

COMMUNIST CHINA AND TIBET

THE FIRST DOZEN YEARS

by

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To Our Parents

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.	I
I. Background Developments and the Political Setting. . .	4
II. Tibet in Transition, 1951-1954	40
III. Tibet under Pressure, 1954-1959	78
IV. The Revolt and its Aftermath	117
V. Tibet Today and Tomorrow	161
VI. Epilogue: Peking-Lhasa-New Delhi	195
Selective Bibliography	211
Index	217

INTRODUCTION

The signing in Peking on May 27, 1951, of the 17-point Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet marked the end of Tibet's latest forty-year interlude of *de facto* independence and formalized an arrangement which, although in some respects differing from the earlier relationship between China and Tibet, in principle but reimposed the former's traditional suzerainty over the latter. Since then, the course and pattern of relations between the Central Government and the so-called Local Government of Tibet have undergone a series of drastic reappraisals and readjustments, culminating in the rebellion of 1959 and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India. These events, together with the recent degeneration of the Sino-Indian border dispute into a full-fledged military confrontation, have served to dramatize the importance of Tibet from the point of view of global strategy and world diplomacy. Long before that, however, indeed ever since Tibet's occupation by the Chinese Red armies and the region's effective submission to Peking's authority, the Tibetan question had already assumed the status of a major political problem and that for a variety of good reasons, internal as well as international.

From the vantage-point of domestic politics, the Tibetan issue was from the very start, and still is now, of prime significance on at least three counts. First, it provides a convenient test-case of Peking's ability to maintain its rule effectively in an area which historically has resisted, with undeniable success one may add, all but the most nominal exercise of jurisdiction on the part of Chinese régimes, be they Imperial, Republican or Nationalist. Second, potentially it represents the main stumbling-block in the way of the smooth operation of the system newly inaugurated in 1954 of regional autonomy within the constitutional structure of the Chinese People's Republic and

a key center of opposition to Mao's national minorities policy in practice. Finally, because of the peculiar manner in which Peking reasserted its claims in the region, i.e., by negotiation and public agreement, combined with the threat of use of armed force, rather than by outright military action as throughout the rest of the mainland, Tibet furnishes the outside world with a singular opportunity to study the record of Communist Chinese willingness to abide by the terms of a solemnly signed document, namely, the Sino-Tibetan pact of 1951 designed to spell out conditions for a local *modus vivendi*.

At the international level, Tibet's role today is equally, perhaps even more, crucial, since actual control of the plateau by China's armed forces supplies that country, as current developments on the Himalayan periphery have graphically demonstrated, with an excellent base for further expansion into South Asia, a possibility not lost on Indian and Nepalese statesmen, as well as on the leaders of other nations, neighbors of Communist China in this sector.¹ Likewise, such a position offers Peking a ready avenue for infiltration into this portion of the continent, in addition to giving it almost unlimited occasion to wage here a war of nerves, through propaganda, pressure, and minor territorial encroachments along the extensive and ill-defined border between its Tibetan marches and adjacent lands, should that prove to be the more attractive course of action.² Moreover, the recurring reports which have been circulating the last few years with regard to continued wide-spread strife and repeated uprisings inside Tibet against Chinese domination in themselves were bound to have serious adverse repercussions abroad, given the highly-charged atmosphere of South and South-East Asian politics, and still do so.

Each of the above elements taken alone, then, would be enough to vest the question of contemporary Sino-Tibetan relations with signal importance and mark it as more than ordinarily deserving of careful attention. Together, these factors conspire to render the matter

¹ For random samples of the official Indian attitude towards developments in Tibet in recent years, see, for example, *New York Times*, March 21, 1959, p. 1, and March 23, 1959, p. 2.

² For that reason most of the western world's preoccupation with Tibet between 1949 and 1951, and again now, was in terms of its strategic military value for the Chinese Communist army and the consequent threat to South Asia. Thus, *Manchester Guardian*, January 13, 1950; *New York Times*, March 9, 1950, p. 1; *Economist*, December 10, 1949, p. 102.

a vital one, not only for the parties directly involved, but for the bystanders too, both those close to the scene and otherwise, and, *pro tanto*, make it imperative to attempt as systematic an examination of all the controversial issues which enter into the problem as available evidence will allow. The present study represents just such an attempt.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND DEVELOPMENTS AND THE POLITICAL SETTING

Whereas the actual extent of Chinese control in Tibet varied markedly over the years, depending on the stability of the Central Government, its military power and other political factors, domestic as well as foreign, the thesis has generally been upheld that, in spite of all temporary fluctuations, *de jure* the status of Tibet was that of a component of the Chinese State, quasi-independent internally, but subject to Chinese suzerainty and represented by Peking in all matters of international diplomacy. True, such a legal formula is itself thoroughly ambiguous, and has led to chronic learned controversy as to its import, the end of which is nowhere in sight.¹ It is surely not the place here to review or try to unravel once again all the many technical arguments *pro* and *con* the definition advanced above. It is submitted, however, that the following set of propositions may perhaps best identify the constants in the disputed question and describe the conjuncture of events as it appeared in the beginning of 1949, i.e., before the advent of the Chinese Communists to power on the mainland and prior to the point where that prospect became a certainty.

First, barring a brief interval in 1910-1912 which saw Lhasa under Chinese military occupation, the Central Government of China has not in modern times exercised effective authority in Tibet, either directly or through the intermediary of the local Tibetan administration,² although the succeeding regimes in Peking have always

¹ For differing points of view on the legal and historical status of Tibet *vis-à-vis* China, see Tieh-Tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet* (New York, 1956); *idem*, "The Legal Position of Tibet," *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 394-404 (April, 1956); Charles H. Alexandrowicz-Alexander, "The Legal Position of Tibet," *ibid.*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 265-274 (April, 1954).

² International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law* (Geneva, 1959), pp. 75-99; *idem*, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic* (Geneva, 1960), pp. 139-165; His Holiness, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, *My Land and My People* (New York, 1962), pp. 73-79. As the Dalai Lama notes, on p. 78: "For the first twenty-two years of our independence,

claimed in the name of China to possess sovereign or suzerain rights over the Tibetan region and, throughout, were able to secure universal acquiescence, tacit or overt, in that contention. Second, during this period Tibetan authorities duly resisted every Chinese attempt to play an active part in the internal governance of Tibet, managed almost without exception completely to deny Peking the role which it thus sought, but failed to request and obtain either Chinese or international legal recognition of Tibet's *de facto* independence. Third, the world community, in the face of persistent Chinese assertions that Tibet was an integral part of the Chinese State and in the light of Lhasa's evident disinterest in acquiring formal international acknowledgment of Tibet's title to sovereign self-rule, felt, and quite properly so, that it was not called upon to pronounce itself on the matter. Consequently, foreign capitals ignored the issue or deliberately remained neutral and refused to commit themselves to the support of either side, thereby in law actually, if perhaps unwittingly, giving aid and comfort to the defenders of the historical past, the Chinese, against their opponents, the Tibetans, who had, in deed, overthrown the *status quo* yet without bothering to record that fact juridically.

In short, from every conceivable angle the situation remained an utterly confused one, which helps explain the perennial disagreement as to interpretation it engendered among students of the subject, and so could only be characterized as a transitional phase in Tibet's political progression. Ultimately, the nature of the relationship between China and Tibet would have had to be normalized and regularized regardless, that is: either the anachronistic official legal framework would have to be radically revised and, in the process, drastically modernized to reflect prevailing practice; or, the facts of the case would have to be brought into line with the legal fabric in which they were alleged to operate, but obviously did not since the two were in flagrant discrepancy, not to say flat contradiction. In specific terms, then, what is meant here is that eventually the native Tibetan administration would have publicly had to announce Tibet's

there were no Chinese officials of any kind in Tibet, but in 1934, after the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, a Chinese delegation came to Lhasa to present religious offerings. After presenting the offerings, the delegation remained in Lhasa on the grounds that it wanted to complete some talks on the Sino-Tibetan border which had been left unfinished. However, the position of these Chinese was exactly the same as those of the Nepalese and British, and later the Indian Missions which were also in Lhasa - and in 1949 even these remaining Chinese were expelled from the country."

independence from China and consummate that act by negotiating for its recognition in due form by an appropriate quorum of third States; or, conversely, the Chinese National Government would have had to make good its claim to sovereignty over Tibet by instituting effective control over the region. As it turned out, both solutions were tried, the former in 1949, the latter in 1951, though only the second succeeded.

Thus, in July, 1949, in order to divorce itself from the internecine struggle between the Communist and Nationalist factions in China proper, a contest in which the prospects for the latter group were rapidly growing dimmer, "foreseeing future complications, the Tibetan Government broke off diplomatic relations with China," and expelled the Nationalist mission in Lhasa from the country. Thereby, Tibet endeavored officially to underscore its independent position *vis-à-vis* China, although it still failed to initiate any concrete measures at this time to have that point recognized by the rest of the world, preferring instead to retire into even greater political isolation than usual. In these circumstances, the international community, again left unconsulted, maintained a discreet diplomatic silence, neither sanctioning nor endorsing Lhasa's actions, nor repudiating them. Likewise, on no occasion was this move by the Tibetan hierarchy accepted by the Chinese authorities, neither by the Communist régime nor its Kuomintang rival.

As far as the Chinese were concerned, therefore, the incident had no significance whatever and certainly was not seen by them as abrogating the sovereign rights that China claimed to possess over the Tibetan region. And, third States, at least those among them aware of these developments, continued to view the constitutional crisis in Sino-Tibetan relations as an unresolved problem steeped in legal uncertainty. No one, then, except the Tibetans, was, as of 1949, inclined fully to subscribe to the proposition that Tibet was an independent international personality and while, in principle, a strong presumption to that effect may well have been there and possibly lacked but a positive gesture originating from Lhasa and acknowledged by the outside world to translate it into a legal fact, because of Tibetan inertia or professed indifference to mundane pursuits the final step was taken only after a prolonged delay, when it was already too late. In short, the consequences of the 1949 developments were once again inconclusive.

With total victory on the mainland almost in sight, the Chinese

Communists soon turned their attention to the Tibetan question. Toward the end of 1949 and the beginning of 1950, a concerted propaganda campaign launched from Peking foreshadowed its preparations for an imminent solution of the problem, a war of words which unfolded along two parallel lines: 1) that Tibet was being infiltrated by foreign imperialist interests, that the so-called declaration of independence of 1949 had been inspired by British and American agents within the area, and that the Tibetans were in fact eager to, and should, take forceful measures to free themselves of these alien influences; and, 2) that the Central Government was determined to help "liberate" the territory in any case and to ensure its "reintegration" into the Chinese State and would proceed to do so forthwith, unilaterally if necessary.¹ Throughout, the Chinese promised that they would respect the Tibetan religion and repeatedly pledged themselves to grant the province autonomy "under the unified control of the Central People's Government."

The dual course of Peking's propaganda offensive, one of threat, the other of cajolery, but both with a single purpose in mind, namely, to achieve an easy "recovery" of Tibet, was markedly stepped up in the spring of 1950, when Chinese troops moved into the areas adjacent to the highland and proceeded there to install a so-called Provisional Government of Tibet formed around sundry exiled Tibetan elements hostile to the Dalai Lama's rule. However, even these plainly ominous preparations on the part of the Chinese still did not manage to convince the Tibetan authorities to undertake a constructive program aimed at strengthening the country's ability to counteract Peking's avowed plans. In fact, if anything, these developments only compounded the confusion already reigning in Lhasa. True, the religious life of the people was intensified during the emergency to boost national morale. More to the point, a long overdue effort was now made to expand and reform the obsolescent Tibetan army, none too successful an endeavor in view both of the lack of technical and organizational know-how and, reportedly, the wide-spread traditional resistance among the population to military service.² Yet, in spite of the magni-

¹ E.g., *Tägliche Rundschau*, October 26, 1950; Hsinhua News Agency, *Daily News Release*, January 26, 1950, p. 166; Chou En-lai's speech of September 30, 1950, *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (hereafter abbr. as *KCA*), 1950, p. 11024; also *KCA*, 1950, p. 11101, and *Facts on File*, 1950, pp. 35, 163.

² B. P. Gurevich, *Osvobozhdenie Tibeta* (Moscow, 1958), p. 163.

tude of the danger, this just about amounts to the sum total of the progress made to meet the dire peril.

The Chinese invasion of Tibet on October 7, 1950, put an end both to the fear-ridden vacillations and whatever optimistic hopes the Tibetan leadership still harbored. The Chinese troops kept up a steady advance and soon seized the key fortress of Chamdo protecting the strategic eastern province of Kham, thus breaking the back of the Tibetan army's resistance. In the process, they captured the influential Tibetan cabinet minister in charge of local defenses, *Kalon Ngaboo*, who shortly thereafter would be prevailed upon to act as the liaison man between the Communists and the Lhasa Government. These reverses at last provoked Lhasa into a flurry of activity. To start with, so as better to unite the nation in the face of the Chinese menace, the Dalai Lama was formally enthroned on November 17, 1950, two years prior to the scheduled date. Immediately, in the name of the new ruler, "a general amnesty was proclaimed, and every convict in prison in Tibet was given freedom,"¹ a step as much designed to honor the momentous occasion as to put an end to the bitter factional rivalries which had beset the interregnum by a grant of royal pardon to the numerous political opponents of the Regent's régime arrested on its orders.

Concurrently, in a last-minute venture into international diplomacy, the Tibetan government readied four delegations to visit Britain, the United States, India and Nepal to ask for help against the Chinese. These feelers met with a negative response, however, and so the missions never left the country. An appeal to the United Nations was tabled by the General Assembly *sine die*² and a deputation assigned to present Tibet's case before the world organization which had already reached Kalimpong remained there. The Tibetan mission in Delhi did establish contact with the Chinese ambassador to India and, for a while, engaged in desultory and fruitless talks which accomplished nothing since the Chinese envoy insisted that these negotiations ought to be pursued in Peking.

On the whole, such efforts as were then made abroad by the Tibetan

¹ The Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 83. See, too, the comments in B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

² "Tibet's Appeal to the United Nations Against Chinese Aggression," *United Nations Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 9, pp. 675-676 (December 15, 1950). As the Dalai Lama indicates in his memoirs, pp. 85-86: "The next grievous blow to us was the news that the General Assembly of the United Nations had decided not to consider the question of Tibet. This filled us with consternation."

officialdom to safeguard their nation's status proved sorely belated, half-hearted and highly ineffective. In great part, of course, this can be traced directly to Tibetan inexperience with diplomatic affairs. And, a good deal of the confusion must also be credited to the fact that the Tibetan hierarchy and Government were at the time reportedly deeply split between the high ecclesiastical representatives who favored coming to peaceful terms with the Chinese and the upper nobility which advocated utmost resistance. Nor, it should be noted, was the unsympathetic attitude of the international community particularly helpful or conducive to the advancement of the Tibetan cause and, in the long run, this manifest universal indifference only helped further weaken Tibet's bargaining position *vis-à-vis* Communist China.

Meantime, back in Lhasa, two other developments of note occurred. First, messengers arrived to the capital from Chamdo from *Kalon Ngaboo*, who was then in Chinese custody, bearing an account of what had befallen the Tibetan forces in Kham and asking the Government for permission to negotiate terms of peace. One of the emissaries soon returned east with the necessary authorization and, concurrently, four more senior officials were assigned as assistants to Ngaboo and dispatched to Peking via India. Defeated in the field and rebuffed by the outside world the Tibetan leadership now resigned itself to dealing directly with the Chinese over a conference table, hoping that Peking's conditions might be reasonable, but, in any event, hardly in a position to reject them even if they should prove not to be, which in the end is exactly what happened.

Second, a hastily convened emergency session of the National Assembly recommended that the Dalai Lama move from Lhasa to a safer place. After some hesitation, the latter finally decided, allegedly under pressure from the local nobility and against the advice of the ecclesiastical branch of the hierarchy, to seek refuge with his personal entourage and a staff of leading State officials at a monastery near Yatung, located within an easy day's flight from the Indian frontier, and set out for that destination on December 19. Before leaving, the Dalai Lama appointed two Prime Ministers, a high monk official, Losan Tashi, and "a veteran and experienced lay administrator," Lukhangwa, gave them full authority and made them jointly responsible in his absence for all affairs of State, with the need to refer to him only "matters of the very highest importance."¹ At Yatung

¹ The Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

itself, provisional Government offices were set up without delay and a regular courier contact was established with Lhasa to keep the Dalai Lama and his advisors informed of the latest events and, in turn, to allow them to maintain some supervision over the officials who stayed behind.¹

While all this was going on and the Tibetan envoys were travelling to Peking and even after formal discussions were initiated there on April 29, 1951, the main bulk of the Chinese expeditionary corps continued to make progress and eventually approached within 250 miles of Lhasa, where it paused in expectation of the results of the diplomatic conference then in session. Finally, on May 27, 1951, Radio Peking gleefully announced that the "peaceful liberation" of Tibet had been accomplished by virtue of an agreement signed that day.

Thus, by a judicious combination of threats, limited use of armed force, skillful pressure and propaganda, and divisive techniques aimed at confusing and disrupting the united front of Tibetan resistance, Peking in short order succeeded in paving the way for the imposition of its influence over Tibet by means other than prolonged warfare and costly conquest. On the other hand, the very choice of methods and the eventual conclusion of the 1951 pact did serve to provide Tibet with a quasi-constitutional charter which officially recognized its special status vastly different, in principle, from that of the other border regions where the Communists had of late reinstated Chinese control by outright military occupation.

Hence, the 17-point so-called Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet originally represented, and, it may be argued, still represents in theory, the contractual basis for present-day Chinese rule in the region and the framework for Tibet's place within the administrative fabric of the Chinese People's Republic. As a consequence, its substance assumes major importance and requires detailed analysis if one is to understand the evolution of Sino-Tibetan relations from 1951 until today.² In so doing, attention should be

¹ H. Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet* (London, 1953), tr. from the German by R. Graves, p. 283.

² For English text of the 1951 agreement, see *People's China*, Vol. 3, No. 12, Supplement, pp. 3-5; Russian text in *Pravda*, May 29, 1951. There were, at the time, persistent rumors that in addition to the 17 published points the agreement also contained 60 secret clauses, see W. Levi, "Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 3 (January, 1954). This has since been proven untrue.

focused on both aspects of the document, its formal contents as well as the complex of informal forces which contributed to the outcome of the talks as embodied in the text of the treaty: 1) the *de facto* political conditions surrounding the negotiations and decisively molding the final contours of the accord; and, 2) the actual provisions of the agreement and their legal significance.

As to the former, even a quick glance at the various documents accompanying the 1951 Sino-Tibetan treaty makes it quite evident that the Central Government did not really conceive of it as an agreement born of free negotiations between equal parties, particularly so with respect to those clauses designed to regulate matters touching upon Tibet's relations with third States. Here, spokesmen for the Chinese side simply dictated that Lhasa "resolutely break away from imperialist influences and actively help the People's Liberation Army march into Tibet; that all external affairs be restored to the Central People's Government for centralized handling; and that the existing Tibetan troops be reorganized step by step into the People's Liberation Army."¹ These conditions seem to have been couched throughout in the form of a unilateral demand by the Chinese delegation, a *sine qua non* over which there would be, and apparently was, no negotiated compromise.²

Aside from the background factor of China's military preponderance in the field which clearly put the Chinese contingent at the conference table in a position to have its way nearly at will on such issues on which it chose to take an intransigent stand, a good deal of the Chinese success in these transactions must also be credited to their own political skill in the manipulation of the proceedings. That, in turn, owes much to the fact that the Chinese had had the foresight to arrange things so that they were in effect dealing not with a single, united Tibetan delegation, but with three distinct Tibetan factions, more or less at odds with each other, thereby providing the Chinese with plenty of room for diplomatic maneuvering and political bargaining.

Of this opportunity, the Chinese fully availed themselves, with results that they must have found gratifying. Indeed, one is almost tempted to admit that the advantageous situation which the Chinese had thus taken pains to engineer well in advance could not have

¹ *Vide*, speech by Li Wei-han, *People's China*, Vol. 3, No. 12, Suppl., p. 8.

² Cf., W. Levi, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

culminated otherwise, given a context in which, facing the monolithic Chinese delegation, there were: a 6-man mission come directly from the Dalai Lama; a 15-man party, headed by the Tibetan representative, *Kalon Ngaboo*, recruited from among Tibetan dignitaries and officials in the eastern territories occupied by the Chinese back in October 1950, some of them only recently released from Chinese military custody, officially authorized by the Dalai Lama to speak in his name, but neither chosen by him nor actually functioning under his control and, it would seem, constituted from Tibetans by then already effectively suborned by their Chinese "hosts"; and, lastly, a deputation from the Red-sponsored so-called Provisional People's Government for the Autonomous Area of Tibet with its temporary headquarters in Tsinghai province, composed of renegade Tibetans and various exiled elements opposed to the Lhasa regime.¹ In these conditions, the end product of the discussions was bound to benefit the Chinese, regardless even perhaps of such other pressures as they could always bring to bear, if need be, on the talks to ensure favorable results.

On the other hand, as regards the question of Tibet's future domestic order, the Chinese attitude appeared much more flexible, at least outwardly, but even here it is evident that, *ultima ratio*, the views of the Central Government prevailed whenever it chose to press them. Peking's chief delegate to the meetings conceded as much when he declared that

the delegates with full powers of the Central People's Government positively put forward a series of proposals in accordance with the policy towards nationalities of the Central People's Government and with the actual conditions in the Tibetan region. At the same time, they have listened to and adopted as many as possible of the constructive opinions of the delegates with full powers of the Tibetan Local Government.²

Although the same spokesman then asserted that, "therefore, the practical needs of both the Tibetan people and the Tibetan Local Government have been taken into consideration," by and large the Central Government's representatives seem to have obtained satisfaction for all of Peking's basic demands. As a result, the final treaty conveyed

¹ B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167. According to this source, the 15-man party arrived in Peking on April 22, the contingent of 6, traveling via India and Hongkong reached the capital on April 26, the Panchen Lama's group came the next day. Final negotiations started on April 29, and ended on May 21, 1951. See, too, *Facts on File*, 1951, p. 171.

² Speech by Li Wei-han, *loc. cit.*

the impression more of a unilateral grant or "generous" concession by the Chinese to a vassal or subject minority than of a mutually beneficial international accord voluntarily contracted by the signatory parties.

This, incidentally, was also corroborated by Tibetan accounts of what happened in Peking which later became available. According to these: when the talks first opened, the Chinese delegation presented its Tibetan counterpart with a ready-made draft treaty consisting of 10 articles; since much of it proved unacceptable to the Tibetans, some hard bargaining ensued, following which the Chinese withdrew the proposed agreement and re-worked it, incorporating a few of the points raised by the Tibetans; after that they submitted to the conference a revised text comprising 17 clauses, accompanied by an ultimatum to the effect that the Tibetan side could either sign the document as it stood, without further alterations or suggestions, or face the consequences. Placed in an untenable position, the Tibetans complied.

The second point to be considered concerns the substantive nature of the 1951 treaty. A resumé of its official contents will therefore be necessary. To begin with, on matters of international import it was agreed (Art. 1) that the Tibetan people would undertake forthwith "to unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet." Furthermore, the Local Government of Tibet obligated itself (Art. 2) "actively to assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defense." Next, it was envisaged (Art. 8) that "Tibetan troops shall be reorganized by stages into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defense forces of the People's Republic of China." Finally, the document stipulated (Art. 14) that "the Central People's Government shall control the centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet; and there will be peaceful coexistence with neighboring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading regulations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and sovereignty."

The net effect of the above formulas amounted, of course, to a total negation of whatever status Tibet may have formerly had on the diplomatic arena. If successfully enforced, these clauses would automatically breathe life into China's traditional, but as of late only theoretical, claim to sovereignty over Tibet which, in practice,

essentially centered on overt recognition of its exclusive right to represent Tibet in the international forum. To that extent, then, it was no more than a restatement and modern reaffirmation of the age-old Chinese thesis as to the constitutional character of the relationship between Peking and Lhasa, as conceived by the former, needless to say, albeit now enunciated in a language appreciably modified in order better to reflect the ideological outlook of the latest pretender to the role of suzerain.

Concerning the local domestic scene, the 1951 agreement was, at one and the same time, both more explicit and more ambiguous than in its sections devoted primarily to foreign affairs problems. Thus, Art. 3 promised that, "in accordance with the policy toward nationalities laid down in the *Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*, the Tibetan people have the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government." Furthermore, the very next clause affirmed that "the central authorities also will not alter the established status, functions and power of the Dalai Lama. Officials of various ranks shall hold office as usual." In addition, Art. 7 stipulated that "the policy of freedom of religious belief laid down in the *Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference* shall be carried out. The religious beliefs, customs and habits of the Tibetan people shall be respected and Lama monasteries shall be protected. The central authorities will not effect a change in the income of the monasteries." Finally, Art. 13 pledged that "the People's Liberation Army entering Tibet shall abide by all the above-mentioned policies and shall also be fair in all buying and selling and shall not arbitrarily take a single needle or thread from the people."

On the other hand, however, these sweeping promises generally to maintain the existing order in the social, political and economic fabric of the Tibetan region were at once qualified, either directly or tacitly, by other provisions of the same document. In the first place, Art. 5 envisaged the early restoration within his birthright of the Panchen Lama who had thrown in his lot with the Chinese as a historical consequence of his predecessor's flight from Tibet and the usurpation of his domain by the Dalai Lama's Government, which was now forced to agree that "the established status, functions and powers of the Panchen Ngoertehni shall be maintained." And, Art. 6 spelled out in detail that "by the established status, functions and powers of

the Dalai Lama and of the Panchen Ngoertehni" were "meant the status, functions and powers of the 13th Dalai Lama and of the 9th Panchen Ngoertehni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other," i.e., when the two acted as official leaders of the Lamaist Church.

Along similar lines, the treaty foresaw that "the spoken and written language and school education of the Tibetan nationality shall be developed step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet" (Art. 9). Likewise, "Tibetan agriculture, livestock raising, industry and commerce" were to be encouraged and "the people's livelihood . . . improved step by step in accordance with the actual conditions in Tibet" (Art. 10). All this, however, was ostensibly subject to the crucial blanket reservation to the effect that, "in matters related to various reforms in Tibet, there will be no compulsion on the part of the central authorities. The Local Government of Tibet should carry out reforms of its own accord, and when the people raise demands for reform, they shall be settled by means of consultation with the leading personnel of Tibet" (Art. 11).

As regards specifically prospective revisions in the institutional pattern of Tibetan internal administration and possible changes in the local personnel, Art. 12 declared that, "in so far as former pro-imperialist and pro-Kuomintang officials resolutely sever relations with imperialism and the Kuomintang and do not engage in sabotage or resistance, they may continue to hold office irrespective of their past." Largely offsetting this concession, however, was the companion recognition that, "in order to ensure the implementation of this agreement, the Central People's Government shall set up a military and administrative committee and a military area headquarters in Tibet, and apart from the personnel sent there by the Central People's Government shall absorb as many local Tibetan personnel as possible to take part in the work." This "local Tibetan personnel taking part in the military and administrative committee may include patriotic elements from the Local Government of Tibet, various districts and leading monasteries." The candidates were to be selected from a roster "drawn up after consultation between the representatives designated by the Central People's Government and the various quarters concerned, and . . . submitted to the Central People's Government for appointment."

The funds required by the military and administrative committee,

the military headquarters and the People's Liberation Army stationed in Tibet had to be furnished by the Central People's Government (Art. 16). Otherwise, the so-called Local Government of Tibet, for its part, was to assist the People's Liberation Army in the purchase and transport of food and fodder and other daily necessities, apparently in order to ensure the cooperation of the native populace in the vital operation of supplying and maintaining the troops.

Such was the charter granted Tibet, and its strengths and weaknesses are readily apparent. In principle, the Chinese thereby undertook to retain and leave undisturbed all the more important local institutions and organs of authority; but, as against that, they also reserved for themselves sufficient formal means to legitimize any possible future endeavor on their part to carry out a thorough socio-political reorganization of the country. Hence, even had the Chinese been strictly held thereafter to the letter of the 1951 treaty, the Central Government would still have found its freedom of action in the execution of its blueprints restricted only to a negligible degree, if it were truly determined to institute local reforms, thanks to the equivocal wording of most of the document's propositions. The vagueness of much of the text's phraseology, intentional no doubt, becomes particularly striking in the formulation of the clauses addressed to the prospective mechanism for introducing changes in the local domestic system, a political weapon the cardinal importance of which a revolutionary leadership such as Mao's cannot possibly have overlooked.

By the same token, it should be noted, too, that the sundry references to the basic principles of the Communist regime's national-minorities policies, mention of which constantly recurs in the body of the 1951 accord, as well as in the various speeches and declarations accompanying the agreement's signature, helped to confuse rather than clarify the issue of Tibet's projected status. Indeed, at the time of the pact's negotiation and conclusion no definite constitutional solution of the political problem of non-Han elements within China had as yet been enunciated by the Communist Party beyond certain very general programmatic pronouncements. Mao Tse-tung's incidental statements on the subject made on various earlier occasions had, by and large, consisted of broad declarations as to doctrinal tenets and conceptual postulates, with little material substance to help ascertain what one could expect actual practice here to amount to in the event

of a Communist accession to power.¹ Similarly, the Common Programme so often cited in the Sino-Tibetan agreement as the supposed source for precise principles regulating Tibet's future place and role in the operative structure of the C.P.R. at best furnishes, in so far as the question of national minorities is concerned, rudimentary policy guide-lines rather than concrete working rules.²

Apart from these theoretical promises, therefore, there was neither actual precedent nor effective definition as of the date the Tibetans agreed to "reintegrate" their land with the remainder of China under Peking's authority to indicate to them what really was subsumed under the slogan of national regional autonomy which they were henceforward scheduled to enjoy. What the latter did connote was that now such modifications in the age-old matrix of Tibetan institutions and customs as the 1951 document itself tentatively proposed lay closely in the offing, though without clarifying the extent and dimensions of this projected plan for the area's "modernization."

Thus, in the final analysis, the problem of Tibet's subsequent history and its *de facto* adaptation to a new *de jure* status as a unit endowed with "national regional autonomy" within the public framework of the Chinese Communist polity resolves itself into an evaluation of: 1) the course of evolution since 1951 of the effective functions and practical significance of the traditional agencies of Tibetan local administration; and, 2) the record of institutional modifications and other innovations effected in the erstwhile socio-political structure of the Tibetan community as a result of the imposition by Peking of its controls over the highland and the implementation there of China's new constitutionalism – in the sphere both of national political organization and economic development.

Before proceeding with such an assessment, one last point needs to be made in connection with the 1951 Sino-Tibetan treaty and some of the still disputed circumstances surrounding its conclusion. At issue here is the doubt recently cast on the original validity of that document in a series of charges proffered by Tibetan leaders in exile on the grounds of flagrant violation by the Chinese of procedural proprieties at the time of its signature. Briefly, the nature of the accusations is as follows.

¹ E.g., in his work entitled "On Coalition Government."

² For official text in English, see *The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese PPCC* (Peking, 1949); text in Russian in E. F. Kovalev (ed.), *Zakonodatelnye akty Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki* (Moscow, 1952), pp. 50–65. Articles 50–53 pertain to the problem of national minorities.

The closing article of the agreement provided that it would enter into force immediately upon signature and application of seals, which the Chinese obviously assumed would take place concurrently. According to the version circulated today in Tibetan refugee circles, however, when it came to affixing the official seals on the document, it was discovered that the Tibetan delegation did not have in its possession the master seal of the Dalai Lama's Government. Only one group in the Tibetan deputation could have actually been entrusted with it: the 6-man mission dispatched directly from Central Tibet via India and Hongkong. It was physically impossible for *Kalon* Ngaboo's party to have had it since all communications between Lhasa and Chamdo whence he and his companions travelled to Peking had been severed earlier by the Chinese advance and it was altogether improbable that such a precious item should have been forwarded to him by messenger in these conditions.

In other words, then, it may safely be surmised that the Lhasan authorities had deliberately sent a delegation to Peking with powers to negotiate an agreement and perhaps even sign it, but only subject to its subsequent ratification by the Tibetan Government in the guise of the ceremony of stamping it with the Dalai Lama's official seal. In part, this seems to have been dictated by a desire for maximum precaution and a fear, fully justified as it turned out, that the Tibetan delegation in Peking might under pressure bind its Government to more than the latter was willing to accept. In part, the gesture represented a bid for more time, with the hope that something would transpire in the interim to improve Tibetan prospects and allow Lhasa to bargain with China concerning its fate from a less vulnerable and adverse position. Whatever the reasons, the technique represented a common and more or less legitimate diplomatic subterfuge that could not, in itself, be regarded as too reprehensible. To the extent that it did convey a dubious impression, the fault rested with the failure of the Tibetan emissaries to make clear from the start how far their powers extended and dispel the evident assumption of the Chinese side that it was dealing with a deputation fully competent to conclude on the spot a valid agreement and its expectations to that effect.

When this state of affairs became known to them, so the story goes, the irate Chinese proceeded to fabricate a counterfeit seal which they produced in short order and browbeat the Tibetan delegation into

using on the document in lieu of the genuine article.¹ The Tibetans apparently went along with the act without undue resistance precisely because they privately questioned the validity of the whole proceedings and so presumably did not believe themselves legally bound by the end results. True, now the whole question may well hold academic interest only, since eventually the Dalai Lama did confirm the agreement by giving it practical effect, duly abided by its provisions and demanded that the Chinese do as much. Nevertheless, if the above account is accurate, it does show that from the very first Tibetan-Communist Chinese relations started out on the wrong footing, with both parties giving proof of bad faith at what was perhaps a decisive moment in the long history of contacts between the two countries. Of the two, the Chinese Communist régime behaved by far the worse in its casual disregard for the rules of proper diplomatic behaviour, but the Tibetan authorities carry their own share of responsibility in this matter; technically speaking, neither side was blameless, though, when all is said and done, surely the Tibetans were much more so than the Chinese, as it were.²

¹ The Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 88; F. Moraes, *The Revolt in Tibet* (New York, 1960), p. 68. The importance of the seal is quite easily explained. Had the treaty been signed without the official seal being affixed to it, it would have been quite obvious to anyone acquainted with Tibetan usage and to every Tibetan that the Dalai Lama had not yet given his final consent to the document and, until he did so, the Chinese remained enemies. With a seal on the treaty, even a spurious one, the agreement immediately went into effect as far as the uninformed public was concerned and the population therefore had to treat the newcomers quite differently. Hopefully, any subterfuge would not become known until the Chinese no longer had to fear the wrath of the Tibetans they had tricked. As it turned out, the claim that a hoax had been perpetrated did not leak out until after the Dalai Lama's flight to India and today it is altogether impossible to verify the truth of the matter. The story circulated by the Tibetans is not *per se* incredible, but much doubt is cast upon it by the fact that for almost a decade not even a rumor was heard on this subject, and then all at once everything came to light so opportunely. For a sceptic, the whole thing smacks too much of a convenient discovery reeking of the wisdom of hindsight.

The Dalai Lama also makes the point, p. 5, that "our government never ratified the agreement which was forced on us." Technically speaking, there was no need for such ratification, since the text of the treaty made no provision for it. In international law, the agreement was certainly valid as it stood, though in Tibetan constitutional law it may have been quite otherwise, without thereby affecting in any way, however, China's rights secured under the document.

² According to F. Moraes, *op. cit.*, p. 69, the validity of the treaty may also be questioned by virtue of the fact that "the Dalai Lama did not accept the agreement until after the vanguard units of the People's Liberation Army arrived in Lhasa on September 9, 1951, and the main body of the army was on the outskirts of the capital," claiming that a copy of the document was not submitted to the Dalai Lama until that time and even then under pressure of force and that his approval was "not only obtained under duress but enforced by chicanery."

