁶⁰ The Indian Government, likewise, when they had time to think over the implications of Rockhill's scheme, decided against any Anglo-Russian 'pseudo-scientific' Tibetan venture. After all, as Bell remarked, 'the chief advantage of our present Tibetan policy is that it keeps Russia out of Tibet'. Anglo-Russian relations were friendly in early 1911; but 'we cannot say how they will stand in twenty years' time'. To put Russia into a

⁵⁸ FO 371/1078, No. 3400, Buchanan to Grey, 17 January 1911.

⁵⁹ FO 371/855, No. 46899, Bell to India, 24 November 1910.

⁶⁰ FO 371/1078, No. 3400, minute by B. Alston on Buchanan to Grey, 17 January 1911.

position to make herself unpleasant if she so wished was, Bell submitted, 'unsound policy'.⁶¹

In late 1910 there were changes both in the India Office and in the Indian Government. Hardinge of the Foreign Office became Viceroy in place of Minto; and Morley handed over the India Office to the Marquess of Crewe. The effect on British policy was not very great. Hardinge began his administration with rather less sympathy for the 'frontier men' than Lord Minto had acquired during his term of office, and favoured as little involvement in Tibetan affairs as possible. Lord Crewe shared Morley's affection for a quiet frontier. However, as we shall see later on, the Chinese in Tibet were steadily becoming more threatening to British prestige in the Himalayas as they began to penetrate across the main ranges of the Assam border tracts. This development was in 1911 to force the Indian Government of Lord Hardinge into intense frontier activity; but an activity which was surprisingly unrelated to the problem of the Dalai Lama and the old issues of the conduct of the trade marts and Indo-Tibetan trade.

During 1911 the question of the Dalai Lama's future remained unanswered, though by the end of the year events quite outside British control began to suggest a possible outcome. The Chinese persisted in attempts to persuade the Lama to return to Tibet on their terms. The Lama continued to try to enlist British aid, and in May addressed a letter to the Tsar in quest of Russian help against the Chinese, sending a copy to Isvolski, who had now been made Russian Ambassador in Paris.⁶² Towards the end of the year the Panchen Lama, who had developed considerable political ambitions during his Lhasa rival's absence, proposed to come down to Yatung to talk things over with the Dalai Lama; but the Indian Government decided to oppose any such meeting between the two Lamas, and nothing more was heard of the project.⁶³ In November 1911 the Dalai Lama again wrote to the Tsar seeking Russian assistance to bring him back to Lhasa.⁶⁴ By this time, however,

⁶¹ FO 371/1078, No. 23493, Bell to India, 24 March 1911.

⁶² FO 371/1078, No. 19979, Buchanan to Grey, 24 May 1911.

⁶³ FO 371/1078, No. 35165, Weir to India, 11 August 1911, and India to Weir, 15 August 1911.

⁶⁴ FO 371/1078, No. 50894, Benckendorff to Grey, 18 December 1911.

it was evident that the Chinese position in Central Tibet was about to be undermined by the outbreak of rebellion against the Manchus in China, thus creating a quite new political situation which will be considered in some detail later on. Up to this point the Indian Government managed to avoid committing itself to the Lama's support in any significant way.

On the eve of the Chinese Revolution, indeed, Lord Hardinge's Administration had come to accept the Chinese control of Central Tibet as one of the permanent factors in frontier affairs. There were aspects of this control, of course, which it found exceedingly distasteful. Its resolve to resist the expansion of Chinese influence into the Himalayan States and the Assam Himalayas was growing stronger day by day. But as far as those old and tried issues of Anglo-Tibetan relations, trade and the trade marts, were concerned, it had more or less made up its mind to establish some working arrangement with the Chinese authorities in Lhasa. During 1911 Anglo-Chinese negotiations were in progress over postal services between India and Tibet (to replace the courier system of the Gyantse Trade Agency authorised in the 1908 Trade Regulations); and the Indian Government were endeavouring to obtain from the Chinese a lease on a new site for the Gyantse Trade Agency, the old site, which had been occupied since 1904, being cramped and in several other ways unsuitable.⁶⁵ Hardinge even suggested, in June 1911, that since 'Yatung and Gyantse, and the routes thereto, are being energetically policed by the Chinese, and we cannot at present deny the effectiveness of the measures taken by them', the Gyantse Trade Agent's escort, which seemed so dangerously inadequate a year earlier, should now be withdrawn. How seriously he meant this it is hard to say. In the event his proposal was rejected by the India Office and the Foreign Office, who both felt that it was rather pointless: it would certainly win no goodwill on the part of the Chinese, who would probably interpret it as a sign of British weakness.⁶⁶ During 1911 Jordan continued, from time to time, to bring to

⁶⁵ PEF 1908/25, No. 186, Hardinge to Crewe, 5 January 1911, and No. 654, Hardinge to Crewe, 16 April 1911; PEF 1908/13, No. 785, Bell to India, 10 April 1911.

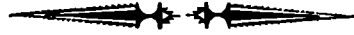
⁶⁶ FO 371/1078, No. 24220, Viceroy to IO, 3 June 1911, and IO to FO, 20 June 1911, and No. 25082, Jordan to Grey, 26 June 1911.

the attention of the Wai-wu-pu the fact that the 1908 Trade Regulations were still being disregarded by Lien Yü and his subordinates;⁶⁷ but this had become little more than a ritual reassertion of a British position which was no longer held in great strength.

⁶⁷ FO 371/1078, No. 33446, Jordan to Grey, 9 August 1911.

XV

SOME CONCLUSIONS



THE Curzon-Younghusband forward policy in Tibet, with the rejection of which this book begins its story, was directed, whatever its proponents might have declared to the contrary, towards the establishment of some kind of British protectorate over Tibet supervised by a British representative permanently resident at Lhasa. Lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Home Government for such extreme methods of combating Russian influence on the Indian border made it impossible for Curzon, and for his subordinate Younghusband, to be entirely frank about their intentions. The Lhasa Convention, the diplomatic basis, it was hoped, for the new Tibet, did not say anything about a British protectorate in so many words. Rather indirectly, however, it provided the Indian Government with a number of openings whereby British influence could make itself felt at the centre of Tibetan political life; and there can be little doubt that Curzon, had he been allowed to by the Home Government, would have exploited to the full the possibilities inherent in Younghusband's treaty. The end result would have been the foundation of a British protectorate, though perhaps never announced as such, in Lhasa. Whether, once founded, such a protectorate would have survived the diplomatic onslaught of the Russians and the military attacks of the Chinese forces in the Tibetan Marches, is highly doubtful: in the event, however, it was never put to the test. No sooner had Younghusband left Lhasa than the 'protectorate' elements of the Lhasa Convention were eliminated or emasculated by Lord Ampthill, acting as Viceroy while Curzon was away on leave. The modified Treaty, while still providing greater opportunities for British influence in Tibet than had existed

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before 1904, lost most of its potential as a blue-print for imperial expansion beyond the Himalayan barrier.

In late 1905 there were changes in Administrations both in England and in India. A Liberal Cabinet, under Campbell-Bannerman, took over from the Conservative Government of Balfour. Lord Minto replaced Lord Curzon as Viceroy. Brodrick handed over the India Office to that theorist of Liberalism, John Morley, who lost no time in laying down a Tibetan policy with none of the distasteful implications of that which Curzon had advocated. Morley made it plain that the British, from now on, should manifest towards Tibet an attitude of non-interference. The only legitimate British interest in Tibet, Morley considered, was to ensure that no other European Power established herself there. Indo-Tibetan trade was of so little value as to be unworthy of the notice of a great Imperial Government. The local administration of the Indo-Tibetan border, such problems as, for example, the continued Tibetan refusal to demarcate the Sikkim-Tibet frontier alignment laid down verbally in the 1890 Convention, Morley did not consider of sufficient importance to justify the slightest departure from non-interference. Once Tibet was internationally neutralised, then the British should have as little to do with it as possible.

The neutralisation of Tibet proceeded by three phases. First, in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 the theoretical status of Tibet was defined. It was a region belonging to the Chinese, but where Chinese rights were to some degree restricted. No Power other than China could interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet. The British retained a number of economic advantages in Tibet which had been specified in the Lhasa Convention, to which the Chinese now adhered. Secondly, by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 the Russians agreed to have no political relations with the Dalai Lama and his people. The British, likewise, made declarations of self-denial in this respect; but they kept those special economic privileges to which the Chinese had recorded their assent in 1906. Finally, in 1908, by the new Trade Regulations, the mechanism of British commercial contact with Tibet was refined and codified.

The effect of the agreements of 1906, 1907 and 1908 was not only to place theoretical obstacles in the way of Russian political intrigues in Lhasa but to block British policy towards

Tibet by means of formidable diplomatic and political barriers. Morley, it is clear, considered that one of the most important, if not the most important, objectives of his policy was the exclusion of the British from Tibet. He appreciated that any Indian Government, even one in the charge of as non-Curzonian a temperament as Lord Minto's, would if left to its own devices tend through sheer inertia to endeavour to fill a Tibetan power vacuum. Relations with the Panchen Lama, the encouragement of British exploration north of the Himalayas, such developments as these, while singly of minor significance, would have as their cumulative effect the steady increase of British influence in Tibet and the progressive transformation of that influence into something increasingly closely resembling a protectorate.

Morley's attitude made it impossible for the Indian Government to combat the rise of Chinese power in Central Tibet following Chang Yin-tang's arrival there in late 1906. Indeed, it is probable that Morley did not regard the Chinese in Tibet with anything like the distaste which was felt in Simla. A Chinese Tibet, after all was the logical end-product of the policy of non-interference. If Russian and British influences were to be kept out of Lhasa, and if, as then seemed fairly certain, the Tibetans could not stand on their own, then a Chinese-dominated Tibet was the only stable possibility. The entry into Lhasa of Chung Ying's column in February 1910, though it produced a situation against the acceptance of which the Indian Government was bound to protest, also provided the strongest possible argument for the continuation of non-interference. Hitherto, as, for example, in the Curzon era, the main Indian case for a forward Tibetan policy had been based on the fact that the Chinese were unable to control their Tibetan subjects. They had failed to persuade the Tibetans to withdraw from Sikkim in 1886-8, they had been unable to secure the proper functioning of the 1893 Trade Regulations, and they had not succeeded in enforcing on the Dalai Lama the Sikkim-Tibet boundary of the 1890 Convention. Even when Curzon was really interested in frustrating the Russians, he still found it expedient to justify in public his forward policy on the grounds that the Chinese, by their failure to ensure Tibetan respect for the treaties, had demonstrated that their control of Tibet was no more than a 'fiction'. Only direct

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Anglo-Tibetan relations, without the Chinese, could make the treaties work. After 1910, however, it could be more convincingly argued that Anglo-Chinese, rather than Anglo-Tibetan, co-operation was called for. The Chinese controlled the trade marts. The Dalai Lama was in exile and the Lhasa Government was a Chinese puppet régime of a kind which had not existed before 1904. If the British wanted no more from Tibet, as they so frequently declared, than a respect for the treaties, the Sikkim-Tibet Convention, the 1893 Trade Regulations and the Lhasa Convention of 1904, then the Chinese advance to Lhasa in 1910 was demonstrably a favourable development. It was possible, though difficult, to get the Chinese to respect treaties: no one had yet managed to make the Tibetans do so.

From the point of view of the treaties, therefore, the logical development of Morley's non-interference policy would have been a recognition of something more than Chinese suzerainty in Tibet. As we have seen, during 1911 the Indian Government was moving *de facto* towards such a recognition with regard to issues like the trade marts, the Trade Agents' escorts, the Gyantse telegraph and the British-built rest houses on the Chumbi-Gyantse road. Had British policy in Tibet only involved such questions as these, it is more than probable that *de facto* recognition would have in time acquired *de jure* status; and the British would have, as did independent India in 1954, admitted the existence of something like a 'Tibet region of China' under Chinese sovereignty. The British, however, were concerned with matters far more important than the trade marts.

A Chinese-controlled Central Tibet might well bring benefits to Indo-Tibetan commerce. It promised, however, nothing but political trouble for the Himalayan boundary. The Chinese would, so the Indian Government concluded, be well placed to intensify their intrigues in Nepal and Bhutan. Moreover, they would now be able to infiltrate into the Assam Himalayas, a region which to date had been an administrative backwater. The British could by treaty protect the Sikkim-Tibet border. They were able to compete with the Chinese in Nepal and Bhutan, much though they might resent the necessity of having to do so. In 1910, however, they were in no position to frustrate any major Chinese project directed towards the hill tracts

separating Tibet from Assam. Here, by 1910, British influence had barely touched the foothills, and the hitherto accepted British border was located far too far to the south. The Chinese, if allowed to fill what was certainly a power vacuum in the Assam Himalayas, could well extend their empire through the Himalayan barrier to the very edge of the Brahmaputra plain. This was a possibility which the Indian Government could not bring itself to accept.

The problem of the Assam Himalayas, which developed so rapidly in 1910 and 1911, transformed the basic nature of British interests in Tibet. This was a boundary question far more grave than that which the Tibetans had posed when they occupied Lingtu in Sikkim in 1886. The Chinese were about to breach the great natural defensive line of Northern India, a barrier which, by tradition, was impenetrable. An independent Asian state, which in late 1911 came under a revolutionary government, would be in direct contact with the peoples of the Indian plains. There were political as well as military dangers here. Would the Chinese, were they in a position to do so, stimulate Indian nationalist agitation? There were powerful reasons why Lord Minto's Administration, and that of Lord Hardinge which took over in late 1910, could not seriously contemplate a passive acceptance of Chinese influence in the Assam hills. But what could be done to frustrate the Chinese?

One possibility, though a logical enough development of the non-interference policy, was not seriously considered. In theory the Chinese might, in return for a British recognition of their sovereignty in Tibet and a declaration that the Tibetans were not entitled to conduct foreign relations on their own behalf, agree to a general Indo-Tibetan boundary settlement. But the Chinese, though under considerable diplomatic pressure, had refused to make a settlement of this kind on the Burma-Yunnan border. What grounds were there for supposing that they would do more in Tibet? Moreover, the very fact that the Himalayan border was under negotiation would perhaps provide embarrassment for the British. Nepal and Bhutan would certainly come under discussion, and the Chinese would surely grasp this opportunity to reassert their ancient claims in these Himalayan States. Could the British afford to have such matters brought into the international arena? Moreover, what was the legal

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position in the Assam Himalayas? The accepted British border here in 1910 ran along the foot of the range. Would it be possible to obtain its northward advance by Anglo-Chinese negotiation? And if the Chinese agreed to a boundary along the Himalayan crests, could not the Russians, invoking the 1907 Convention, claim to see in this a British annexation of Tibetan territory? And what would be the Russian price of acceptance?

Perhaps, had the Chinese remained in Central Tibet, the Indian Government in the end would have had no alternative but to run the risks of Anglo-Chinese boundary negotiations. Had they done so, the position of the Indian Government today might well have been much happier. However, before any decision had to be faced, the Chinese power in Central Tibet collapsed as a result of the outbreak of the Chinese Revolution; and the Indian Government were thereby presented with another possible approach to the Assam boundary question. If the boundary was settled by Anglo-Tibetan agreement while at the same time the Chinese were permanently excluded from all direct contact with it, then the Himalayan defences might perhaps be repaired without incurring diplomatic risks. In 1912 the British began to work in this direction, in the process departing radically from the principles of Morley's non-interference. Chinese exclusion from Central Tibet meant, in fact, the creation of something like an autonomous, if not fully independent, Tibetan state with defined limits and with guaranteed defences against Chinese reconquest. Such a state, it was clear, could not hope to survive indefinitely without British support. Indeed, a viable non-Chinese Tibet would really have to be under active British protection. It involved, therefore, a return to many aspects of the Tibetan policy of Curzon.

The Assam Himalayan problem, which is the subject of the second volume of this book, thus led to a revival of Curzonian solutions. The establishment of a British resident in Lhasa and the British occupation of Chumbi were once more discussed in despatches from the Viceroy. However, in 1912 the Indian Government did not possess in Tibet anything like the freedom of action it had enjoyed in 1904. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 had so tied British hands that any significant departure from non-interference would probably require Russian consent. Moreover, the rising tension in Europe now made British

commitments beyond the established Indian borders even less desirable than they had been a decade earlier. In 1904 a Conservative Government had only been induced to authorise the despatch of a British army to Tibet on the understanding that no permanent occupation would result. It had, once Younghusband had reached Lhasa, managed to ensure that this event did not give momentum to a forward policy which it abruptly checked. There could be no question that after 1910 a Liberal Government would go anywhere like as far as had Balfour in 1904. Another Younghusband Mission was now quite unthinkable. The Home Government had been taught a lesson by Curzon which it was not likely to forget. Thus, if the Chinese were to be excluded from contact with the Assam border, it would have to be done without creating a British protectorate in Tibet. A compromise solution was called for. Its quest is described in the next volume of this book.