This is controverted by facts. The Dalai Lama himself admits in his memoirs, p. 88, that he learned of the terms of the agreement in a broadcast over Radio Peking while he

Until fairly recently, the Chinese Communist pledge to preserve intact the principal institutions and customs of the native Tibetan administration was to a considerable extent honored by the Central Government, at least formally, although piecemeal amendments, some rather significant, were in fact introduced into the established system. In order properly to evaluate these changes, it will be necessary to examine the structure of the Tibetan organs of authority as they functioned in 1951 and their subsequent evolution, at both levels of operation: 1) the top rungs of the hierarchy, namely, the Dalai Lama's court and his Government; and, 2) the lower echelons of administration, the organs of local rule.

In modern times, the undisputed head of the Tibetan polity has been the Dalai Lama who to his followers-subjects was both a god and an absolute monarch within his territorial domain. Tibet's administration was a theocracy, and the Dalai Lama combined in his own person the full authority of both the ecclesiastical and the secular branches of government. As God-king he was, at one and the same time, the highest officer of the Church and lay ruler of the country. In the latter capacity, despite the existence of a so-called Cabinet, "owing to the appointing authority of the Dalai Lama the real power and responsibility for the high direction of the executive rests with him."¹ In principle, then, the Dalai Lama stood supreme in every sphere, providing, of course, he so chose to exercise his innate rights and possessed the necessary ability to that end, which historically has not always been the case. The Dalai Lama's unique position as paramount head of a hierarchy traditionally dominated by the official Lama Church was not (at least until very recently) challenged directly by the Chinese Communist régime; theoretically, therefore, literal adherence by Peking to the terms of the 1951 agreement would have assured the Dalai Lama of continued unlimited power, spiritual as well as temporal,² over all internal affairs of his terrestrial realm.

was still at Yatung, out of reach of any Chinese and therefore free to reject it at once. He again had an opportunity to do so when he met Chang Ching-Wu alone at Yatung, without fear of reprisal. On neither occasion was the attempt made, so that the charge of duress and chicanery fails. By the time the God-king had returned to Lhasa he was fully familiarized with the contents of the treaty signed in his name and by his behavior had already indicated tacit approval of its provisions.

¹ R. Rahul, "The Government of Tibet 1912-1933," *International Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 174 (October, 1962).

² As a distinct mark of the Dalai Lama's temporal authority he is given the unique title of official of the first rank.

To preserve the Dalai Lama's isolation from things mundane and maintain his divine status as the foremost living embodiment of Buddha, a special court provided for all his needs and saw to his personal affairs and private properties. This personal retinue, composed exclusively of high clerical figures in keeping with the monarch's exalted religious role, was headed by the Lord Chamberlain (*Chi-Ch'ub Khen-Po*) who held the highest rank in the regular ecclesiastical administrative hierarchy. To assist him there were three lesser clerical aides (*Khen-Pos*), monk officials of higher than fourth rank, who, as Household Comptroller Abbot, Chief Chaplain, and Chief Cup-Bearer were in charge, respectively, of their ruler's requirements with respect to daily living, religious ceremonials, and food.¹ The inner circles of Dalai Lama XIV also included his two preceptors, with a number of junior assistants, responsible for the monarch's religious instruction, and the ex-Regent. A private secretariat completed the Dalai Lama's immediate entourage.

Access to the God-king was traditionally limited to these individuals (a situation later modified at the insistence of the Chinese authorities), and a special office was maintained at the Potala palace to ensure liaison with the government proper and, through it, with the lower ranks of the bureaucracy. In charge of it was the Grand Steward, a high Lama dignitary assisted by an exclusively clerical staff, whose main function was to transmit to all agencies and persons concerned the wishes and commands emanating from the throne. In purely secular matters this meant, as a rule, communicating the Dalai Lama's desires to the chief lay body of Tibet, the Cabinet, also known as *Kashag* (*Ka-Sha*) or Council of *Kalons*.

The Grand Steward sometimes had a counter-part in the secular apparatus in the figure of the *Silon* or Prime Minister, an institution of recent origin and with a chequered history. The post dates back to 1912 when the previous ruler, Dalai Lama XIII, upon his return from exile in India, appointed the three senior members of his Cabinet Great Ministers. In 1926, the position of Prime Minister was created instead and the Dalai Lama appointed his eldest brother's son to this high office, which the latter occupied until 1940. It has been written of the post that, nominally, "the Prime Minister, Tibet's highest

¹ Tsung-Lien Shen and Shen-Chi Liu, *Tibet and the Tibetans* (Stanford, 1953), p. 104. These four officials were inseparable from the Dalai Lama's person and accompanied him wherever he went. "Collectively, the four men are known as the Khen-Pos of the Rear."

lay civil official, ranks above the Ministers of the Council and is the sole intermediary between them and the head of the State. From the Ministers he receives reports on all matters dealt with by them; he submits them, with his opinion, to the Dalai Lama for orders. He is also in charge of all criminal cases which the Dalai Lama normally never handles,"¹ although nothing could prevent the latter from doing so if he should want to.²

Despite the imposing title, however, "during the lifetime of Dalai Lama XIII," the Prime Minister "had little influence in state affairs" and "after the death of His Holiness [in 1933] the office of the Prime Minister shrank to the position of a mere name, the Ministers taking to dealing directly with the Regent as before 1893."³ Moreover, since the Regent was a monk and had to be surrounded by churchmen, between 1934 and 1940 the Prime Minister had to share his duties with a fourth rank monk cadre official appointed by the Regent, ostensibly as an assistant, but in reality behaving as an equal. Finally, in 1940, due to ill-feeling between the Regent and the *Silon*,⁴ the latter was forced to resign and the Lesser Assembly, at the urging of the Regent, abolished the rank and for the remaining length of the Dalai Lama's infancy vested full spiritual and temporal powers in the acting Regent. In 1950, on the eve of his departure from Lhasa to Yatung, the newly enthroned Dalai Lama XIV resurrected the post of Prime Minister and entrusted it jointly to a veteran lay administrator, Lukhangwa, and a high monk official, Lobsang Tashi, vesting them with full authority in the secular sphere. Both were subsequently to be dismissed under pressure from the Chinese; they were not replaced and, with their forced resignation, the institution of Prime Minister came to an end, at least for the duration of Communist Chinese ascendancy in Tibet.

One step below the *Silon*, when that post was occupied, stood the members of the Cabinet, or *Kashag*, a much older institution than that of Prime Minister and the only regular organ resembling to some extent what the rest of the world generally regards as a modern-like

¹ R. Rahul, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

² As head of state, the Dalai Lama also had the right to dispense pardon and proclaim amnesties.

³ R. Rahul, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁴ *Ibid.* Some of the friction apparently arose from the fact that in rank the *Silon* was equal to the Regent, both being officials of the second class, which displeased the Regent and led him to demand the liquidation of the post of *Silon* as such.

instrumentality of national government. It originally consisted of four ministers, the leader of which always belonged to the clerical branch and was accordingly known as *Kalon* Lama, and the others, designated simply as *Kalons* or *Shapas*, invariably to the secular one. They held the rank of officials of the third class. Later, the composition of the Council was expanded to six, two monks and four lay administrators, the most prominent figure still being one of the former, and stayed that way until the *Kashag* as such was liquidated in the wake of the 1959 uprising against the Chinese and the consequent downfall of the Dalai Lama's rule.

The historical functions of the Cabinet, an essentially administrative rather than executive body, were broadly defined (in the special 18th Century law creating it) as follows: the foremost duty of a *Kalon* is absolute loyalty and obedience to the Dalai Lama; all the most important criminal and civil cases are judged by the Cabinet¹; *Kashag* members are responsible for increasing the Army's military might and efficiency; the ministers are strictly bound to observe the rules of economy in their financial expenditures, but are not permitted to diminish the funds earmarked for the maintenance of monasteries; quarrels between ministers and other highly placed individuals are settled according to the procedures of Church law; *Kalons* are obligated to ensure systematic control over the activities of subordinate agencies and functionaries; disputes between ordinary monks and average citizens are heard and decided by ministers according to law and custom.²

As has already been noted, in principle, "owing to the appointing authority of the Dalai Lama the real power and responsibility for the high direction of the executive rests entirely with him, not the Council. He exercises his executive powers and appoints and dismisses all principal officers through the Council. Thus, the Council, the highest decision-making authority in the country, is jointly responsible to him only for the general policy of the Government."³ Directly beneath the Council were two bodies with important secretarial functions – the recruiting office of the clerical arm (*Yiktsang*) and its secular counterpart, the finance department or Accounting Office. Together,

¹ With the proviso that in exceptional cases a legal decision might be rendered by the Dalai Lama himself.

² G. M. Valiakhmetov, *Organy vlasti i upravleniya Tibeta* (Moscow, 1958), pp. 30–31.

³ R. Rahul, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

the Cabinet and these two bureaus formed the core of the country's national administration.

Traditionally, the religious department consisted of four grand secretaries (all monk officers of the fourth rank) who were, theoretically, subordinate to the *Kashag* and on a par with the four lay finance officers. In ordinary practice, however, because of the exalted position of the Church and its representatives, the former could, and often did, go over the heads of the *Kalons* to deal directly with someone in the Dalai Lama's immediate entourage. During the late Regency, in particular, when the influence of the Church reached its apex, the recruiting office seems to have taken orders directly from the Regent and to all purposes, it would appear, functioned independently of and on an equal footing with the Cabinet itself and even the *Silon*. A like situation obtained at the beginning of the reign of Dalai Lama XIV for, reportedly, the Lord Chamberlain "who was in charge of the Potala was the counterpart of the *silons* and acted as an intermediary between the *Yiktsang* and the Dalai Lama."¹ This unusual situation should perhaps be credited to the fact that the unduly dominant position of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, secured during the long Regency, had then not as yet been overcome and, actually, persisted because of the emergency political conditions in the land arising from the conflict with China. On the other hand, it may have also reflected a desire on the part of the new Dalai Lama to maintain close control over the key body in the country's ecclesiastical administrative organization, an aim readily achieved in this manner since the monarch's third elder brother, Lobsang Samten, served as his Lord Chamberlain.

To the jurisdiction of the four grand secretaries belonged such questions as drawing up and communicating to their proper destination various documents setting forth the decisions of the *Kashag*, drafting sundry legislative acts in the name of the Dalai Lama, submitting to the Dalai Lama for his personal confirmation appointments and transfers of clerical officials. The secretariat was also responsible for the administration of temples and sacred places, except the three great monasteries of Drepung, Sera, and Ganden, which enjoyed the privilege of self-management. The *Yiktsang* held the Dalai Lama's seal which had to be affixed to all documents of importance. But, it drew its main prestige from the fact that it was the office of appointment of monks to the higher rungs of the administrative ladder

¹ F. Moraes, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

where they shared power with the lay nobility and of recruitment, training and upkeep of the whole clerical staff of the ecclesiastical court, including the special academy for the preparation of candidates for the clerical arm of the civil service.

The latter was an unique and important feature of the Tibetan system and was the logical result of the concept of equal distribution of governmental functions between the Church and the lay nobility at every level of authority. The Church thus had to provide its own staff of civil administrators which it did through an extensive program of selection and education of young Tibetans who, upon graduation, formed a sect of secular monks (*Tse-Drungs*). Traditionally numbering 175, they formed (together with the recently graduated students of the school who remained on probation for a number of years in the capacity of candidates) the so-called ecclesiastical court (*Tse-Kor*). From this pool all appointments were made to the regular posts reserved for the ecclesiastical half of the Tibetan government; and, actually, despite the understanding that parity was to be maintained between monk and lay civil cadre, given the preferential treatment normally accorded the Church in Tibetan life, *Tse-Drungs* generally held nearly 60 per cent of all public offices. Furthermore, again because of Tibet's fundamentally theocratic form of rule, these clerical magistrates occupied all functions intimately connected with the Dalai Lama's person, by definition the most influential ones, needless to say, and historically have been very close to the Tibetan throne.¹

Similarly, the secular body of the finance department (*Tsekang*) was composed of four officials of the fourth rank (*Tsepons*), appointed by the Dalai Lama from amongst laymen; they were assisted by a secretarial personnel of accountants-auditors, archivists and clerks. The finance office fulfilled primarily the task of auditing revenue and expenditure from the public treasury and of checking on the work of subordinate agencies engaged in the collection of taxes in kind. To it was also attached a school in which children of the nobility aspiring to careers in the lay officialdom were given training. In cases of personnel transfer, the finance office furnished the Cabinet with the necessary data on aspirants for the vacant positions. As opposed to its religious counterpart, this lay bureau was directly subordinate,

¹ The close relationship between the throne and the Lama court found official expression in the ritual of the daily morning tea attended by all the members of the court and the Dalai Lama.

in fact as well as theory, to the Cabinet and operated under its immediate supervision.

In addition to these two main organs associated with the Council of Ministers, the secretariat and the accounting bureau, more than twenty lesser agencies functioned under the Cabinet in the capital. Thus, the duty of two special officials attached to the finance department was to deliver sentence in criminal proceedings against individuals directly subordinate to that office. Directly below the *Kashag* there was also a separate judicial body for the trial of particularly complex or important criminal cases, headed by two magistrates of the fifth rank (chief justices). A number of other bureaus, both old and new, staffed equally by clerical and lay officials and each, as a rule, under two or three chairmen, were entrusted with considerable powers in the field of agriculture, tea and salt taxation, post and telegraphs, defense, the army, supply, and personnel service. In 1926, Dalai Lama XIII had set up a Foreign Office (a namesake had existed in 1909-1914), mainly in order to regulate and conduct expanding official foreign business, primarily with the Mongols and the Nepalese. In 1951, invoking the terms of the Sino-Tibetan agreement, the Chinese demanded and obtained its dissolution.

Finally, there was an institution of an essentially deliberative nature, the so-called Parliament or Assembly which could be convoked in three forms. At its smallest, it met as the Lesser Assembly composed of the eight officials of the Yiktsang and Tsekang, together with other high dignitaries and representatives of the three great monasteries near Lhasa, about twenty persons all told. In turn, "this nucleus assembly could convene a larger body of about thirty members to consider specific problems"¹ of more than ordinary significance. Meetings of the Lesser Assembly (of either type) were attended only by individuals specially invited for the occasion by the Council of *Kalons*: on the ecclesiastical side, as already noted, officers of the three leading monasteries of the capital, delegated by their own congregations; on the secular side, a few senior members of the nobility and officials in charge of major government departments, all appointed by the Cabinet and usually of third or fourth rank. Conferences were presided over by a committee of eight comprising the four monk grand secretaries and the four lay finance officers. This body of eight transmitted all recommendations of the Chamber to the Cabinet,

¹ The Dalai Lama, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

for, while State Ministers were not permitted to take part in the Chamber's deliberations, the *Kashag* concurrently met in quarters nearby for the express purpose of receiving and examining the Assembly's resolutions and then communicating them to the Dalai Lama. In case of disagreement between the *Kashag* and the Assembly with respect to the latter's suggestions, the proposals were referred back to the Chamber for further discussion. If it still persisted in its original views, the differences would eventually be settled by mutual compromise, but such incidents, if they happened at all, must have been extremely rare.

Finally, an extraordinary Great Assembly (*Tsongdu*) might be called to discuss some particularly vital question affecting all Tibet. Even then, its membership consisted solely of representatives of spiritual and lay officialdom, of prominent individuals in local government specially summoned for the occasion and of delegates from the districts and monasteries under the Panchen Lama's jurisdiction.

In none of its three versions was the Assembly truly endowed with effective power, its role being no more than an advisory one, and always in the past it had met only irregularly by order of the *Kashag* to ratify important Government decisions, and did very little else. With the ascent of Dalai Lama XIV to the throne, coinciding with the Communist Chinese threat to Tibet's very existence, both the Lesser and Great Assemblies gained added weight in the governance of the country. Indeed, reportedly, during this period the core Lesser Assembly was almost continuously in session, a practice which could but enhance materially its influence in State affairs. It is also a mark of these perilous times that the Great Assembly which, heretofore, might perhaps have been called together once in a lifetime, now met twice in rapid succession in the course of a single year, 1950: on the first occasion to consider reports of hostile Communist Chinese moves on Tibet's eastern frontiers and advise an appeal to the outside world for assistance; on the second, to study what should be done in the face of the Chinese invasion, whereupon it recommended, *inter alia*, that the Dalai Lama leave Lhasa for a safer place. Throughout, however, Tibet's Assembly retained its narrow social basis with membership restricted to the privileged classes alone and commoners barred outright from participation in its business, and so remained till the end an institution that was in no real sense either democratic or representative, sundry later claims to the contrary notwithstanding.

The complexity and indefiniteness of the central organization of Tibet's governmental system was fully matched at the lower rungs of the administrative ladder. Here, too, the traditional structure of Tibetan local rule was extremely involved and displayed at every step the dual authority of Church and lay nobility. In addition, it plainly reflected the thoroughly feudalistic nature of Tibetan society, in which the private fiefs of noble families and monasteries occupied a recognized and leading place in the country's administrative fabric and these two upper strata of the social order shared widely in and were organically associated with the exercise of public authority much of which was, in fact, virtually left to their own care and discretion.

The whole of Tibet was divided into three levels of local rule: the region or province; the district magistracy; and the village. Besides Lhasa and its suburbs, which were under the jurisdiction of two special local offices, there were historically five regional governments, which differed markedly among themselves in area, population and political rank. In theory, each regional administration was to be jointly headed by one clerical and one lay official of the fourth rank, appointed by the Dalai Lama, and assisted by a staff of secretaries and other officials; their term of office was usually three years. The governor supervised the activities of the local organs in the districts under their authority and discharged administrative, judicial and military functions within the region. It should be noted, however, that in practice the duality of authority in provincial leadership does not seem to have been always observed. For instance, traditionally the most important of the Tibetan regional units has been the Kham area on the eastern approaches of the country through which passes the most accessible route to and from China and it was as a rule entrusted to a high secular figure, generally a Minister of the Council. The Northern territories have since the 1940's been ruled by a monk and a lay civil servant but the Southern region was again run by a single governor, this time a clerical official, and the Western by another agent, a secular administrator. Central Tibet lay within the responsibility of the Lhasa government, but two senior officials from Lhasa of like rank also served in Shigatse, the Panchen Lama's capital, working together with the reigning Panchen Lama prior to 1923 and, following his flight into exile that year, with a senior monk functionary of his monastery, Tashilunpo, appointed by the Lhasa Government to manage the Panchen Lama's affairs in his absence.

The next, and main, level of Tibetan local government was the district. Tibet was partitioned into some one hundred districts of different size, population and political importance, classified into large medium and small, depending on their area and population. Administratively the districts were subject to a dual system of authority.

In charge of each magistracy belonging to the large or medium category usually stood two officials (one clerical and one lay) of the fifth or sixth rank, and in the smaller districts generally one secular officer of the sixth or seventh rank. As a rule, district magistrates were chosen for the post for approximately a three-year term. Nominally, the district head was responsible for maintaining public order, for the punctual remittance to the treasury of taxes and other imposts and for the exercise of judicial functions. Until very recently, the magistrate was almost always an absentee official residing at the Lhasan court. His functions in the district to which he was assigned (usually confined in fact to the levying of taxes on his own and the Government's behalf) were ordinarily carried out by a personal agent or steward employed by him. In reality, therefore, the district governorship represented by and large an honorific post, albeit a very remunerative one for the person holding it, and as organs of routine administrative control were for the most part ineffectual.¹

More significant from the point of view of actual local government was the second jurisdictional subordination of the districts, a truly functional one of four types. Some districts were placed under the administration of the leading monasteries and specially assigned to the particular satisfaction of their needs in food, money, labor and

¹ The precise powers of the district magistrate are shrouded in mystery, apparently being left up to custom and usage alone. Even the question of tenure leads to disagreement. Thus, according to P. Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet* (Seattle, 1959), p. 82, "appointments are for short periods of time, usually for three years, although reappointment is possible." On the other hand, Lowell Thomas, Jr., *The Silent War in Tibet* (New York, 1959), p. 129, maintains that "since ancient times Tibet was divided into *dzongs*, which were comparable to a county. The *dzongpon* was the head official, above the village leaders but below the regional governor. Traditionally the *dzongpon* had great power, particularly in the outlying areas. He was appointed for no definite period and often held the post for life. He was obligated to pay a fixed revenue from his *dzong* to Lhasa. Whatever he could collect in excess of the fixed amount was his own profit. He was not salaried and was subject to only loose control from higher authority."

Likewise, H. E. Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (New York, 1962), p. 22: "Although the district officials were under the general supervision of the Provincial Governor they were directly responsible to the Council. They led a comparatively independent existence and had wide power in their own jurisdiction, being guided by a general and traditional set of rules rather than by frequent instructions from the capital on points of detail."

The complexity and indefiniteness of the central organization of Tibet's governmental system was fully matched at the lower rungs of the administrative ladder. Here, too, the traditional structure of Tibetan local rule was extremely involved and displayed at every step the dual authority of Church and lay nobility. In addition, it plainly reflected the thoroughly feudalistic nature of Tibetan society in which the private fiefs of noble families and monasteries occupied a recognized and leading place in the country's administrative fabric and these two upper strata of the social order shared widely in and were organically associated with the exercise of public authority much of which was, in fact, virtually left to their own care and discretion.

The whole of Tibet was divided into three levels of local rule: the region or province; the district magistracy; and the village. Besides Lhasa and its suburbs, which were under the jurisdiction of two special local offices, there were historically five regional governments, which differed markedly among themselves in area, population and political rank. In theory, each regional administration was to be jointly headed by one clerical and one lay official of the fourth rank, appointed by the Dalai Lama, and assisted by a staff of secretaries and other officials; their term of office was usually three years. The governors supervised the activities of the local organs in the districts under their authority and discharged administrative, judicial and military functions within the region. It should be noted, however, that in practice the duality of authority in provincial leadership does not seem to have been always observed. For instance, traditionally the most important of the Tibetan regional units has been the Kham area on the eastern approaches of the country through which passes the most accessible route to and from China and it was as a rule entrusted to a high secular figure, generally a Minister of the Council. The Northern territories have since the 1940's been ruled by a monk and a lay civil servant, but the Southern region was again run by a single governor, this time a clerical official, and the Western by another agent, a secular administrator. Central Tibet lay within the responsibility of the Lhasa government, but two senior officials from Lhasa of like rank also served in Shigatse, the Panchen Lama's capital, working together with the reigning Panchen Lama prior to 1923 and, following his flight into exile that year, with a senior monk functionary of his monastery, Tashilunpo, appointed by the Lhasa Government to manage the Panchen Lama's affairs in his absence.

The next, and main, level of Tibetan local government was the district. Tibet was partitioned into some one hundred districts of different size, population and political importance, classified into large medium and small, depending on their area and population. Administratively the districts were subject to a dual system of authority.

In charge of each magistracy belonging to the large or medium category usually stood two officials (one clerical and one lay) of the fifth or sixth rank, and in the smaller districts generally one secular officer of the sixth or seventh rank. As a rule, district magistrates were chosen for the post for approximately a three-year term. Nominally, the district head was responsible for maintaining public order, for the punctual remittance to the treasury of taxes and other imposts and for the exercise of judicial functions. Until very recently, the magistrate was almost always an absentee official residing at the Lhasan court. His functions in the district to which he was assigned (usually confined in fact to the levying of taxes on his own and the Government's behalf) were ordinarily carried out by a personal agent or steward employed by him. In reality, therefore, the district governorship represented by and large an honorific post, albeit a very remunerative one for the person holding it, and as organs of routine administrative control were for the most part ineffectual.¹

More significant from the point of view of actual local government was the second jurisdictional subordination of the districts, a truly functional one of four types. Some districts were placed under the administration of the leading monasteries and specially assigned to the particular satisfaction of their needs in food, money, labor and

¹ The precise powers of the district magistrate are shrouded in mystery, apparently being left up to custom and usage alone. Even the question of tenure leads to disagreement. Thus, according to P. Carrasco, *Land and Polity in Tibet* (Seattle, 1959), p. 82, "appointments are for short periods of time, usually for three years, although reappointment is possible." On the other hand, Lowell Thomas, Jr., *The Silent War in Tibet* (New York, 1959), p. 129, maintains that "since ancient times Tibet was divided into *dzongs*, which were comparable to a county. The *dzongpon* was the head official, above the village leaders but below the regional governor. Traditionally the *dzongpon* had great power, particularly in the outlying areas. He was appointed for no definite period and often held the post for life. He was obligated to pay a fixed revenue from his *dzong* to Lhasa. Whatever he could collect in excess of the fixed amount was his own profit. He was not salaried and was subject to only loose control from higher authority."

Likewise, H. E. Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (New York, 1962), p. 22: "Although the district officials were under the general supervision of the Provincial Governor they were directly responsible to the Council. They led a comparatively independent existence and had wide power in their own jurisdiction, being guided by a general and traditional set of rules rather than by frequent instructions from the capital on points of detail."

services, etc. Others were allocated to the private sustenance of high feudal lords, some of them ancient royalty and princelings in their own right. A third group of livestock raising districts was in fact ruled by special emissaries (each of them assisted by four advisors), vested with almost unlimited powers in the management of vast territories inhabited by nomadic tribes.² Finally, a number of districts were directly subordinate to the central authorities of the Dalai Lama. There, too, however, most of the land, agricultural and pastoral, was ascribed to various public institutions or high officials as a means for their support and to furnish their budget, only a very small portion being rented out to private individuals.

In short, although district magistrates were legally vested with extensive administrative authority, in actuality their official functions were limited to the collection of the tax quotas assessed by the finance department of the Lhasa Cabinet. Apart from this, the powers of effective rule lay with the monasteries, the lords, the special governors or, in the purely public lands, with the agencies or high dignitaries to whom they were specifically assigned in return for services. These maintained their own regular administrative organization for the daily management of their vast private estates, serfs and all, with minimum interference on this count from the State.

On the lowest echelon of government functioned the village, under a headman appointed by the district magistrate. In areas where tribal relations still persisted the post of headman could be hereditary, passing to the son of the chieftain or clan prince. Headmen of villages or of nomadic tribes also had powers of adjudication in minor matters and sometimes wielded considerable personal authority by virtue of ancient local custom.

Separate municipal organs existed in the larger centers of population, including city courts each staffed by two judges. Lhasa, too, as already noted, was endowed with a special status, being administered by two local bodies to which were attached two special judicial officers empowered to decide routine criminal and civil cases.

As mentioned above, the monasteries and feudal estates, though not formally part of the system of State administration, in fact wielded enormous power, governed on their own a large section of Tibet and much of its population and regularly exercised sundry public functions, besides enjoying extensive special privileges and

¹ B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

rights, many of an official or, at best, quasi-official nature. This was particularly true of the pattern of relationship which obtained between the so-called State apparatus and the Church. Indeed, the influence of religion was so pervasive in Tibetan life and so dominant in the context of the country's avowedly theocratic régime, that in many respects the two organizations often proved completely indistinguishable, with the State acting in this association, needless to say, as junior servant of the faith.

Thus, monasteries retained exclusive legal and disciplinary competence with regard to members of the Lamaist Church and, together with high lay lords, could collect taxes and manage secular affairs in the districts allotted to their use. Drepung, for example, one of Lhasa's three great monasteries, held the special privilege, in the person of its head, of regulating all questions of administration, justice, transportation, and communication in the city of Lhasa during the first 24 days of a Tibetan New Year when all Government and administrative offices were closed. Likewise, the Government conceived itself as duty-bound to support financially the religious activities of the Lamaist monastic orders throughout the country, to the point where the latter had virtually open access to the State treasury for any of their needs, making subsidies to the recognized Church by far the single most important item of national expenditure. The magnitude of the cost of upkeep of the ubiquitous ecclesiastical centers and their thousands of inmates may be garnered, even if only imperfectly, from a report that in the first month of the Tibetan year alone, a time which all monks spent in Lhasa, "the Government supplied them with three tons of tea and fifty tons of butter, in addition to pocket-money to the value of something over £ 40,000."¹ Such instances were legion, and as a rule public practice closely reflected, occasional setbacks to the principle notwithstanding, the traditional Tibetan conviction that the State's chief purpose always consisted in furthering by every means at its disposal the glory of the faith, and, by inference, of its acknowledged spokesman and symbol, the organized Church.

The political organization of the Tibetan community amounted, then, to a feudal system, in the classical generic sense of that word,²

¹ H. Harrer, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223.

² Cf. P. Carrasco, *op. cit.*, p. 208, who classifies Tibet as either a simple form or a semi-complex type of community under Wittfogel's theory of Oriental or Hydraulic society.

and, as such, it displayed all the strengths and weaknesses typical of that societal model. Its gravest shortcoming, characteristic of feudal systems, lay in the lack of a well-defined institutionalized framework and the informality and uncertainty of functional hierarchical gradations within the State structure, both caused by the fundamentally personal quality of status and rank in the fabric of Tibetan social relations. Kinship, tradition, family background, personal and religious title, all could and, as a rule, did prevail over official distinctions or authority conferred by virtue of public service, even in the highest governmental posts.

In theory, of course, the monarch, i.e., the ruling Dalai Lama, wielded absolute authority in all matters pertaining to his earthly realm, but seldom in recent history has the God-king been able to avail himself of his prerogatives in full. While acknowledged by everyone as the paramount ruler of Tibet, the Dalai Lama has generally acted as little more than the titular head of State, supreme in principle and name, but quite ineffective in practice. In part, this protracted paralysis of the monarchy may be explained by accidental factors, among others weakness of character demonstrated by many of the occupants of the Lhasa throne and the youthfulness and ill-health of a long sequence of God-kings. In part, however, the phenomenon must also be credited to a long history of deliberate policy implemented by successive Regents and their close associates among the lay and monastic dignitaries to keep the monarchy weak and thus enhance their own power, prestige and influence in the government of the country.

True, occasionally, the bitter conflicts and rivalries between competing coteries for precedence at the Lhasan court did allow the Dalai Lama to set himself up as supreme arbiter between the opposing camps and gradually to gather in his own hands the reins of government, providing he possessed sufficient acumen and firmness. That had been the case with the previous monarch, Dalai Lama XIII, who had managed to concentrate in his person so much effective authority as to turn his reign into a genuine autocracy. During his rule, the country underwent a relatively extensive (for Tibet) process of modernization and secularization: the bureaucracy was noticeably improved and professionalized, the Army was reorganized and renovated, controls were centralized and local lords and princelings saw many of their private feudal rights and privileges drastically curtailed

and themselves made increasingly subject to the capital's supervision. Altogether, one can almost speak of a minor political revolution in Tibetan age-old traditions, all due to the forceful personality and dynamism of the ruler.

This is not to say, however, that the Tibetan polity was organically and irrevocably transformed by the changes wrought in its complexion in the course of this one isolated reign. The inherent flaws of that society were definitely toned down under the impact of the Dalai Lama's undisputed primacy, but not in any way cured, and they came back to the fore with a vengeance after the monarch's demise in 1933. Between then and 1950, when Dalai Lama XIV was finally enthroned, the Tibetan political scene reverted to its former state. Thereupon, the endless factionalism to which the Regency soon fell victim again undid in short order everything that had been accomplished at such cost in the preceding period. In seventeen years, a powerful and unified Tibet became so debilitated by this unrelenting internecine struggle for power and leadership between a plethora of rival families, classes, orders and institutions, that it was to fall easy prey to Peking's machinations after the introduction of the Chinese presence into Tibet in 1951.

In the final analysis, therefore, the successes registered as well as the setbacks suffered by the Chinese in Tibet during the last decade owe much to the political physiognomy of the Tibetan scene itself. That, in turn, can be understood only from a realistic assessment of the alignment of the main forces shaping Tibetan social organization, taking into account to that end both the sundry ingredients that made for native cohesion which strongly militated against local Chinese penetration and those centrifugal elements, equally numerous, which, conversely, facilitated that insidious process and lowered the Tibetan capacity to resist the alien onslaught. Both sets of factors, it should be noted from the outset, helped dictate the subsequent course of Sino-Tibetan relations.

The mainspring of national solidarity in the Tibetan community was undoubtedly rooted in the people's sense of faith. To the extent that a common bond united all Tibetans, it rested precisely here - in the unquestioning acceptance by the population of the religious authority of the Church and of the Dalai Lama as the highest incarnation of divinity. When the occupant of the throne at Lhasa evidenced the kind of personal qualities and caliber of leadership which

marked Dalai Lama XIII as a great figure in Tibetan history, religious unity found itself well reinforced by an autocratic secular régime and, for the duration, a centralized policy of administrative direction and control overcame the perennial secessionist tendencies manifested in the border areas of the far-flung State. A more negative phenomenon which, nevertheless, also exerted effective centripetal pressure stemmed from the general Tibetan opposition to and suspicion of the outside world, particularly in the sphere of political contacts. Such a mentality logically fostered the development of a shared feeling of communal exclusiveness and an inwardly oriented outlook on events which further strengthened the Tibetan's conviction in their own special identity and separateness from the neighboring peoples.

None of this, however, fully resolved all the many contradictions which seemed endemic to the very nature of the Tibetan social order, not to speak of the innumerable incidental fissures engendered by these internal weaknesses. By far the most crucial source of major tension in Tibetan political life lay in the latent enmity between the secular and the ecclesiastical hierarchies for national leadership, a constant, if ordinarily muted, struggle in which, historically, the latter group has as a rule held the upper hand. The rivalry should by no means be construed as a standard contest between "progressive" and "reactionary" elements (although occasionally one could also detect in the sustained dialogue faint undertones of these ideas, as will be seen later), or viewed in the perspective of a normal confrontation of opposing political movements, for Tibet never developed organized parties in the modern sense. Rather, private factions endlessly maneuvered for public influence and high lords, lay as well as monastic, sought personal power with the help of family, conscripted retinue, and class associates, and, in the process, some of them just elected to be more closely identified with the destinies of the lay nobility than with those of its ecclesiastical counterpart, though none really stood exclusively in one camp or the other.

Nevertheless, a core of secular nobility did engage at court in chronic agitation, demanding a greater share of State power and wealth for their class and insisting on a more equitable apportionment of influence and public office between their group and the Church leadership. By the same token, they generated considerable pressure in the capital in favor of the secularization of certain spheres of governmental activity, heretical suggestions which always met with

adamant resistance from the Church and thus made little headway. Still, this suppressed ferment does help explain, for instance, the wide cleavage which suddenly came to the surface in 1950 and deeply split official Tibetan circles in connection with the debates concerning the best way for dealing with the Chinese threat of invasion. On that occasion, the country's leading lay figures found themselves frankly in opposition to the policy advocated by the ecclesiastical elements, not, it would seem, because either of them felt more or less pro-Chinese, but for totally different, and more lasting, reasons that should be well understood.

Indeed, the available evidence plainly points to the conclusion that the emergency was seized upon by both factions essentially in order to strengthen their respective internal position, and with little else in mind at the moment. The lay nobility, for one, saw in the incipient conflict a ready chance to recover the prominent role it had played under the former Dalai Lama in part precisely because of the latter's pre-occupation with military matters. Hence, it now urged utmost armed resistance to the Chinese advance, hoping thereby to enhance its own influence in the affairs of State. The ecclesiastical authorities, on the other hand, preached a more conciliatory approach and a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Tibetan dispute less, one suspects, because of genuine belief in Chinese good faith than of mistrust of its local opponents who would likely benefit on the domestic front from a deepening crisis in Sino-Tibetan relations.