As we shall see, however, there was no real compromise possible. Either the Chinese were accepted as Indian neighbours, and the British tried to coexist with them, or the British would have to be prepared to give military backing to a non-Chinese Tibet and face all the consequences of such a step. Any limitation of Chinese rights in Tibet, unsupported by armed might, would be bound to be unstable. Sooner or later a China would arise which was strong enough to repeat the exploits of Chao Erh-feng; and, given the Chinese attitude towards Tibet, she would certainly attempt in these circumstances to do so. This moment eventually arrived in 1950, with the Communist victory over the Kuomintang. The 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet immediately followed.

Mr. Nehru's Government, faced with such a repetition of the events of 1910, adopted what amounted to a version of Morley's non-interference policy taken nearer to its logical end. In the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954 India recognised China's sovereignty in Tibet, the so-called 'Tibet Region of China'.¹ Mr. Nehru, however, does not seem to have quite realised the full implications of what he had done. He believed that pious phrases about the five principles of peaceful coexistence and the general atmosphere of Asian anti-imperialist solidarity would make the Chinese, without protest, accept an Indian-dictated

¹ Appendix XX.

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boundary alignment. The Chinese Communists, it is more than likely, would have agreed to a boundary which their Manchu or Republican predecessors had accepted by treaty in 1910-12; but no such boundary existed. The Indian version of the southern boundary of the 'Tibet Region of China' was one which the British had decided upon, except for the short stretch in Northern Sikkim, without securing valid Chinese agreement. Indeed, after 1914 the British consistently denied that the Indo-Tibetan border was in any way a matter for Chinese concern. The Chinese, as might have been expected, saw in the 1954 Agreement the preliminary stage to a general negotiation of the resultant Sino-Indian border. The Indians thought otherwise.

Perhaps, had it not been for the resistance which the Tibetans offered to China, the Indians might in the end have agreed to talk realistically about boundary matters with China. However, the Tibetan risings and the Indian exile of the Dalai Lama both aroused Chinese suspicions as to the sincerity of Indian professions of a desire for peaceful coexistence and created in India a climate of opinion hostile to the Chinese. The boundary question, in this atmosphere of mutual suspicion, became incapable of negotiated settlement. The Himalayas, by the late 1950s, had become the scene of Sino-Indian armed 'confrontation', to borrow an expression which President Soekarno has made so much his own. In 1962 confrontation turned into something very like war. Could this situation have been avoided? Perhaps, but only if both parties had been in possession of an extremely realistic understanding of the history of the Sino-Indian border in British times. The Chinese would have had to see that it was basically a distrust of China that produced British attempts to keep the Chinese as far away from the Himalayan border as possible; and that, unless the Chinese acted in a more neighbourly spirit than was their wont, the British attitude would be adopted by independent India. The Indians would have had to see that, in a very real sense, the borders with China which they inherited were created by British anti-Chinese actions and that, whatever might be their merits *qua* borders, the Chinese would resent them and would challenge their validity. Neither side having shown any particular understanding in the boundary question, the unhappy outcome was inevitable.

This analysis of recent events in the Himalayas rather suggests that it would have been better for independent India if the British had managed to come to some general border settlement with China. Had Morley's non-interference policy also contained a positive element, an expressed wish to see Tibet as Chinese rather than as an unstable power vacuum, much as the Indian Government had tried to make the Pamirs Chinese in the early 1890s,² then some Anglo-Chinese Treaty over Tibet might well have emerged in 1910. The result could possibly have been, firstly, a negotiated and agreed border—this would not have been easily secured, of course—and secondly, the establishment of Chinese control in Central Tibet strong enough to weather the storms of 1912. The existence of a Chinese Tibet between 1912 and 1950 might not have guaranteed friendly Sino-Indian relations today; it would certainly, however, have ensured for those relations a rather different history.

² For some account of British and Chinese policy in the Pamirs before 1895, see Lamb, *China-India Border*, op. cit., and Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier*, op. cit.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet, signed at Calcutta, 17 March 1890¹

Whereas Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of China, are sincerely desirous to maintain and perpetuate the relations of friendship and good understanding which now exist between their respective Empires; and whereas recent occurrences have tended towards a disturbance of the said relations, and it is desirable to clearly define and permanently settle certain matters connected with the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet, Her Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the Emperor of China have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have, for this purpose, named Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, His Excellency the Most Hon'ble Henry Charles Keith Petty Fitzmaurice, G.M.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.M.I.E., Marquess of Lansdowne, Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

And His Majesty the Emperor of China, His Excellency Shêng Tai, Imperial Associate Resident in Tibet, Military Deputy Lieutenant-Governor.

Who having met and communicated to each other their full powers, and finding these to be in proper form, have agreed upon the following Convention in eight Articles:

Article I

The boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters which flow into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into other rivers of Tibet. The line commences at Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan frontier and follows the abovementioned water-parting to the point where it meets Nipal territory.

Article II

It is admitted that the British Government, whose protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognised, has direct and exclusive

¹ Aitchison, XII, 1931, pp. 66-67.

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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.

Article III

The Government of Great Britain and Ireland and the Government of China engage reciprocally to respect the boundary as defined in Article I, and to prevent acts of aggression from their respective sides of the frontier.

Article IV

The question of providing increased facilities for trade across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier will hereafter be discussed with a view to a mutually satisfactory arrangement by the High Contracting Powers.

Article V

The question of pasturage on the Sikkim side of the frontier is reserved for further examination and future adjustment.

Article VI

The High Contracting Powers reserve for discussion and arrangement the method in which official communications between the British authorities in India and the authorities in Tibet shall be conducted.

Article VII

Two Joint Commissioners shall, within six months from the ratification of this Convention, be appointed, one by the British Government in India, the other by the Chinese Resident in Tibet. The said Commissioners shall meet and discuss the questions which by the last three preceding Articles have been reserved.

Article VIII

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in London as soon as possible after the date of the signature thereof.

In witness whereof the respective negotiators have signed the same and affixed thereunto the seals of their arms.

Done in quadruplicate at Calcutta this seventeenth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety, corresponding with the Chinese date the twenty-seventh day of the second moon of the sixteenth year of Kuang Hsü.

LANSDOWNE

Chinese seal and signature

APPENDIX II

Regulations regarding Trade, Communication, and Pasturage, to be appended to the Convention between Great Britain and China of 17 March 1890, relative to Sikkim and Tibet.

Signed at Darjeeling, 5 December 1893¹

1. A trade mart shall be established at Yatung on the Tibetan side of the frontier, and shall be opened to all British subjects for purposes of trade from the 1st day of May 1894. The Government of India shall be free to send officers to reside at Yatung to watch the conditions of British trade at that mart.
2. British subjects trading at Yatung shall be at liberty to travel freely to and fro between the frontier and Yatung, to reside at Yatung, and to rent houses and godowns for their own accommodation, and the storage of their goods. The Chinese Government shall undertake that suitable buildings for the above purpose shall be provided for the officer or officers appointed by the Government of India under Regulation 1 to reside at Yatung. British subjects shall be at liberty to sell their goods to whomsoever they please, to purchase native commodities in kind or in money, to hire transport of any kind, and in general to conduct their business transactions in conformity with local usage, and without any vexatious restrictions. Such British subjects shall receive efficient protection for their persons and property. At Lang-jo and Ta-chun, between the frontier and Yatung, where rest-houses have been built by the Tibetan authorities, British subjects can break their journey in consideration of a daily rent.
3. Import and export trade in the following articles: arms, ammunition, military stores, salt, liquors, and intoxicating or narcotic drugs, may, at the option of either Government, be entirely prohibited, or permitted only on such conditions as either Government, on their own side, may think fit to impose.
4. Goods, other than goods of the description enumerated in Regulation 3, entering Tibet from British India, across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier, or *vice versa*, whatever their origin, shall be exempt

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1892-3, Vol. LXXXV, pp. 1235-7.

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from duty for a period of five years, commencing from the date of the opening of Yatung to trade; but after the expiration of this term, if found desirable, a tariff may be mutually agreed upon and enforced. Indian tea may be imported into Tibet at a rate of duty not exceeding that at which Chinese tea is imported into England, but trade in Indian tea shall not be engaged in during the five years for which other commodities are exempt.

5. All goods on arrival at Yatung, whether from British India or from Tibet, must be reported at the Customs Station there for examination, and the report must give full particulars of the description, quantity, and value of the goods.

6. In the event of trade disputes arising between the British and Chinese or Tibetan subjects in Tibet, they shall be inquired into and settled in personal conference by the Political Officer for Sikkim and the Chinese Frontier Officer. The object of personal conference being to ascertain facts and do justice, where there is a divergence of views, the law of the country to which the defendant belongs shall guide.

7. Despatches from the Government of India to the Chinese Imperial Resident in Tibet shall be handed over by the Political Officer for Sikkim to the Chinese Frontier Officer, who will forward them by special courier.

Despatches from the Chinese Imperial Resident in Tibet to the Government of India will be handed over by the Chinese Frontier Officer to the Political Officer for Sikkim, who will forward them as quickly as possible.

8. Despatches between the Chinese and Indian officials must be treated with due respect, and couriers will be assisted in passing to and fro by the officers of each Government.

9. After the expiration of one year from the date of the opening of Yatung, such Tibetans as continue to graze their cattle in Sikkim will be subject to such Regulations as the British Government may from time to time enact for the general conduct of such grazing in Sikkim. Due notice will be given of such Regulations.

General Articles

1. In the event of disagreement between the Political Officer for Sikkim and the Chinese Frontier Officer, each official shall report the matter to his immediate superior, who in turn, if a settlement is not arrived at between them, shall refer such matter to their respective Governments for disposal.

SIKKIM-TIBET TRADE REGULATIONS OF 1893

2. After the lapse of five years from the date on which these Regulations shall come into force, and on six months' notice given by either party, these Regulations shall be subject to revision by Commissioners appointed on both sides for this purpose, who shall be empowered to decide on and adopt such amendments and extensions as experience shall prove desirable.

3. It having been stipulated that Joint Commissioners should be appointed by the British and Chinese Governments under Article VII of the Sikkim-Tibet Convention to meet and discuss, with a view to the final settlement of the questions reserved under Articles IV, V, and VI of the said Convention; and the Commissioners thus appointed having met and discussed the questions referred to, namely trade, communication, and pasturage, have been further appointed to sign the Agreement in nine Regulations and three General Articles now arrived at, and to declare that the said nine Regulations and three General Articles form part of the Convention itself.

In witness whereof the respective Commissioners have hereto subscribed their names.

Done in quadruplicate at Darjeeling, this 5th day of December, in the year 1893, corresponding with the Chinese date, the 28th day of the 10th moon of the 19th year of Kuang Hsü.

A. W. PAUL, *British Commissioner.*

HO CHANG-JUNG,

JAMES H. HART, *Chinese Commissioners.*

APPENDIX III

(I) *Convention between Great Britain and Tibet, signed at Lhasa on 7 September 1904*¹

Whereas doubts have arisen as to the meaning and validity of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and the Trade Regulations of 1893, and as to the liabilities of the Tibetan Government under these agreements; and whereas recent occurrences have tended towards a disturbance of the relations of friendship and good understanding which have existed between the British Government and the Government of Tibet; and whereas it is desirable to restore peace and amicable relations, and to resolve and determine the doubts and difficulties as aforesaid, the said Governments have resolved to conclude a Convention with these objects, and the following articles have been agreed upon by Colonel F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., in virtue of the full powers vested in him by His Britannic Majesty's Government and on behalf of that said Government, and Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen, the Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche, and the representatives of the Council, of the three monasteries Se-ra, Dre-pung, and Ga-den, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly on behalf of the Government of Tibet.

Article I

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

Article II

The Tibetan Government undertakes to open forthwith trade marts to which all British and Tibetan subjects shall have free right of access at Gyantse and Gartok, as well as at Yatung.

The Regulations applicable to the trade mart at Yatung, under the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of 1893, shall, subject to such amendments as may hereafter be agreed upon by common consent between the British and Tibetan Governments, apply to the marts above-mentioned.

¹ Aitchison, 1929, XIV, pp. 23-26.

LHASA CONVENTION OF 7 SEPTEMBER 1904

In addition to establishing trade marts at the places mentioned, the Tibetan Government undertakes to place no restrictions on the trade of existing routes, and to consider the question of establishing fresh trade marts under similar conditions if development of trade requires it.

Article III

The question of the amendment of the Regulations of 1893 is reserved for separate consideration, and the Tibetan Government undertakes to appoint fully authorised delegates to negotiate with representatives of the British Government as to the details of the amendments required.

Article IV

The Tibetan Government undertakes to levy no dues of any kind other than those provided for in the tariff to be mutually agreed upon.

Article V

The Tibetan Government undertakes to keep the roads to Gyantse and Gartok from the frontier clear of all obstruction and in a state of repair suited to the needs of the trade, and to establish at Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok, and at each of the other trade marts that may hereafter be established, a Tibetan Agent who shall receive from the British Agent appointed to watch over British trade at the marts in question any letter which the latter may desire to send to the Tibetan or to the Chinese authorities. The Tibetan Agent shall also be responsible for the due delivery of such communications and for the transmission of replies.

Article VI

As an indemnity to the British Government for the expense incurred in the despatch of armed troops to Lhasa, to exact reparation for breaches of treaty obligations, and for the insults offered to and attacks upon the British Commissioner and his following and escort, the Tibetan Government engages to pay a sum of pounds five hundred thousand—equivalent to rupees seventy-five lakhs—to the British Government.

The indemnity shall be payable at such places as the British Government may from time to time, after due notice, indicate whether in Tibet or in the British districts of Darjeeling or Jalpaiguri, in seventy-five annual instalments of rupees one lakh each on the 1st January in each year, beginning from the 1st January 1906.

Article VII

As security for the payment of the above-mentioned indemnity, and for the fulfilment of the provisions relative to the trade marts

APPENDICES

specified in Articles II, III, IV and V, the British Government shall continue to occupy the Chumbi valley until the indemnity has been paid and until the trade marts have been effectively opened for three years, whichever date may be the later.

Article VIII

The Tibetan Government agrees to raze all forts and fortifications and remove all armaments which might impede the course of free communication between the British frontier and the towns of Gyantse and Lhasa.

Article IX

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

- (a) no portion of Tibetan territory shall be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise given for occupation, to any Foreign Power;
- (b) no such Power shall be permitted to intervene in Tibetan affairs;
- (c) no representatives or Agents of any Foreign Power shall be admitted to Tibet;
- (d) no concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights shall be granted to any Foreign Power. In the event of consent to such concessions being granted, similar or equivalent concessions shall be granted to the British Government;
- (e) no Tibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to any Foreign Power, or the subject of any Foreign Power.

Article X

In witness whereof the negotiators have signed the same, and affixed thereunto the seals of their arms.

Done in quintuplicate at Lhasa, this 7th day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and four, corresponding with the Tibetan date the 27th day of the seventh month of the Wood Dragon year.

F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND, COL.,
British Commissioner.

Seal of British
Commissioner

Seal of the Dalai Lama,
affixed by the Ga-den
Ti-Rimpoche

Seal of
Council

Seal of
Dre-pung
Monastery

Seal of
Sera
Monastery

Seal of
Ga-den
Monastery

Seal of
National
Assembly

LHASA CONVENTION OF 7 SEPTEMBER 1904

In proceeding to the signature of the Convention, dated this day, the representatives of Great Britain and Tibet declare that the English text shall be binding.

F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND, COL.,
British Commissioner.

Seal of British
Commissioner

Seal of the Dalai Lama,
affixed by the Ga-den
Ti-Rimpoche

Seal of Council	Seal of Dre-pung Monastery	Seal of Sera Monastery	Seal of Ga-den Monastery	Seal of National Assembly
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AMPTHILL,
Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

This Convention was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council on the eleventh day of November, A.D., one thousand nine hundred and four.

S. M. FRASER,
*Secretary to the Government of India,
Foreign Department.*

(2) Declaration signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and appended to the ratified Convention of 7 September 1904

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, having ratified the Convention which was concluded at Lhasa on 7th November 1904 by Colonel Younghusband, C.I.E., British Commissioner, Tibet Frontier Matters, on behalf of His Britannic Majesty's Government; and by Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen, the Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche, and the representatives of the Council, of the three monasteries, Sera, Dre-pung and Ga-den, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly, on behalf of Tibet, is pleased to direct as an act of grace that the sum of money which the Tibetan Government have bound themselves under the terms of Article VI of the said Convention to pay to His Majesty's Government as an indemnity for the expenses incurred by the latter in connection with the despatch of armed forces to Lhasa, be reduced from Rs. 75,00,000 to Rs. 25,00,000; and to declare that the British occupation of the Chumbi valley shall cease after the due payment

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of three annual instalments of the said indemnity as fixed by the said Article, provided, however, that the trade marts as stipulated in Article II of the Convention shall have been effectively opened for three years as provided in Article VI of the Convention; and that, in the meantime, the Tibetans shall have faithfully complied with the terms of the said Convention in all other respects.