Again, the rival motivations underlying these issues cannot properly be classified under the standard heading of sympathy for China versus hostility to Peking, or "conservatism" versus "liberalism." Quite the contrary, the behavior of both parties stemmed to no appreciable extent from conscious endorsement by them of some semi-articulate political program such as either of the above, but from a traditional, near automatic, mutual antipathy coupled with the instant readiness of either side to exploit any propitious conjuncture of events to further its own particular interests, if possible at the expense of the other. Thus, despite repeated attempts over the years to cover it up, this basic fissure in the Tibetan body politic persisted, sometimes attaining critical proportions, then all but unnoticeable; but, the flaw was always there and, throughout, adversely affected the nation's domestic strength and weakened its international posture.

Otherwise as well, the same frank expediency provided the sum

total of the rationale which led certain segments of Tibet's secular nobility to embrace in a more general sense what passed for a "progressive" program. What impelled them to do so once more was not faith in the value of modernization as such, but something entirely different. The Church was committed, by temperament and almost by definition, to a total defense of the *status quo*; ultra-conservatism was its hallmark, it consciously staked its political destiny on the perpetuation of the past. Hence, in challenging the established theocratic order and seeking a greater public role for their members, the privileged secular classes were all but forced into projecting an alternate image of themselves and, by default as it were, had to fall back on acting outwardly as champions of innovation.

Needless to say, in most cases such endorsement of "reform" did not reach the point of favoring changes which could conceivably endanger the entrenched position of those that posed as partisans of "progress" and such suggestions as were heard on this count still could not by any reasonable stretch of the imagination be termed "liberal" by 20th century criteria. At best, then, these prominent lay lords represented "progress" in the light alone of comparison with the reigning ideology of the monastic body and so still only by negative reaction to the latter and not through independently arrived at conviction as to the positive worth of a modern-like social order.

Finally, as has been correctly observed, one ought also to remember that even when Dalai Lama XIII was at the height of his power, this so-called

party for progress was very much in the minority. The majority consisting of abbots, monks and nuns representing a sizeable bulk of the population of the country was vehemently against anything likely to disturb the placid existence in the monasteries that they had traditionally enjoyed. Therefore they viewed with alarm and concern all the progressive measures of the Government.¹

The internal instability of the faction's composition which was always at the mercy of the private whims of its independent and equal members added to the problem, for, depending on circumstance, the organization could not rely on the support of the entire lay nobility either. This was graphically demonstrated by what occurred again during the reign of Dalai Lama XIII, when "the nobility from whom the Ministers are drawn tended to alienate themselves from the party for progress under the leadership of Tsharong and to ally themselves

¹ R. Rahul, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

with the conservatives under the preponderating influence of the monks. They thought that the Dalai Lama, in taking full control of the administration, had usurped the power which originally lay with them.”¹

The historical controversy rooted in the lay-ecclesiastical dichotomy which beset the leadership of the Tibetan nation probably represented the single most important source of conflict at the Lhasan court. It may well have acted as the most permanent cause of political friction in the local community, but certainly did not constitute the sole reason for that phenomenon. Indeed, cutting across the polarized lines of hard-core secular-monastic confrontation was a tangled skein of long-standing private feuds born of personal ambitions and family entanglements. Some of these occasionally developed into outright bids for supreme national power, often pursued by means little short of civil war, and so duly engendered all the social dissension that appears naturally to accompany such fratricidal strife and then tends to linger seemingly forever.

Held to a minimum by the over-riding authority of a strong monarch whenever the land was fortunate enough to be presided over by an energetic Dalai Lama such as the 13th in line of succession, this barely suppressed factionalism had a habit of coming fully into its own during periods of relative relaxation of centralized controls, at a time when the monarchy betrayed its weakness or, especially, in the course of the long interregnums when a Regent administered the country. The years between the death of Dalai Lama XIII and the enthronement of his successor were marked by more than their share of such crises, with disastrous effect.

The interlude which would prove so crucial for the fate of Tibet opened with an attempt by a favorite minister of the late king to set himself up as a dictator. Although the plan was quickly defeated by Tibet's conservative forces, led by the Church hierarchs, the brutal repression which followed upon the victory left new and indelible scars on Tibet's as it is badly fragmented body politic. Shortly thereafter, the country suffered another, equally unsettling experience, when the ruling Regent, Reting Rimpoche, was forced under pressure to resign and was replaced as a Regent by Taktra Rimpoche. That was not the end of the story, however, bad enough though it already was, for in 1947 the deposed Regent and his followers attempted a *coup*

¹ *Ibid.*

d'état to return to power. The *putsch* failed lamentably after the authorities resorted to armed force to put it down, but there was some loss of life and more persecution; Reting Rimpoche himself was arrested and then apparently murdered. Most of his associates fled to China where they soon met with the opportunity, welcomed by most of them, to offer their valuable services to the new Communist régime in its fight against Lhasa and whence they returned under the latter's auspices.

Perhaps even more disruptive of the internal unity of the Tibetan society was the mortal quarrel which had estranged the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama during the lifetime of the two previous holders of the title and which had induced the latter in 1923 to flee Tibet into exile in China where he later died. In the meantime, the split between the two recognized leaders of the official Lamaist Church, each a powerful figure in his own right, commanding the religious allegiance of the population and the personal loyalty of a mass following, persisted despite various tentative efforts to resolve it amicably. The feud even continued unabated after the death of the original disputants. Throughout, of course, this incident too could only benefit the Chinese whom it served to provide, the Nationalist Government first, and its Communist successor afterwards, with a ready weapon for use against the Lhasan court. Indeed, in the person of the former Panchen Lama and, since, his latest youthful reincarnation eager to recover his birthright and at the time still living with his corps of trusted Tibetan advisors on Chinese soil, Peking acquired potentially perhaps the most effective instrument to help further its claims against the Tibetan central régime. As things turned out, it was soon to have the satisfaction of seeing its expectations in this regard fully realized.

Before closing this discussion of the objective conditions which made for Tibet's low fragmentation coefficient, as it were, one more feature of the local scene requires mention at this point since it is directly germane to the topic at hand. At issue here is the question of the "organic looseness," so to speak, of the Tibetan polity. The strong element of cohesion introduced into the indigenous community by the bonds of shared faith which crystallized around the Dalai Lama as a divine symbol have already been noted. At the religious level, accordingly, a centripetal movement definitely predominated which managed to integrate the disparate component ingredients in the population into a close approximation of a single national entity. The same did not hold true, however, on the purely secular front.

The Church and the Dalai Lama were revered, but that did not prevent Lhasa's civil authority from meeting with constant challenge in outlying districts with an ancient tradition of local independence and cherished historical claims to be ruled by their own hereditary chieftains and feudatory princelings. No one denied the Dalai Lama's right to speak in the name of all Tibet, but a long list of tribes, clans and private fiefs in practice refused on dynastic grounds to submit to administrative directives emanating from the capital. Relations between the central régime and these all but self-governing units on the periphery of the country generally remained tense. Occasionally, the barely concealed friction between them would lead to more or less successful insurrections on the part of the local elements against Lhasa's encroachments which, in turn, drove the latter into undertaking full-scale armed pacification campaigns against the rebels.¹

Still, military repression only rarely solved the problem. Thus, on the eve of the Chinese Communist invasion, what can perhaps best be described as a normal state of uneasy truce reigned between the capital and the more refractory of its subjects: by common tacit consent, Lhasa did not attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Goloks, the Khambas, and other like border tribes which virtually operated outside its control, and the latter, in exchange, nominally recognized themselves as subordinate to the Dalai Lama, but without conceding that in concrete terms. The opportunities that such a situation offered the Chinese occupation authorities after 1951 for promoting internal dissension and, coincidentally, consolidating their own power in Tibet are obvious. Needless to say, Peking did not fail to exploit every one of them to the utmost, with results that today are well-known.

¹ In 1928, for instance, when the Po tribes in north-east Tibet revolted against Lhasa's officials, the Central Government sent a punitive expedition to pacify them, and three years later annexed the territory within the regular administrative fabric of Tibet. The local ruler, one of the last of the minor princelings who in the past ruled over the eastern outskirts of Tibet escaped to India where he died. G. N. Roerich, *Trails to Inmost Asia* (New Haven, 1931), p. 470; J. Hanbury-Tracy, *Black River of Tibet* (London, 1938), p. 162.

CHAPTER II

TIBET IN TRANSITION, 1951-1954

Such, then, was the Tibetan governmental structure which confronted the Communist authorities in 1951 and which they promised to respect within the constitutional context of the Chinese People's Republic. On the surface, the pledge was to a large extent observed, at least until the uprising of 1959, and the formal institutions of native Tibetan administration were altered but little. Nevertheless, while outright refashioning of the local State mechanism remained minimal during this first phase of Sino-Tibetan relations, the Chinese almost at once began introducing sundry indirect changes into the fabric of the area's political organization. Hence, the course followed by Peking in its circuitous approach to the touchy question of implementing reforms in Tibet well deserves attention, for, in the long run, it is thus that the Chinese prepared the ground-work and made possible the concerted action subsequently initiated by them with a view toward transforming altogether the physiognomy of the Tibetan society.

From the start, at the heart of the entire Chinese policy *vis-à-vis* Tibet lay the determination to redefine the concept of the so-called Local Government of Tibet, the other party officially designated in the 1951 agreement and with respect to which Peking legally assumed obligations therein. To achieve that objective, the Communist Chinese fell back on the same favorable, albeit largely accidental, conjuncture of factors that had already advanced their cause at the time of the pact's negotiation and signature, to wit, the presence on the Tibetan side of three distinct groups whose aims and interests plainly did not coincide. This situation the Chinese now resolutely sought to project onto the Tibetan political arena as a whole, by representing Tibet as if it were a jural entity actually composed of three separate, and to all intents and purposes, equal and independent territorial parts – central Tibet ruled by the Dalai Lama; the separate, and smaller,

jurisdiction of the Panchen Lama in the Shigatse district; and the special province of Chamdo, – notwithstanding the absence of any historical evidence to support this thesis.

Needless to say, by so dismembering the country, Peking did much to promote its own ultimate control over all the competing components thereof, its conduct here fully conforming to the classical principle of *divide et impera*. More than that, the Chinese thus undertook and eventually managed to relegate the Lhasa government to a position where it stood simply on a par with the two other regional administrations, and, as such, recognized it as possessed of but strictly limited spatial jurisdiction, confined in its case to central Tibet. And, having postulated that frame of reference, Peking next proceeded to insist that the virtual guarantee of immunity from internal reform which it had extended to the Tibetans by way of the 1951 treaty meant in fact the conditional inviolability of the established order in central Tibet alone, i.e., barring a consensus to the contrary in which the Dalai Lama's régime concurred. Elsewhere on the plateau, however, to pursue that line of argument, these protective clauses would presumably not apply, at least not to the extent of requiring explicit approval by the Lhasan authorities before a program of local reform could be initiated.

In short, the Chinese always maintained their willingness to abide by the express provisions of the 1951 accord, professed throughout to do so and, in a technical sense, could defend their right to the claim of having duly fulfilled their obligations thereunder – in a manner of speaking. At the same time, however, through the device of palpably casuistic interpretation they soon succeeded in circumventing the clear and ordinary intent of the document on a key point of the text in order to secure a notable advantage for their side in the latent struggle against the native Tibetan government. The *de facto* partitioning of Tibet may have been totally illegitimate, and any reasonable reading of the relevant passages of the Sino-Tibetan agreement would uphold that conclusion, but there is no gainsaying that the subterfuge nonetheless proved fully effective and, whether legal or otherwise, it still contributed appreciably toward the proximate consolidation of Chinese control over the newly won land.

With that in mind, therefore, the Chinese presently bent all their efforts on denying the Lhasan court any voice in the public affairs of the Chamdo and Shigatse territories and, by the same token, on

building up the latter two units as equal in status to the Dalai Lama's realm. Thus, from the very start, the area of Chamdo has, following the early imposition of Chinese hegemony there, occupied a special niche in Tibet's revised administrative pattern. Because of its strategic importance as the natural gateway to the highland from China, this easternmost province, after its conquest by the Chinese armies in the opening days of the 1950 invasion, was from the outset earmarked for much closer integration with China than the rest of Tibet. The semi-independence traditionally enjoyed by the tribes populating this border region from Lhasa's secular authority seemingly encouraged this project, as probably did too the fact that they had a longer history of relations with the neighboring Chinese areas than the rest of Tibet. Indeed, even if the intercourse had for the most part not been amicable, some contact had nevertheless resulted from that experience which, Peking apparently calculated, did not work altogether adversely to the local propagation of Chinese influence.

True, here also the ingrained hostility to the alien Han persisted, as rabid as elsewhere in Tibet, – perhaps stronger in the wake of the chronic frontier raids and warlike incursions indulged in by both parties; still, familiarity at least tempered such of its features as arose primarily from the excessive suspicion of the outside world harbored by most Tibetans as a mere matter of course and so paved the way for possible mutual understanding and co-existence, so to speak, an adjustment less likely in the more remote inner stronghold of Tibetan physical and spiritual isolationism. As against that, it could be contended, of course, and hindsight would lend some support to this argument, that the long years of conflict along Tibet's eastern approaches were bound to create in the contested region a mounting backlog of hatred and bitterness which would strongly militate against the solution now proposed by the Chinese. Conversely, so the thesis runs, the lack, by and large, of this negative dimension in the Chinese record of dealings with central Tibet would instead facilitate a peaceful settlement with the masses in the interior, probably more hostile to foreigners on grounds of principle than their more exposed kinsmen nearer the border, but also personally less committed to a specifically anti-Chinese attitude.

In any event, following a "People's Conference of all Classes of the Population" convened in Chamdo in January, 1951, under Chinese auspices, a so-called People's Liberation Committee was inaugurated

with headquarters in that city and formally endowed with powers to administer the area. Soon after it was reliably reported that the Chinese had also established an Administrative Council there which maintained direct contact with Peking and decided upon local Tibetan affairs without reference to Lhasa. Thus, as one observer accurately noted, "by transferring more and more of the administrative offices and activities to Chamdo, the Chinese are withdrawing them from the influence of the Dalai Lama. At the same time they are making them more accessible to the Chinese, for Chamdo can be reached by plane from Chungking within a few hours." ¹

Of course, the top official posts in the local State apparatus, notwithstanding its thorough reorganization in accordance with Peking's directives, were still occupied by leading Tibetan figures, but by then as creatures of the Chinese. For instance, *Kalon* Ngaboo, the Dalai Lama's erstwhile Governor of Kham and Commander-in-Chief of the ill-fated Tibetan troops on the eastern front, nominally retained his civil title and functions, though no longer pretending very hard to act in his sovereign's name, even so much as for the sake of theory. In actual practice, therefore, the Chamdo territory almost at once became for all intents and purposes independent of the Dalai Lama's authority; and, while a member of the latter's cabinet, a Lhasa appointee, continued publicly to preside over the provincial government, the region otherwise operated under the sole management of the local Chinese military headquarters.

Subsequent developments at Shigatse followed a parallel course. Because of certain peculiarities inherent in that situation, however, on this occasion Peking's drive for local control could not readily take on a form as overt as the transparent posture the Chinese could afford to adopt in Chamdo, and anyway in this case probably did not need to. Whatever the reasons, here Chinese influence chose to exert its will more indirectly and Chinese power made itself felt with greater circumspection than previously in Kham. For all that, or perhaps precisely due to that, the entire process would seem to have been only the more efficacious in the long run from the standpoint of furthering the plans the Chinese Communists nurtured for Tibet.

Throughout, of course, Peking's expectations in this connection depended heavily on two sets of factors: first, that the existing hostility

¹ W. Levi, "Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule," *loc. cit.*, p. 7. See also, *New York Times*, February 1, 1952, p. 2.

between the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama and their respective entourages would persist and, if possible, increase; second, that the Panchen Lama, so forced to lean on Chinese support in his fatal dispute with Lhasa and to rely on it, could be elevated to a status of parity with his opponent, not only undermining thereby the latter's position, but also furnishing the Chinese with a potential alternate in the event of a showdown with the Lhasa régime. From the start, concerted efforts were made in both directions. Thus, after Peking had apparently assured itself of the full loyalty of the Panchen Lama and his retinue and of their readiness to partake in its blueprints for Tibet, with a good deal of fanfare it brought them back to Shigatse in 1952 and ceremoniously installed them at the Tashilunpo monastery, the official residence of the number two man in the Tibetan ecclesiastical hierarchy. Having safely accomplished this much, the Chinese next proceeded to enhance in every conceivable way the secular authority of the Panchen Lama in an attempt to represent him as the Dalai Lama's equal on this plane too, well established historical precedent to the contrary notwithstanding.

Admittedly, the precise nature of the relationship between the two leading figures in the Lamaist Church has long been the subject of doctrinal controversy, in which the prospects of a satisfactory outcome always looked dim, though never more so than today. In general, however, it was agreed that the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama stood together at the apex of the monastic pyramid, with the latter assigned, according to the purists, a minute degree of spiritual precedence in dogma – a technicality with little or no practical effect. In the sphere of lay authority, on the other hand, the power of the Dalai Lama was, in principle, paramount, even if its actual exercise was, as already noted, very markedly circumscribed by the realities of Tibet's feudal mode of life. The ties between Lhasa and Tashilunpo fell into the same category. Thus, the numerous districts in the Shigatse area held in fief, so to speak, by the Panchen Lama personally, that is, by virtue of his high office, and those allotted to the corporate body of the monastery of which he acted as the religious and administrative head to furnish its inmates with the basic means of sustenance, were managed by his own staff. In this, the arrangement did not differ from that which obtained on all important estates, except, perhaps, as regards the extent of the holdings (larger than most), the great wealth here accumulated, and the exalted status

of the local titular lord – the Panchen Lama. Otherwise, it remained a standard situation.

True, one could find elements which conveyed the impression that this constituted a special case, but these were quantitative rather than qualitative. Given the unusual size of Tashilunpo's land endowment, for example, and of the population of serfs attached to it, and the affluence of its treasury, the administrative organization responsible to the Panchen Lama for the management of his properties was much more elaborate than that found elsewhere on private and semi-private domains. Again, because of the spiritual eminence of the Panchen Lama's position, a formal retinue and an official court (including a Council of Advisors vaguely reminiscent of the Lhasa Cabinet) accompanied him wherever he went and publicly attended on his person in a miniature replica of the ritual surrounding the Dalai Lama. Finally, because of the prestige enjoyed by the Panchen Lama, the central authorities would ordinarily refrain from interference in the internal matters lying within the latter's jurisdiction more so than in other like instances.

Still, none of this made the Panchen Lama the secular equal of the Dalai Lama, current contentions to the contrary notwithstanding, nor even, in a technical sense, an independent ruler in his own realm, to say nothing of pretender to the Lhasa throne. Indeed, in the Shigatse territory itself, a goodly number of districts formed part of the Dalai Lama's dominion and so operated exclusively under Lhasa's orders. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the Dalai Lama's régime has traditionally posted provincial governors at Shigatse who administered the region in its name, but who were also required to coordinate their actions with the Panchen Lama and secure his consent to such policies as might affect his sphere of authority. All this bespeaks of rigid social delineation of the scope of an individual's public rights and duties and the reciprocal autonomy, as between successive levels on the vertical line of personal relationships, of the respective parties' official attributes – a characteristic of feudal political patterns. But, the concept of express interdependence of the connected component human particles in a system of this sort was, nonetheless, squarely predicated on the acknowledgement of a superior-inferior dimension in each bilateral association, in which every rung stood contractually subordinate to, yet organically separate from, the one immediately above, a status that by no stretch of the imagination added up to sovereignty as conceived in modern parlance.

However, blithely disregarding the facts, the Chinese now took great pains to address the Panchen Lama at every opportune occasion as if he and his predecessors had always been monarchs in their own right. His renovated Council of Advisors was hailed as the counterpart and equivalent of the Dalai Lama's Council of *Kalons*, complete with a religious secretariat, a finance office, and various subordinate departments in charge of some aspect of public service (treasury, construction, agriculture, food supplies, salaries of officials, etc.). Altogether, his administrative hierarchy within the Shigatse region was forever being portrayed as a parallel to the Dalai Lama's governmental apparatus, smaller, but otherwise supreme within its particular territorial compass. Peking apparently even attempted to claim that the Panchen Lama's sovereign rank entitled him to a private army and that his predecessors had exercised that right, though it could adduce no historical evidence in support of this extraordinary contention. In any event, having thus insulated the Panchen Lama from the Dalai Lama's authority, severed the traditional ties that bound them, and completely withdrawn the Shigatse area from Lhasa's jurisdiction, the Chinese in turn proceeded to establish their own control there.

From the start, then, Shigatse became the focal point to which gravitated most dissident Tibetan elements opposed to the Lhasa court, among them the followers of the late Reting Rimpoche, other enemies of the Regent, sundry dissatisfied tribal groups, disgruntled feudals frustrated in their political ambitions, renegade Tibetans from China proper, etc. Hence, while Chamdo amounted to a recognizably Chinese venture, Shigatse functioned throughout as an ostensibly native center of anti-Lhasa sentiment and activity. The Chinese ran it, of course, but from behind the scenes, which only made the whole operation that much more dangerous.

The third act of Peking's grand design for Tibet logically called for the entrenchment of dominant Chinese influence in Lhasa itself. Because they anticipated having to overcome serious difficulties before they could reach that goal, in their initial contacts with the Tibetan central régime the Chinese chose to tread their way with relative caution. True, the Chinese never ceased pushing toward their end objective, and that inevitably caused friction and trouble, but at least at the outset they made what seemed a genuine effort, short-lived as it turned out, to register progress in the desired direction without

altogether alienating, if possible, the other party. In that, however, they were, at best, only partially successful.

The first direct encounter between the Dalai Lama's government and top Communist representatives occurred in July, 1951, when Peking's emissary, General Chang Ching-wu, on his way to Lhasa via India stopped at Yatung for a brief personal interview with the Dalai Lama and then went on to the capital, the monarch and his entourage shortly following suit. In the fall of that year, advance contingents of Communist Chinese troops entered Lhasa and soon other units came after them, in ever increasing numbers. In the meantime, a confused atmosphere prevailed as to what was happening on the plateau, with wild rumors constantly circulating about a massive program of radical reforms supposedly forthwith decreed by the Chinese occupation authorities in flagrant violation of the provisions of the Sino-Tibetan treaty.¹ As far as is known, nothing came of it all, and either these reports must be dismissed as products of over-heated imaginations, or such attempts were indeed made by local Chinese field commanders, but proved abortive and were quickly reversed. The former explanation rings truer.

This does not mean, of course, that after the introduction of Chinese physical presence into Lhasa Peking long remained quiescent. On the contrary, through its local spokesmen it soon began exerting steadily mounting pressure on the Tibetan authorities with a two-fold, but single-purpose, objective in mind: 1) to weaken those indigenous elements and institutions which stood, or promised to stand, in the way of effective Chinese control of the highland, including Chinese plans for the eventual refashioning of the Tibetan society in a "socialist" image; and 2) to strengthen those native forces which could lend themselves to exploitation by Peking to its own ends, either because they themselves had a direct value from the Chinese viewpoint or for the sake alone of the adverse effect that promoting them would have on the internal unity of the existing order. While the Chinese kept up almost from the outset a relentless drive against the Lhasa régime on both grounds, it should at once be emphasized that their efforts did not develop along highly systematic lines or adhere to a detailed

¹ E.g., *New York Times*, October 19, 1951, p. 3. It was claimed at the time that the program was based on the 60 secret clauses of the 1951 agreement, one of which allegedly provided for a policy "to narrow the gap between rich and poor." See, too, *Facts on File*, 1951, p. 346.

preconceived blueprint. True, Peking waged a sustained campaign to achieve its goals, but always by resort to eminently expedient tactics. In other words, Chinese strategy called for extensive changes in the established socio-political organization of the country, but throughout the Chinese pursued that plan in a purely *ad hoc*, thoroughly pragmatic manner, with specific conditions which obtained at any given moment both dictating the choice of individual moves and determining the elaboration of the practical course of action conducive to their execution.

On a short-term basis, such an approach made excellent sense, of course, and the Chinese recorded considerable progress in their endeavors to upset, so to speak, the political balance in Tibet to their advantage. On the other hand, a fluid policy of this sort inevitably blurred the overall picture and rendered any accurate assessment of the alignment of competing forces at a determinate point in time almost impossible. Rather than attempt to tidy up the image and impart to it an artificial neatness which the events themselves never displayed, therefore, the evolution of Communist Chinese policy *vis-à-vis* the Tibetan central authorities in this initial phase, i.e., between 1951 and 1954, will be traced here in combined chronological-topical fashion most closely approximating the actual historical process.

Not unexpectedly, the Chinese from the very first concentrated a good deal of attention on the problem of the mechanics of Tibetan national government. Again, this interest did not manifest itself in the early formulation by Peking's advocates of an express program of comprehensive reform of the local apparatus of administration, but sought rather the achievement of a succession of piecemeal changes, all pointing in the same general direction, but not organically inter-related or totalling up to a major revision with recognizable focus. Thus, they ranged in scope, quite haphazardly as far as can be judged, from symbolic modifications at the highest levels of the Tibetan hierarchy to functional alterations at the primary plane of village self-rule, products, it would seem, less of what the Chinese actively desired, assuming, that is, that the latter ever had a schedule positively setting forth particular operational objectives, than of what they could readily obtain, much of that, in turn, falling into the category of negative benefits, as it were.

The figure of the Dalai Lama represented, of course, a prime target for such Chinese moves, most of them aimed not at some specific

functional attribute of the monarch, but generally at his status as an emblem of divinity. For, Peking fully realized that the power and influence of the occupant of the Lhasa throne repositied essentially in his recognized claim to God-hood and only very incidentally in his concurrent role of earthly king. Hence, in order to undermine the public authority of the Dalai Lama, the Chinese strove first to downgrade his "other-worldly" image, to "humanize" him, so to speak, by pushing him into greater involvement in mundane affairs and by trying to saddle him with routine responsibilities, both presupposing extensive contacts with ordinary mortals, so as to destroy much of the awe and mystery surrounding the hitherto unapproachable God-king.

Thus, it was reported in 1953 that the Dalai Lama had announced that he would henceforth be accessible to any Tibetan who wanted to petition him. In part, this act surely constituted a concession to the aforementioned Chinese pressures. In part, however, it must also have reflected the Dalai Lama's personal awareness, independently reached, of an urgent need for a measure of "liberalization" of some of the particularly backward Tibetan political practices and his own desires to partake more actively in the governance of the country, including a greater degree of free *rapprochment* between the throne and the people. Of the two, the second probably deserves more credit for the proposed reform for, at this early stage, the Chinese could not have forced the issue had the Dalai Lama been unalterably opposed to their wishes, especially on a point such as this which closely affected his private rights. In any event, given the conservative mentality of the Tibetan citizenry, it remains extremely doubtful whether, even after the new policy had been proclaimed, any Tibetan commoner made use of this privilege, unless under Chinese prodding or as part of a carefully stage-managed scene mounted by the Chinese.

Similar considerations inspired other initial Chinese ventures into the field of Tibetan politics and into the sphere of operations of the Tibetan central government. In 1952, for example, by dint of constant threat Peking's emissaries on the plateau secured the dismissal of the Dalai Lama's two prime ministers, appointed by him in 1951 on the eve of his departure for Yatung. By this stroke, the operative channels of communication between the crown and the conventional administration were disrupted, thereby forcing the Dalai Lama either to assume more or less direct control of his Cabinet and play the role of an active

temporal ruler or tacitly relinquish effective secular power to that body from which it soon would, in turn, inevitably devolve to the Chinese since the Council of *Kalons* enjoyed no separate basis of authority but simply mirrored the desires emanating from the palace. Besides, the two *Silons*, and Lukhangwa in particular, had thoroughly antagonized the Chinese by their staunch defense of their sovereign's rights against endless Chinese encroachments and by their outspoken opposition to the sundry reform projects which the Chinese attempted to introduce with a view to consolidating their hold over the country. The forcible retirement of the Dalai Lama's chief administrative advisors thus served a dual purpose: it further undermined the monarch's symbolic position by making it necessary for him henceforth to take a hand in the daily affairs of the nation at the risk of seeing the Chinese inherit that welcome role by default; and, it disposed of two highly placed and influential Tibetan officials who refused to submit to Chinese dictates and would not fall victim to Chinese blandishments.

Parallely with their unobtrusive, yet determined, campaign against the prestige and influence of Tibet's God-king, Peking's representatives on the highland pursued a like course with regard to the multitude of public and semi-official privileges vested in the Lamaist Church. This was done in two ways: first, some of the purely secular functions exercised by the ecclesiastical authorities either on special occasions or as part of their regular duties were drastically curtailed or, where possible, eliminated outright; second, an attempt was begun to divorce to a maximum the mechanics of civil service from informal monastic supervision and direction and, in the process, a concerted effort was made either to "secularize" Tibet's native administration completely or, failing that, to reverse the traditional order of precedence between the laity and the Church and subordinate the latter to the former.

The reasons for such a program are not hard to fathom. The Church still represented by far the most potent force on the Tibetan social scene and continued to stand as the citadel of local conservatism. Moreover, it derived its power from an independent source of authority and appealed to extra-terrestrial values; so, on both counts, it proved totally unpalatable to the Chinese Communists. True, Tibetan secular circles were not appreciably more progressive, from the Chinese standpoint, than the religious elements, but they had two virtues to recommend them: they did not wield the power that their monastic

counterparts did and lacked the cohesiveness and unity of the latter; they could be dealt with on purely human terms, with no invocation of religious sanction and sanctity of faith, and, consequently, occupied a more vulnerable position, which naturally led to the Chinese preferring them.

In line with this approach, the Chinese obtained, for instance, the abolition at a very early date of the tradition of *Lama Raj* symbolizing the primacy of the monks in the governance of Tibet, whereby every year all lay officials temporarily withdrew from active service, turned over their powers to their clerical opposites and allowed them to rule alone for 21 days. They also tried to extend the authority of the Council of *Kalons* over the ecclesiastical court (*Tse-Kor*), a move which, if successful, would have put the latter under the jurisdiction of a predominantly secular body and so increase Peking's chances of capturing for itself control of that powerful religious agency. Apparently acting to block this plan, the Dalai Lama raised to five the staff of the monastic secretariat (the chief task of which was the management of the *Tse-Kor*) and named his elder brother to the newly created post.

While Peking's spokesmen did start by acting in such a way as to favor the lay aspects of the Tibetan political organism, this outwardly benevolent attitude should not be construed as a blanket endorsement by the Chinese of those of the country's institutions which somehow escaped organic association with the Church. Rather, the situation can perhaps best be described as one in which the secular arm of rule was merely disliked by the Chinese less than its monastic *alter ego*, for reasons previously mentioned, and not as a case of Peking approving of the native laity because it deemed it intrinsically superior to or better than the religious hierarchy. Nor, for that matter, was the apparatus of secular administration spared critical Chinese scrutiny either, or allowed to emerge unscathed from the consuming Chinese passion for reforms.

Thus, reports soon began filtering out that the more objectionable survivals of feudal practices in Tibet were under heavy attack and that many of the past vast privileges of high noblemen and vestiges of quasi-absolute powers of the leading secular lords and top Tibetan families had already either been abolished outright or much curtailed, particularly with regard to the custom of maintaining private courts and levying taxes for personal use. Indeed, to judge from an eyewitness account, in the course of these first few years, "feudalistic institutions

in Tibet had gone out of the administration," meaning by that "various officials and go-betweens who held their own courts and carried on the administration in their own way, apart from the Dalai Lama and often at variance with his wishes." ¹

Even the Dalai Lama's Cabinet did not prove immune to the winds of change and, in January, 1953, the *Kashag* underwent a notable reorganization: first, a special commission of three ministers was created to conduct relations with the Central Government's mission and the Commander of the Chinese expeditionary corps in Tibet; second, individual *Kalons*, rather than the Cabinet as a whole, would henceforth be entrusted with specific tasks, e.g., supervision of construction projects, initiation and implementation of reforms, etc., and would be personally held liable for the performance of their assigned duties. By so pinpointing official responsibility, the Chinese certainly placed themselves in a far better position to exercise effective control over the work of the Cabinet than when the Ministers had felt protected by the anonymity of the collective body. Likewise, the Chinese undertook to formalize somewhat existing administrative procedures, both in order to define the proper channels of command and clarify jurisdictional competence and, concurrently, to limit further the personal authority of the monarch by rendering a public servant's term in office independent of the crown's whims and wishes. District magistrates, for example, had traditionally held the post at the will of the Dalai Lama. Now, their tenure was uniformly set at three years ² and, at Chinese instigation, similar developments next took place in other spheres of Tibetan public administration as well.

Finally, a number of companion measures were initiated by the Chinese during this period designed further to underscore the new constitutional relationship between Tibet and China and, inferentially, stress the former's subordination to the "Mother country." Not to

¹ *Asian Recorder*, 1956, p. 670.

² Lowell Thomas, Jr., *The Silent War in Tibet*, pp. 129-130: "One such 'improvement' was the alteration of the status of the *dzongpon*. . . . Under the reform, the *dzongpon* was paid a fixed monthly salary and forwarded all revenues to Lhasa. Also, he was appointed for a fixed term of three or four years. The reform, however, did not stop here. Older *dzongpons* now were pensioned off and new *dzongpons* were appointed. And all *dzongpons*, whether new or old, were to perform their official functions 'only after consultation with and advice from the local Chinese military commander.' The notice which informed the *dzongpons* of their new status pointed out that the Dalai Lama himself was governing 'with the advice of the Chinese Commander-in-Chief.' Thus the Chinese hoped to enforce co-operation of the Tibetans at the *dzong* level."

waste such opportune occasions, Peking also used them to emphasize again the equality which the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama enjoyed in its eyes and, lastly, to foster the revised human portrayal of these two figures in lieu of their historical divine image. Hence, as far back as 1951, both of them, together with *Kalon* Ngaboq, were elected members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. And, soon after, both Lamas sent personal representatives to Peking to open permanent liaison offices there.¹

The results of Chinese enterprise enumerated above were, needless to say, always characterized by Peking as fully consonant with the spirit and the letter of the 1951 Sino-Tibetan treaty. If that document did not expressly foresee these developments, presumably that was due solely to the signatories' reluctance to clutter the text with undue detail, and not because the eventuality had not been envisaged in principle. Still, as already noted, the clauses of the basic agreement were drafted so loosely and so equivocally as to allow for precisely this type of claim, and thus nothing can be gained from engaging in learned controversy as to the purportedly real intent of the parties in their final choice of official formulas on that memorable occasion. Therefore, it may perhaps be safer simply to state that whereas the lawfulness or the illegitimacy of these Chinese actions remains a closely disputed point, since the available evidence readily lends itself to either interpretation, Peking's initiative in proceeding in the way it did can derive from the wording of the 1951 accord but indirect justification at best, by arguing a silent blessing, as it were.

The situation appears as altogether different, then, as regards three other issues for which the original treaty had explicitly prescribed a solution along specified lines. In effect, the latter had thereafter reserved for Peking alone the "centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet." In addition, all defense matters were henceforth to lie within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Chinese authorities and Tibetan troops were scheduled to "be reorganized by stages into the People's Liberation Army, and become a part of the national defense forces of the People's Republic of China." Finally, the Central Government won the right to maintain a military and administrative committee and a military area headquarters in Tibet. The Chinese did not delay in asserting these powers where is suited their purpose and, indeed, as usual went well beyond them whenever

¹ *Facts on File*, 1952, p. 419; B. P. Gurevich, *Osvobozhdenie Tibeta*, p. 182.

they found their restless exploratory probing meeting with insufficient resistance from the local authorities to discourage them forthwith.

The question of the diplomatic business of the Tibetan State did not present much difficulty simply because it never had progressed beyond rudimentary beginnings. With the liquidation of the Tibetan Foreign Office at Chinese insistence, that phase of it came to a close. There still remained trade with the neighboring nations, of course, but that too shortly fell within the ambit of Chinese regulatory activity as part of the program of economic reorganization of the region sponsored by Peking soon afterwards.

As for the integration of the Tibetan armed forces into the Chinese army, ostensibly here also rapid progress was registered. At the beginning of 1952, the Tibetan Military District of the People's Liberation Army was created. A Chinese general, Chang Kuo-hua, was named Commander of the District and two Tibetans, the ubiquitous *Kalon* Ngaboo and Ndokar Funguog Rabshi, were appointed as his assistants. All other high officers were Chinese, however. In February, 1952, it was officially disclosed by the military headquarters in Lhasa that the integration of Tibetan units with the Chinese Liberation Army had already been successfully completed.

While the announcement sounded conclusive enough, on the face of it, it was signally remiss in not spelling out what that transformation meant in ordinary operational terms. For that reason and because of the charges subsequently to be levelled by the Chinese in the wake of the 1959 uprising at the Lhasa régime to the effect that it had treacherously mobilized Tibetan soldiers behind Peking's back, accusations which Peking's own earlier statements about assimilation, if themselves true, would brand as utter nonsense, the entire problem bears looking at a little more closely. Without in any way pre-judging the Chinese case in connection with the revolt, it may safely be said at this point that the original Chinese claims regarding the absorption of the Tibetan military establishment, such as it was, would seem to have been either premature or erroneous, to put it mildly, or grossly spurious. For now, let it suffice just to indicate that this so-called "incorporation" in practice amounted apparently to nothing more substantive than the adoption of Chinese uniforms and weapons by Tibetan units and the nominal subordination of the latter to the Chinese regional command. As against that, operational control of the Dalai Lama's troops continued to rest with Tibetan officers appointed by him or in his

name, the corps preserved intact its separate identity and never became merged with the Chinese garrison, and even refused to fly the Chinese flag over its barracks, which led to at least one major crisis in Sino-Tibetan relations. Furthermore, the symbiosis so enthusiastically greeted in those early days never really evolved beyond the initial paper stage, a fact of some consequence for the future of Tibet.¹

In the meantime, the question of instituting a special military and administrative committee in Lhasa still remained unresolved. True, in May, 1952, it was persistently rumoured that the Chinese emissaries in Tibet were taking the first steps towards forming such an organ, described as a quasi-religious administration in which both Lamas would be equal members along with representatives of "patriotic" elements and delegates from Lhasa's three leading Buddhist monasteries. This new governing body, purportedly, would then supersede the Dalai Lama's Cabinet and would be expected to enforce the Sino-Tibetan agreement and introduce wide-spread reforms. Subsequently, conflicting reports began circulating to the effect that the Chinese in Lhasa had been cajoling the Dalai Lama to accept the chairmanship of the proposed military and administrative committee, involving his personal attendance, together with the Panchen Lama and *Kalon Ngaboo*, at its sessions, but had met with stubborn refusal.

The end result was that no military-administrative committee ever came into existence. To some extent, this outcome undoubtedly repre-

¹ Lack of effective Chinese control over the Tibetan troops came out into the open at the time of the 1959 revolt. First, the Chinese charged that the Tibetan army was cooperating with the insurrectionary bands, by furnishing them with arms and men. There is some evidence of the truth of these charges. Second, the Chinese, when they wanted the services of the Tibetan units against the rebels, had to request the Dalai Lama's permission for that purpose and it was refused to them. Thirdly, at the time of the 1959 hostilities in the capital, the Tibetan soldiers cast off their Chinese uniforms and joined the fighting against the P.L.A. under their own officers. All of this demonstrates that the original Chinese claim of fusion of the Tibetan army with the P.L.A. had been premature and erroneous and that the Tibetan troops remained largely separate and led by their own officers.

The other charge, then, voiced in 1959, that the Tibetan government had secretly expanded the size of the army no longer sounds incredible, given the falsehood of the earlier claim of practical Chinese control over these troops. As a matter of fact, such expansion apparently did take place, although since the troops in question consisted of the palace guards and corps of personal bodyguards of the Dalai Lama, there was little room for growth and Chinese assertions to the contrary are vastly exaggerated. Besides, the fighting quality of these troops remained questionable and their performance in the March uprising was by no means outstanding, so that Peking was really making much ado about nothing. Things could not be very much different from the situation observed by Tsung-Lien Shen and Shen-Chi Liu, *Tibet and the Tibetans*, p. 115: "The Tibetan army, with its complete lack of modern equipment and poor leadership, is not taken seriously even by the Tibetans themselves. The monks detest it as an imported hybrid. The nobility distrusts it as a potential menace. And the common people fear it as a public scourge."

sented a concession to strong opposition on the part of the Tibetan leadership to such plans. Probably a more important reason lies in the attitude of the Peking régime itself. Indeed, while the Chinese did entertain on and off some vague notions concerning the possible desirability of organizing a body of this type, these ideas never crystallized sufficiently to impel them to translate their preliminary thought into concrete action. And, in turn, a good deal of this behavior can be explained by the incidental factor that the central government's decree of October 10, 1952, had meanwhile abolished the institution of military-administrative committees throughout the rest of China, which likely made Peking hesitate on whether to push especially the creation of such a body in Tibet alone.¹

In any case, the Chinese finally decided not to. Instead, they busied themselves on the national scene with the enactment of various pieces of legislation and sundry documents defining in some measure their official policy towards China's ethnic minorities,² the Tibetans included. None of these, however, were specifically addressed to the Tibetan problem, save a single clause in the Regulations for the Organization (on a Trial Basis) of Committees for Affairs of National Minorities Attached to People's Governments at All Levels of February 22, 1952, which simply provided for the creation of a department (3rd) for Tibetan affairs in the Commission for Affairs of National Minorities of the Central People's Government.³

Needless to say, the Chinese did not all this time concentrate their attention exclusively on practical politics and administrative procedures. Indeed, given the precariousness of their physical foothold on the plateau in those first difficult years, one finds them very deliberately channeling much, if not most, of their proselytizing energy elsewhere, into connected, but hopefully less explosive, fields of endeavor. Here, Peking apparently counted on the cumulative effect of its multiple peaceful inroads into various routine aspects of Tibetan

¹ B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193. For a summary of the decree, see *KCA*, 1953, pp. 12785, 13819.

² For the texts of some of the enactments of this period concerning the constitutional status of the lesser ethnic elements, see *Policy Towards Nationalities of the People's Republic of China* (Peking, 1953).

³ Text in *Jen-min jih pao*, August 15, 1952. For text in Russian, see N. G. Sudarikov (ed.), *Konstitutsiya i osnovnye zakonodatelnye akty Kitaishkoi Narodnoi Respubliki* (Moscow, 1955), pp. 113-118. Other early provisions on national autonomy may be found in the law on Basic Principles for Realization of Local National Autonomy in the Chinese People's Republic of February 22, 1952, *Jen-min jih-pao*, August 13, 1952, and the Electoral Law of February 11, 1953, in N. G. Sudarikov (ed.), *op. cit.* pp. 82-96.

life gradually to tilt the balance of equilibrium on the highland in its favor and against the old order, by capitalizing on the normal power of conversion of "modern" techniques and skillfully promoting disenchantment with ancient methods. Of course, these activities too were pursued primarily with a view to bolstering the Chinese position in the newly won region and their contribution to that end was far from negligible; still, this approach at least had the advantage of ostensibly focusing on non-controversial problems and treating of matters unmarked by the stigma of political conflict, which rendered it that much more attractive to the Chinese in those uncertain months.

Thus, not surprisingly, the record indicates that the Chinese lavished throughout a great deal of care on questions of education and indoctrination, since these two fields lay close enough to the key issue of social reform to warrant sustained cultivation, yet seemed sufficiently safe and neutral to indulge in on a material scale without undue risk of engendering dangerous friction. Indoctrination lent itself particularly well to the type of policy the Chinese then had in mind and so, almost from the start, Peking spared no efforts to mount an effective campaign intended to re-orient Tibetan public opinion in the desired direction. Indeed, rumors to the effect that the Chinese military mission at once opened a "cultural department" to indoctrinate Tibetans in Marxist philosophy and launched a comprehensive information campaign to familiarize the local people with the Communist Manifesto and the 1951 treaty and was busy setting up a printing press for Marxist literature and building a radio station in Lhasa accompanied the first appearance of the Chinese in the capital.

Be that as it may, thereafter most of the Chinese activity in this sphere expressed itself somewhat less directly, to wit, through the proliferation of "social" organizations of every conceivable type coordinating their work in a carefully concerted drive to influence the outlook of selected groups of the Tibetan population. Thus, on May 4, 1952, a Tibetan department of the New Democratic Youth Federation of China was formed in Lhasa, and on February 13, 1953, also in Lhasa, a Cultural Association of Patriotic Youth. On March 8, 1954, establishment of a Women's Patriotic Federation was announced; in Gyantse, in addition to these, the authorities organized a special Committee of Study officially dedicated to acquainting the local

residents with the policies of the Central Government.¹ Numerous offices of the Chinese Communist Party had, of course, already been operating in Tibet since Peking's original mission arrived in the capital, but their staff did not include any Tibetans.

As regards the issue of economic reforms in Tibet, the Chinese initially pursued a like cautious course. Still, by 1953, they already could claim one major coup to their honor in that they had managed to prevail on the local authorities to take a few rather decisive steps toward alleviating the oppressive financial burdens pressing down on the lower classes and toward lessening the economic dependence of the lowly commoners, the peasants and cattle-herders, on the whims of the nobility, the monasteries and the large landowners. As a result, the old accumulated grain and money debts which reduced most peasants and nomads to a status of virtual bondage were forthwith cut in half and back-interest waived.² In the Panchen Lama's districts, a similar process occurred and even the interest due on new debts was diminished by one-third.³ Concurrently, taxes were lowered, the permitted interest rate on loans was reduced, and it was prohibited to seize mortgaged peasant land-holdings for non-payment of debts, those already forfeited being ordered returned to their owners.

As noted above, the Chinese took full credit for these improvements, for ameliorations they undoubtedly were and long overdue at that. What they fail to mention, though, is that their success on this score to a large extent stemmed from the fact that the Dalai Lama's régime had once before attempted to initiate on its own a similar program of reform and actually had registered some gains in that direction. True, progress had not been very spectacular and that for two reasons. In the first place, the Dalai Lama's régime had been able to act forcefully only in the purely public lands belonging to the throne and there it had effected the beginnings of far-reaching changes along the same lines the Chinese later followed, i.e., by cancelling outright part of the peasantry's debts to the national treasury, and reducing much of the remainder. However, this still left untouched the great mass of debts contracted by the lower classes, usually at usurious rates, from private moneylenders, merchants, lords and monastery officials. Apparently,

¹ *Jen-min jih-pao*, August 28, 1956; V. P. Leontiev, *Inostrannaya ekspansiya v Tibete v 1888-1919gg* (Moscow, 1956), p. 208.

² G. M. Valiakhmetov, "Vnutrennee ustroistvo Tibeta," *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, 1956, No. 7, pp. 114-115.

³ V. Ovchinnikov, "Reportazh s 'kryshi mira'," *Zvezda*, 1956, No. 8, p. 139.

the Lhasa government did entertain thoughts on remedying this situation too by disbursing funds for the purpose of helping the lower classes settle these obligations and even by expropriating, upon compensation, the larger private estates for redistribution of the fields to the landless tenants, but nothing concrete was yet done about these tentative plans, largely, it would seem, simply for lack of time.¹ In the second place, even where the local Tibetan authorities tried to implement the Dalai Lama's directives they generally encountered determined Chinese opposition, motivated precisely by the Chinese desire, one, to aggravate to the utmost such tensions as existed and exploit them to their own ends against the Tibetan government, and, two, then to step in with a ready solution and pose as savior and protector of the Tibetan "working masses" from their exploiting compatriots.

In these conditions, it becomes almost impossible to determine with any degree of fair accuracy which party deserves recognition as the true author of these positive changes for the better. This much can be said, however. The Dalai Lama's régime itself approved of such reforms and, in fact, undertook some of them independently. It achieved a modicum of success in this endeavor, though not very much because of the feudal conservatism of the Tibetan upper strata bent on resisting all transformations likely to affect their vast entrenched privileges and to some extent also due to the machinations of the Chinese resolved to usurp the role of the fount from which all blessings flowed for themselves alone. On the other hand, when the Chinese decided to proceed with this program under their own auspices they certainly acted much more energetically (and, one should perhaps add, more ruthlessly) than the Dalai Lama's régime in pursuit of their goal and achieved more faster, but, in large part, were able to do so only because it was popularly known that such a course already enjoyed in principle the doctrinal *imprimatur* of the Dalai Lama. In short, the practical execution of the blueprint was, at bottom, the work of the Chinese, but its success, in turn, owed very much to the fact that the Chinese stand just happened to coincide with the Dalai Lama's personal views on this count and so derived from that an aura of legitimacy which immeasurably facilitated Peking's course of action.

Clearly, the purpose of this enterprise was largely negative, in the sense at least that its effects were not valued by Peking in themselves

¹ The Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People*, pp. 64-66.

but rather as phenomena preliminary and preparatory to further progress. Its immediate function thus lay in helping curry favor with the masses, alienate the latter from their own ruling circles, disrupt the organic unity of the Tibetan society and, eventually enable the Chinese to secure dominant control over a people deeply divided against itself, so that the task of "building socialism" could then be begun in properly propitious circumstances. The expected dividends, therefore, loomed in the future, and the entire conception was predicated on long-term calculations and grounded in the notion of gradual returns.

Meanwhile, however, the Chinese strove by much more direct means to establish an early hold over certain other areas of Tibetan economic life and to consolidate it here as soon as possible, presumably because they regarded these sectors as more crucial to the perpetuation of Peking's physical presence on the plateau. Commerce, especially foreign commerce, at once fell into this high-priority category. Thus, a branch of the People's Bank of China was opened very shortly after the so-called "peaceful liberation" of the country and subsidiary offices soon appeared in Shigatse and Gyantse; in a short while, their operations exerted considerable influence over domestic Tibetan commercial activities. Furthermore, by 1952 all Tibetan foreign trade was already monopolized by a joint Sino-Tibetan syndicate and all sales of Tibetan products to China were handled through a Peking-operated General Tibetan Commercial Corporation.¹

The commercial ventures of the Chinese authorities were, of course, launched with a definite aim: to bolster Peking's domination of Tibet via control of the local finances and economic resources, to the same end bind the region's trade with China's markets and, finally, to eradicate existing foreign interests in the area. What really made it possible for Peking to achieve this objective, however, was something else again, namely, its achievements in the field of road-building. Indeed, here one cannot deny that the Chinese accomplished a real feat. The record of Han penetration and influence in Tibet since 1951 is, in fact, inextricably linked with the intensive development of transport and communications. The invasion of the Chinese Communist

¹ *Facts on File*, 1952, p. 3; B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 183; Lowell Thomas, Jr., *op. cit.* p. 122, describes the process as follows: "They [the Chinese] limited the profit margin for all traders. In many cases they discouraged the trader from pursuing his business, suggesting that he lend his capital to the Chinese at a modest interest rate and not bother about making the tiresome trip at all."

armies in 1950, which led to the conclusion of the Sino-Tibetan agreement the next year was itself spearheaded by large-scale highway and bridge construction by the People's Liberation Army enabling impressive quantities of men and heavy equipment to be moved into terrain hitherto accessible only to foot-travellers and yaks. The signing of the 1951 treaty imparted further impetus to the Chinese army's construction program which culminated three years later (on December 25, 1954) in the official opening of regular motor traffic on the 2,300-km Sikang-Tibet highway connecting Yaan (in the former province of Sikang) with Lhasa, by way of Chamdo, and on the 2,100-km Chinghai-Tibet highway joining Sining (the provincial center of Chinghai) with Lhasa. Extensive works subsequently rendered both roads all-weather routes open the year round.¹

The development of communication projects on the Tibetan plateau was not confined to basic means of transportation alone. In July, 1952, for instance, postal and telephone connections were established between Chungking and Lhasa and shortly thereafter Chinese teams extended the wires to Shigatse. Telephone service between Peking and Lhasa has reportedly been in operation since December, 1953; radio communication between Lhasa and Changtu opened in the first half of May, 1954, and long-distance telephone lines, it was claimed soon after, already linked all the major towns and cities of the Tibetan highland.²

Taken together, these modern facilities, but the highways in particular, were bound to leave a heavy imprint on the subsequent commercial pattern of the region. Behind the road-building program lay primarily military considerations, without a doubt, but once consummated the introduction of the latest means of conveyance, accompanied by the systematic expansion of advanced communication methods, naturally led, as it surely was expected to from the very outset, to a marked growth of commerce both within Tibet and, what is more important, between it and those areas of China to which it was now conveniently connected. The wide-spread replacement of yaks, capable of only small-bulk haulage, by mechanized transport, as well as the exploitation of certain new resources and the inclusion of new

¹ B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 186; Chang Po-chun, "First Highways to Tibet," *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 2-5 (May, 1955); *Daily News Release*, January 3, 1955, p. 16; January 21, 1955, p. 122; September 11, 1956, p. 89.

² *Daily News Release*, May 18, 1954, p. 185; March 14, 1955, p. 83; April 27, 1955, p. 340; June 4, 1955, p. 41.

commodity items in the flow of goods, fundamentally altered in the process not only the volume of trade, but also its composition.

As a result, then, after 1951, Tibetan external trade saw itself increasingly diverted toward China and away from India and Nepal, the traditional outlets for Tibetan exports, a trend which grew with every passing year. Matching this, according to Chinese sources, a constantly mounting volume of goods, including daily necessities, lathes, cranes and heavy equipment, made its way over the recently opened highways from the interior of China to Tibet, primarily to Lhasa and Chamdo. The reforms sponsored by the new order on the plateau allegedly encouraged both local production and demand and brought on a higher trade turn-over; concurrently, the prices of items imported from China, to judge by official data, declined steadily after 1951, the cost of tea, an indispensable staple of the Tibetan diet, to cite but one case, supposedly decreasing by two-thirds in two years.¹

All of this, the authorities claimed, meant that traffic both ways kept rising throughout. Thus, the General Tibetan Commercial Corporation was said to have imported four times as much goods into Lhasa from China in 1955 as in 1954. In turn, in 1955 its branches reportedly concluded contracts with Tibetan merchants and producers for the sale of 1 million yuan worth of wool, medicinal herbs and other local products alone, a sum threefold that of total Chinese purchases in Tibet for the entire 1954.² The press painted a picture of even more impressive gains in the less distant Chamdo province. Here, the prices of manufactured goods, tea and salt and other essentials imported from China proper were described as reduced by half since the Sikang-Tibet highway reached the city in 1952. The town, according to news releases, had since become a major transit depot for Sino-Tibetan commerce, transshipping to the outer plateau items arriving from all parts of China and, as a consequence, had grown nearly beyond recognition.

At this point, two other areas of endeavor in which the Chinese displayed considerable interest from the start still remain to be examined: agriculture; and health and welfare. Agriculture has his-

¹ B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-187; V. P. Leontiev, *op. cit.*, p. 207; Chang Kuo-hua, "A New Tibet Is Arising," *People's China*, 1953, No. 10, p. 7; *Survey of China Mainland Press*, No. 1369, September 13, 1956, p. 26, and No. 1377, September 26, 1956, p. 27 (hereafter abbr. *SCMP*).

² On the volume of Sino-Tibetan trade, see *Daily News Release*, January 21, 1955, p. 122; February 14, 1955, p. 116; *Jen-min jih-pao*, January 8, 1956, and November 18, 1956; V. Kassis, "Ninety Days in Tibet," *New Times*, 1956, No. 9, p. 28.

torically represented the most important economic occupation in Tibet, with animal husbandry second and artisanship a poor third. What progress has officially been claimed in the field of local agriculture since the advent of the Chinese, and thanks to them, during this first period fell primarily into the category of improvements recorded by the native populace as a result of aid and assistance granted it by the Han authorities. By that token, important advances in the exploitation of virgin lands and significant ameliorations in the yield and quality of traditional crops were publicized by official sources. Credit for these results went primarily to the introduction of better agricultural methods and the dissemination of modern technical information by Chinese settlers, administrators, specialists and members of the People's Liberation Army's units garrisoned throughout the region, as well as to the financial support extended locally to individual Tibetan households through the just opened branches of the People's Bank of China. For example, shortly after the conclusion of the 1951 accord, the People's Bank of China claimed to have assigned more than 30,000 million yuan to a general fund earmarked for loans to needy herdsmen, tillers and artisans in Tibet to enable them to buy seed, manufactured articles and food, and that almost immediately money to the total sum of some two million was distributed in interest-free loans by the Chinese authorities on the plateau to Tibetan peasants and nomads. In October, 1954, it was again disclosed that additional interest-free loans in money and grain and free Government supplies of agricultural implements had been made.¹

Likewise, health and welfare projects constituted an important part of the public program initiated by the Chinese authorities on the Tibetan highland almost at once after the "liberation." As early as August, 1952, Lhasa witnessed an event of first-rate significance as the new Lhasa People's Hospital opened its doors; in its first six months of operation, it reportedly gave free medical care to over 27,000 sick-cases, in addition to handling 70,000 consultations. Numerous other medical stations, as well as mobile medical units and vaccination teams, were said to have been formed in the beginning of 1952, designed to serve most of the populated centers and even the remote areas of the country. According to official figures, in 1951-1952 the Central Government spent upwards of 13 million yuan on health measures in

¹ B. Gurov, "Tibet: Chinese Press Review," *New Times*, 1952, No. 48, p. 13; B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 184; *Daily News Release*, May 23, 1955, p. 203.

Tibet, including veterinary work and the cost of a serum factory in Lhasa. By 1954, the Lhasa People's Hospital revealed that it had attended up to 220,000 sick calls free of charge and had greatly expanded its services, staff and technical facilities; furthermore, new teams of doctors and medical specialists were said to be arriving at frequent intervals from China. In order to cope with the daily influx of patients (estimated to have grown from 200 to 400), the hospital had begun training Tibetan medical workers.¹

Similarly, by October, 1954, an announcement appeared to the effect that a general hospital for Tibetans had just been built in Shigatse, equipped with supplies and apparatus forwarded from Shanghai. A local People's hospital also supposedly functioned in Chamdo and was scheduled to be considerably enlarged in 1955, and a medical clinic was set up in the new town of Gyanta. At a regional health conference held in Lhasa in September, 1955, statistics, admittedly incomplete, were quoted indicating that free medical treatment and inoculation had reached approximately 963,000 people in the four years since 1951. In addition, 170 Tibetans had in the interim undergone training as medical workers and 400 doctors and nurses had been dispatched by the Central Government from China proper to the plateau. Plans already drafted foresaw the establishment of even more clinics, the creation of additional mobile units, and the graduation of a further 50 to 80 Tibetan medical workers in the next two years.²

Outwardly, of course, the end image conveyed by this multitude of projects, both those actually completed and those still in the process, cannot fail but impress the audience at which the information is beamed, be it the body of domestic listeners or the interested observer abroad, if for no other reason than by the very massiveness of the effort here outlined. The quantitative impact of Peking's manifold enterprises in Tibet on that country, as chronicled above, therefore defies denial and must be conceded without further ado. The net qualitative effect of these Chinese commitments, however, constitutes a totally different dimension in which no clear-cut and positive conclusions immediately come to mind and where Peking's balance-sheet does not readily lend itself to a neat summing up. Still, some attempt at an over-all assessment of the Chinese record for this period

¹ Chang Kuo-hua, *op. cit.* (p. 62 above), p. 9: *Daily News Release*, August 21, 1954, p. 231.

² *Daily News Release*, October 7, 1954, p. 96; September 16, 1955, p. 132; I. Epstein, "Tibet Beyond Lhasa," *People's China*, 1956, No. 2, pp. 17-25.

is called for, even if on a test basis only, and so must needs be tried, notwithstanding the unavoidably tentative nature of any undertaking such as this given the available information.

Perhaps the easiest to evaluate is the extent of the gains registered by the Chinese in the political field proper between 1951 and 1954, although for that purpose one must look at each of the three artificially drawn component parts of Tibet separately. In Chamdo, the Chinese seemed most firmly in control, wielding authority directly through an administration heavily infiltrated with Chinese personnel and, presumably because of this, venturing to introduce changes closely akin to the reforms then being started in China itself, something they definitely did not risk at the time in the rest of Tibet. Thus, Han settlers soon began arriving in Chamdo in ever increasing numbers, receiving land in the area and expected to work it along "socialist" lines, which included prospective collectivization. Such notions were also thrust on the local Tibetan population, with the Chinese administrators betraying mounting belligerency and impatience at the obvious reluctance shown by Tibetans of all walks of life to accept these ideas. Added to that there was the determination shown by the Chinese, quite understandable one may add, to disarm the local war-like tribes, in which the men-folk regarded weapons as part of their normal costume, and to curb some of the traditional high-handed treatment meted out by the nomadic elements to their sedentary brethren.

Not surprisingly, these moves by the Chinese, which most of the Tibetans in Chamdo chose to regard as unjustified alien encroachments on their customary existence, in short order provoked a violent reaction among the native people. That, in turn, rapidly degenerated into armed conflict and resulted in a widening spiral of attack and military repression which engulfed the entire province and, then spilled over into the adjacent areas of the plateau. Whether the Chinese are solely to blame is a moot point, for, it would seem, short of simply never appearing in Chamdo, it is indeed hard to see how they could have otherwise avoided collision with the native inhabitants given the abyss separating the two parties. To the extent alone that the Chinese aspired to concentrate in their own hands the administration of public order and to impose it on all the local residents, they were bound to meet with defiance from the Goloks and the Khambas. The fact that the Chinese were foreigners and, what is more, entertained

unwelcome plans for what the latter regarded as their homeland undoubtedly made them readier to challenge Peking's authority. But, immensely jealous as they were of their independence, they would just as surely have disputed any like claim to curtail it regardless of its origin and, for that matter, had all along successfully maintained precisely that position *vis-à-vis* the Lhasa government.

This is not to say that the Chinese in Chamdo did not contribute to the troubles that developed there at a very early date between themselves and the Tibetan denizens. Their attitude and their behavior certainly played a major role in provoking the periodic outbursts of violence that marked the years after 1951 in which the area's population confronted the Chinese garrison. What must be remembered, however, is that while the conduct of the "occupation" authorities may have added fuel to the flames, the fire would most likely have burst out anyway, considering the highly inflammable temperament of the Tibetan border tribes caught in a new, and to them perturbing and therefore threatening, situation. With proper tact, the explosion may have been postponed for a while, but whether it could have been avoided altogether is most questionable.

Be that as it may, a good deal of the control which the Chinese exerted in Chamdo in these troubled years after 1951 depended on the use of forceful means or relied on such backing. The formal apparatus of administration lay safely in the hands of Peking's representatives and reforms, where the Chinese could enforce them, went further than in any other part of Tibet, whether in the field of economics, education, sanitation or elsewhere. The ground-work for a complete transformation of the region pursuant to plans drafted in Peking and envisaging its recasting in a "socialist" image was thus prepared and the instrumentalities for effectively consummating that process had in the meantime been created – by dint of repeated resort to naked force. The widespread revolt of the nomadic elements stood as the chief, perhaps the sole obstacle in the way of proximate execution of these blueprints, but that required handling at the military level at which the original challenge had been couched, after which everything seemed ready for the initiation of the desired transition. In the final analysis, however, only Chinese military preponderance had brought on this favorable conjuncture of events in the first place and now stood to ensure its successful outcome.

In Shigatse, the picture looked totally different. Because the

Chinese here operated behind the protective screen offered by the Panchen Lama and his entourage, their policies took an indirect route and the modalities for the realization of Chinese influence in the region were altered accordingly. Emphasis in this case had to be directed at "social" questions simply because the political sphere had already fallen peacefully into Chinese hands and no adverse force had materialized at this level.

The same was true of the Chinese position in Lhasa, but for a diametrically opposed reason. There, Peking confined its activities to the "non-political" arena not because it chose to do so, but simply because it could not act otherwise. Short of attempting to overthrow outright the Dalai Lama's government in the capital, as the Chinese had, to all intents and purposes, engineered the downfall of the local authorities of the Chamdo area, the very nature of things constrained Peking largely to desist from active interference in the administrative processes of the central régime. For, the Chinese were not as yet willing and probably could not as yet manage to carry out such a *coup* on terms acceptable to them, to wit, with a maximum of certainty and a minimum of embarrassment. As already noted, these considerations did not discourage Peking altogether from generating a modicum of pressure bent on effecting some changes in the structural and functional fabric of the Dalai Lama's government and Chinese initiative did register some gains on this count. Their meaning remained plainly marginal, however, and, at no time, it must be said, did the Chinese succeed in noticeably eroding the hard core of the Tibetan leadership's power, privileges and prestige. On the political plane, then, an uneasy stalemate ensued, an impasse satisfactory to neither party, yet provisionally tolerable to both and so warily endorsed by the two sides simply for lack of a better alternative at the moment.

In such conditions, the center of struggle inevitably shifted to those other spheres of public life Chinese interest in which has been documented above. Here, Peking openly took the offensive and this onslaught, instead of having to contend, as it would have if tried at the political level, with active resistance from the Tibetan hierarchy, now met with chiefly passive, albeit stubborn, resistance rooted in the conservative fabric of the national tradition. The end results were thus very uneven, depending on the ability of Peking's program to overcome each point of this defensive response separately and individually. That, in turn, determined the degree of leverage required

for each purpose and, coincidentally, the strength of the reaction materializing in the face of every such application of forceful tactics.

Problems of health and welfare constituted the least controversial facet of this activity. Though quite modest in proportion to the accumulated requirements of the region, Chinese innovations in this field seem to have answered a real need on the part of the local populace for such measures. As a result, Peking's policies here apparently met with little, if any, opposition, none of it serious, from the native inhabitants and, if various reports are to be believed, as they well may be in this case, soon succeeded in obtaining the confidence of a substantial segment of the Tibetan community. This type of goodwill could not, of course, prove conclusive in the overall contest for supremacy on the highland, and the Chinese surely did not intend it to play that role, but it occupied a place as a contributory element in the struggle for influence, in that context definitely carried some weight and commanded a price for that reason. By the same token, what imparted it particular value was the fact that it produced nothing but positive response, with perhaps a few negligible adverse side-effects, while in most other instances results were, at best, mixed. But, possibly for that very same cause, it could not be expected to, and did not, bring in decisive dividends, though it undoubtedly helped the Chinese project locally a better image of themselves and added a bit to their insurance coverage on the highland.

Normally, one would think that the Chinese venture in road-building would lead to similarly beneficial results, insofar as concerned Peking, or, at worst, would operate in a neutral atmosphere. To a large extent the situation that did ensue displayed elements of both these attitudes, but with an appreciable admixture of negative overtones the emergence of which remained otherwise completely unforeseen. The explanation for the latter development lies in the essentially accidental origins of the phenomenon. At bottom, the feat of engineering which the highways reflected could not fail but impress the Tibetans and hence thoroughly enhance the stature of the Chinese among the indigenous masses. In this respect, then, the undertaking represented a net profit, to say nothing of the immense worth of these routes as instrumentalities for the consolidation of the Chinese physical hold over the country, their real purpose throughout, needless to add, and which they served most effectively.

Where the Chinese managed to spoil some of this mass sentiment

in their favor was by their apparent inflexibility in tracing the path of the roadbeds. In the process, they reportedly tore down buildings, ruined fields, appropriated good farm land and so forth,¹ all for the sake of adhering to the initial survey and, perhaps, out of technical calculations as well, regardless of the considerable price this exacted in terms of present and future popularity. The loss they thus suffered should not be exaggerated, of course, since only a small number of individuals were personally injured by that behavior. Still, this arbitrariness, precisely because it was so unnecessary and could so easily have been avoided, and was not, left a strong residual flavor of bitterness the taste of which was also widely shared with those not directly involved in the incident, thereby giving it a much broader forum and vesting it with more importance than it justly deserved, all to the marked detriment of the Chinese. Though Peking came out ahead anyway, it had nonetheless narrowed the margin of gain and, what is more, had compounded the mistake by having provoked the setback so short-sightedly and so foolishly.

The social reverberations of Peking's moves in the field of agricultural pursuit generally resembled the impact-at-large which attended the outcome of its construction projects. Potentially, of course, the subject was a much more explosive one, but, apparently for this very reason, the Chinese here proceeded with extreme caution and, except for the fiasco in the Chamdo area, duly managed to escape any untoward accidents. True, they failed to effect any great changes in the system of land tenure, and, while they repeatedly urged the Tibetans to make a decision with regard to the implementation of land reform, nothing ever came of it.² Tentatively, then, it may be concluded that Peking's policies in the Tibetan countryside after 1951 had some effect on the mass of the peasants and herdsmen – an imprint for the most part psychological and with relatively small practical consequences. In the main, the Chinese authorities did not alienate the Tibetan lower classes, as they surely did the local vested interests, through their attempts to bring about changes in the traditional rural way of life.

In a positive sense, however, the Chinese accomplishment in this field remained minimal. While rather impressive sums of money had

¹ International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, p. 66.

² Cf. R. Ford, *Captured in Tibet* (London, 1957), p. 251. Also G. M. Valiakhmetov, *Organy vlasti i upravleniya Tibeta*, p. 19.

been set aside by Peking for purposes of improving the lot of the Tibetan commoner, only a small fraction of the funds ended up by being distributed among the native inhabitants, partly, it would seem, because of opposition by the conservative circles among the upper classes which saw this as an encroachment on their ancient prerogatives, partly due to normal suspicion of the foreigner. Even when Tibetans accepted Chinese aid, it still did not mean that they now owed allegiance to their "benefactors" or so much as felt very grateful toward them, for some evidence exists to show that not a few Tibetans took what was offered, while inclined to view the donors with a mixture of amusement and contempt.¹

In another sense, too, the picture appears quite blurred, to wit, as concerns the basic matter of the physical implementation *per se* of the Chinese program. Indeed, for a number of years the Chinese regularly issued statistics purporting to show the extent to which this assistance reached the Tibetan masses, the scope and breadth of the help thus rendered. Yet, in the wake of the 1959 uprising they charged the Tibetan authorities with having systematically sabotaged their efforts by refusing to turn over to the population the supplies and implements entrusted to them by the Chinese for local apportionment and by hoarding and destroying much of what the Chinese furnished to them to that end. If true, and some of these accusations undoubtedly contain a grain of veracity, then Peking's original claims as to progress recorded in the countryside in the earlier years require further discounting, making it even harder to gauge what importance to assign to the whole scheme.

Generally speaking, it would seem safest to state that this aspect of Chinese activities again falls into the rubric of enterprises which did not harm Chinese plans on the plateau, probably strengthened somewhat the Chinese position, though not very much. One is, in fact, tempted to argue that the net end effect of the above program lay primarily on the plane of neutralizing the sentiments of the Tibetan masses, assuaging their potential anti-Han predisposition, as it were, rather than actively mobilizing their enthusiasm for the Chinese cause. At best, Tibetan popular opinion was to be given food for thought as to the possible value of the Chinese, which might cause it to waver, rather than be won outright. If so, there is room for belief that success was duly achieved.

¹ See, for instance, Lowell Thomas, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 120-142.