AMPTHILL,
Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

This declaration was signed by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Simla on the eleventh day of November, A.D., one thousand nine hundred and four.

S. M. FRASER,
*Secretary to the Government of India,
Foreign Department.*

(3) *Separate Article to the Lhasa Convention*²

The Government of Tibet agrees to permit the British Agent, who will reside at Gyantse to watch the conditions of British trade, to visit Lhasa, when it is necessary to consult with the high Chinese and Tibetan officials on such commercial matters of importance as he has found impossible to settle at Gyantse by correspondence or by personal conference with the Tibetan Agent.

Sealed and signed at Lhasa the 7th September 1904, corresponding with the Tibetan date, the 27th day of the 7th month of the Wood Dragon year.

F. YOUNGHUSBAND, COLONEL, *British Commissioner.*

Seal of Dalai Lama affixed by the Ti-Rimpoche

Seal of the Council

Seal of the Drebung Monastery

Seal of the Sera Monastery

Seal of the Gaden Monastery

Seal of the Tsong du (National Assembly)

² FO 535/5, no. 43, Younghusband to India, 9 September 1904.

This Separate Article was not printed in Aitchison, but it appears in the second Tibet Blue Book in 1905 and also in Younghusband's *India and Tibet*, p. 300. Lord Amthill, on his own initiative, declared the Separate Article to be invalid; and it thereupon passed into oblivion.

APPENDIX IV

*Convention between Great Britain and China respecting Tibet. Signed at Peking, 27 April 1906 (Ratifications exchanged at London, 23 July 1906)*¹

Whereas His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of China are sincerely desirous to maintain and perpetuate the relations of friendship and good understanding which now exist between their respective Empires;

And whereas the refusal of Tibet to recognise the validity of or carry into full effect the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of March 17th 1890 and Regulations of December 5th 1893 placed the British Government under the necessity of taking steps to secure their rights and interests under the said Convention and Regulations;

And whereas a Convention of ten articles was signed at Lhasa on September 7th 1904 on behalf of Great Britain and Tibet, and was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India on behalf of Great Britain on November 11th 1904, a declaration on behalf of Great Britain modifying its terms under certain conditions being appended thereto;

His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the Emperor of China have resolved to conclude a Convention on this subject and have for this purpose named Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:

His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland:

Sir Ernest Mason Satow, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of China;

and His Majesty the Emperor of China:

¹ BD IV, pp. 324-5; J. V. A. MacMurray, *Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China 1894-1919*, Vol. 1, *Manchu Period (1894-1911)*, New York, 1921, pp. 576-7; G. E. P. Hertslet, *Treaties, etc., between Great Britain and China; and between Great Britain and Foreign Powers etc.*, 2 vols., London, 1908, Vol. 1, pp. 202-8.

APPENDICES

His Excellency Tong Shoa-yi [*sic*], His said Majesty's High Commissioner Plenipotentiary and a Vice-President of the Board of Foreign Affairs;

who having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and true form have agreed upon and concluded the following Convention in six articles:

Article I

The Convention concluded on September 7th 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet, the texts of which in English and Chinese are attached to the present Convention as an annexe, is hereby confirmed, subject to the modifications stated in the declaration appended thereto, and both of the High Contracting Parties engage to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified therein.

Article II

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

Article III

The concessions which are mentioned in Article 9(d) of the Convention concluded on September 7th 1904 by Great Britain and Tibet are denied to any State or to the subject of any State other than China, but it has been arranged with China that at the trade marts specified in Article 2 of the aforesaid Convention Great Britain shall be entitled to lay down telegraph lines connecting with India.

Article IV

The provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and Regulations of 1893 shall, subject to the terms of this present Convention and annexe thereto, remain in full force.

Article V

The English and Chinese texts of the present Convention have been carefully compared and found to correspond but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them the English text shall be authoritative.

Article VI

This Convention shall be ratified by the Sovereigns of both countries and ratifications shall be exchanged at London within

ANGLO-CHINESE CONVENTION OF 27 APRIL 1906

three months after the date of signature by the Plenipotentiaries of both Powers.

In token whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed and sealed this Convention, four copies in English and four in Chinese.

Done at Peking this twenty-seventh day of April, one thousand nine hundred and six, being the fourth day of the fourth month of the thirty-second year of the reign of Kuang-hsü.

(LS) ERNEST SATOW
(Signature and Seal of the Chinese Plenipotentiary)

Annexe

Convention between Great Britain and Tibet signed at Lhasa on the 7th September 1904.

Declaration signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India on behalf of the British Government and appended to the ratified Convention of the 7th September 1904.

Notes exchanged²

Mr. Tong Shoa-yi to Sir E. Satow.

Your Excellency,

April 27 1906.

With reference to the Convention which was signed to-day by Your Excellency and myself on behalf of our respective Governments I have the honour to declare formally that the Government of China undertakes not to employ any one, not a Chinese subject and not of Chinese nationality, in any capacity whatsoever in Tibet.

I avail, &c.

TONG SHOA-YI.

Sir E. Satow to Mr. Tong Shoa-yi.

Your Excellency,

Peking, April 27 1906.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's Note of this day's date in which you declare formally, with reference to the Convention relating to Tibet which was signed to-day by Your Excellency and myself on behalf of our respective Governments, that the Government of China undertakes not to employ any one, not a Chinese subject and not of Chinese nationality, in any capacity whatsoever in Tibet.

I avail, &c.

ERNEST SATOW.

² BD IV, pp. 325-6.

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Sir E. Satow to Mr. Tong Shoa-yi.

Private.

Dear Mr. Tong,

Peking, April 27 1906.

As regards the undertaking given by the Chinese Government in your Note of to-day not to employ any one not a Chinese subject or of Chinese nationality in any capacity in Tibet, I am authorised to state that no objection will be raised by His Majesty's Government to the employment by China of foreigners for a period of 12 months from to-day, being the date of signature of our Convention, in order to give time for the organisation of the Customs in Tibet. But after April 27th 1907 the undertaking in your Note will of course come into force and be faithfully carried out.

Yours, &c.

ERNEST SATOW.

APPENDIX V

*Convention between Great Britain and Russia relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. Signed at St. Petersburg, 31 August 1907 (ratifications exchanged 23 September 1907)*¹

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, animated by the sincere desire to settle by mutual agreement different questions concerning the interests of their States on the Continent of Asia, have determined to conclude Agreements destined to prevent all cause of misunderstanding between Great Britain and Russia in regard to the questions referred to, and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit:

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, the Right Honourable Sir Arthur Nicolson, His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias;

His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, the Master of his Court Alexander Isvolski, Minister for Foreign Affairs;

Who, having communicated to each other their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following:

Agreement concerning Persia

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia having mutually engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia, and sincerely desiring the preservation of order throughout that country and its peaceful development, as well as the permanent establishing of equal advantages for the trade and industry of all other nations;

Considering that each of them has, for geographical and economic reasons, a special interest in the maintenance of peace and order in certain provinces of Persia adjoining, or in the neighbourhood of, the Russian frontier on the one hand, and the frontiers of Afghanistan and Baluchistan on the other hand; and being desirous of avoiding

¹ MacMurray, *China Treaties*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 674-8.

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all cause of conflict between their respective interests in the above-mentioned provinces of Persia;

Have agreed on the following terms:

Article I

Great Britain engages not to seek for herself, and not to support in favour of British subjects, or in favour of the subjects of third Powers, any Concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as Concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c.—beyond a line starting from Kasr-i-Shirin, passing through Isfahan, Yezd, Khakh, and ending at a point on the Persian frontier at the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar Concessions in this region which are supported by the Russian Government. It is understood that the above-mentioned places are included in the region in which Great Britain engages not to seek the Concessions referred to.

Article II

Russia, on her part, engages not to seek for herself and not to support in favour of Russian subjects, or in favour of subjects of a third Power, any Concessions of a political or commercial nature—such as Concessions for railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c.—beyond a line going from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, and ending at Bunder Abbas, and not to oppose, directly or indirectly, demands for similar Concessions in this region which are supported by the British Government. It is understood that the above-mentioned places are included in the region in which Russia engages not to seek the Concessions referred to.