A like conclusion comes to mind when examining the significance of the sustained campaign of public indoctrination launched by the Chinese almost from the opening day of their appearance on the highland. From the start, the Chinese objective of remolding the Tibetan outlook was pursued in a wide variety of ways: directly through propaganda, indirectly through education, by participation in numerous social, religious and cultural associations and by means of sundry opportunities for on-the-job training. Each method was utilized in close conjunction with other techniques. On the whole, it represented a comprehensive drive probably affecting a high percentage of the Tibetan people of all ages and both sexes, of all social conditions, economic classes and political status. Quantitatively, the results looked impressive enough. Qualitatively, doubts again arise. Fringe elements in the Tibetan community, groups and individuals particularly susceptible to the appeals of the Chinese Communist views, may well have succumbed to Peking's blandishments. The hard core, however, apparently proved immune to this alien ideology.

How many Tibetans became active enemies of the Chinese because of revulsion against Peking's attempts at thought-control and disagreement with the value system espoused by the Chinese, is not known. Quite a few probably did react adversely to what they correctly estimated as a grave danger to the traditional Tibetan way of life and tried to counter the peril. The majority, however, simply did not respond either *pro* or *con*, at least not visibly. In their case, the consequences amounted to a latent infection, as it were: the seeds of doubt were planted, they might germinate after a while, but it would be thoroughly unrealistic to expect them to bear fruit immediately. Everything indicates that the Chinese in undertaking this scheme harbored few illusions as to the likelihood of collecting early dividends - again they operated, it would seem, within the framework of long-range conceptualization and so probably did not suffer too much disappointment at the subsequent turn of events.

To sum it up, then, if Peking counted on its indoctrination campaign in short order subjecting the Tibetan mind to mass plastic surgery, so to speak, profound disillusionment lay in store for it. Admittedly, the Chinese may have had such ideas, but the point is debatable for their initial *modus operandi* strikes the observer as altogether too circumspect, almost too modest one might say, for a plan so grandiose. Hence, rather than tax the Chinese leadership with inordinate naïveté,

a more accurate judgment would view them, if at all at fault, as perhaps overly, yet still not unduly, optimistic as to the power of organized persuasion. In that context, the meager outcome of their propaganda efforts could hardly have loomed as a failure, though it may well have sparked a feeling of momentary letdown.

While ambivalence marked many, if not most, of the features of the Chinese record in the above fields of endeavor, the picture emerges somewhat clearer in regard to Peking's progression toward the objective of influencing the economic pattern of Tibetan existence. Here, the sum total of the repercussions accompanying Peking's ambitions was more definitely negative, even though the spectrum as a whole continued to be distinguished by considerable unevenness.

Chinese commercial policy on the highland in the years following 1951 represents a case in point. On the whole, the line followed by Peking on this front may be said to have been animated by three purposes: 1) gradually to eliminate all foreign influence in the area and re-orient the flow of Tibetan trade towards China; 2) to gain control in this fashion over a significant facet of local life and, in the process, impose a State quasi-monopoly over most commercial pursuits; and, 3) to use the lever of economic power thus gained to further China's political plans for Tibet. In striving for the first goal, the Chinese in short order secured a material measure of success and they put themselves within reach of their second aim before very long too. Indeed, although retail trade thereafter still survived on the plateau, soon after "liberation" most of the native merchantmen became little more than intermediaries for the Chinese State corporations, buying and selling at official prices and working on a fixed margin of profit.

In thus disposing of the Tibetan merchant interests, the Chinese acted throughout with notable tactical finesse and so managed to avoid most of the serious adverse reverberations which could otherwise have easily ensued from such action. However, existing conditions favored them on this score. True, the native trading class, one of the propertied segments of the population, was, as a result, reduced to economic impotence and turned into a mere appendage of the Chinese banks and trading companies, but this group had never been closely organized, was relatively small, and lacked both influence and status in the traditional Tibetan social hierarchy. Of course, leading Tibetan families had dabbled sporadically in trade also and most monasteries

supplemented their income by occasionally venturing into the realm of commercial transactions and speculation, and to the extent that what the Chinese now did dealt these circles a bad blow, it generated among the latter ill-will directed against Peking for what they viewed as unjustified interference with their natural prerogatives. Nevertheless, the personal unhappiness caused in this manner never constituted a crucial public factor, for two reasons: where the rights so affected were vital, the victim belonged to the merchant profession and therefore lacked the voice to make a major issue of his woes; else, the activity represented a subsidiary occupation, and, while not necessarily unimportant to those engaged in it, was not a source of livelihood and, accordingly, did not provoke in them an indignation as intense as the one they would have betrayed had the contrary situation obtained.

For those reasons, then, these tensions did not in themselves develop into a national crisis. The consequences, however, of the Chinese securing a near monopoly of local trade activity and of the commercial changes sponsored by Peking which accompanied that phenomenon, came close to igniting widespread unrest verging on that. Ironically, the cause of it all lay precisely in that spectacular growth of internal and external trade turn-over that Peking constantly adduced as a sign of the brilliant progress its rule had brought to the plateau. For, indiscriminate buying by the Chinese authorities steadily drove the prices of local products upward, quickly resulting in a rampant inflation which affected primarily the poorer classes. What is more, the Chinese garrison on the highland settled down to live off the land, literally, and Chinese military headquarters next began systematically extorting from the Tibetan authorities supplies to feed the troops under the guise of emergency borrowing, a pattern of behavior which soon depleted the grain reserves maintained by the Lhasa régime for times of hardship and caused the cost of staple foodstuffs to skyrocket beyond the reach of increasing numbers of native inhabitants.¹

True, two factors served to attenuate somewhat the worse features of this trend. In the first place, urban centers suffered most from the multiple shortages so occasioned, the essentially self-sufficient countryside remaining to a large degree immune. The cities, however, dependent on outside sources for the sustenance of the residents, were hard-hit, Lhasa perhaps worst of all. The regular peasant household

¹ F. Moraes, *The Revolt in Tibet*, p. 90.

may well have been able to weather these difficulties without too much trouble, but the ordinary town-dweller's lot proved altogether unenviable. In the second place, the Chinese did try to lessen the adverse effects of the excessive burden their physical presence alone imposed on the Tibetan economy, further compounded by some of the unrealistic schemes implemented by Peking in this area. Thus, they reportedly sold whatever was sent in from China "at a 100 percent loss, just to keep the prices down."¹ But, helpful though they were, such stop-gap measures did not, and could not, provide the hoped-for remedy and solution, simply because neither in volume nor in nomenclature did these shipments replace what the Chinese consumed or siphoned off nor, given the circumstances, did it seem likely that they would ever be able to do so. Paradoxically, even the increase in the asking price of certain local commodities often tended to favor the big native producers, instead of the small farmers, to say nothing of how disastrously it affected the consumers.

The outcome of these developments was mounting ferment among the Tibetan population, particularly noticeable in Lhasa because of the special conditions prevailing there. In the capital, the rising cost of living soon combined with other forces to create a situation far more explosive than any encountered elsewhere in the country. Here, extreme economic exasperation, a unique concentration of representatives of the influential conservative classes, princes and prelates alike, the large number of monasteries in the immediate vicinity, a population generally more articulate and alert than the average provincial Tibetan, these sundry factors together precipitated the emergence of a spontaneous popular movement emotionally hostile to the Chinese administration, the so-called *Mimang* phenomenon, which displayed particular activity in 1952 and thereabouts.

Nevertheless, in considering these unusual, and portentous, events, so at odds with the traditional tenor of Tibetan existence, due caution must still be exercised. Whatever else it may have been, the *Mimang* was not an organized political force as conceived in common modern parlance, certainly not a formal party, as understood today, with a regular leadership, a recognized platform, a set institutional framework. Rather, it took shape, insofar as it did, as a mass protest movement,

¹ "Hungarians in Tibet, The Genesis of Revolt," *East Europe*, Vol. 8, No. 8, pp. 17-18 (August, 1959); these are excerpts from a book by Imre Patkó, *Tibet* (Budapest, 1957), in Hungarian.

fluid in its composition, mode of expression, and course of action, resting on a complex of economic grievances and aggravated by a latent anti-foreign-*cum*-anti-innovation sentiment and current irritation with Chinese obtuseness. It remained local in scope and, though wide-spread in its manifestations, in tone, spirit and content rarely transcended the bounds of what may be described as popular indulgence in gestures of public defiance of orders issued by the Chinese and a predilection toward Han-baiting, as it were. Though thoroughly offensive to the Chinese without a doubt, all these practices did not add up to a gesture of conscious revolt nor contained the stuff of which revolutions are likely to be made: for that they lacked proper perspective, orientation, and central direction. So, for the short while it lasted as a distinctive ingredient on the Tibetan scene, the *Mimang* never outgrew its initial dimensions of little more than a collective crystallization, largely accidental, of diffuse individual feelings of frustration and bitterness, in which lurked much potential power and political promise, but almost none of which effectively saw the light of day.

For the Chinese, the whole experience spelled trouble and could have, conceivably, degenerated into that. The unfamiliarity of the Tibetans with such tactics, however, itself further militated against their adroit exploitation of the favorable conjuncture of forces; they let the propitious occasion slip by and their fleeting advantage was soon dissipated, never really to return. Admittedly, some of the elements entering into the situation persisted long after and so did a measure of basic unrest. Sympathy for their fellow Tibetans in Chamdo, fanned by rumors of the brutalities the Chinese reportedly perpetrated there, perpetuated anti-Chinese feeling which continued to agitate Lhasa's residents. Threats of a proximate influx of Chinese settlers into eastern Tibet helped feed the flames. Sundry tentative moves in that direction could already be discerned and the jaundiced eye of the Tibetans, ever wary of the human mass poised on Tibet's border, immediately read more into them than the actual facts justified. And, of course, it still left unexplained Mao's cryptic statement voiced in 1952 concerning the pressing need to raise Tibet's population to 10 million in the very near future, an idea which obviously could be carried out only through a concerted program of resettlement of Han elements from China's lowlands onto the plateau and seemed to envisage precisely that,¹ a prospect which bore very little appeal

¹ *New York Times*, November 26, 1952, p. 3. A. G. Yakovlev, *Reshenie natsionalnogo*

to the Tibetans. Thus, an under-current of ferment could always be sensed in Lhasa, cyclically waxing and waning in strength depending on the turn of events, but never evaporating altogether. Still, the precise concatenation of developments which had rendered the 1952 situation in the capital so uniquely explosive on its own (for, as will be shown later, the impulse for the 1959 events at Lhasa for the most part originated from outside) never recurred and the singular chance, once lost, was never recaptured. A like situation of optimum local conditions, coupled with maximum Chinese vulnerability, did not again materialize.

This, then, sums up how things stood as of 1954, with that year marking the first definite water-shed in the history of the relations between Communist China and Tibet.¹ In the course of the four years which in the meantime had elapsed, both parties had consistently tried to gain the upper hand, or rather, the Chinese had made efforts to that end while the Dalai Lama's government had sought desperately to preserve its former ascendancy. Each had won some ground and ceded some, but in Lhasa proper the end result outwardly looked like a genuine stalemate. Appearances proved false, however: in that process, all of Tibet's resources had been committed to the struggle, China's reserves still appeared inexhaustible; moreover, Tibet had waged a rear-guard action and, while the main defense lines had been held, ultimately the hidden erosion and the accumulation of small losses would inevitably take their toll.

In short, in Chamdo the Chinese faced a wide-spread uprising by the war-like border tribes, a serious challenge, but an isolated one, on which Peking could bring to bear the full force of its armed might and forthwith proceeded to do so. Victory long eluded the Chinese, but, given the disproportion in manpower and technology of the respective sides, the final outcome of the contest seemed certain. In the meantime, what was left of the local Tibetan administration functioned by the grace of the Chinese as a vehicle for Peking's purposes. Thus, Chamdo presented difficulties, but those the Chinese were prepared to meet with outright coercion and, what is more, the problem lent itself to such a solution. Here at least was a challenge the Chinese recognized

voprosa v Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respublike (Moscow, 1959), p. 89, for example, openly treats the issue as one of massive immigration from China's interior.

¹ Cf. M. L. Niemi, "Recent Trends in Chinese Communist Control of Tibet," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 7, pp. 104-107 (July, 1958).

and knew how to deal with and where success meant something tangible.

This is not to say that the Chinese welcomed the opportunity to resort to arms, but one ventures to surmise that neither were they particularly upset by the incident, given the stakes and the odds in their favor. Indeed, these very considerations may well have egged them on in their apparently reckless disregard from the outset of the opposition which they encountered locally to their various enterprises, almost, it would appear, as if Peking were not really averse to an early showdown and, perhaps, even looked forward to such a test of strength. If true, its forecast did not prove far wrong, though native resistance probably exceeded its expectations and the fighting, together with the ensuing charges of mass brutalities and atrocities imputed to the Chinese, some substantiated, others not, surely caused it greater embarrassment than Peking must have bargained for.

Shigatse, thanks to the cooperation of the Panchen Lama and his entourage, stayed quiescent and submissive. Lhasa, as already noted, was a horse of a different color: preparatory skirmishes were fought, figuratively speaking, of course, between Peking's representatives and the Dalai Lama's government, but they had only led to mounting frustration, impatience and suspicion; a head-on collision had been avoided by mutual consent, but constant friction exacerbated tempers on both sides and made a moot point of the prospects of preserving under such strain, what, at best, was tantamount to a vigilant and precarious truce. Yet, no ready alternative presented itself to the principal actors in the drama, none that they espoused in any case, and so the succession of minor moves and counter-moves, exploratory pressure and tailored response, wended its uncertain course. On the other hand, since the Chinese had survived this long and the worse now lay behind them and, thereafter, physically things could only improve for them, barring a totally unforeseen reversal of the current trend of events, from there on time would only work for them and slowly run against the Tibetans.

CHAPTER III

TIBET UNDER PRESSURE, 1954-1959

The development which provided the aforementioned landmark in the post-1951 progression of Sino-Tibetan relations was the inaugural session of Communist China's National People's Congress and what transpired on that important occasion.

First, both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, each accompanied by a retinue of high Tibetan dignitaries, attended the opening of the legislature in Peking, the latter quite willingly, the former reluctantly acceding to insistent Chinese urging that he make the trip. The ensuing situation presented the Chinese with a welcome opportunity to press their own policy line. Thus, in these circumstances Peking took infinite pains to treat both Lamas as equals, immediately matching whatever distinctions and honors it heaped on one of them with similar attention to the prestige and rank of the other. This, of course, was thoroughly consistent with the previous Chinese approach which had already for a number of years aimed at elevating the Panchen Lama to a position of temporal parity with the Dalai Lama while also surreptitiously hoping to promote thereby the latent hostility and internecine rivalry between the two Popes of the Lamaist Church. The ceremonial air surrounding the convention allowed the Communist leadership to underscore that point in public almost as part of the normal course of such events, and it seized upon the propitious moment to do so tactfully but, at the same time, altogether unequivocally.

The physical presence of the two Lamas in the capital served by implication to further Chinese ends in sundry other ways as well. It helped, for example, give outward support and credence to the perpetual Chinese claim to the effect that the Tibetan people constituted an integral component of the so-called "great family of fraternal nations voluntarily associated" within the framework of the Chinese People's Republic and that the Tibetans thought of themselves in

that light. Moreover, the spectacle of the participation of the twin heads of the Tibetan ecclesiastical hierarchy in such lowly and prosaic business, in profane politics, so to speak, could perhaps be counted upon to dispel a bit the ethereal aura with which they appeared infused in the eyes of the average Tibetan.

Finally, the fact that the Dalai Lama condescended to attend that well-publicized forum without known protest in a capacity of less than sole spokesman for all Tibet also played directly into Chinese hands. Indeed, though the Tibetan monarch tried throughout to act as the only figure legitimately representing the whole Tibetan people, and the Chinese in many respects could not really avoid acknowledging the preeminence of his authority at home, formally things had been so arranged in advance as to convey in the course of the proceedings the impression that he stood, at best, as a *primus inter pares* on the overall Tibetan political scene: i.e., to picture him on the secular plane as merely a local potentate, albeit the foremost prince in the constellation of the native nobility, vested with circumscribed territorial jurisdiction and sharing the governance of the country with like independent polities adjacent to his private domain. The special handling of the Panchen Lama by the Chinese, noted above, occupied a central place in this scheme and succeeded at least to the extent that the Dalai Lama failed to repudiate outright these obvious encroachments upon his traditional prerogatives, hence, in turn, potentially compromising his erstwhile undisputed rights. A phenomenon of a similar order possibly even more detrimental to the Dalai Lama's future position lay in his apparent acquiescence on this occasion in Chamdo's official secession from his realm, for that province now openly enjoyed separate representation in the national parliament, endowed with three seats there as compared to nine for Tibet proper (Lhasa and Shigatse combined).

Second, there still remained to be reckoned with the outcome of the chief object of business of the assembly, to wit, the adoption of the Constitution of the Chinese People's Republic. With that, the search for a basic answer to the problem of defining the formal pattern of inter-relationships which would obtain between the central power and the ethnically non-Han border regions and for a determinate *modus vivendi* between them finally came to an end. With the promulgation of the Fundamental Law a more or less precise juridical framework emerged for the first time outlining, *inter alia*, the functions and

powers reserved for the autonomous nationalities within the administrative fabric of the Chinese State. Thereby, the initial period of vague, *ad hoc*, and therefore disjointed, solutions to the whole complex of issues raised by the cardinal question of the respective field of competence of the national regime and local authorities in the outlying provinces and the position of these two levels of government *vis-à-vis* each other was nominally brought to a close. Now, Tibet, along with other territorial divisions in the same category, found itself vested at last with a legally specified status in the institutional structure of Communist China. Thus, the version of the Constitution which ultimately emerged from the Congress' deliberations stipulated that China was to be a unitary State (Art. 3), although the organic act also conceded that the C.P.R. was a multi-national State and that, in areas where national minorities resided in compact groups, regional autonomy would be exercised. The document hastened to add, however, that such regions of national autonomy were integral parts of the Chinese People's Republic.

While the above formula was certainly not free from ambiguities and readily lent itself, as the record of subsequent practice would soon graphically demonstrate, to diametrically opposed interpretations, one as tenable in principle as the next, it nevertheless marked an improvement, in theory at least, over the previous situation which altogether lacked an official frame of reference in this matter, aside from the even more equivocal provisions of the 1951 Sino-Tibetan treaty. True, one can argue contrariwise, with some justification, that by virtue of this development Tibet lost whatever special character it may have derived from the original agreement with China which stamped its relations with Peking with a peculiarly unique dimension totally absent in the case of the other autonomous regions. By the same token, according to that thesis, Tibet's place in the public system of Communist China from then on hinged exclusively on the latter's constitutional doctrine, hence on domestic law rather than, as previously, on the contents of a para-international accord, all of which naturally meant a further downgrading of Lhasa's political stature and a proportionate strengthening of Peking's hand.

Though either view commands its share of advocates, in the last analysis it would still seem, however, that in concrete terms both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution did little to detract from the formal status hitherto bestowed on Tibet by the stipulations of

the 1951 treaty and, instead may well have bettered it a bit by regularizing to some extent what until now had operated as a thoroughly abnormal exception to the otherwise established norm. Admittedly, in the process Tibet was robbed of an element of distinctiveness and concurrently also saw extinguished some of that extraordinary quality which prior to this attached to the nature of its juridical ties with China proper; but, in exchange, it ostensibly gained a degree of stability on that score and further recognition of its singular political personality such as automatically entitled it to practice internal autonomy, even if only of a standard type rather than a particular one, as formerly.

Nor, it should be added, did the Constitution purport to supersede the initial agreement and neither of the parties to that accord ever construed it as intended to do so, leastways positively not the Tibetan side. All seemed to concur in the view that the treaty remained intact throughout and was not affected in any manner by the latest events. The constitution may have indirectly confirmed some of the principles of that document, incorporated them into a purely domestic enactment, generalized them by unilaterally extending their applicability to a few of the country's other minority races, but it accomplished little else as regards identifiable substantive modification of the precedent set in this field.

On the other hand, in a broader sense, apparent endorsement by leading Tibetan figures attending the session of a piece of basic legislation prominently displaying the key proposition that China was a unitary State could not but gravely prejudice henceforward the Tibetan case, which Lhasa had always pressed in the past, that Tibet, whatever else it was, was not an organic portion of the Chinese body politic. After 1954, that pivotal point could no longer logically be maintained. Thus, if the adoption of the C.P.R.'s Constitution amounted to an appreciable setback for the Tibetan nation, as is sometimes claimed, the cause of it lay here alone. Apart from that, one ought probably to describe the net effect of the new fundamental law, insofar as regards Tibet's position, as neutral, for in itself it neither materially worsened nor significantly ameliorated that region's prospects in the current scheme of things. In any event, the Tibetans for their own part, interestingly enough, showed no signs of being perturbed by this particular development, which looks rather strange given the intensity of the learned controversy the subject suscitated abroad.

Actually, there is a satisfactory explanation for this seeming indifference in the Tibetan camp to an incident of such magnitude, even aside from the question that the Tibetans may simply not have deemed the matter of special importance so far as they were concerned, and that is that the attention of most Tibetans was focused elsewhere. What disturbed them most was, apparently, the fate of the Dalai Lama and the fear that his exalted person stood in danger from Chinese machinations directed against him in both his private capacity and his public role as Tibet's God-king. Yet another issue, however, loomed large in the Tibetan mind at this time – the third element connected with the occasion.

Indeed, instead of immediately returning to Tibet after the adjournment of the National People's Congress, the two Lamas with their retinue stayed on in Peking at the insistent urging of the Chinese. Taking advantage of the presence of Tibet's twin leading political figures in the capital, the latter now proposed a number of measures designed, according to them, to resolve certain problems still outstanding on the Tibetan domestic scene, to institute some changes and initiate assorted reforms of a kind purportedly acceptable to both parties, to chart the course of subsequent relations between Tibet and China and further clarify the former's status for local purposes as well as with respect to the over-all national system of administration. To start with, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama were reportedly prevailed upon to reach an official agreement (January 19, 1955) putting an end to all their "historic and unsettled problems," political as well as economic.¹ In fact, of course, the accord additionally guaranteed and bolstered the stature of the Panchen Lama, Peking's protégé, *vis-à-vis* that of the Dalai Lama and inevitably at the latter's expense. Once in possession of this supplementary insurance, so to speak, the State Council next proceeded to adopt, on March 9, 1955, a resolution on the creation of a Preparatory Committee for the Formation of a Tibetan Autonomous Region, a move for which the Chinese had obtained the prior consent, *in principio*, of the Dalai Lama and, needless to say, the full endorsement of the Panchen Lama during the discussions held in Peking at the beginning of the year.

In so acting, the Central Government gave tacit, but unmistakable, recognition to the special nature of many of the problems posed by

¹ V. Kassis, *Vosemdesyat dnei v Tibete* (Moscow, 1956), p. 87; also, *New York Times*, March 13, 1955, p. 1.

Tibetan conditions and, by clear inference, thus indicated a willingness to deal with them in a different manner better adapted to the circumstances. In effect, at this point regional autonomy as envisaged in the general language of the Constitution was not bestowed outright on Tibet, as would happen soon afterwards in Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia where Peking's control seemed, in the main, already secure by 1954 and where the basic policies of the Communist regime were, on the whole, as advanced in execution as in China proper. On the contrary, because of Tibet's unique distinction as the most backward area on the Chinese mainland, (among territories of similar size and population, that is), and one in which primitively feudal socio-political patterns obviously precluded an early program of rapid modernization, to say nothing of "socialization," (land reform, for example), the country was not deemed ready for immediate regional autonomy. Instead, the Chinese now devised an intermediate status in order to lay the groundwork for eventual transition to that stage. This task the Preparatory Committee, after its inception, made desperate efforts duly to fulfill from 1955 until 1959. Since the Chinese throughout officially regarded that body as the true repository, for all intents and purposes, of supreme area-wide local public authority, at least for the duration and till the completion of the region's reorganization into a full-fledged autonomous unit, the organ's role, powers and structure in that period deserve detailed analysis.

According to the Brief Regulations on the Creation of a Preparatory Committee for the Formation of a Tibetan Autonomous Region, as eventually adopted at the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the C.P.R., September 26, 1956,¹ the Committee was established temporarily, until the creation of the Tibetan autonomous region, as a collegiate agency for the elaboration of plans towards that goal. The Committee would function as an organ of State authority and carry out its activities under the guidance of the State Council of the C.P.R. (Art. 2). It was to consist of representatives from the so-called Local Government of Tibet (the Chinese designation for the Dalai Lama's administration), the Panchen Lama's Council of *Khen-Pos*, the People's Liberation Committee of the Chamdo area, leading monasteries and religious sects, upper social classes, "patriotic elements" in the local Tibetan officialdom and

¹ For text of law, see *Kuang-ming jih-pao*, September 27, 1956; B. P. Gurevich, *Osvobozhdenie Tibeta*, pp. 205-209.

other groups, as well as from among cadre-workers sent to the plateau by the central organs of the C.P.R. (Art. 3). The Committee was to direct the work of the Local Government of Tibet, the Shigatse Council of *Khen-Pos*, and the People's Liberation Committee of the Chamdo area.

In the process of progressing toward full Tibetan regional autonomy, the Committee, guided by the Constitution of the C.P.R. and the 17-point Sino-Tibetan agreement of 1951 and in awareness of local conditions, was: 1) gradually to assume ever greater public responsibility, lay the groundwork for the official establishment of a single Tibetan autonomous region, and implement concrete measures leading to the formation of a single region; 2) to ensure that questions of local development and such other projects as could be undertaken were resolved in accordance with a unified plan and, to that end, to conduct general discussions in the Committee, which then had to work out the decisions and, after sanction by the C.P.R.'s State Council, put them into execution; 3) to promote cohesion among representatives of all the country's various nationalities and the consolidation of Tibet's internal unity by bringing together delegates from different strata of the population; 4) to organize and direct education, raise the professional level of the cadre-workers, their knowledge and experience in combatting "imperialism," educate the masses in the spirit of patriotism, and carry on an active indoctrination campaign among the cadres; 5) to guard the life and property of all the nationalities and classes of the Tibetan population, including the Buddhist monks, in accordance with the law; and, 6) to enforce a policy of freedom of conscience and religious belief, protect Lamaist monasteries and their revenues.

In pursuit of this program, the Committee had the power: 1) to make decisions and issue orders based on general laws and decrees, as well as on the resolutions and directives of the State Council of the C.P.R., after first thoroughly discussing the proposed action in plenary session, supervise their execution, and publish the most important ones after their approval by the State Council; 2) to draft provisional laws and directives adapted to special local conditions, following a general exchange of opinion aimed at obtaining a unanimity of views among the Committee's members, and put them into effect, but only after requesting and securing in each individual case the permission of the State Council or the Standing Committee of the National People's

Congress to do so; 3) to appoint and transfer personnel, in accordance with the provisional directives issued by the State Council of the C.P.R., or request the State Council in each individual instance to transfer or appoint an official, or petition it to confirm the appointment or transfer of officials; 4) to submit for the State Council's ratification a budget and financial reports, after discussing these in detail and reaching unanimity in the Committee itself, and direct the work of its subordinate organs. All administrative questions on which the Committee was unable to render a unanimous decision had to be referred to the State Council for final solution.

According to Art. 5, as ultimately phrased, the Committee would consist temporarily of 55 members and the data on the appointment, transfer or dismissal of personnel on the Committee's organs, after discussion in the Committee proper, had to be transmitted for confirmation to the State Council, which was also formally to appoint the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the members of the Committee. To carry on its day-to-day work, a plenary session of the Preparatory Committee was to elect a Permanent Committee, its composition again subject to ratification by the State Council. The Chairman and his assistants were to preside over meetings of the Preparatory Committee and guide its order of business (Art. 6). If the Chairman or one of his deputies could not, for some reason, discharge their official duties, they could suggest a substitute to the Permanent Committee and, after that body's consent, the appointment had to be forwarded to the State Council for final approval (Art. 7).

To assist it, the Committee was empowered to create a number of subordinate departments. It was to establish a four-man Secretariat, the chief of which (a member of the Committee) would be guided in his duties by the Committee Chairman or the latter's deputies. The other three provisionally appointed members (respectively in charge of a secretarial section, a compilation and translation section, and a general affairs bureau)¹ jointly helped the first secretary. Later it was decided to create additional bureaus: two commissions with wide powers (financial-economic, and religious affairs), and eleven departments each with a more specialized jurisdiction (civil administration, finance, construction, health, public security, agriculture and forestry, live-stock raising, trade and industry, transportation, justice, culture and education).

¹ *Daily News Release*, May 15, 1956, p. 156.

Each of these subordinate bodies would be headed by a chief or manager with two or three assistants; whenever necessary sub-offices could be created under them (Art. 10). The top staff was chosen at a general session of the Committee and the nominations had to be ratified by the State Council (Art. 11). Meetings of the Permanent Committee, according to the Regulations, were to be convoked by its officers once a week; if required, the directors of the operational departments could attend its sessions, by invitation, with the right of consultative voice (Art. 12). In case of financial difficulties during the period of transition, the Dalai Lama's Government, the Panchen Lama's Council of *Khen-Pos* and the People's Liberation Committee of the Chamdo area had the right, each on its own behalf, to appeal for assistance directly to the State Council, informing the Preparatory Committee beforehand when contemplating such a move (Art. 13). The Committee was enjoined always to maintain close ties with the headquarters of the Tibetan Military District and actively assist it in strengthening local defenses and guarding public order (Art. 14). Lastly, Art. 15 stipulated that the Regulations in question would come into force after their adoption by the first Plenary Session of the Preparatory Commission and their ratification by the Standing Committee of the C.P.R. All subsequent amendments to its text had to be adopted and confirmed by the same two instances.

It is readily apparent from even the above skeleton sketch that the Committee was seriously meant to function as the sole agency of local centralized administration for Tibet as a whole, with a decisive voice in every significant sector of the region's social, political and economic life, the continued existence of the three now subordinate and heretofore (i.e., after 1951) primary units of government there notwithstanding. Clearly, too, the Committee was directly, and completely, dependent on the State Council in all important respects, in negation of the spirit of the new Constitution and the concept of autonomy as commonly understood. In the procedural sense, nothing illustrated that point better than the express rule that passage of substantive decisions by the Preparatory Committee demanded the unanimous vote of its membership, a clause amounting to a *liberum veto* and allowing the Chinese to hamstring its proceedings at will, thus permitting them at a moment's notice to effect the withdrawal of any issue from the local forum and legally force its transfer to the State Council in Peking for resolution there.

Despite all that, ever since the Committee's inception Communist sources have consistently tried to strengthen in the popular mind the impression that it alone stood as the real and undisputed source of Tibet-wide authority, acclaiming it at every conceivable opportunity as the true representative assembly of the entire Tibetan nation, hence superior, of course, to the authorities still administering the country's three component parts.¹ Needless to say, by so arguing the Chinese actually tried to justify their own systematic encroachments, thereafter channeled through the captive Committee and its subsidiary departments, on the rights of the traditional Tibetan leadership which otherwise Peking was officially bound, under the terms of the 1951 agreement, to observe. Concurrently, however, measure after thinly disguised measure was initiated by the Central Government intended further to extend its control over the supposedly autonomous organ ostensibly designed to give expression to local interests.

A prime example of such practice was the material alteration, within a short period of time, of the original blueprint for the Preparatory Committee's composition. Initial plans set the Committee's membership at 51 delegates: 15 from the Local Government of Tibet; 10 from the Panchen Lama's Council of *Khen-Pos*; 10 from the People's Liberation Committee of the Chamdo area; 5 from among the Central People's Government personnel stationed in Tibet; and 11 from the major monasteries, religious sects and mass organizations. The Dalai Lama was designated Chairman (with the Panchen Lama and General Chang Kuo-hua as his deputies) to bring the total to 54, and *Kalon Ngaboo* occupied the post of secretary-general. This, incidentally, was the way the scheme had first been privately outlined to the Dalai Lama during his visit to Peking in connection with the session of the National People's Congress when he had voiced his tentative assent to the project. However, by September 1956, when the Brief Regulations were adopted in final form, the Committee saw its size increased to a total of 55 persons and the earlier quota breakdown for its membership considerably revised, to the further disadvantage of the Dalai Lama's regime. The new lineup came out as: 10 deputies from the Lhasan court; 10 from the Panchen Lama's administration; 10 from the Chamdo area authorities; 5 from the Central Government;

¹ E.g., L. D. Voevodin, *Gosudarstvennyi stroi Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki* (Moscow, 1956), p. 132.

and the remaining 17 from religious and popular organizations.¹

Nevertheless, outwardly the Committee still appeared as almost exclusively Tibetan in make-up. Indeed, that feature had furnished perhaps the single most important reason for the Dalai Lama's original willingness to acquiesce in the Chinese proposals to form such an agency, in the belief that its overwhelmingly native membership would ensure its functioning as a body genuinely oriented towards and attuned to local needs and conditions. Admittedly, the mode of recruitment of its personnel reportedly struck the Dalai Lama as "anomalous," since the procedure that the Chinese chose in fact openly downgraded his government to a position of *primus inter pares* at best, instead of recognizing it as the only authority on the plateau, as dictated by tradition. Though acceptance of the scheme in these circumstances meant a major concession to the Chinese viewpoint, the Lhasan court presumably acceded to the sacrifice precisely because it hoped in exchange to render possible the emergence of a *bona fide* Tibetan central authority in which, though seemingly in the minority, it would, thanks to the Dalai Lama's personal and spiritual influence, play the leading role.

To that extent, the subsequent modification of the blueprint for the allocation of seats on the Committee, though humiliating to the Lhasan Cabinet in that it now demoted the Dalai Lama's administration to mere parity with the Panchen Lama's regime and the Chamdo authorities, without even bothering any longer to pretend, if only for the sake of appearance, to recognize the former's priority through the harmless expedient of assigning it a few extra votes, was yet tolerable in that at least it preserved intact the over-all indigenous character of the organ. However, the whole matter would soon become largely academic anyway. Indeed, neither the Dalai Lama's formal presidency of the new agency nor the fact, so often emphasized, that "among the 52 members of the Committee, 48 are Tibetans,"² proved of much avail. In the first place, apart from the Lhasan contingent, nearly all the other delegates soon revealed themselves as creatures of the Chinese, with the spokesmen for the Shigatse court said to have behaved least reasonably and to have acted throughout

¹ For the breakdown of the original composition of the Preparatory Committee, see *Daily News Release*, March 14, 1955, p. 84-85; and *KCA*, 1955, p. 14128. For final membership, see B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

² *Daily News Release*, April 23, 1956, p. 250. See, too, G. M. Valiakhmetov, *Organy vlasti i upravleniya Tibeta*, p. 34.

more Chinese than the Chinese. In the second place, allegedly "all basic policy was decided by another body called the Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet, which had no Tibetan members," whereas the Preparatory Committee was "allowed to discuss the minor points, but . . . never make any major changes" ¹ in what had already been settled there, a claim which sounds altogether plausible to anyone familiar with the *modus operandi* normally favored by the Communists, Chinese or otherwise.

Practically, then, the Preparatory Committee, after it began operating, just served to gather in the hands of Peking's military and civilian representatives in the Tibetan capital more of that elusive power and, more important, some of the legitimate authority which the Chinese badly needed in order effectively to rule the highland and which they had so far failed to win at the heart of the native polity, - at the Lhasan court. The modest hopes which the Dalai Lama once pinned on the project, thinking of it as a possible instrument for the safeguarding of a modicum of Tibet's ancient individuality, thus came to naught. Instead, behind the highly convenient facade of an institution almost purely native in flavor, the Chinese now increasingly busied themselves with the task of concentrating at their own fingertips the real means for exercising uncontested political control of the occupied country and its people. In short, if Peking could not readily subvert the nerve center of the Tibetan public system outright, it would try to supplant it with an alternative, like core institution of Chinese manufacture and, from this strategic foothold, work to erode and usurp from the indigenous leadership to the point where, hopefully, the latter died of progressive atrophy.