Article III

Russia, on her part, engages not to oppose, without previous agreement with Great Britain, the grant of any Concessions whatever to British subjects in the regions of Persia situated between the lines mentioned in Articles I and II. Great Britain undertakes an identical engagement as regards concessions to be given to Russian subjects in same regions of Persia.

All Concessions existing at present in the regions indicated in Articles I and II are maintained.

Article IV

It is understood that the revenues of all the Persian customs, with the exception of those of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, revenues guaranteeing the amortization and the interest of the loans con-

cluded by the Government of the Shah with the 'Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse' up to the date of the signature of the present arrangement, shall be devoted to the same purpose as in the past.

It is equally understood that the revenues of the Persian customs of Farsistan and of the Persian Gulf, as well as those of the fisheries on the Persian shore of the Caspian Sea and those of the Posts and Telegraphs, shall be devoted, as in the past, to the service of the loans concluded by the Government of the Shah with the Imperial Bank of Persia up to the date of the signature of the present arrangement.

Article V

In the event of irregularities occurring in the amortization or the payment of interest of the Persian loans concluded with the 'Banque d'Escompte et de Prêts de Perse' and with the Imperial Bank of Persia up to the date of the signature of the present arrangement, and in the event of the necessity arising for Russia to establish control over the sources of revenue guaranteeing the regular service of the loans concluded with the first-named bank, and situated in the region mentioned in Article II of the present arrangement, or for Great Britain to establish control over the sources of revenue guaranteeing the regular service of the loans concluded with the second-named bank, and situated in the region mentioned in Article I of the present arrangement, the British and Russian Governments undertake to enter beforehand into a friendly exchange of ideas with a view to determine, in agreement with each other, the measures of control in question and to avoid all interference which would not be in conformity with the principles governing the present arrangement.

Convention concerning Afghanistan

The High Contracting Parties, in order to ensure perfect security on their respective frontiers in Central Asia and to maintain in these regions a solid and lasting peace, have concluded the following Convention:

Article I

His Britannic Majesty's Government declare that they have no intention of changing the political status of Afghanistan.

His Britannic Majesty's Government further engage to exercise their influence in Afghanistan only in a pacific sense, and they will not themselves take in Afghanistan, nor encourage Afghanistan to take, any measures threatening Russia.

The Imperial Russian Government, on their part, declare that they recognize Afghanistan as outside the sphere of Russian influence, and they engage that all their political relations with

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Afghanistan shall be conducted through the intermediary of His Britannic Majesty's Government; they further engage not to send any Agents into Afghanistan.

Article II

The Government of His Britannic Majesty having declared in the Treaty signed at Kabul on the 21st March 1905 that they recognize the Agreement and the engagements concluded with the late Ameer Abdur Rahman, and that they have no intention of interfering in the internal government of Afghan territory, Great Britain engages neither to annex nor to occupy in contravention of that Treaty any portion of Afghanistan or to interfere in the internal administration of the country, provided that the Ameer fulfils the engagements already contracted by him towards his Britannic Majesty's Government under the above-mentioned Treaty.

Article III

The Russian and Afghan authorities, specially designated for the purpose on the frontier or in the frontier provinces, may establish direct reciprocal relations with each other for the settlement of local questions of a non-political character.

Article IV

His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Russian Government declare that they recognize as regards Afghanistan the principle of equality of treatment in waters concerning commerce, and they agree that any facilities which may have been, or shall be hereafter obtained, for British and British-Indian trade and traders, shall be equally applied to Russian trade and traders. Should the progress of trade establish the necessity for Commercial Agents, the two Governments will agree as to what measures shall be taken, due regard, of course, being had to the Ameer's sovereign rights.

Article V

The present arrangements will only come into force when His Britannic Majesty's Government shall have notified to the Russian Government the consent of the Ameer to the terms stipulated above.

Arrangement concerning Tibet

The Governments of Great Britain and Russia recognizing the suzerain rights of China in Tibet, and considering the fact that Great Britain, by reason of her geographical position, has a special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the external relations of Tibet, have made the following Agreement:

Article I

The two High Contracting Parties agree to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet, and to abstain from all interference in its internal administration.

Article II

In conformity with the admitted principle of the suzerainty of China over Tibet, Great Britain and Russia engage not to enter into negotiations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. Nevertheless this engagement does not exclude the direct relations between the British Commercial Agents and the Tibetan authorities provided for in Article V of the Convention between Great Britain and Tibet of the 7th September, 1904, and confirmed by the Convention between Great Britain and China of the 27th April, 1906; nor does it modify the engagements entered into by Great Britain and China in Article I of the said Convention of 1906.

It is clearly understood that Buddhists, subjects of Great Britain or of Russia, may enter into direct relations on strictly religious grounds with the Dalai Lama and the other representatives of Buddhism in Tibet; the Governments of Great Britain and Russia engage, so far as they are concerned, not to allow those relations to infringe the stipulations of the present arrangement.

Article III

The British and Russian Governments respectively engage not to send Representatives to Lhasa.

Article IV

The two High Contracting Parties engage neither to seek nor to obtain, whether for themselves or their subjects, any Concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, and mines, or other rights in Tibet.

Article V

The two Governments agree that no part of the revenues of Tibet, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to Great Britain or Russia or to any of their subjects.

Annexe to the Arrangement between Great Britain and Russia concerning Tibet

Great Britain reaffirms the Declaration, signed by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India and appended to the ratification of the Convention of the 7th September, 1904, to the effect that the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by British forces shall cease after the payment of the three annual instalments of the indemnity of 2,500,000 rupees, provided that the trade marts mentioned in Article II of that Convention have been effectively

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opened for three years, and that in the meantime the Tibetan authorities have faithfully complied in all respects with the terms of the said Convention of 1904. It is clearly understood that if the occupation of the Chumbi Valley by the British forces has, for any reason, not been terminated at the time anticipated in the above Declaration, the British and Russian Governments will enter upon a friendly exchange of views on this subject.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchanged at St. Petersburg as soon as possible.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Convention and affixed thereto their seals.

Done in duplicate at St. Petersburg, the 18th (31st) August, 1907.

(L.S.) A. NICOLSON.

(L.S.) ISVOLSKI.

Notes exchanged²

Sir A. Nicolson to M. Isvolski

Saint-Pétersbourg le 18 (31) Août 1907

M. le Ministre,

Me référant à l'arrangement au sujet du Thibet signé aujourd'hui, j'ai l'honneur de faire à Votre Excellence la Déclaration suivante :

Le Gouvernement Britannique juge utile, pour autant qu'il dépendra de lui, de ne pas admettre, sauf accord préalable avec le Gouvernement Russe, pour une durée de trois ans à partir de la date de la présente communication, l'entrée au Thibet d'une mission scientifique quelconque, à condition toutefois qu'une assurance pareille soit donnée de la part du Gouvernement Impérial de Russie.

Le Gouvernement Britannique se propose, en outre, de s'adresser au Gouvernement Chinois afin de faire agréer à ce dernier une obligation analogue pour une période correspondante; il va de soi que la même démarche sera faite par le Gouvernement Russe.

A l'expiration du terme de trois ans précité, le Gouvernement Britannique avisera d'un commun accord avec le Gouvernement Russe à l'opportunité, s'il y a lieu, de mesures ultérieures à prendre concernant les expéditions scientifiques au Thibet.

Je saisis, &c.

(Signé) A. NICOLSON.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson

Saint-Pétersbourg, 13 18 (31) Août, 1917.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

En réponse à la note de Votre Excellence en date de ce jour,

² BD IV, pp. 354-5.

j'ai l'honneur de déclarer à mon tour que le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie juge utile, pour autant qu'il dépendra de lui, de ne pas admettre—sauf accord préalable avec le Gouvernement Britannique—pour une durée de trois ans à partir de la date de la présente communication, l'entrée au Thibet d'une mission scientifique quelconque.

De même que le Gouvernement Britannique, le Gouvernement Impérial se propose de s'adresser au Gouvernement Chinois afin de faire agréer à ce dernier une obligation analogue pour une période correspondante.

Il reste entendu qu'à l'expiration du terme de trois ans les deux Gouvernements aviseront d'un commun accord à l'opportunité, s'il y a lieu, de mesure ultérieures à prendre concernant les expéditions scientifiques au Thibet.

Veillez agréer, Monsier l'Ambassadeur, l'assurance de ma haute considération.