The realization that the last word in Tibetan affairs thus still remained with the Chinese was one of the main reasons behind the renewed wave of local opposition to Peking's plans, a movement which, *inter alia*, materially delayed the formal inauguration of the Preparatory Committee. Tempers had calmed down somewhat in Lhasa in the preceding months, both parties watchfully waiting for

¹ The Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People*, p. 133. It should also be remembered that "many of the committee's subordinate offices were headed by Chinese Communists. Of forty-nine 'leadership personnel' seventeen were Chinese and thirty-two Tibetans, while according to the list released by the New China News Agency a Chinese was among the 'leadership personnel' of every one of the fifteen committees except that of Culture-Education. This office, however, was in the safe hands of the Political Committee of the Tibet Military Command," F. Moraes, *The Revolt in Tibet*, p. 72.

the outcome of the negotiations in Peking, with the Tibetans fearing moreover that any show of spirit on their part could endanger the life of the Dalai Lama in the far-off capital or reduce him to a permanent status of hostage used to guarantee their good behavior. With the safe return of the God-king to his palace and the revival of Chinese activity on the plateau, the situation soon reverted to its former unhappy state. Lhasa's population again began chafing under the irksome burden of alien control and spontaneously defying Chinese orders. The mounting spiral of Tibetan unrest and corresponding Chinese reaction increasingly finding expression in haphazard attempts at repression of the more overt incidences of local opposition to Peking's authority was once more set in motion.

This time, however, Tibetan resentment crystallized sufficiently to articulate some of that mass sentiment, although the movement still fell short of elaborating a recognizable political program, to say nothing of a formal organization, and so did not progress much beyond the stage of providing a popular vehicle for anti-Chinese feeling or ever represent more than just a tide of widely shared negative response to the Chinese push. Nevertheless, a number of resolutions were now passed calling on the Chinese to withdraw from the highland or, at least, to cease and desist from meddling in indigenous affairs, an acknowledged leadership and influential spokesmen emerged quite by chance, as often happens in circumstances of the sort, and large protest meetings were even staged on a number of occasions. In the beginning of 1956, the ferment culminated in a veritable demonstration against the Chinese presence and the passage and public circulation of a manifesto demanding genuine autonomy for the country. Peking's representatives in Lhasa countered by insisting on the surrender to them of the known leaders of the native resistance or their arrest by the Tibetan authorities, and the latter finally elected to act on the second of these alternatives, seen as the lesser evil.¹

Thus beheaded, the opposition's surge subsided temporarily, but, of course, the emotions underlying it refused to vanish altogether. Despite all Chinese efforts, latent bitterness against Peking's minions persisted throughout largely unabated, though it took a while before

¹ For a description of some of these events, see M. L. Niemi, "Recent Trends in Chinese Communist Control of Tibet," *loc. cit.*, pp. 104-107; Lowell Thomas, Jr., *The Silent War in Tibet*, pp. 130-133.

in Lhasa itself the pent-up rancor could effectively flare up in the open anew.

Given all that, it was only on September 20, 1955, that an office was established in Lhasa to pave the way for a meeting of the Preparatory Committee. It officially sat for the first time on September 30. Forty members, Chinese and Tibetans, attended, under the Chairmanship of *Kalon* Ngaboo. The Preparatory Committee itself had to wait until April 22, 1956, to be installed, convening on that date in an enlarged plenary ceremonial session of 1,083 delegates who met for 10 days. The Committee's secretariat began functioning even later, on May 14, at which time the secretary-general announced its personnel, and it was not until June 30 that the other 13 subordinate departments were reported as in actual operation.¹ As already noted, the Brief Regulations of the Committee which expressly defined its rights and powers officially came into force only on September 26 of that year.

A major reason for the slow progress registered in the above undertaking lay in that the Chinese now encountered stiffening Tibetan resistance at every turn, not in the sphere of administrative innovation alone, as had heretofore generally been the case, but in other fields of endeavor as well. In part, this phenomenon merely reflected the Tibetans' growing awareness of that fact that Chinese encroachment elsewhere than in the purely political area nevertheless would, if let unhindered, eventually pose a danger to the system as a whole and that the latter's integrity depended, in the last analysis, on its indivisibility, so to speak. Otherwise, the development simply represented the obverse side of the primary cause of it all, appearing then as just a graduated response to the antecedent intensification of Chinese pressure on the socio-economic plane.

Indeed, faithful to precedent, Peking's latest drive for the further consolidation of Chinese political control of the plateau again came accompanied by a full accoutrement of blueprints foreseeing the proximate introduction of far-reaching reforms in most other sectors of Tibetan life as well. Thus, already when, on March 9, 1955, the 7th plenary session of the State Council took the official decision to set up the Preparatory Committee for Tibet, it at the same time approved a Resolution to Grant Assistance to Tibet in the Construction of Local

¹ *Asian Recorder*, 1955, p. 442; L. D. Voevodin, *op. cit.*, p. 132; G. M. Valiakhmetov, *op. cit.*, p. 35; *Daily News Release*, May 15, 1956, p. 156, and July 1, 1956, p. 12.

Objectives.¹ Quite moderate in its aims, the plan nonetheless envisaged a significant expansion of Chinese investments in the Tibetan economy and naturally presaged a concomitant rise in China's role and influence here. Under its terms, the Central Government undertook to assign sufficient means and dispatch to Tibet the requisite engineering and technical personnel to build a number of medium-sized installations of which, in its estimation, the region stood in dire need. This included a hydro-electric station in Lhasa with "more or less modern equipment," survey operations at Shigatse preparatory to a like undertaking there scheduled to be begun right after the highway reached the town, and erection in the meantime at the latter site of a small thermo-power plant, enough to ensure local lighting and communication service.

In Lhasa, the Chinese proposed to install a leather-working factory and a small iron-works to produce ordinary agricultural tools and parts for the simplest machinery. They also intended to complete dams on the Lhasa and Tsangpo rivers in order to prevent threats of inundation to Lhasa and Shigatse and concurrently contribute to the solution of the local irrigation problem. The experimental farm at Lhasa was to be turned into a "large experimental agricultural station" by way of increasing its mechanical inventory and adding to its staff, while Shigatse would receive two waterpumps for test irrigation purposes. Next, the measure provided for the reorganization of the Tibetan military district school for the training of leading cadres into a Tibetan school for the training of local cadres of Tibetan and other nationality, and for expansion of the boarding-school at Shigatse to accommodate 500 pupils instead of the current 200. The main streets of Lhasa and Shigatse were earmarked for paving and plans were made to finish an edifice to house the offices of the Panchen Lama's Cabinet and a hotel in Lhasa. Finally, the State Council voted to disburse one million yuan to the Tibetan authorities at Lhasa, Shigatse, and Chamdo, for the purchase of agricultural implements, and entrusted the Preparatory Committee with drawing up concrete recommendations for the allocation of these tools by region and their delivery for local distribution.

Responsibility for the execution of these tasks lay with the appropriate central ministries. The personnel which they would post to Tibet to carry out the various projects was, however, expected to work

¹ Text in A. G. Krymov and M. A. Shafir (eds.), *Konstitutsiya i osnovnye zakonodatelnye akty Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki (1954-1958)*, (Moscow, 1959), pp. 214-216.

under the direction, respectively, of the Dalai Lama's government and the Panchen Lama's administration.

This program dealt, of course, only with what the Chinese soon proposed to do on their own as regards the promotion of Tibet's economic development. It made no mention of what line Peking intended to follow on the plateau on other questions, particularly those involving social issues and the established pattern of private and public relations. While Chinese sources reported that the State Council also reached at this time a decision to extend the Tsinghai-Tibet highway to Shigatse and build a road from Shigatse south-east to Gyangtse, as well as to create a Tibetan transportation bureau in Lhasa with sub-administrative units for the Sikang-Tibet and Tsinghai-Tibet highways, they vouchsafed no further information on what else Peking had in mind for Tibet and its people. Yet, that such a basic plan existed is quite evident, as the subsequent course of events on the highland convincingly demonstrates.

As early as May, 1955, for instance, the Chinese launched a concerted effort to institute large-scale secular education in Tibet, a move which immediately incurred them the hostility of the Tibetan ecclesiastical class, for the field had traditionally been monopolized by the monasteries. With this step, Tibet at last took the road toward acquiring the beginnings of an extensive free primary education for the first time in its long history. Books and scholastic equipment were sent from China and also produced locally by the Editing and Translation Committee of the headquarters of the People's Liberation Army in Tibet (created shortly after the region's "liberation") and reportedly distributed gratis to the native students.¹ In spite of opposition from monastic circles, the Chinese throughout 1955 and the first half of 1956 continued vigorously to push their school program. Thus, by the middle of 1955, 27 primary schools were opened and, by May of that year, the number of students was said to have reached 2,000, double the previous year's enrollment. During the first half of 1956, according to official sources, the number of schools increased two-fold, to reach a total of more than 60. In 1956-1957, Tibet's first secondary school began functioning in Lhasa. Concurrently, the Central

¹ *Daily News Release*, March 23, 1955, p. 148; Phuntsogwanggyei, "Tibet Forges Ahead," *People's China*, 1954, No. 13, pp. 15-17. For an earlier step, see *Daily News Release*, May 12, 1954, p. 121, concerning the first primary school in Tibet to be set up in a Himalayan village within the Panchen Lama's jurisdiction.

Government announced that it had worked out a 12-year (1956-1967) blueprint to enable education in the national minority regions to catch up with the progress made in other parts of the mainland.¹

Parallel with the drive to create on short notice at least the skeleton of a comprehensive school system in Tibet itself, the Chinese leadership lavished much time and energy on the expansion of sundry educational facilities in China proper expressly designed to handle native students from the country's border areas, the assorted so-called Institutes for Nationalities. By the fall of 1956, for example, the Central Academy for Nationalities, located in Peking, claimed that it had graduated 210,000 cadre workers of non-Han ethnic origin, presumably including some Tibetans, although exactly how many is not known.² In the province of Tsinghai, neighboring on Tibet, an Institute for Nationalities was now organized in which teachers of Tibetan language underwent training, followed by the inauguration of special classes for primary school teachers in Tibet proper. Indicative of the scope of these activities is the fact that for the school year 1956-1957 alone the Permanent Committee of the Preparatory Committee decided to send 500 young Tibetans for training in the Institutes for Nationalities in Peking and Chengtu.³

Quantitatively, again, the results of these Chinese endeavors strike the outside observer as most impressive, especially if one remembers the physical and human difficulties encountered and overcome in the process. As for the qualitative impact of the project, any assessment here must needs remain tentative. Undoubtedly, Chinese policies in this sphere left a visible imprint on the Tibetan mind and, in many instances, achieved their calculated objective of molding the subject's outlook in the Communist value pattern. Frequently, however, the effects of this reorientation, even where outwardly it appeared fully successful, failed to last and the alien veneer rapidly peeled off when exposed to other influences, especially when the person so treated found himself reintegrated in his original environment. What is more, a fundamental recasting of a set mental viewpoint under unrelenting pressure was bound to generate adverse side reactions in more than

¹ *Daily News Release*, May 23, 1955, p. 203, and July 31, 1956, p. 290; G. M. Valiakhmetov, *op. cit.*, p. 60; *Druzhba*, October 25, 1956, and May 19, 1956. By the middle of 1956, 50 of the teachers employed in the local schools were Tibetans.

² L. D. Voevodin, *op. cit.*, p. 132 ff; L. M. Gudoshnikov, *Mestnye organy gosudarstvennoi vlasti Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki* (Moscow, 1958), p. 88.

³ *Daily News Release*, June 24, 1956, p. 270.

one patient, such as hidden frustrations, repressed schizophrenic habits, as well as personality fissures caused by the heavy strain of always consciously practicing thought dissimulation. Still, these by-products could not have represented more than a fringe problem, a troublesome phenomenon, to be sure, but not one that could defeat the main purpose of the experiment.

While the depth of penetration of the Chinese undertaking on those directly affected by it is open to divergent evaluation, the scheme's repercussions on interested on-lookers among the Tibetan people were, for the most part, uniformly negative. The ecclesiastical elements, as already noted, bitterly resented this breach of their estwhile monopoly in the field. Other privileged classes, though possibly admitting in private the need for "modern-type" education, nevertheless also opposed the way the Chinese handled the problem, on two counts: first, the Chinese deliberately emphasized the "democratic" nature of their venture, i.e., stressed disregard for class distinction in the schools and, indeed, openly favored their children of humble social origin, to the dismay and resentment of the patrician families; second, the ideological ingredient, often militantly Communist in tone, flavoring much of the curriculum struck many of the adult Tibetans as a conscious instrument for destroying the native youth's belief in its own country's ancient civilization, and so those of them spiritually wedded to the past naturally objected to the practice, either vocally or by adopting a reserved and critical attitude toward the whole proceedings. On the other hand, Tibetan response to the idea of sending young Tibetans to China for training in special institutes there expressed itself altogether unequivocally - popular sentiment was overwhelmingly against it, even though in the end the Chinese still managed to have their way in the affair.

With this, one must let the matter rest, accepting in general the conclusion that "few of the Chinese efforts to communize Tibet were as successful, but none embittered the adult Tibetans more" ¹ than the education campaign. The truth of the first proposition led the Chinese to persevere in their efforts to refashion the Tibetan mentality, while the many vicissitudes suffered by Peking's endeavors in this sphere over the next few years amply testify to the accuracy of the second observation.

Equally hard to assess are the substantive consequences of another

¹ Lowell Thomas, Jr., *The Silent War in Tibet*, p. 144.

aspect of this core policy, to wit, the continuing proliferation and ceaseless activity of the various Communist and "front" mass organizations which had in the meantime opened local branches or were busy doing so and had steadily extended the scope of their operations on the plateau in a carefully coordinated attempt to indoctrinate select groups of the Tibetan population. Thus, a Tibetan Youth Conference which opened in Lhasa on September 21, 1956, decided forthwith to set up an Association of Patriotic Youth of Tibet; the first Tibetan company of Young Pioneers was formed in Lhasa on April 15, 1956, with a membership of 75 primary school pupils, and by May 20, 1956, the organization counted 521 adherents at its inaugural conference; a Tibetan branch of the Chinese Buddhist Association was established in Lhasa on October 7, 1956, and a Tibetan auxiliary of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association went into business in June of that year, both as the result of decisions of the Preparatory Committee's Permanent Committee and with the ostensible approval and cooperation of the Dalai Lama and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries.¹

Finally, the Chinese Communist Party, which had opened offices in Tibet almost immediately following the area's "liberation," succeeded in enrolling its first local recruits: on July 2, 1956, seven Tibetans were admitted into the Party's ranks, the first group of Tibetans from Tibet proper to take the step. Four days later, in connection with the pending instauration of the Preparatory Committee, it was decided in Peking to organize in Lhasa a Tibetan Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee. To that end, a preparatory bureau was instituted in Lhasa on November 9, to conduct local consultations with sundry ecclesiastical groups, lamaseries, mass associations and prominent public figures.

As suggested earlier in connection with the analysis of the import of like Chinese activity in the 1951-1954 period, the net effect of these tactics is almost impossible to gauge. From the standpoint of long-range prospects, these multiple efforts to reach, communicate with, hence, influence, assorted segments of the Tibetan population undoubtedly contributed to the "softening up," so to speak, of the Tibetan community, thereby perhaps rendering the Chinese a signal service by

¹ *Daily News Release*, July 1, 1956, p. 4, and October 11, 1956, p. 100. The Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama were elected honorary presidents of the Tibet branch of the Buddhist Association of China, Gahdan-Tsri-pa Thubden Kuwka, successor to Sumatikirti, founder of the Yellow Sect, was elected Chairman of the Executive Council of the Tibetan branch.

helping, if only tangentially, undermine the impressive record of Tibetan immunity to Peking's allurements. One can safely conjecture that the total balance-sheet showed mixed dividends. Such techniques could not realistically be expected to have a profound impact on the recipients of this kind of attention, and Peking was probably reconciled to that fact. On the other hand, on a selective basis an approach of this sort could, and probably did, add appreciably to improving Peking's public image on the highland, particularly since the idea was to focus on groups deemed potentially susceptible to this type of appeal anyway. And, while the very nature of the activities in question militated against them playing a decisive role in the continuing Sino-Tibetan struggle for local supremacy, their level of operation also minimized the intensity of possible adverse native reaction, while the contrary situation obtained in the case of the Chinese educational program, motivated by more ambitious calculations, gambling for higher stakes, but also running infinitely greater risks.

Nor did the Chinese neglect in the meantime the more technical facets of their program for the thorough transformation of Tibet's physiognomy. In particular, the Central Government now appreciably stepped up its plan of construction and communications development, all the major projects being drafted in Peking and directed and operated on the spot by imported Han personnel. The rising pace was largely made possible, of course, by the present availability to the Chinese of the two key highway arteries completed by 1954 and linking the inner plateau with China's interior. With that much already achieved and ready for exploitation, the Chinese could here allow themselves the luxury of entertaining somewhat more grandiose ideas for the near future. In any event, road construction gained noticeably in impetus in the next few years, in breadth and tempo both. As mentioned earlier, in March 1955, the State Council had decided to extend the Chinghai-Tibet highway from Lhasa to Shigatse and build a motor-road from Shigatse south-east to Gyangtse. On October 20, 1955, a Lhasa dispatch announced that the two new routes, 428 kms in total length, had been opened to vehicle traffic on that day, and, in December, it was resolved to push the highway further southward to Yatung across the Himalayas and to the very frontier between Tibet and India – a plan soon executed.¹ Concurrently, the authorities

¹ *Daily News Release*, April 25, 1955, p. 313; August 3, 1955, p. 37; October 3, 1955, p. 3; October 10, 1955, pp. 84, 89; October 21, 1955, p. 197; November 17, 1955, p. 155; December 29, 1955, p. 287.

revealed in November, 1955, that the highways in Tibet would hereafter be controlled by a special commission appointed by the Chinese Ministry of Communications. Thereupon, on November 23, the Ministry officially set up a Special Tibetan Highway Commission in Lhasa to regulate all questions connected with the strategically important road communications in the area. "In 1955, the People's Government sent 550 motor vehicles and 500 drivers to the Sikang-Tibet and Chinghai-Tibet highway administrations,"¹ the two subsidiary bureaus of the Commission.

The completion of the main trunk-lines was paralleled by the building of secondary motor roads. Thus, by April, 1956, more than 4,300 kms of such branch routes were said to be open to traffic within Tibet proper, and on August 6, 1956, a Lhasa bulletin indicated that construction of two other highways would begin that year: a major all-weather road to link Nagchuka (Nag-Ch'u-Kha), the provincial capital of the northern governorship, with the province of Ari bordering on Kashmir (along the trace surveyed in March of that year), with Gartok as its probable western terminal; and a highway from Lhasa to the south, to join upon completion Lhasa with Gyantse via Netang (Nye-Thang) on the Tsangpo river. Altogether, by November 1956, according to various estimates, the Chinese had finished about 6,000 kms or 4,000 miles of motor-roads on the Tibetan plateau, of widely varying types and degrees of serviceability. By then, all eight regional governorships were linked by road spurs more or less suitable for truck passage.²

Further progress was made in road building in 1957, with the Lhasa-Netang route reported being put into service in January and the Lhasa-Tsetang (Tse-Thang) section on January 10 (this representing the second highway to cross the Tsangpo). Another road, from Nagchuka to Chamdo, ultimately seen as a 720-km segment of the proposed direct route from Chamdo to the Kashmir border, was claimed to be under intensive construction in December, 1956. On October 5, Peking broadcast news of the completion of a 737-mile highway from south-west Sinkiang into western Tibet, the third major route joining

¹ V. Kassis, "Ninety Days in Tibet," *loc. cit.*, p. 28. See, also, *New York Times*, November 28, 1956, p. 7.

² *Daily News Release*, April 16, 1956, p. 179; August 7, 1956, p. 61; August 12, 1956, p. 118; *SCMP*, No. 1451, January 16, 1957, p. 27. For data on developments in 1957, see B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 188; *SCMP*, No. 1444, January 5, 1957, p. 29; *Facts on File*, 1957, p. 283.

Communist China with Tibet and passing, incidentally, through a disputed section of Ladakh. There are also indications that by then yet other highway projects were either under survey or at various stages of planning and construction; on some of these, preliminary work had been completed and they already handled some traffic, perhaps primarily of a military nature. Thus, one encounters occasional passing references to a motor-road between Shigatse and Tradom in the west, skirting the Tsangpo and the frontier, eventually to be pushed all the way to Gartok, of a second spur paralleling the present Kanting-Tibet (the former Sikang-Tibet) highway through the Chamdo area, of a trunk highway linking Bomda with Ningtsin, and of a road from Tibet penetrating into northern Nepal. How much of this is true and how much the product of rumor and fancy, how much of it is actually there and in what shape, and how much is so far only talk, some serious, some not, it is impossible to say.

In line with precedent established from the start, the road network, built mostly with the help of the Chinese military and by recruited or conscripted local labor, operated and serviced predominantly by Han administrative and field personnel, was almost exclusively Peking's concern and primarily dictated by the needs of its army. Tibetan interest in, and influence over, the road-construction project remained, as always, negligible and so control over land communication and transportation in Tibet very soon turned into a virtual Chinese monopoly.¹ The entire scheme was tailored to Peking's needs, and the heavy investment it called for, in time, energy, and money, shortly proved well justified, for the end results of all this work stood the Chinese in good stead soon after when they found themselves faced with a serious threat to their position on the plateau.

Needless to say, while the program ran its course satisfactorily enough, it did not escape its due share of problems. An undercurrent of popular resentment, brought on by tactless Chinese handling of the question of condemnation of the property situated along the right-of-way, marred its progress. In addition, natural calamities plagued the construction teams and maintenance crews and, ever since, have made frequent repairs necessary, have often disrupted the traffic flow and created conditions dangerous to both men and vehicles. Lastly, the guerilla tactics employed by the rebellious tribes in the Chamdo area against the Chinese garrison have naturally focused on the highways

¹ International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, pp. 52-53.

and their load of Chinese convoys in transit, with ensuing damage to the road-beds, to say nothing of the drastic reduction in the exploitation of these arteries. Indeed, at the height of the fighting in the east between the Chinese and local warlike clans, the Sikang-Tibet route fell into almost total disuse for that reason and the Chinese detoured most of the traffic to and from Tibet via the Tsinghai-Tibet highway, sufficiently remote from the scene of hostilities to offer relative safety and anyway physically less demanding on both humans and engines. Nevertheless, even if the situation did not always look quite ideal, it still represented an immeasurable improvement over what had obtained heretofore and, for the Chinese, the difference was truly a vital one, as subsequent events were to illustrate.

To supplement the above road system the Chinese now also vigorously pressed ahead with the further development of other methods of modern communication and transportation both between points within the highland and between the latter and China proper. Thus, the Central Government disclosed at this time that it had just finished drawing up blueprints for the construction of a railroad line to link Lhasa with Lanchow (in Kansu province), with completion envisaged for 1962¹ – an overly optimistic time-table, it so happened. On May 26, 1956, Lhasa announced the landing of the first airplane at its new airfield and the first commercial flight, inaugurating scheduled air traffic between the Chinese and Tibetan capitals, took place on May 29.² By then, regular air connections had already long been in existence between Chungking and Chamdo where a major airport started operating shortly after the area's "liberation" in 1950. In addition, a number of military landing strips are known to have been built by the Chinese troops at various sites, but neither their total nor the location of each of these can be ascertained with any real degree of exactitude. Outside estimates, more or less informed, generally speak of the existence of approximately 18 such installations of a permanent or semi-permanent character throughout the Tibetan uplands. Occasionally, more precise data comes to light, as, for instance, when in December, 1959, the world press circulated stories that the Chinese had recently built landing fields at Kampa Dzong, forty miles north of the Sikkim frontier and were using others lying near Tingri, about

¹ K. Beba, "Tibet Revisited," *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 6, June, 1957, pp. 9-12.

² *Daily News Release*, May 27, 1956, p. 275; Pan Kuo-ting, "Flight to Lhasa," *China in Transition* (Peking, 1957), pp. 178-183.

forty miles north of Mount Everest, while, concurrently, two or more new military airstrips began functioning near the Ladakh area.¹

Likewise, in August, 1959, official sources published news-releases on the impending inauguration of regular navigation between Lhasa and Tsetang along the Lhasa and Tsangpo rivers for vessels and barges up to fifty tons, marking the end of the first stage of a long-term project elaborated by Peking to increase utilization of the plateau's major streams for cheap internal bulk haulage. Dredging and deepening were eventually expected to make this 230-km waterway navigable for craft up to 2,000 tons, and teams of experts were said to be engaged in designing special vessels suited for the two rivers. The waterway was necessary, according to Peking, because of the inability already of the freshly opened highway between the two cities to handle the volume of traffic.²

Neither did the planned growth of the latest techniques of rapid communication lag far behind. By April, 1955, so the Chinese claimed, forty postal and telecommunications offices had been set up in Inner Tibet and the Chamdo area, and in June, 1955, the authorities loudly publicized the establishment of relay radio stations in Lhasa, Shigatse, and Chamdo. On February 14, 1956, long-distance radiophone service between Lhasa and Peking and Chungking became available and like contacts were scheduled for inauguration later that same year between Lhasa and Lanchow in north-west China and Lhasa and Changtu and Kantze in south-west China.³

In the final analysis, much of the credit for the ability of the local Chinese garrison to withstand all along repeated Tibetan attempts to dislodge Han authority from the region must go to the fact that throughout it had ready access to an effective system of modern transportation and communication. The plant represented a heavy investment, to be sure, but it thoroughly paid for itself over the years, politically, militarily, and otherwise. What is more, it should be remembered that most of this was achieved with a minimum of friction with the native population and, for that matter, even brought in additional dividends in the form of enhanced popular awe and respect

¹ *New York Times*, October 15, 1959, p. 9; December 22, 1959, p. 5; and December 25, 1959, p. 1.

² *SCMP*, No. 2071, August 7, 1959, p. 28.

³ *Daily News Release*, April 27, 1955, p. 340; June 4, 1955, p. 41; *SCMP*, No. 1401, October 27, 1956, p. 16; V. P. Leontiev, *Inostrannaya ekspansiya v Tibete v 1888-1919gg*, p. 207.

for Chinese technological superiority. True, things did not always proceed with uniform smoothness here either and, once in a while, hitches occurred that contributed to the general tension, but these were no more than marginal incidents and, for the Chinese, the advantages of their program netly outweighed its occasional negative by-products.

In other fields as well, the basic approach evolved earlier persisted without much change, except for a general enlargement in the scope of the various undertakings. The extension of the road network within Tibet, for instance, led, judging by official figures, to further gains in Sino-Tibetan commerce from the standpoint of both the volume and nomenclature of the exchange. To cite one example, in line with the announced resolution of a 17-day trade conference concluded in Lhasa on February 10, 1955, Tibetan peasants and herdsmen were scheduled to receive 70 percent more consumer items that year from the State trading companies, with the supply of tea to increase by 60 percent and that of cotton fabrics and other mass consumption goods to expand proportionately. Coincidentally, a decision was published that State purchases of animal products and sundry local merchandise would grow ten-fold over the previous year's level, with new State trading centers for both wholesale and retail business already in the process of being set up for that purpose in a number of Tibetan cities and outposts.¹ An identical trend can be discerned in the following years.

The same rationale still dominated the enterprise: to draw on Tibetan economic resources for China's needs; to tie Tibet more closely to China through greater dependence on the latter for import and export alike; conversely, to diminish Tibet's trade flow with the rest of the world, particularly India and Nepal, historically the region's chief sale and purchase markets. The deleterious effects of such a policy on the average Tibetan's means of livelihood, which had made themselves felt almost at once, kept pace with its growth, i.e., inflation continued rampant, shortages multiplied, costs rose, increasing hardships beset large sections on the local population, especially its urban component. Still, by paying this price, Peking did succeed in reaching its main objectives, for, as has been pointed out,

in 1954, Tibet bought goods to the value of \pm 13 million, half from other parts of China, half from India. In the first $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1956, \pm 27,420,000 worth of

¹ *Daily News Release*, February 14, 1955, p. 116.

goods were brought in, of which \pm 20 million worth were from inland China. Imports from India have not decreased, in fact they have gone up a little, but since the completion of the new roads they constitute a smaller proportion.¹

The absolute value of imports from India may have, as claimed, risen a bit, though the gain strikes one as quite negligible, but it was as nothing when compared with the disastrous decline of the relative weight of India's share in Tibet's total trade turn-over, and the latter factor is what really counted. As things stood, Tibet now lay, to all intents and purposes, within China's commercial domain, India's interest and sustained activity in this sphere notwithstanding. Moreover, the eventual completion of the projected railroad track from Lanchow to Lhasa could only accentuate this trend and accelerate its tempo, a result which Peking fully anticipated since it clearly pinned its "main hopes of rapid progress in the Tibetan economy" on the future trunk-line.

On the other hand, still no conclusive advances came to reward Peking's initiative in the area of rural amelioration and reform. Chinese policies in this sensitive sector remained substantially the same, except perhaps that here too more projects were now under way and the whole program was somewhat more broadly conceived. In agriculture, the Chinese continued to emphasize diverse forms of aid and rely to a great extent on the power of persuasion through example and counsel and the local appeal of offers of free instruction in various fields of agronomy, particularly to the younger peasant element.

Apparently, this low-key approach did score a few successes and manage to make a respectable number of converts among the native inhabitants, for, by September, 1956, Tibetan traders in India were quoted as saying that "there has been a great improvement in agriculture . . . modern techniques have been introduced and the Tibetans are greatly impressed by the results . . ." ² Likewise, more and more Tibetans allegedly found themselves attracted by the Chinese rural exhibits and experimental farms and, according to a Lhasa broadcast, sixty young Tibetan herdsmen and peasants were already attending a training class, learning to operate tractors, combine-harvesters and other agricultural machinery in courses sponsored by the Agricultural and Forestry Department of the Preparatory Committee.³

¹ K. Beba, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-12.

² *New York Times*, September 6, 1954, p. 3.

³ *Daily News Release*, September 19, 1956, p. 171; *SCMP*, No. 1375, September 24, 1956,

In line, again with the pattern established earlier, the comprehensive 7-point program made public by Peking at the end of 1958 outlining a general plan of development of the Tibetan region in 1959 envisaged further investments in schemes of land reclamation and tree-planting on urban and rural sites, the latter primarily to afford protection to crops. The Chinese authorities on the plateau also engaged directly, on an ever increasing scale, in agricultural experimentation and production, either through the use of military labor from the army units stationed here or through the relocation of immigrants from China on empty and purchased lands. Indeed, concerning that last point, some 500,000 Chinese were reported to have been brought into the area between 1954 and 1956 alone, mostly into the Chamdo province, and settled on land vacant, acquired from its native owners, or expropriated.¹ The plots worked by these Han immigrants were said to have been duly collectivized, as in the rest of China proper, and supposedly were being cultivated in accordance with modernized farm techniques, thus, allegedly, greatly improving the crop yield of the Tibetan countryside.

In a strictly physical sense, then, loans on easy terms, free distribution of select seeds and better implements, training and instruction of local peasants in new production methods, and the personal contribution of the local Chinese contingent to the increase of the region's agricultural output – all these played a material role in the appreciable upsurge of the Tibetan rural economy during the period in question. At least, that is the picture conveyed by statistics released through official channels. Though one must, of course, discount some of the regime's figures and accept others only with serious reservations, it would nonetheless seem that the hard core of the above claims came close enough to the truth and so did reflect rather accurately actual conditions on the highland.

The human element of the situation, however, as usual poses a more difficult problem of assessment. Inwardly, the average Tibetan peasant may well have been thoroughly impressed, as alleged, by this evidence of superior Chinese technical know-how, but no signs whatever appeared on the horizon of an imminent rush to embrace the ideals

p. 28. For a description of some of the earlier projects of agricultural experiments and land reclamation efforts, see P. Y. Wang, "Letter from Lhasa," *China Monthly Review*, April, 1953, pp. 20-26.

¹ *New York Times*, November 28, 1956, p. 7, and February 6, 1957, p. 10.

preached by the Chinese. Overawed or not, the mass of Tibetans did not easily abandon the traditional way of life and quite unanimously hung back from the new and the untested. Had the fruits of this relative affluence, accepting for the moment Peking's word on this subject, tangibly benefited the Tibetan commoner, the added incentive might have generated among the lower rural classes a measure of eagerness to venture on the path urged on them by Peking's spokesmen. As it turned out, such a consideration never arose, for the surplus, if that expression applies at all, either went to China or served to feed the large, and always growing, local Chinese colony, with the native population profiting little from the land's increased productivity. Nor did the Chinese set aside any of the excess yield for reimbursement to the Tibetan authorities to replenish the grain reserves traditionally maintained by the latter against a time of emergency and by now badly depleted by earlier Chinese "borrowing".

Two other factors conspired further to reduce the appeal of the Chinese program to the native audience: one, that it came accompanied by a planned and heavy influx of Chinese immigrants, with the future holding promise of more arrivals, a prospect which Tibetans naturally found altogether abhorrent; two, that these newcomers, despite their vaunted advantages in knowledge and experience of things modern, did not enjoy a standard of living noticeably higher than that of the ordinary Tibetan, certainly not so superior as to excite the envy of the latter and inflame him with a spirit of emulation.

In short, no major breakthrough materialized on this front. Actually, the Chinese approach, best described as circumspect, was not really suited for consummating a revolution in the Tibetan countryside and, as far as one can determine, did not actively pursue that end. Instead, it apparently continued to concentrate on lesser objectives, more readily accessible, yet capable of spelling the difference between victory and defeat if and when the occasion presented itself to cast an outright challenge to the traditional order. Hence, the Chinese still bent their efforts on wooing the poorer Tibetans, the local proletariat of land-tilling and pastoral serfs and, if possible, drawing them away from their age-old allegiance to their feudal overlords, princes and prelates alike. The positive psychological effect of these tactics on the rank-and-file Tibetan's ingrained outlook on his personal relations with the community and his recognized place in it, defies accurate assessment for two reasons: first, the historically conditioned apolitical attitude of

the Tibetan masses largely precluded public expressions of belief on their part concerning such matters; second, the Chinese line did not at this early date propose to precipitate an overt crisis within the fabric of Tibetan society the responsibility for which would clearly go back to Peking and in which the latter would be forced to choose sides.

However, the absence of any visible signs of crystallization of popular Tibetan opposition to the established authorities does not yet mean that the Chinese hopes to influence local opinion proved altogether barren, but rather that both the emphasis of Peking's efforts and their results lay elsewhere: in the "benevolent neutralisation," so to speak, of the run-of-the mill Tibetan, i.e., his tacit withdrawal from the political contest between the indigenous hierarchy and the Chinese and subtle shift toward a position in some respects akin to that of "mental attentisme." To put it otherwise, the common Tibetan did not in the face of Chinese pressure and blandishment turn into an ally of the Chinese and develop strong and articulated differences with his own rulers, but some of his habitual suspicions of the Chinese were certainly allayed by Peking's deliberate policy of currying favor with the poorer classes and his past blind acceptance of the existing system concurrently shaken by Peking's adroit and relentless propaganda campaign. Conversely, this very fact caused increasing restiveness in the top echelons of the native hierarchy and led to mounting resentment in those circles against the Communist Chinese which, at times, more than counterbalanced the modest progress the latter made at the lower levels.