ISVOLSKI.

Note. The text of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 was to some extent modelled on the Anglo-Russian exchange of notes at St. Petersburg, 28 April 1899, with regard to railway interests in China, so, Grey noted, 'as to introduce terms already familiar to Russia'. See R. P. Churchill, *Convention*, op. cit., p. 28; MacMurray, *China Treaties*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 204-5.

The Agreement concerning Tibet was not communicated formally to the Tibetans, though there can be no doubt that the Dalai Lama at least was well aware of its contents by 1908.

The Convention concerning Afghanistan, by Article V, required the consent of the Amir before it could come into force. Much to the annoyance of Lord Minto, the Amir refused to accept those terms relating to his country which had been negotiated without his participation. Strictly speaking, therefore, the Afghan part of the Anglo-Russian Convention remained invalid.

The British did not consider that, with the collapse of the Tsarist régime in 1917, the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 had been nullified. They hoped that the new régime in Russia would continue to regard itself as bound by its terms. The Convention was formally cancelled in Article II of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 7 August 1924.

APPENDIX VI

*Agreement between Great Britain, China and Tibet amending Trade Regulations in Tibet, of 5 December 1893. Signed at Calcutta, 20 April 1908. (Ratifications exchanged at Peking, 14 October 1908)*¹

Preamble

Whereas by Article I of the Convention between Great Britain and China of the 27th April, 1906, that is the 4th day of the 4th moon of the 32nd year of Kwang Hsu, it was provided that both the High Contracting Parties should engage to take at all times such steps as might be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of the terms specified in the Lhasa Convention of the 7th September, 1904, between Great Britain and Tibet, the text of which in English and Chinese was attached as an Annexe to the above-named Convention;

And whereas it was stipulated in Article III of the said Lhasa Convention that the question of the amendment of the Tibet Trade Regulations which were signed by the British and Chinese Commissioners on the 5th day of December, 1893, should be reserved for separate consideration, and whereas the amendment of these Regulations is now necessary;

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India: Mr. E. C. Wilton, C.M.G.;

His Majesty the Emperor of China: His Majesty's Special Commissioner Chang Yin Tang;

And the High Authorities of Tibet have named as their fully authorized representative to act under the directions of Chang Tachen and take part in the negotiations, the Tsarong Shape, Wang Chuk Gyalpo.

And whereas Mr. E. C. Wilton and Chang Tachen have communicated to each other their respective full powers and have found them to be in good and true form and have found the authorization of the Tibetan Delegate to be also in good and true form, the following amended Regulations have been agreed upon:

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1907-8, Vol. CI, pp. 170-5.

TIBET TRADE REGULATIONS OF 1908

1. The Regulations of 1893 shall remain in force in so far as they are not inconsistent with these Regulations.

2. The following places shall form, and be included within, the boundaries of the Gyantse mart:

(a) The line begins at Chumig Dangsang (Chhu-Mig-Dangs-Sangs) north-east of the Gyantse Fort, and thence it runs in a curved line, passing behind the Pekor Chode (Dpal-Hkhor-Choos-Sde), down to Chag-Dong-Gang (Phyag-Gdong-Sgang); thence passing straight over the Nyan Chu, it reaches the Zamsa (Zam-Srag).

(b) From the Zamsa the line continues to run, in a south-easterly direction, round to Lachi-To (Gla-Dkyii-Stod), embracing all the farms on its way, viz., the Lahong, the Hogtso (Hog-Mtsho), the Tong-Chung-Shi (Grong-Chhung-Gshis), and the Rangang (Rab-Sgang), &c.

(c) From Lachi-To the line runs to the Yutog (Gyu-Thog), and thence runs straight, passing through the whole area of Gamkar-Shi (Ragal-Mkhar-Gshis), to Chumig Dangsang.

As difficulty is experienced in obtaining suitable houses and godowns at some of the marts, it is agreed that British subjects may also lease land for the building of houses and godowns at the marts, the locality for such building sites to be marked out specially at each mart by the Chinese and Tibetan authorities in consultation with the British Trade Agent. The British Trade Agents and British subjects shall not build houses and godowns except in such localities, and this arrangement shall not be held to prejudice in any way the administration of the Chinese and Tibetan local authorities over such localities, or the right of British subjects to rent houses and godowns outside such localities for their own accommodation and the storage of their goods.

British subjects desiring to lease building sites shall apply through the British Trade Agent to the Municipal Office at the mart for a permit to lease. The amount of rent, or the period or conditions of the lease, shall then be settled in a friendly way by the lessee and the owner themselves. In the event of a disagreement between the owner and lessee as to the amount of rent or the period or condition of the lease, the case will be settled by the Chinese and Tibetan authorities, in consultation with the British Trade Agent. After the lease is settled, the sites shall be verified by the Chinese and Tibetan Officers of the Municipal Office conjointly with the British Trade Agent. No building is to be commenced by the lessee on a site before the Municipal Office has issued him a permit to build, but it is

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agreed that there shall be no vexatious delays in the issue of such permit.

3. The administration of the trade marts shall remain with the Tibetan Officers, under the Chinese Officers' supervision and directions.

The Trade Agents at the marts and the Frontier Officers shall be of suitable rank, and shall hold personal intercourse and correspondence with one another on terms of mutual respect and friendly treatment.

Questions which cannot be decided by agreement between the Trade Agents and the Local Authorities shall be referred for settlement to the Government of India and the Tibetan High Authorities at Lhasa. The purport of a reference by the Government of India will be communicated to the Chinese Imperial Resident at Lhasa. Questions which cannot be decided by agreement between the Government of India and the Tibetan High Authorities at Lhasa shall, in accordance with the terms of Article I of the Peking Convention of 1906, be referred for settlement to the Governments of Great Britain and China.

4. In the event of disputes arising at the marts between British subjects and persons of Chinese and Tibetan nationalities, they shall be inquired into and settled in personal conferences between the British Trade Agent at the nearest mart and the Chinese and Tibetan Authorities of the Judicial Courts at the mart, the object of personal conference being to ascertain facts and do justice. Where there is a divergence of view the law of the country to which the defendant belongs shall guide. In any such mixed cases, the Officer or Officers of the defendant's nationality shall preside at the trial, the Officer or Officers of the plaintiff's country merely attending to watch the course of the trial.

All questions in regard to rights, whether of property or person, arising between British subjects, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the British Authorities.

British subjects who may commit any crime at the marts or on the routes to the marts shall be handed over by the local authorities to the British Trade Agent at the mart nearest to the scene of the offence, to be tried and punished according to the laws of India, but such British subjects shall not be subjected by the local authorities to any ill-usage in excess of necessary restraint.

Chinese and Tibetan subjects, who may be guilty of any criminal act towards British subjects at the marts or on the routes thereto, shall be arrested and punished by the Chinese and Tibetan Authorities according to the law.

TIBET TRADE REGULATIONS OF 1908

Justice shall be equitably and impartially administered on both sides.

Should it happen that Chinese or Tibetan subjects bring a criminal complaint against a British subject before the British Trade Agent, the Chinese or Tibetan Authorities shall have the right to send a representative, or representatives, to watch the course of trial in the British Trade Agent's Court. Similarly, in cases in which a British subject has reason to complain of a Chinese or Tibetan subject in the Judicial Court at the mart, the British Trade Agent shall have the right to send a representative to the Judicial Court to watch the course of trial.

5. The Tibetan Authorities, in obedience to the instructions of the Peking Government, having a strong desire to reform the judicial system of Tibet, and to bring it into accord with that of Western nations, Great Britain agrees to relinquish her rights of extra-territoriality in Tibet, whenever such rights are relinquished in China, and when she is satisfied that the state of the Tibetan laws and the arrangements for their administration and other considerations warrant her in so doing.

6. After the withdrawal of the British troops, all the rest-houses, eleven in number, built by Great Britain upon the routes leading from the Indian frontier to Gyantse, shall be taken over at original cost by China and rented to the Government of India at a fair rate. One-half of each rest-house will be reserved for the use of the British officials employed on the inspection and maintenance of the telegraph lines from the marts to the Indian frontier and for the storage of their materials, but the rest-houses shall otherwise be available for occupation by British, Chinese, and Tibetan officers of respectability who may proceed to and from the marts.

Great Britain is prepared to consider the transfer to China of the telegraph lines from the Indian frontier to Gyantse when the telegraph lines from China reach that mart, and in the meantime Chinese and Tibetan messages will be duly received and transmitted by the line constructed by the Government of India.

In the meantime China shall be responsible for the due protection of the telegraph lines from the marts to the Indian frontier, and it is agreed that all persons damaging the lines or interfering in any way with them or with the officials engaged in the inspection or maintenance thereof shall at once be severely punished by the local authorities.

7. In law suits involving cases of debt on account of loans, commercial failure, and bankruptcy, the authorities concerned shall

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grant a hearing and take steps necessary to enforce payment; but, if the debtor plead poverty and be without means, the authorities concerned shall not be held responsible for the said debts, nor shall any public or official property be distrained upon in order to satisfy these debts.

8. The British Trade Agents at the various trade marts now or hereafter to be established in Tibet may make arrangements for the carriage and transmission of their posts to and from the frontier of India. The couriers employed in conveying these posts shall receive all possible assistance from the local authorities whose districts they traverse and shall be accorded the same protection as the persons employed in carrying the despatches of the Tibetan Authorities. When efficient arrangements have been made by China in Tibet for a postal service, the question of the abolition of the Trade Agents' couriers will be taken into consideration by Great Britain and China. No restrictions whatever shall be placed on the employment by British officers and traders of Chinese and Tibetan subjects in any lawful capacity. The persons so employed shall not be exposed to any kind of molestation or suffer any loss of civil rights to which they may be entitled as Tibetan subjects, but they shall not be exempted from all lawful taxation. If they be guilty of any criminal act, they shall be dealt with by the local authorities according to law without any attempt on the part of their employer to screen or conceal them.

9. British officers and subjects, as well as goods, proceeding to the trade marts, must adhere to the trade routes from the frontier of India. They shall not, without permission, proceed beyond the marts, or to Gartok from Yatung and Gyantse, or from Gartok to Yatung and Gyantse, by any route through the interior of Tibet, but natives of the Indian frontier, who have already by usage traded and resided in Tibet, elsewhere than at the marts shall be at liberty to continue their trade, in accordance with the existing practice, but when so trading or residing they shall remain, as heretofore, amenable to the local jurisdiction.

10. In cases where officials or traders, *en route* to and from India or Tibet, are robbed of treasure or merchandise, public or private, they shall forthwith report to the Police officers, who shall take immediate measures to arrest the robbers and hand them to the Local Authorities. The Local Authorities shall bring them to instant trial, and shall also recover and restore the stolen property. But if the robbers flee to places out of the jurisdiction and influence of Tibet, and cannot be arrested, the Police and the Local Authorities shall not be held responsible for such losses.

TIBET TRADE REGULATIONS OF 1908

11. For public safety, tanks or stores of kerosene oil or any other combustible or dangerous articles in bulk must be placed far away from inhabited places at the marts.

British or Indian merchants wishing to build such tanks or stores may not do so until, as provided in Regulation 2, they have made application for a suitable site.

12. British subjects shall be at liberty to deal in kind or in money, to sell their goods to whomsoever they please, to purchase native commodities from whomsoever they please, to hire transport of any kind, and to conduct in general their business transactions in conformity with local usage and without any vexatious restrictions or oppressive exactions whatever.

It being the duty of the Police and Local Authorities to afford efficient protection at all times to the persons and property of British subjects at the marts, and along the routes to the marts, China engages to arrange effective police measures at the marts and along the routes to the marts. On due fulfilment of these arrangements, Great Britain undertakes to withdraw the Trade Agents' guards at the marts and to station no troops in Tibet, so as to remove all cause for suspicion and disturbance among the inhabitants. The Chinese Authorities will not prevent the British Trade Agent from holding personal intercourse and correspondence with the Tibetan officers and people.

Tibetan subjects trading, travelling, or residing in India shall receive equal advantages to those accorded by this Regulation to British subjects in Tibet.

13. The present Regulations shall be in force for a period of ten years reckoned from the date of signature by the two Plenipotentiaries as well as by the Tibetan Delegate; but if no demand for revision be made by either side within six months after the end of the first ten years, then the Regulations shall remain in force for another ten years from the end of the first ten years; and so it shall be at the end of each successive ten years.

14. The English, Chinese, and Tibetan texts of the present Regulations have been carefully compared, and, in the event of any question arising as to the interpretation of these Regulations, the sense as expressed in the English text shall be held to be the correct sense.

15. The ratifications of the present Regulations under the hand of His Majesty the King of Great Britain and Ireland, and of His Majesty the Emperor of the Chinese Empire, respectively, shall be

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exchanged at London and Peking within six months from the date of signature.

In witness whereof the two Plenipotentiaries and the Tibetan Delegate have signed and sealed the present Regulations.

Done in quadruplicate at Calcutta this 20th day of April, in the year of our Lord 1908, corresponding with the Chinese date, the 20th day of the 3rd moon of the 34th year of Kuang-hsu.

E. C. WILTON,
British Commissioner.

CHANG YIN TANG,
Chinese Special Commissioner.

WANG CHUK GYALPO,
Tibetan Delegate.

APPENDIX VII

A NOTE ON ANGLO-BHUTANESE TREATIES

I. *The Treaty of Sinchula, 11 November 1865*¹

This Treaty concluded the Anglo-Bhutanese war of 1864-5. It contained ten Articles. Article I declared that perpetual peace and friendship would exist between Bhutan and the British. Article II provided for the British annexation of Bhutanese territory along the Bengal, Cooch Behar and Assam border. Article III obliged the Bhutanese to surrender British subjects they had until then been detaining. Article IV provided for a British subsidy to Bhutan not exceeding Rs. 50,000 p.a. Article V specified that the British Government could suspend payment of the subsidy if the Bhutanese failed to comply with the Treaty. Article VI obliged Bhutan to surrender to the British criminals who had fled from British justice to Bhutanese territory. Article VII laid down the mechanism whereby such extradition could be carried out. Article VIII, dealing with Bhutanese foreign relations, read as follows:

The Bhootan Government hereby agree to refer to the arbitration of the British Government all disputes with, or causes of complaint against, the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, and to abide by the decision of the British Government; and the British Government hereby engage to enquire into and settle such disputes and complaints in such manner as justice may require, and to insist on the observance of the decision by the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar.

Article IX provided for free trade between British India and Bhutan. Article X dealt with questions of ratification.

Only in Article VIII was there any mention of the foreign relations of Bhutan; and here the British acquired no control over Bhutanese relations either with Tibet or with the Chinese authorities in Tibet.

¹ C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, Vol. XIV, Calcutta, 1929, pp. 96-98.

2. *Treaty between His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Gilbert John Elliott-Murray-Kynynmound, P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.M.G., Earl of Minto, Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, and His Highness Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, K.C.I.E., Maharaja of Bhutan, 8 January 1910. (Ratified at Calcutta, 24 March 1910)*²

Whereas it is desirable to amend Articles IV and VIII of the Treaty concluded at Sinchula on the 11th day of November 1865, corresponding with the Bhutia year Shing Lang, 24th day of the 9th month, between the British Government and the Government of Bhutan, the undermentioned amendments are agreed to on the one part by Mr. C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, in virtue of full powers to that effect vested in him by the Right Honourable Sir Gilbert John Elliott-Murray-Kynynmound, P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.M.G., Earl of Minto, Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, and on the other part by His Highness Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, K.C.I.E., Maharaja of Bhutan.

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 fifty thousand rupees (Rs. 50,000) to one hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 100,000) with 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 complaint against the Maharajas 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 Maharajas named.’

Done in quadruplicate at Punaka, Bhutan, this eighth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten,

² *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.

A NOTE ON ANGLO-BHUTANESE TREATIES

corresponding with the Bhutia date, the 27th day of the 11th month of the Earth-Bird (Sa-ja) year.

C. A. BELL,
Political Officer
in Sikkim
8th January 1910.

Seal of Political
Officer in Sikkim

Seal of Dharma Raja
Seal of His Highness the
Maharaja of Bhutan
Seal of Tatsang Lama
Seal of Tongsa Penlop
Seal of Paro Penlop
Seal of Zhung Dronyer
Seal of Timbu Jongpen
Seal of Punaka Jongpen
Seal of Wangdu Potang
Jongpen
Seal of Taka Penlop
Seal of Deb Zimpon

MINTO,
Viceroy and Governor-General of India

This treaty was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Fort William on the twenty-fourth day of March, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and ten.

S. H. BUTLER,
Secretary to the Government of
India, Foreign Department.

Note. A second treaty was also signed at this time, which provided for the Bhutanese surrender to the Indian Government of fugitives from British justice.³

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

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