By comparison, Peking's impact on Tibetan animal husbandry was narrower in scope, somewhat less fruitful in practical results, and to a large extent bereft of direct social implications. On the whole, a much smaller sum of financial aid was applied for and utilized by Tibetan cattle-breeders during this period. True, interest-free loans were distributed in the pasture-lands too, but at a slower rate and in more restricted amounts. More significance attached to the extensive Chinese purchasing practice with regard to wool and other animal products, at reportedly high and stable prices, as well as to Peking's actions to improve the quality of the local herds. Currently, a dozen veterinary stations were said to be operating at numerous points in Tibet's vast highland and teams of veterinarians were now sent into remote districts of the region to initiate preventive measures against animal diseases.¹

¹ A. Winnington, *Tibet, Record of a Journey* (London, 1957), pp. 180-184; Phuntsog-wanggyei, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-189.

In September, 1956, the first stock-raising classes in Tibet were inaugurated under the sponsorship of the Preparatory Committee and, the next month, the Ministry of Agriculture announced that it had allotted a special fund to develop animal husbandry and veterinary medicine in Tibet. According to official sources, a whole series of additional measures were thereafter undertaken by the Central Government to improve the quality and increase the numbers of the native herds on the Tibetan plateau.¹

Developments in the field of general health and welfare followed the same steady course. Reports released in April, 1956, noted that the Central Government had spent more than 5 million yuan on public health in Tibet in the previous four years and that over 150,000 people had by then undergone vaccination. In the Chamdo area alone, there now functioned, according to these accounts, in addition to the central hospital, nine public health centers dispensing free medical care to the local population. A new, more modern hospital was planned for Shigatse for 1959. The 7-point program for Tibet for 1959 once more emphasized the subject of welfare. Thus, by the end of 1958, 18 medical-sanitation installations equipped with modern apparatus were said to be operating throughout Tibet, assisted by numerous mobile units. In 1959, the number of such facilities reportedly again increased sharply; in addition to the three fairly large polyclinic hospitals in Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo, medical services was now being dispensed, so the Communist press claimed, by eight clinics and twelve medical stations, plus the ambulatory crews.²

Finally, a like pattern obtained in the realm of the industrial development of the region launched by Peking. Prior to Tibet's "liberation," the entire industrial sector of the local economy consisted of an obsolete 60-kw power station in Lhasa and an archaic mint employing a few workers. Although very considerable growth has characterized this area since 1951, industrial activity still constitutes a relatively negligible factor in Tibet's life and national income. Nevertheless, the Chinese have already claimed some notable advances and accomplishments, a record officially presented as but a prelude to further progress and a forerunner of greater things yet to come.

¹ SCMP, No. 1367, September 11, 1956, p. 26; No. 1397, October 25, 1956, p. 26.

² *Daily News Release*, March 17, 1955, p. 116; October 8, 1956, p. 72; SCMP, No. 1276, April 26, 1956, p. 25; No. 1278, April 20, 1956, p. 17; No. 1399, October 27, 1956, p. 16; and No. 2020, May 26, 1959, p. 25.

Efforts to create a local industrial complex began with a comprehensive survey of the plateau's natural resources, conducted by teams of Chinese scientific workers. These expeditions soon reported the discovery of over thirty different minerals (including deposits of iron ore, coal, boron, graphite) in significant quantities. Simultaneously, the Chinese started the erection of a few minor projects. Initially, most of these rudimentary installations aimed at purveying to the basic needs of the construction industry and the building and maintenance of the highway network. Thus, by 1955, a motor-repair works, a saw-mill, a brick kiln, and lime works were established.¹ As previously noted, a number of additional projects scheduled for early completion were enumerated in the plan adopted by the State Council on March 9, 1955. Thereupon, to stimulate the development program, a 41-man survey mission was sent from Peking to Lhasa, including geologists, engineers and technicians.²

In the months that followed, reports of progress filled the official press. Systematic exploitation of the great virgin forests of the Chamdo area was said to have yielded 10,000 cubic meters of lumber in the first nine months of 1955, the first time in history that timber was commercially cut here, to be used on building projects along the new highways. During 1956, blueprints were drawn up for Lhasa's first factories, for dams along various rivers and for expanded electric power facilities. Quarters were rapidly put up, to accommodate the many new undertakings at Lhasa, Shigatse, Chamdo and the nascent towns along the motor-routes. In January, 1956, a further contingent of 170 Chinese skilled workers and seven engineers and technicians reached Lhasa to help in Tibet's industrial growth, and many more were described as on their way.³

In July, 1956, the authorities announced that the first steam power plan in Shigatse had entered into service and on October 1, the new

¹ Wang Hsi-ti, "Treasure Seekers on the Sikang-Tibet Plateau," *People's China*, 1954, No. 10, pp. 26-29; B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 187; *Daily News Release*, January 21, 1955, p. 122; June 4, 1955, p. 35; December 8, 1955, p. 64; Ch'en Hsi, "New Life of the Tibetan People," *Extracts of China Mainland Magazines*, No. 169, May 25, 1959, p. 30.

² *Daily News Release*, March 14, 1955, p. 85; B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 188. A good deal of emphasis was put, from the start, on the possibility of systematic development of the highland's water resources for power purposes. As an example of this line of thought and the data gathered, see V. D. Ivanov and E. P. Kazakevich, *Gidroenergeticheskie resursy Kitaiskoi Narodnoi Respubliki i ikh ispolzovanie* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1960), pp. 43-45.

³ *Daily News Release*, October 10, 1955, p. 90; I. Epstein, "In Lhasa Today," *People's China*, 1956, No. 1, pp. 13-17; *SCMP*, No. 1233, February 23, 1956, p. 17, and No. 1334, July 23, 1956, p. 20.

600-kw hydro-electric power station in Lhasa followed suit. The building of a geophysical observatory began in Lhasa in the same month, with the bulk of the construction scheduled for completion that year. In October, a hydro-electric Surveying and Designing Department was set up in Lhasa by the Ministry of Electric Power Industry to help in the further construction of power installations and in training native engineers, technicians and workers. More than sixty technicians were already said to be staffing the bureau, preparing to survey a new hydro-electric power plant project in Lhasa to be carried out by the end of that year. At the same time, the Shigatse power station made public its plans to offer a 14-month technical training course for 100 Tibetan workers. More geological findings were claimed by the Chinese scientific teams working in eastern Tibet in 1957 and Peking's broadcast from December 29, 1958, of the 7-point program for the development of Tibet in 1959 stressed continued construction of factories in the region. Indeed, according to news released from Lhasa in the first week of March, 1959, a blast furnace there, built by workers of the transportation department of the Chinghai-Tibet highway administration, produced its first pig iron made from local ore. Its initial daily capacity was only 1½ tons of pig iron, but there were plans to erect other such smelters in the capital soon. In 1958, a coal vein near Lhasa, originally discovered and worked by Chinese soldiers, went into full-scale commercial production, allegedly supplying in short order all of the capital's normal fuel needs.¹

By today's standards, these results still seem quite meager, of course, though, when compared with the situation that had existed here before, they cannot fail to impress the casual observer. Moreover, as in the case of the innovations in animal husbandry, and public health and welfare, and unlike other areas of Chinese initiative, the incipient industrialization trend managed to take root without engendering heated controversy and unduly arousing political tempers. A purely Chinese enterprise, it enhanced the overall psychological impact of Peking's policies on the Tibetan mind, to be sure, but, because of its very conception and exclusiveness, plus its limited scope, proved

¹ *Daily News Release*, July 3, 1956, p. 25; B. P. Gurevich, *op. cit.*, p. 188; *SCMP*, No. 1390, October 16, 1956, p. 13; No. 1457, January 24, 1957, p. 24; No. 1982, March 31, 1959, p. 25; *Asian Recorder*, 1959, pp. 2472, 2548; *Current Background*, No. 567, May 1, 1959, p. 4 (hereafter abbr. *CB*). For first reports on dykes, dams, and hydrological stations along the Lhasa, Brahmaputra (Tsangpo) and Nyangchu rivers, see *Daily News Release*, March 14, 1955, p. 85, and June 13, 1955, p. 99.

totally unable to effect any deep and lasting transformations in the traditional pattern of local relations. The industrial establishment, such as it was, always remained an alien creature, ignored by most Tibetans, commanding awe and respect from those coming into contact with it, useful to a very few, vital to none, and subordinate throughout to Chinese requirements alone.

Though deserving full credit for helping strengthen the Chinese position on the plateau, all the above activities nevertheless represented only a subsidiary feature of the main Chinese offensive, its flanking thrusts, so to speak. The chief focus stayed firmly on politics, which held the key to the solution to the question regarding the future path of Sino-Tibetan relations. Here, with the installation of the Preparatory Committee, the process of concentrating power in the hands of Chinese dominated agencies now visibly picked up momentum, particularly since the decisions of the Committee were ostensibly sanctioned by the Dalai Lama and other top Tibetan dignitaries in their respective capacity of Chairman and members of that body. The finance department, for instance, thereafter rapidly extended the scope of its competence in the field of taxation, which, in turn, led to vexing friction with the Tibetan authorities. Furthermore, its widespread practice of granting interest-free loans and material assistance and fiscal subsidies on easy terms to the Tibetan peasantry, thereby appreciably lessening the latter's dependence on (and exploitation by) the native landlords, monasteries and nobility, earned in the undying hatred of the propertied classes and so added to the already considerable tension. The bureau of education and culture, for its part, encroached to an ever increasing degree on the monastery-administered institutions of traditional learning, tirelessly promoting, over the Church's opposition, a Communist-oriented curriculum, another issue calculated to stir up controversy.

The newborn judicial department, too, bent its energies on trying to usurp more and more of the official attributes of the Tibetan legal organs and persistently sought to inculcate what passed for court proceedings on the plateau with the basic principles of Communist Chinese legislation, usually at the expense of the grievously antiquated body of Tibetan customary law. As was then noted, "following the formation of the department of justice attached to the Preparatory Committee, judicial functions were gradually being transferred to it. Temporarily, it also discharges the duties of the procuracy." Progress

was slow, however, especially with respect to the proposed renovation of the archaic Tibetan substantive legal rules – in itself an eloquent testimonial to the resistance encountered from the conservative element. Still, as the same credible, even if partisan, source indicates, “after the liberation of Tibet some changes have been introduced into the earlier laws. In particular, the liability of members of the family for crimes and offenses committed by the head of the family was abolished, the question of debts regulated, etc. . . . Before the liberation of Tibet, cruel and defamatory punishments, too, were in use. After the liberation of Tibet, such punishments have been used much more rarely.”¹ As an outside source rightly commented at this time in a like vein: “There was no headlong rush towards imposing a Communist society. But year by year more and more Chinese, more and more Chinese laws, have become part of Tibet.”²

Finally, the Preparatory Committee now proceeded, with some success, to put into force a plan envisaging the organization of a region-wide system of local branches of the Committee to operate at all the lower echelons of administration. “It was decided to create, in 1956, secretariats of the Preparatory Committee in Lhasa, Shigatse, Chamdo, Gyantse, Dangpongpo, Shannan, and Phari, and, by the end of the year, district secretariats in all the districts of Tibet. The [Preparatory Committee’s] resolution noted that the creation of district and regional branches would prepare the ground for the emergence of a single autonomous region.”³ On July 11, 1957, in a report to the annual session of the National People’s Congress in Peking, *Kalon Ngaboo* declared that “offices had been set up in eight special districts and over 50 places up to county level since the Preparatory Committee was formed last spring.”⁴ Since these rapidly proliferating agencies could obviously not all be staffed by trained Tibetan personnel, Han officials were imported wholesale to fill the vacancies, an incidental feature not widely publicized, for reasons apparent to everyone. And, the fact that this whole scheme, if successful, would spell the death of the former structure of Tibetan government, leaving it a shrunken head without a body, was also tactfully left unsaid.

By then, however, the Chinese plan had already run into serious trouble, had slowly ground to a halt and, soon after, seen itself forced

¹ G. M. Valiakhmetov, *op. cit.*, p. 39-41.

² *New York Times*, January 13, 1957, p. 1.

³ G. M. Valiakhmetov, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁴ *Asian Recorder*, 1957, p. 1571.

to reverse gears. A violent reaction now set in to the creeping infiltration which threatened to engulf everything, culminating in armed uprisings at various points of the Tibetan plateau and elsewhere along China's continental frontier, especially in districts inhabited by ethnic minorities, including once again Tibetan settlements outside the highland, in the peripheral Chinese provinces. Major revolts as well as minor rebellions continued to plague the Chinese throughout 1956 in this outer land belt, aggravated by the difficult terrain and the racial, religious and nationalistic overtones of the struggle. In Tibet proper, Peking's probing tactics met with stiffening resistance as early as the end of 1955, apparently causing the Central Government to have second-thoughts of the kind that inspired Indian sources to circulate at the time a plausible account of a statement by Chou En-lai to the effect that Communism was still a very distant goal for Tibet. But, the pause, if one may call it that, did not last for more than a fleeting moment and 1956 saw resurgent Chinese pressure on every front which led anew to intermittent uprisings of greater or lesser magnitude in eastern Tibet and nearby areas for the duration of that year.

Faced with this inescapable evidence of their failure to eradicate local opposition to their authority, the Chinese responded in typical manner: on the one hand, heightened repression of overt manifestations of dissent; on the other, verbal promises of immediate improvement. While Chinese troops in the interior battled sporadic outbreaks all around them, the Communist leadership duly tried to placate the insensed tribesmen by tendering conciliatory pledges and making sundry friendly gestures. The tenor of the remarks by Marshall Chen Yi, a Deputy Prime Minister, at the inaugural session of the Preparatory Committee in April already reflected awareness of the urgent need to pacify the badly ruffled feelings of his native audience. The key speeches at the Eighth Party Congress (September 15-27, 1956) elaborated the same line of thought, dwelling at length on the theme of the indispensability of pursuing a gradual course of transformation in the national minorities regions and unanimously advocating a go-slow program of reform there, preaching caution and moderation in a voice oddly at variance with the sanguine tones of yesteryear. Finally, these assurances were repeated and embroidered upon and guarantees of further concessions were extended personally to the Dalai Lama by Chou En-lai himself at the time of the former's pilgrim-

age to India at the end of 1956 when it looked for a moment as if he would decide to stay in that country and refuse to go home.

All of this seemed perfectly sincere and so it undoubtedly was – to the extent that prevailing conditions did not favor forceful action and the Chinese, knowing that, had sense enough to bow graciously in the face of the inevitable, disguise their true feelings and wait for more opportune circumstances, without in the least abandoning their inward determination to see things done their own way before long. In any event, by this late date the process of deterioration of mutual relations between the antagonists had gone too far for mere talk to suffice. Nothing less than concrete proof of Chinese good faith and Peking's capacity to abide in practice by its optimistic oral sureties would now satisfy the adversary, no matter how bitter a pill this might be for the Central Government to swallow. In 1957, the conflict rapidly came to a head, resulting in a major Chinese retreat on all sectors.

The first conclusive sign of a drastic reorientation in Chinese policy *vis-à-vis* the border territories came in February, 1957, when, in his speech on the "correct handling of contradictions among the people," Mao openly denounced "Great-Han chauvinism" and endorsed a gradualistic approach with respect to all of China's national minorities. As regards specifically Tibet, Mao declared:

Because conditions are not yet ripe, democratic reforms have not yet been carried out there. According to the seventeen-point agreement between the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet, reforms of the social system must eventually be carried out. But we should not be impatient; when this will be done can only be decided when the great majority of the people of Tibet and their leading public figures consider it practical. It has now been decided not to proceed with democratic reforms in Tibet during the period of the second Five-Year Plan, and we can only decide whether it will be done in the period of the third Five-Year Plan in the light of the situation obtaining at the time.

This thesis was immediately echoed and amplified by the other leaders of the Chinese Communist regime. The Vice-Secretary of the Working Committee of the Communist Party at Lhasa now promised that reforms in Tibet would be undertaken only with the consent of the people and that the Chinese would not resort to coercion in implementing social changes. And, Chou En-lai reportedly expressed readiness to discuss a virtually complete withdrawal of the Chinese from the highland,¹ while warning, prophetically as it soon turned

¹ *Asian Recorder*, 1957, p. 1317; *New York Times*, January 20, 1957, p. 3, and April 28, 1957, p. 13; *KCA*, 1956, p. 14664.

Emphasis on the "go-slow" approach was also evident in the various speeches read at the

out, that any uprising in Tibet would be met by the Central Government with action similar to the one it had favored in the recent Hungarian crisis – outright repression. Within a surprisingly short time – for Tibet – these declarations of principle brought on a succession of practical readjustments designed to give concrete embodiment to the new line.

Thus, on June 16, 1957, the Permanent Committee of the Preparatory Committee, meeting in Lhasa, resolved that most of the Han personnel, stationed in Tibet to “help” with the administrative and construction work, should be pulled out and sent to other parts of China. “Peiping radio, quoting a Lhasa communiqué, said that since the Central Government had decided not to carry out democratic reforms in Tibet for the next 6 years, the present staff was considered too large. Besides, the withdrawal would also be beneficial in bringing about the initiative of Tibetan personnel.”¹ In the meantime, the Central Government was reported to be pushing ahead with large-scale training of local cadres to replace the returning Chinese. As a result of this shock program, official Lhasa sources could announce on December 10, 1956, that Tibet already boasted more than 6,000 government workers of Tibetan nationality. The departments directly under the Preparatory Committee and its eight regional offices were described as staffed now mostly by Tibetans and plans for a school for native functionaries, with the Dalai Lama as the head of its board of directors and the Panchen Lama as his First Deputy, were in preparation, the blueprints envisaging an institution eventually capable of accommodating several thousand students.²

Finally, in August, 1957, the Preparatory Committee adopted the draft-project of a law to cut down its own staff, abolish the powerful finance-economic commission and consolidate the existing eleven de-

Eighth Party Congress, advocating a gradual transformation in the national minorities areas and a cautious program. See, *Materially VIII Vsekitaiskogo s'ezda Kommunisticheskoi Partii Kitaya* (Moscow, 1956), for statements by Chang Kuo-hua, p. 277; Ulanfu, pp. 233-238; Chou En-lai, pp. 154-155.

¹ *Asian Recorder*, 1957, pp. 1506, 1571. A retrenchment committee was set up by the Preparatory Committee to study the measures for carrying out the new line, headed by Kalon Ngaboo, aided by 2 vice-chairmen, and comprising 44 members. On that occasion Chang Kuo-hua made the unusual admission that “judging from the situation during the past year, it was, however, found that conditions for democratic reforms in Tibet were not yet mature. Only the minority, not the majority, of the people of upper strata are in agreement of carrying out the reforms. The aspiration of the masses of the people in the reforms is definite, but their awareness is still low.” *CB*, No. 490, February 7, 1958, pp. 1-2.

² *Daily News Release*, December 11, 1956, p. 91.

partments into four (internal affairs, culture and education, construction, and finance). It is a good indication of the true extent of Peking's reluctance to countenance the dismantlement of the control edifice which it had erected at such cost that the final measure ratifying these cutbacks was passed by the Committee only in March, 1958, at which time that organ also ruled that 90 percent of the personnel of the surviving offices subordinate to the Committee would thereafter be recruited from among Tibetans.¹ By then, however, the Committee's action amounted to no more than a formal gesture belatedly recognizing a *fait accompli*, for, according to reliable accounts, "at least 91.6 percent of the Communist Party officials had been withdrawn from Tibet" already by October, 1957. These sources concurrently indicated that "a number of Chinese schools were being closed. Whenever possible, local authority was being handed back to the Tibetans and the number of Chinese in Tibet was being reduced drastically."²

Nevertheless, even these far-reaching concessions did not succeed in assuaging to any decisive extent the thoroughly envenomed relations between Peking and Lhasa. In spite of sundry Chinese compromises, reports of periodic local uprisings of Tibetans continued to reach the outside world throughout 1958. In turn, Peking, apparently growing more and more uneasy over the trend of developments in Tibet, now clutched at every opportunity to arrest the drift of events and try to regain its dominant position on the plateau. Thus, in March, 1958, it suddenly launched a major "rectification campaign" on the highland in order to "universally and seriously combat the practices of bureaucratism, subjectivism, sectarianism, big-nation chauvinism, local national chauvinism and individualism." In June, the Central Government followed up by resolving that a branch of the Supreme People's Court and of the Supreme People's Procuratorate forthwith be set up on the plateau,³ a step long postponed in deference to Lhasa's opposition to the idea and currently serving clear notice of Chinese determination to retake the offensive. At about this time, other

¹ G. M. Valiakhmetov, *op. cit.*, p. 38, fn. 1; *Asian Recorder*, 1958, p. 1947.

² *Asian Recorder*, 1957, p. 683; *Facts on File*, 1957, p. 342; *New York Times*, October 12, 1957, p. 2.

³ *KCA*, 1958, p. 16062, for statement by Liu Ke-ping, Chairman of the Committee on Nationalities of the National People's Congress; *Asian Recorder*, 1958, p. 1947, for statement by Chang Ching-wu, representative of the People's Government in Tibet. For text of the Resolution on the Tibetan branch of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, see A. G. Krymov and M. A. Shafir (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 677.

reports began filtering out of the beleaguered country that showed that the Chinese military grip, which had slackened the previous year, had again tightened up with the arrival of a delegation from the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to advise local authorities in "weeding out reactionaries." ¹

Hence, primarily as a result of the intransigent attitude of both parties, or, more precisely, of the Chinese Communist leadership, on the one hand, and of assorted disaffected elements in Tibet, on the other, the 1957 *modus vivendi*, won with such difficulty, was soon reduced to the status of just another temporary cease-fire agreement, not a very effective truce even while it lasted. The watchful confrontation of the antagonists still stamped the political scene and, in the long run, made it inevitable that the ensuing precarious deadlock would only be broken by an open showdown between the two camps. Given these conditions, a crisis was surely forthcoming; the timing alone remained in doubt. That point, too, was settled before long. Accidentally, but not altogether unexpectedly, the oft-delayed occasion for such a "final solution" presented itself earlier than generally anticipated, the climax materializing in March, 1959, with consequences which today have already become history.

¹ *New York Times*, March 19, 1958, p. 16; and June 6, 1958, p. 8.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVOLT AND ITS AFTERMATH

The sequence of the March, 1959, events in and around Lhasa and of several of the more spectacular accompanying developments, such as the flight of the Dalai Lama and his entourage to India, is by now sufficiently well known not to require further repetition. There may still be some controversy on matters of fact or interpretation of particular points in the history of the crisis, which could remain disputed forever, but the general picture of what happened is no longer in doubt, allowing one to draw the necessary conclusions therefrom with little danger of falling into serious error due to the lack of a piece of vital data. Instead of another chronological recitation of the various steps leading to the final outbreak and of a blow-by-blow account of the short-lived revolt itself, therefore, an attempt will here be made to analyze the main elements of the uprising from the standpoint of the forces involved, the chief issues at stake, and the long-range consequences for Tibet of the outcome of this showdown, so to speak, given its specific causes and the character of the actors in the drama.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the 1959 armed clash between the Chinese and the Tibetans is the strictly limited scope of the conflict, in terms both of the extent of the territorial theatre of the principal hostilities and of the numbers and types of people who took active part in the fighting. In effect, in the geographical sense, the locus of the revolt lay almost entirely in Lhasa and its immediate environments and, while military operations later spread to a few of the outlying regions as well, the uprising proper was confined to the capital and its surroundings and its fate was in the main settled by what occurred there. From that angle, then, the outbreak appears as little more than a locally centered disturbance, important only in that it physically affected the seat of government and thus directly involved the country's leadership in the struggle, but, spatially, it otherwise re-

mained as circumscribed as most of the collisions between the Chinese garrison and the indigenous population observed earlier on the plateau, and probably more so than quite a few of these latter.

Hence, areawise, the revolt hardly qualifies to be treated as a national insurrection, in the accepted meaning of that expression, unless Lhasa's stand is seen as symbolically representative of the spirit of the entire Tibetan people, in other words, if judged on the qualitative rather than the quantitative plane. By that token, the argument can validly be made that what transpired in the capital itself constituted but the logical culmination of a chain of prior like incidents elsewhere, that, accordingly, it did not amount to an isolated phenomenon, but formed part of a consistent cycle with a country-wide import, and, finally, that Tibet's vastness and severe practical difficulties in communication alone prevented the conflagration from spreading at once and assuming mass proportions. Be that as it may, the record does indicate that the conflict as such bore all the marks of a highly localized case as regards the primary arena of effective military confrontation of the contestants. Even when looked at from the perspective of the history of past violence periodically punctuating the troubled course of Sino-Tibetan relations since 1951, this latest resort to arms could, with full justification, be viewed not as an organic component of a definitely crystallized political pattern, but just as the latest manifestation in a series of outwardly similar, yet not substantively inter-related, contingencies. If considered as still another instance of spontaneous combustion, as it were, generally akin to previous such episodes, though not necessarily connected to them, the 1959 Sino-Tibetan test of strength can well bear examination on its own, as a development possibly singular in its native genre because of its circumstantial setting and its especially grave repercussions, but not because of the presence of some special property making it an experience perceptibly different in kind.

A glance at the human side of the picture strongly reinforces the above impression as to the strictly limited nature of the uprising. Indeed, numerically, the Tibetan insurgents never succeeded in mustering into their ranks even a large fraction of the population at hand, to say nothing of a majority. As far as can be ascertained, the great bulk of the common people of Lhasa and of the adjoining countryside failed to join in the fighting against the Chinese both when it first began and as it progressed. Why that was so is not altogether

clear. Several possible causes may be cited. In part, a mixture of apathy, apprehension, and the traditional disinterest in politics and ingrained aversion to violence on the part of the lay citizenry would explain this low ratio of popular involvement. Some of it was undoubtedly also due to the effect of the years of propaganda and indoctrination to which the rank-and-file Tibetan had been subjected by the Chinese, a concerted verbal barrage aimed at fostering a sentiment of alienation between the man in the street and the ruling classes or, at least, nurturing skepticism in the former's mind as to the supposed identity of interests between himself and the privileged circles of the official hierarchy. In the end, however, incidental factors, pure and simple, suggest the best reasons for the notable lack of mass solidarity among the Tibetans at such a crucial moment in the nation's history.

Probably the most signal of these is the fact that the source of and impetus for the outbreak came from the outside. What is meant thereby is that the will to challenge the Chinese and the wherewithal to lock horns with them came not from within Lhasa itself but from an external force. To understand that, one must briefly describe the situation prevailing in and around the capital on the eve of the events in question. In the first place, it was the Tibetan New Year and the city was thronged with pilgrims from every corner of the land come here for the ceremonies and the festivities. Always a turbulent occasion, it was more so now because an irksome foreign presence marred the spirit of the celebrations, exasperating the national pride and offending the religious fervor of the participants, already sufficiently excited without that. In a charged atmosphere of this sort, it would not take much to generate mob mentality and precipitate crowd action even if all went relatively smoothly, which certainly was not the case now, so that in effect that, in many respects, is precisely what did materialize. In the second place, by a fortuitous combination of accident and normal circumstances, a large contingent of tribesmen from eastern Tibet were then encamped in the environments of Lhasa, warlike elements which had abandoned their hereditary domains in Kham after repeatedly clashing with the Chinese and which had drifted to inner Tibet to seek the protection of the central authorities and escape Chinese domination. Exasperated almost beyond endurance by Peking's persistent efforts to bring them back under its rule, these rebellious refugees, heavily concentrated in one spot, amounted to

just so much dry tinder awaiting only a spark to ignite it and set off a rampaging blaze. The scene was thus primed for trouble and ripe for an explosion from the very start, and while the behavior of all interested parties could serve to attenuate or, conversely, aggravate the friction, the basic tension was largely the product of conditions beyond their direct control.

Between these two groups, Lhasa's permanent population played an essentially passive role, standing by, so to speak, as a ready reservoir of potential recruits for the insurgent side, if properly approached and tapped, but not representing of and by itself a dynamic power on the verge of triggering a crisis. Hence, while the residents of Lhasa could, in the main, be counted upon to take part in any overt assault on the local Chinese garrison, if it ever came to that, the initiative for such a daring move would have to arise elsewhere and the degree of their personal involvement ultimately depended on the practical ability of those behind such a challenge to portray the venture as a joint cause against the common enemy. That is where the plan's execution broke down – in the inability or failure at the top to grasp the need to forge a united front against the Chinese, to mobilize the entire populace in a mass defiance of the Han authorities and call every able-bodied man to arms when the fighting erupted.

Had the anti-Chinese insurrection been motivated by local grievances, Lhasa's population would have experienced no difficulty in carrying with it both the transients and the evacuees from the east, since both of these elements generally were more mercurial, more militant and more hostile to the alien occupants than the random inhabitants of the capital. The reverse did not hold true, however. Though the average Tibetan of the interior sympathized with the plight of his kinsmen from Kham and, among other things, resented Chinese rule precisely because of Peking's thoroughly objectionable record in that region, a gulf nevertheless separated the people of Lhasa from their border brethren. They had warred against each other on more than one occasion in the not too distant past, the frontier tribesmen had traditionally acted independently of the Lhasan court and gone their own way. While they were all Tibetans, to be sure, their mutual relations had never been distinguished by particularly close association or cordiality, their manner of life was quite unlike, and latent suspicion marred what contacts existed between them.

Thus, when the revolt broke out, led, manned, and inspired chiefly

by the refugee Khambas, the response in Lhasa was by no means automatic, except perhaps in the midst of the equally disaffected and turbulent mass of pilgrims assembled there for the holidays. And, for lack of adequate coordination this tacit barrier was never surmounted so that the bulk of the Lhasans was never effectively drawn or integrated into the trial of strength in which the insurgents soon found themselves pitted against the Chinese troops. Historical and other differences militated against an innately close alliance of the various factions in the Tibetan camp and while these could, of course, be overcome given enough determination, for sundry reasons, among them lack of time and preparation, the process of consolidation never reached that point. In the end, the Tibetans paid heavily for their failure to get together. Apart from that, political heterogeneity within the fabric of the Tibetan community helped keep what could well have been a national endeavor at the level almost of a private clan feud, thereby badly minimizing its chances of success. Indeed, this latter quality, more than anything else, contributed toward creating the image of the 1959 uprising as merely the latest round in the series of unresolved collisions between the Chinese and the Kham tribes, as one more try, so to speak, by both parties to settle their unfinished personal business.

Another crucial parallel with the past lay in the fact that the insurgents not only had not coordinated their actions with the policies of the Lhasan administration beforehand, but in effect proceeded independently of and, in some respects, in a manner contrary to the explicit wishes of the Dalai Lama. This is not to say that those taking part in the revolt harbored sentiments hostile to the Dalai Lama personally or rejected his spiritual authority, for such was not the case. The figure of the God-king remained sacred to all Tibetans including those who now rose in his name against the Chinese. However, not only was the temporal power of the monarch disregarded by the rebel leadership, not only was the acknowledged ruler not consulted on matters of vital importance by those who claimed to be his loyal subjects, but the latter actually took measures to which the monarch had already openly expressed opposition. What is more, some of these were in fact directed against the political authority of the Dalai Lama in order to ensure his cooperation against the Chinese or at least his benevolent neutrality in the struggle.

By the Dalai Lama's own admission, for instance, he found his

freedom of movement severely restricted during the uprising by the insurgent forces, being to all intents and purposes confined to the palace grounds, apparently to prevent him from communicating with Peking's representatives and possibly making further concessions to the Chinese to reestablish peace in the capital. The Dalai Lama had never made a secret of his aversion to violence, his stubborn refusal to condone it and his private conviction that such a course would prove disastrous for the Tibetan nation in the face of the P.L.A.'s superiority in arms and men. Nor had he spared any effort in the past to settle disputes with the Chinese by negotiation, by compromise and, in the last extreme, by surrender if necessary to Chinese demands to avoid useless bloodshed. It is precisely against such a contingency that the rebels presently sought to safeguard themselves by making it impossible for the Dalai Lama or his trusted ministers to enter into any pour-parlers with the commanders of the local Chinese garrison. While this does not signify that the Tibetan insurrectionary elements had turned against the throne, it certainly indicates a lack of trust on their part in the duly constituted government and a readiness publicly to challenge, if need be, its stated views.

That, too, was typical of the Khamba mentality, with its tradition of contempt for the Lhasan court and its record of rash independence. Without in any way questioning the divine status of the Dalai Lama, the warlike eastern tribes, congregated by chance and choice around the capital, simply by-passed the secular power of the crown in their determination to redress, without inconvenient interference from a ruler noted for his peaceful leanings, the many wrongs inflicted on them and, by resort to arms, obtain satisfaction for their accumulated grievances. Optimistic of victory, they therefore moved to insure that the success of their venture would not be jeopardized by the Dalai Lama or his advisors who, they silently felt, throughout had shown themselves too amenable to Chinese promises and too willing to give ground before Chinese threats at the expense of the legitimate rights and interests of the Tibetan people as a whole and of the hard-pressed inhabitants of the eastern regions in particular.

In part because the reasons for the resentment animating the Khambas were not shared by the population of the inner plateau whose hostility to the Chinese stemmed from other causes, the two groups effectively failed, as already noted, to present a common front to the Chinese even after the outbreak of hostilities in the city. The

anti-Dalai Lama overtones in the insurgents' conduct contributed to the misunderstanding and aggravated the situation by conveying the impression that the Tibetans were busily working at cross-purposes with each other. Had the residents of Lhasa heard a positive appeal from the palace calling on them to join the fighting and expel the Chinese, they undoubtedly would have responded *en masse*. Instead, the throne remained silent, seemingly under some form of benevolent duress from the insurgents, at best visibly neutral in spirit and deed in the struggle between the former and the alien enemy, but definitely not overtly identifying itself with the rebel cause and offering no concrete guidance to the expectant populace. Disoriented, the latter continued to wait for some expression of the monarch's will or for a tangible sign of the official attitude toward these events, always to no avail. The government remained mute and the Khambas either would not or could not address the nation in the name of the God-king. Begun almost as a private feud, the conflict stayed at that level because of the failure of the rebels to sway the Dalai Lama to their side and enroll him and the government as active allies in the anti-Chinese *coup*. The Khambas could count on the personal sympathy of the Dalai Lama, to be sure, but could not secure his official support for their line of conduct, the one thing that spelled the difference between revolt and revolution, and possibly also between defeat and triumph.

A final factor to keep in mind when attempting to put the March crisis into its proper perspective is the essentially accidental nature of the incident. True, mounting friction, and sporadic outbursts of violence, had generally marked the pattern of Sino-Tibetan relations over the years, so that there was every likelihood of fresh recurrence of resort to brute force by either party at one time or other. Thus, in principle, the odds were all in favor of such a clash somewhere along the line; precedent made it probable and the current trend bespoke of further proximate attempts to resolve persistent divergences of opinion and assorted basic incompatibilities of values and outlooks. That both sides were drifting in the direction of a major collision may well have been the case, but nothing made it inevitable that the confrontation should have come about in the way and at the time and place that it did. The specific conditions under which the potential suddenly crystallized into a certainty were without a doubt the product of pure chance, of a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances and of an

unforeseen conjuncture of disparate elements which all at once combined into an explosive mixture quite independently of the conscious desire and will of the individuals involved.

At the root of the problem lay the long-standing feeling of utter frustration which possessed both the Chinese and the Tibetans after years of bitter recrimination, endless tension, constant watchfulness and mutual suspicion verging on paranoia. Frayed nerves, sheer exasperation weakened their respective willingness to labor to maintain the uneasy *status quo* indefinitely and fostered a spirit of impatience to arrive at a final settlement at almost any reasonable cost. The act that triggered the sequence of events which led directly to the revolt unconsciously arose precisely from this prevailing conviction that only decisive measures would break the impasse and, by undoing the stalemate, ease the all but unbearable pressure. The Chinese invitation to the Dalai Lama and his closest advisors to attend a theatrical performance at their military headquarters, which precipitated the whole trouble, may not have been deliberately intended to provoke a showdown. Nevertheless, it looked like a deliberately insulting, rash gesture, more of a command than an invitation, with obvious overtones of a superior addressing a subordinate. One can positively assert that the Chinese did not plan it as an ultimatum, but one can hardly deny that it did not fall far short of that and that psychologically it amounted just about to a test as to who was the real master of the situation. For the Dalai Lama to have acceded to the Chinese terms would have constituted a profound personal humiliation and would have struck a severe blow to the political prestige of the government which he headed as well. The Chinese surely realized this. In fact, that was their major objective – to gain the upper hand in dealing with Tibet's ruler, which explains their offensive posture.

One must, however, discount the notion that the Dalai Lama stood in physical danger from the Chinese had he accepted the summons to view the proposed entertainment unaccompanied by his usual body-guard and flanked only by his Cabinet ministers. It is unlikely that the Chinese ever contemplated going to such extremes. Apart from acting in such a manner as to teach the Dalai Lama a lesson, so to speak, and perhaps also thinking of using his presence in the military camp where he could readily end up as a hostage as reserve leverage against any attempt by the Tibetans gathered in the capital for the New Year celebrations to seize upon the occasion to cause difficulties, the local

Chinese gave no evidence of wanting to bring on an open crisis at this time, although that is exactly what they succeeded in doing.

The Dalai Lama appears not to have attached undue importance to the unbecoming tone of the Chinese communications even if it did displease and perturb him. Still, had the Chinese persisted in their demands, he would probably have acquiesced in the end and gone as asked. At no time does he seem to have feared for his life or seen any reason to feel himself in any peril, rightly so, one might add. What changed the entire picture was the appearance of a noisy crowd in the streets of the city around the palace insisting that the Dalai Lama abandon any plans to visit the Chinese camp under the mistaken belief apparently that he would be spirited away by the Chinese or come to harm there. So, bowing to the appeals of the population and in order to avoid possible bloodshed, the God-king decided to remain in the palace and notified the Chinese to that effect, whereupon the multitude for the most part dispersed.

That could have been the end of the incident. True, the Chinese had been openly defied and in the mood they were in they were bound to look for a handy excuse to vent their anger. In due time, Peking's representatives would have ranted at the Dalai Lama and perhaps berated him personally, as they had done on more than one occasion previously. They might have issued public warnings, demanded exemplary punishment of known ring-leaders of the demonstration, imposed additional repressive regulations, but at least the lack of an identifiable source of opposition would have precluded purposeful punitive use of force on any material scale. Unfortunately, events took a different turn, for some self-appointed elements now undertook to ensure the continued safety of the Dalai Lama and forthwith proceeded to do so by surrounding the palace, sealing off its grounds, and preventing any normal communication between its occupants and the Chinese military and civilian personnel. No conceivable peril threatened the king any longer, but that, it would seem, was not the issue anymore. Indeed, overnight, the situation had passed into the hands of the more extremist native factions, the Khambas, the inmates of the great monasteries nearby, the conservative elements within Lhasa, bent on exploiting the opportunity to the full by pushing the local government into outright conflict with the Chinese, thus hoping to rally the nation to their flag. This militant wing in effect pressed for a showdown and consciously seized upon the present occasion as

ripe for bringing it to a head. With the Chinese determined to put an end to further Tibetan flouting of Peking's authority and a segment of the Tibetans equally resolved to expel the Chinese bodily from the country, the clash could not long be averted. Moreover, the Chinese now had to move quickly, lest the Dalai Lama change his mind in the meantime and join their enemies, with dire consequences for Peking's proposed plans for Tibet.

Once started, then, the progression of events followed a logical enough path. Neither the initial impetus which set the process in motion nor the subsequent shocks which kept it spiraling upward were in any sense inevitable, however. Gross miscalculation, shortsightedness, stubbornness, stupidity, recklessness, emotionalism, to cite but a few of the graver defects displayed by the interested parties, all played a role in charting the subsequent trajectory leading to the fateful collision. Positive qualities may have had a part too in motivating the behavior of those responsible, but the outcome was nevertheless just as tragic. The gallantry of the Tibetans against heavy odds in particular cannot be gainsaid, even if it must be admitted that, for all their valor, through their abortive rashness they ultimately caused their land more harm than good. In effect, faced with a visible enemy willing to take a stand, the Chinese did not delay in launching a vigorous attack which, in short order, broke the back of Tibetan resistance in Lhasa. With the Dalai Lama and his entourage in full flight toward the Indian frontier, the bulk of the rebels captured or dispersed, the last acknowledged and meaningful barrier to absolute Chinese control of the country had been swept away. Tibet lay prostrate. True, spontaneous resistance, guerrilla warfare, lack of cooperation posed factual problems which would continue to impede the smooth operation of Chinese policies on the plateau thereafter as well. But, now these could and would be dealt with in any way that seemed practical, without having to worry about the reactions of a recognized native authority vested with certain definite, even if minimal, rights and possessed of considerable informal influence and power. The organized, overt and legitimate center of alternate, oftentimes competing, authority represented by the Dalai Lama and his government had vanished from the scene. Henceforward, Chinese rule on the plateau would be limited only by their own capacity to endow Peking's word with the force of law, by physical factors alone, altogether uncomplicated by any galling

legal and administrative technicalities, such as had repeatedly obstructed Peking's full freedom of action up till then.

One last question bears looking into in this connection, namely, the Chinese attitude towards the figure of the Dalai Lama during the revolt. What little evidence is available points to the lack of any personal hostility on the part of the Chinese in the capital to Tibet's God-king. Before the fighting erupted, as a matter of fact, the Chinese reportedly attempted to convince the Dalai Lama to seek safety in their camp, but, that, of course, could very well have been suggested for purely selfish reasons. Failing in that, the Chinese are said to have requested the Dalai Lama to pinpoint for them the location of his chambers in the palace so as to avoid firing in that direction and jeopardizing his life. It is not clear if this information was furnished to them, but, in any case, at the height of the battle, Chinese artillery systematically shelled the palace grounds and caused extensive damage to the buildings, including the royal apartments. That, however, seems to have been the product of callous disregard for the king's safety rather than of deliberate intent to injure his person. Had the Dalai Lama perished in the bombardment, undoubtedly the Chinese would have accused the rebels of having killed him for having refused to cooperate with them, using these charges, impossible to verify one way or the other, to justify further repressive measures and enlist sympathy for their cause, while setting world and local opinion against the insurgents. Had he survived, private apologies would have been duly offered for subjecting him to such danger and an attempt made to explain the unfortunate incident away by reference to emergency conditions and absence of real choice in the matter. In either contingency, the Chinese would have come out ahead.

Once it was discovered that the Dalai Lama had left the capital in the company of rebels, perhaps the best solution open to the Chinese, and the one which they apparently chose, was to make certain that he went into exile. Contrary to the claims usually made on this score, it is highly improbable that the Chinese seriously tried intercepting the fleeing monarch and the likelihood of them attempting to engage his escort in combat when this could lead to the death of the king, for which they would be blamed, seems quite improbable. Pressure was exerted, it is true, to prevent the cortege from digging in somewhere on Tibetan soil and organizing an underground government around the symbol of the Dalai Lama and to that end various

military moves were undertaken to ensure that the royal retinue would not stop until it had crossed the border and sought refuge in India. But, given the quantity of Chinese troops reportedly stationed in the country, none of these maneuvers amount to a deliberate operation to block the avenue of escape, which, from accounts of Chinese strength on the highland, would have been a relatively simple task for the Chinese to accomplish. Instead, the Chinese apparently shadowed the retreating Tibetans, kept up the pressure until the frontier was reached and did nothing to impede the flight.

One reason that may be offered for this attitude possibly lies in the fact that the Chinese did genuinely believe that the Dalai Lama had been abducted against his will by his captors. By that token, letting him reach India unharmed in the expectation that he would soon return to Tibet on his own held certain attractions. Dead, especially if he died by fault of the Chinese, the Dalai Lama would have become a martyr, a symbol for desperate national resistance, and a source of endless trouble for Peking. Spirited away to India and then voluntarily coming back to Lhasa, the Dalai Lama would prove the truth of the Chinese contentions regarding the reactionary nature of the revolt and would surely strengthen the Chinese hand in the country and abroad as well. Finally, even if he chose to stay in India, the Dalai Lama's position would have been badly weakened for, in exile, he could not hope to exert any real influence over developments at home and he himself would stand largely discredited in the eyes of the people he had thus abandoned. Either way, the Chinese risked to win more than they could lose.

Nor, it must be noted, were the Chinese altogether wrong in their assessment of the situation, nor can the basic premise from which they proceeded be called unreasonable. Indeed, the Dalai Lama had never given them cause to suspect that he would countenance armed violence as a means for solving Sino-Tibetan differences, quite the contrary. He had always shown a conciliatory attitude, preached moderation and helpfully held the more militant among his followers and subjects in check by his example and personal ascendancy. The messages exchanged between him and the Chinese headquarters on the eve of the showdown, today conveniently dismissed by Tibetan spokesmen in exile as a deliberate diversionary gesture, duly reenforced this earlier impression. The Chinese claim that the Dalai Lama was a prisoner of his guards was not true of course, for he went with them

willingly. It must, however, be conceded, that by then the monarch was certainly a prisoner of forces beyond his control, a victim of circumstances with which he could no longer cope.

The decision to leave Lhasa was not the product of deliberation and careful thought, but the accidental outcome and consequence of outside pressures, both unforeseen and undesired. Others had set the stage and so limited the alternatives that the Dalai Lama could thereafter but select from the rules externally determined for him and function within a narrowly circumscribed circle of choices also defined against his will. In any event, the policy he had attempted to steer all along stood compromised beyond redemption; the machinery of his authority lay in utter ruin. To have stayed on in the capital after the debacle meant a future of total dependence on the Chinese, continued existence at the sufferance and behest of Peking's representatives, unavoidable cooperation with the foreign occupant, thereby sanctioning the latter's behavior and legitimizing his actions. In those conditions, to go abroad seemed the lesser of the two evils, nothing more, and so the head of the Tibetan hierarchy elected to follow that path, notwithstanding the dismal political prospects of such a course. Still, Tibetan history knew examples of successful come-backs staged from exile, and at the moment asylum in alien surroundings looked more alluring than the role of virtual prisoner of Peking. Dimly realizing the pros and cons, but literally helpless to remedy the desperate situation, the monarch reluctantly acceded at last to the frantic exhortations of his court officials, bowed to the inevitable, and agreed to escape to India, much against his inner beliefs and inclinations. By then he was a prisoner of fate or of history, and not of any particular group of men, as is alleged today, and without the possibility of any truly independent choice was doomed to throwing in his lot with one side or the other, with neither of which did he really sympathize or whole-heartedly identify himself.

The Chinese may not have deliberately provoked the uprising of March, 1959, but there is no denying the fact that they could not have been especially distressed by the incident and did not noticeably strain themselves to evade the issue. Indeed, once the tide of battle turned to their advantage, it is safe to surmise that Peking felt rather pleased by the course of events, given its thoroughly satisfying end results, unexpected and temporarily embarrassing though the situation may have been while the crisis lasted. True, the brutal crushing of the

revolt in Lhasa did not permanently bar all local challenge to the Chinese Communists' mastery of the country: sporadic guerilla warfare continues to this day and periodically at some spot fighting flares up anew between the Chinese troops and the restive native population. But, the pitched encounter in the capital did tighten Peking's grip on the land to such an extent that the central regime now felt itself in a position to implement its long-proclaimed – and equally long-postponed – program of sweeping political and social transformation of the area. Peking's official spokesmen in Lhasa thus immediately began decreeing major reforms in all spheres of Tibetan life, particularly in the fields of public administration, social institutions and policies, education and indoctrination. Even in the brief span of four years since the defeat of the Tibetan insurrection, the Chinese drive has apparently made considerable advance towards recasting the socio-political contours of Tibet in the "socialized" image of the rest of mainland China, profoundly disrupting in the process what still remained of the traditional political and cultural patterns of Tibetan society.

The first concern of the Chinese in the wake of the 1959 uprising was the elimination of the surviving remnants of Tibetan governmental autonomy and the substitution in lieu thereof of a thoroughly revised system of regional administration subservient to the authority of Peking. The flight of the Dalai Lama and his advisers and ministers into political exile provided the central regime with a golden opportunity to accomplish this objective. By a decree of the State Council of the Chinese People's Republic, promulgated on March 28, 1959, the "Local Government of Tibet" – that is, the formerly separate and autonomous administration of the Lhasan theocracy – was proclaimed officially dissolved.¹ Thus, by unilateral action, Peking put an end to the personal rule of the Dalai Lama notwithstanding the fact that under the Sino-Tibetan treaty of May 1951, which defined the legal basis of Tibet's future relationship to Communist China, the latter was expressly committed to respect his special position and prerogatives.

The Peking decree simultaneously stipulated that the functions and powers of the abolished indigenous government would henceforth be exercised by its own Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, which thanks to the departure of the duly recognized

¹ Text in *Concerning the Question of Tibet* (Peking, 1959), pp. 1-3; *New York Times*, March 29, 1959, p. 3.

native leadership from the scene, at last found the path clear to move toward assuming full control of the local administrative structure. To pave the way for this, Peking's edict of March 28 directed major changes in the leadership and make-up of the Committee. Of cardinal importance was the elevation now of the Panchen Lama, a complaisant tool of the Communists, to the chairmanship of the Committee in place of the Dalai Lama. Preserving the official fiction that the latter had been "abducted by reactionary elements," the decree declared that "during the time that the Dalai Lama, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region, is under duress by the rebels, the Panchen Ngoertehni, Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, will act as Chairman." Concurrently, Pebala Choliehnamje was designated to fill the vice-chairman's post vacated by the Panchen Lama, and a second vice-chairmanship was awarded to the ubiquitous *Kalon* Ngaboo, already serving as secretary-general of the body.

These changes in the leadership of the Committee were accompanied by a systematic purge of so-called "traitorous elements" among its members. Eighteen officials, all Tibetans, were forthwith relieved of their posts as members of the organ and of all other public duties, and the edict provided that they would be "punished individually under the law." Sixteen new members – five Chinese and eleven hand-picked Tibetans – were immediately appointed to replace those implicated in the recent events.

Thus reconstituted, the Preparatory Committee lost no time in initiating a sweeping reorganization of the existing administrative structure.¹ At its first plenary meeting to be scheduled after the revolt, on April 8, 1959, it adopted a resolution nominating nine persons, including General Tan Kuan-san, political commissar in the Tibetan headquarters of the P.L.A. and presently Peking's active chief representative in Tibet, to membership on its standing executive organ, the Permanent Committee. It also voted to create six new administrative departments (public health, industry and commerce, communications, agriculture and animal husbandry, public security, and the counselor's office) in addition to the six then operative subordinate bureaus (staff office, religious affairs commission, and the departments of civil affairs, finance, culture and education, and construction). This projected expansion signaled the Committee's effective investiture with

¹ CB, No. 555, April 13, 1959.

full governing authority as the sole agency of Tibetan "autonomy"; by the same token, it pointedly marked a return to the administrative system which the Chinese had tried hard to impose in 1955-56, but had been obliged to dismantle in 1957 when Chinese ascendancy in the area went through a phase of political eclipse. In the meantime, the Committee ordered that "all administrative personnel at all levels of the defunct Tibetan Local Government should immediately register with the local military control committee or military representative, and should conscientiously assume the responsibility of safeguarding public property and documents, pending further instructions."¹

Another feature of the new order calculated to bolster Peking's hold over the highland lay in the current administrative reapportionment of Tibet into seven regions (Nagchu, Chamdo, Lingtse, Loka, Gyangtse, Shigatse, and Ari), plus the Lhasa municipality, broken down, in turn, into 72 rural districts, 4 urban districts and 2 suburban districts in the capital equivalent to regular districts, a move "designed, as was frankly announced, to erase the 'old feudalistic carving up of land' between the lamas, the nobility, and the traders."² Perhaps even more significant in the long run for the future of the plateau was the fact that this extensive reorganization of the administrative structure soon extended to the intermediate and lower levels of government as well. This ambitious effort to establish a whole new administrative hierarchy topped by the Preparatory Committee and functioning all the way down to the district level had the immediate effect of again aggravating a perennial problem – the shortage of experienced, ideologically "reliable" personnel. In the past, as previously noted, the Chinese had attempted to solve that trouble through the wholesale importation into Tibet of Communist bureaucrats of Han nationality, but this solution had engendered such serious friction with the native population that most of these officials had had to be withdrawn following the 1957 setback to Chinese plans for the area. Peking had then altered course and concentrated on the rapid recruitment and training of a corps of civil servants of Tibetan origin and the desired political orientation, so that already by late 1957 its spokesmen could claim, with some degree of veracity, that "now there are more than 5,000 local revolutionary cadres of Tibetan nationality, more than 1,000

¹ "Resolution of Tibetan Committee on Implementation of State Council Order," *ibid.*, p. 16.

² F. Moraes, *The Revolt in Tibet*, p. 108.

Communist party members of Tibetan nationality, and more than 2,000 Youth Communist League members.”¹

Over the years, the program had presumably continued to register satisfactory progress, for by the time the Chinese undertook the general restructuring of the local administrative apparatus in the aftermath of the 1959 revolt, they could announce that the Chinese officials removed in 1957 would not have to return now to Tibet but that their places for the most part would be filled instead by Tibetans who had completed their course of instruction in China proper and in sundry Chinese-run institutions operated locally. Thus, already by June, 1959, some 1,200 Tibetan graduates of the Central National Institute for Nationalities, the Southwest Nationalities Institute, and the Szechwan Public School for Tibetans saw themselves sent back to Tibet (in the company of 200 Tibetan-speaking Chinese cadres) to assume various administrative posts. And, in order to insure an adequate supply of such graduates to meet the expanding personnel needs, the campaign to train young Tibetans was pushed ahead with still greater vigor.

Peking's new policy of manning the revamped regional administration as far as possible with Tibetans "educated" in China was singularly astute on several counts. For one thing, the return of large numbers of Tibetan young men and women from China served to placate that large segment of native public opinion which, at the height of the March uprising, had insistently demanded that the absent students be brought home. More importantly, the appointment of Tibetans to official posts helped to soften the shock of the sweeping political changes effected following the revolt, and avoided to some extent the injury to national sensibilities caused by the erstwhile practice of importing alien Chinese functionaries. Finally, these advantages were gained without any sacrifice of the real substance of Peking's controlling power inasmuch as virtually all the Chinese-trained Tibetans sent back to occupy posts in the revised administrative structure had by then become thoroughly indoctrinated and most of them had joined the party. (According to one source, 90 percent of the returnees were of peasant and lower class families and about 60 percent had become Party or Youth League members).² Even so, they were always assigned to subordinate positions, subject to constant

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

² *SCMP*, No. 2012, May 10, 1959, p. 25; No. 2016, May 20, 1959, p. 25; No. 2017, May 21, 1959, p. 25; No. 2033, June 19, 1959, p. 36; No. 2075, August 13, 1959, p. 37. For data on

supervision from above where the Chinese and their native allies were firmly entrenched and completely in command. This does not mean that the Chinese program proved uniformly successful, for it has been established that several Tibetans upon repatriation did turn against their mentors and entered the ranks of the rebels. In the main, however, those who had undergone the process remained loyal to the foreign schooling they had received.

In short, the political new order erected by the Communist Chinese in Tibet within a few months after the 1959 outbreak was one in which the outward trappings of regional autonomy were to some extent maintained, but merely served to camouflage the reality of Peking's final authority, as supreme here as elsewhere throughout the country. Otherwise, the liquidation of the Dalai Lama's government and the purging of his supporters from public office were closely accompanied by the concentration of all effective power in the hands of the drastically reorganized Preparatory Committee and the Communist Chinese military headquarters on the plateau. Parallely, the systematic infiltration of Communist-indoctrinated Tibetans into all levels of the State machinery further tightened Peking's strangle-hold over this key control mechanism.

While the immediate purpose of these political changes was to assure Peking's absolute control over the local regional administration, they also pursued the further objective of setting the stage for a comprehensive program of "social reform" expected soon to refashion Tibet into an integrated, indistinguishable component of the socialized Chinese State. Less than a month after the quelling of the Tibetan revolt, Premier Chou En-lai declared at the Second National People's Congress in April, 1959, that the action of the rebels "in destroying themselves" had created "extremely favorable conditions for the democratization of Tibet." The early launching of the reform campaign was likewise foreshadowed by a unanimous resolution of the Congress proclaiming the intention of the central regime "to build a prosperous, socialist Tibet."¹ Thus, with the current political situation differing so radically from that which had obtained in 1957, Peking now consigned to limbo without more ado the pledge it had voiced then of "no reforms within the next six years."

earlier Chinese policies on the education of Tibetan youth in China proper, see I. Epstein, "Two Girls from Shigatse," *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 27-28 (April, 1956); *Daily News Release*, April 25, 1956, p. 270, and June 24, 1956, p. 270.

¹ *New York Times*, April 15, 1959, p. 1; *SCMP* No. 2005, May 4, 1959, p. 1.

Shortly thereafter, the Chinese press began a vigorous propaganda drive publicizing the alleged evils and decadence of the former ruling group in Lhasa and emphasizing the necessity of immediate action to transform the existing social order on the plateau. In the same vein, a directive issued by the Lhasa authorities on June 28 urgently called upon local government officials and the Chinese military garrison in the area to cooperate in paving the way for the proximate institution of various reform measures. Meanwhile, to cushion the impact of the veritable agrarian revolution in stock for the Tibetan countryside and secure a maximum reserve of goodwill among the natives in preparation for that trying experiment, the Chinese worked hard to improve their image in the far-flung Tibetan villages. In May, 1959, for example, the Chinese Military Command in Lhasa announced that it had decided to exempt Tibetan farmers from any further taxes and public grain deliveries in 1959. In addition, the authorities claimed, teams organized by the Working Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet and the Tibet Military Headquarters of the P.L.A. had distributed over 1,750 tons of seed and grain in interest-free loans to poor peasants during that month, these loans being larger than previous ones, according to official data, and spread over a wider area.¹

The first substantive outline of Peking's proposed blueprint for remodelling the inner fabric of the Tibetan community was presented by General Chang Kuo-hua, commander of the Chinese troops in Tibet, at the second plenary session of the reconstituted Preparatory Committee on June 28.² In his speech, he advanced a two-stage program of "democratic reforms" – the first phase aiming at the suppression of the rebellion, the elimination of serfdom and other forms of unpaid forced labor, and the reduction of rents and interest; and the second stage to center on "redistribution of land." While reiterating that "the policy of the Communist Party and the government regarding freedom of religious belief will be firmly carried out," he also warned his listeners that "a campaign will be carried out in the monasteries and temples to oppose rebellion, privileges, and exploitation." He further indicated that, in addition to steps for liquidating the old

¹ *Asian Recorder*, 1959, p. 2472; *Facts on File*, 1959, p. 154; *SCMP*, No. 2017, May 21 1959, p. 41.

² See "Interim Report on 2nd Plenary Session of Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region," *CB*, No. 584, July 15, 1959, and "Final Report on 2nd Plenary Session of Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region," *CB*, No. 586, August 6, 1959. For Chang Kuo-hua's speech, see *CB*, No. 584, July 15, 1959, pp. 11-15.

order in the countryside, plans for the near future envisaged the establishment of "peasants' associations" slated to become the basic form of organization to exercise mass leadership and function as the basic units of local government throughout the rural areas.

Also addressing the session as acting committee chairman, the Panchen Lama endorsed the main points of Chang Kuo-hua's statement. Both speakers made it known that the Tibetan rebels loyal to the Dalai Lama would suffer punishment, including confiscation of their lands and property, with their herds to be turned over to the care of herdsmen faithful to the new regime. Otherwise, it was indicated that, under the terms of the land redistribution project proper, those landlords who cooperated in surrendering land or other property which they held in excess of the maximum limits to be fixed by law would receive full compensation for it, and that their herds would not be subject to redistribution altogether. Debts of the "working people" incurred prior to 1958 to individuals belonging to the so-called "three major divisions of manorial owners" (the Lhasa government, the monasteries and the nobility) were herewith cancelled without exception, whereas loans contracted after 1959 with those lords who did not join the insurrection just saw their rates of interest now reduced. Land rent was lowered everywhere and, in live-stock raising areas, a general "policy of dual benefit" would henceforth obtain that would lessen "exploitation by herd-owners and increase the income of the herdsmen."¹

Practical steps to implement the reform plan had not long been underway before official Communist Chinese sources already began claiming that major successes had been scored toward achieving the goals of the first stage of the program. The chief means of enlisting popular support was the staging of a mass campaign after the standard Communist Chinese pattern, prosecuted under the militant slogan of "the three anti's and two reductions" – anti-rebellion, anti-slavery, anti-forced labor; reduction of rents, reduction of interest. Accompanying propaganda emphasized that the key to the formation of a local revolutionary movement which could secure for the Tibetan people far-reaching political, social and economic improvements lay in the mobilization of the masses and the inculcation of class consciousness among the "toiling strata." The militant vanguard of the movement,

¹ For the text of the addresses and of the final resolution of the session, see the materials cited in the preceding note. Also, *New York Times*, July 4, 1959, p. 1.

it was said, would be recruited largely (75 percent) from among the poor serfs and freed slaves, but it would ally itself with the middle serfs and other "progressive elements" (i.e., persons of the upper social rungs who showed themselves "patriotic and anti-imperialistic").¹ Throughout, Peking's pronouncements emphasized the need to win the support of the peasantry.

Parallel with the mass drive, certain features of the organizational pattern by then familiar and well tested in Communist China proper were first introduced into Tibet to ensure effective enforcement of the reforms decreed by the Preparatory Committee. The usual "residents' committees" soon appeared in urban areas, charged with the task of "leading the masses to develop production, assisting the municipal military control commissions, watching over the conduct of the civil administration, helping to assure the livelihood of the people, and leading the masses to engage in study." In a matter of months, twenty-seven such bodies were established in the four central districts of Lhasa alone.²

Although progress was generally slower in carrying the program into the backward rural areas, persistent prodding by the Chinese authorities eventually had its effect, and, by the fall of 1959, Lhasa and Peking were also taking credit for major accomplishments in the organization of peasants' associations and in other phases of agrarian reform. These claims were well summed up in a report presented by the Panchen Lama at a session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the C.P.R. in October where he stated:

Democratic reform is being carried out mainly in agricultural areas. In agricultural districts with an aggregate population of 400,000, the first stage of democratic reform, namely, the carrying out of the "three anti's and two reductions" has been successfully completed or will soon be completed. . . . In individual places, the second stage, that is, the abolition of land ownership by feudal lords, enforcement of land ownership by peasants, and distribution of land to the peasants, had been completed. In the remaining agricultural districts with an aggregate population of 500,000, preparations are being made for carrying out the campaign of the "three anti's and two reductions."³

According to another Communist source, 503 peasants' associations with 100,000 members had already begun operating at the district level – an achievement described as a decisive step toward the im-

¹ SCMP, No. 2120, October 21, 1959, p. 5.

² SCMP, No. 2147, December 2, 1959, p. 18.

³ SCMP, No. 2120, October 21, 1959, p. 5; *New York Times*, October 15, 1959, p. 9, and November 14, 1959, p. 1.

pending total transformation of Tibetan rural life.¹ In order to give the campaign greater impetus, a new 26-man committee took office in Lhasa in November, 1959, under the chairmanship of the Chinese military chief, General Chang Kuo-hua, to draft plans for pushing ahead with the main part of the land redistribution program. Finally, Chinese mainland press releases apprised the world in February, 1960, that "democratic reforms" had successfully destroyed feudal serfdom in Tibet, implying that the preliminary process of breaking up big estates and assigning the land to the peasantry was virtually completed. Concurrently, Peking dispatches hinted that action had by then also been initiated to organize farmers' mutual-aid teams and cooperatives as the first move toward full collectivization of Tibetan agriculture and, eventually, the introduction of communes.²

Despite the notable changes effected in the predominantly agricultural portions of the highland, the pastoral areas still remained untouched by the second phase of the reform schedule. The efforts of the regional administration among the nomadic population of these districts were reportedly confined as yet to combatting rebellion, doing away with slavery and forced labor, developing the economy and improving living standards. Except for the confiscation of herds belonging to the leading participants in the March, 1959, uprising, the manorial lords and herd-owners continued to retain possession of their livestock, though here too conditions of employment duly fell under regulation by the Lhasan authorities. Or, to couch it in the official jargon:

Since conditions in the pastoral areas differ from those in the rural areas, the Party's principle there is: aside from the confiscation of the livestock of rebel estate- and livestock-owners and turning them over to the herdsmen who had tended them and impoverished herdsmen, there will be no struggle meetings, no redistribution of livestock, no differentiation by classes and a policy of mutual benefit between livestock-owners and herdsmen will be carried out. This is for the purpose of giving full play to the initiative of the herdsmen in tending the livestock and similarly bringing into full play the initiative of the livestock-owners in managing animal husbandry.³

From the start, however, the regime made no secret of its intention eventually to bring socialism to this sector as well.

¹ SCMP, No. 2139, November 19, 1959, p. 30.

² SCMP, No. 2209, March 4, 1960, p. 29; *New York Times*, December 15, 1959, p. 17, and February 29, 1960, p. 8.

³ Chang Ching-wu, "The Victory of Democratic Reform in Tibet," *Peking Review*, No. 13, March 29, 1960, p. 17.

In this connection, one point in particular should be underlined. In Tibet, as in the rest of Communist China, land reform was implemented not as an end in itself, but merely as a revolutionary technique to dispossess the old propertied classes and, by the same token, win the support of the mass of the peasant population prior to embarking on the established Communist path toward total collectivization of agriculture. Thus, the land reform always represented a purely transitional policy ultimately destined to give way to measures enforcing the production pattern already imposed upon the countryside elsewhere in Communist China – whether or not to the accompaniment of the same coercive methods and brutal pressures which drove the Chinese peasantry first into farm cooperatives and subsequently into communes remained to be seen.

One of the most crucial facets of the Communist Chinese endeavor to remold Tibetan society – and one which met throughout with especially determined resistance – had been the attempt earlier to make use of the educational process as a weapon of political indoctrination. After the military take-over of the country in 1951, Peking's efforts in this direction were relatively slow and circumspect, at first, but they eventually gave way to an aggressive push to gain full control of the school system. Between 1954 and 1959, the effectiveness of the drive fluctuated markedly along with the repeated ups and downs of Communist Chinese authority and prestige on the highland in general, reaching its nadir at the time of the 1957 political retreat. Since the 1959 uprising, however, complete Chinese mastery of the regional state administration, and especially the suppressive measures taken against the monasteries – the traditional centers of Tibetan learning – because of their implication in the insurrection, have permitted the accelerated application of Communist educational policies.

Chinese statements and press releases in the post-revolt period have claimed steady progress in building up a secular public school network run by the state, along with a rapid growth in student enrollment. In the capital, registration in public primary schools supposedly showed such a sharp increase soon after the end of the fighting there (1,500 fresh applications) that it exceeded school capacity for the first time. One new primary school (No. 3) was reportedly already opened, as well as the first public school for spare-time attendance by workers. By June, 1959, the total number of children and adults

attending Lhasa's public schools was officially put at 5,000, as compared to the pre-March enrollment of 1,000 (children only) in the city's elementary institutions of learning. A further news-item appearing towards the end of 1959 stated that 5 regular primary schools and 42 spare-time workers' schools and study-groups now functioned in Lhasa.¹

A like expansion of state-run educational facilities and a proportionate rise in school enrollment marked the current situation in the rest of Tibet, according to government sources. In the Chamdo district, for example, an August, 1959, official statement spoke of more than a dozen public primary schools operating in addition to those in the main city of the area, of scholarships provided for the poor, and plans being made to double the number of pupils registered during 1960.² By February of that year, the press disclosed that approximately 150 primary schools, middle schools, and workers' evening schools functioned throughout Tibet, and that rapid and impressive gains had been achieved everywhere in student attendance. More than 7,000 former serfs and their children, it was claimed, had already become literate thanks to the growing school program.³

This renewed Chinese drive to promote mass education constituted, of course, but an extension of Peking's earlier efforts in this sphere, except that it now took on a broader sweep because the political terrain had in the meantime been cleared of the numerous obstructions which formerly had hindered progress here. It also conformed to the standard general practice of Communist regimes wherever they have come to power and, again, represented only a means and not an end. That is to say, the undertaking reflected Peking's basic belief in the efficacy of mass public education as an indoctrinational weapon for winning over the younger generation of Tibetans to communism. As such, one could safely expect to see the program henceforth vigorously pressed, with the Chinese steadily funnelling increasing quantities of time, money and energy in an enterprise the ultimate value of which for their purposes they neither doubted nor stopped to question.

¹ SCMP, No. 2026, June 3, 1959, p. 12; No. 2136, November 16, 1959, p. 26.

² SCMP, No. 2069, August 5, 1959, p. 27.

³ Ch'en Hsi, "New Life of the Tibetan People," *Extracts of China Mainland Magazines*, No. 169, May 25, 1959, p. 30; SCMP, No. 2020, May 26, 1959, p. 19; No. 2042, June 25, 1959, p. 23; No. 2074, August 12, 1959, p. 34; No. 2136, November 19, 1959, p. 26; No. 2186, February 1, 1960, p. 35. On December 26, 1959, the first agro-technical training class in Tibet attended by 80 newly liberated serfs opened in Lhasa, SCMP, No. 2168, January 4, 1960, p. 33.

Long before their maneuvers to gain control of Tibetan education finally succeeded, the Chinese were utilizing other familiar, and more direct, methods of mass political indoctrination in the hope of converting the Tibetan population to their views. In addition to the usual unremitting barrage of party propaganda via press and radio, the Communists busied themselves organizing a wide variety of social and cultural associations designed to attract maximum following among the native inhabitants. Although these activities suffered a temporary setback during the 1957 interlude of so-called "entrenchment," they were quickly revived after the 1959 revolt. Not only were the functions and business of the already existing associations now considerably expanded, but an assortment of new organizations were presently formed to supplement the party machinery in mobilizing public opinion at the grass-roots level in support of the successor regime and its policies. On June 2, 1959, for instance, a Lhasa broadcast declared that "a new era has opened for the 300,000 children of Tibet; more than 1,000 children became Young Pioneers since the putting down of the rebellion."¹ The first Lhasa Municipal General Federation of Trade Unions began functioning in August, 1959, and a Tibetan chapter of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee, announced as early as 1956, was finally inaugurated in October, 1959. The important public role allocated to these select mass organizations in the official plans is well illustrated by reports that technically they carried full responsibility for the election of some 100 delegates from the 170,000 inhabitants of the municipality who attended a representative assembly convened by the new Lhasa City People's Government early in 1960.²

The above pattern established in the first year after the revolt has since continued to obtain, gaining in scope and momentum, but otherwise hewing to the same general line and still heading in the direction set earlier.

Much energy continued to be expended by the Chinese in the following months on the development of a complete new centralized administrative system on an area-wide scale, comprising, as in China proper, a succession of tiers each subordinate to the one above and

¹ *SCMP*, No. 2030, June 9, 1959, p. 30.

² *SCMP*, No. 2090, September 4, 1959, p. 34; No. 2133, November 10, 1959, p. 38; No. 2139, November 19, 1959, p. 30; No. 2166, December 30, 1959, p. 30 (First Plenary Session of the First Tibet Committee of the CPPCC, December 20, 1959); No. 2186, February 1, 1960, p. 35.

culminating in the Preparatory Committee functioning from Lhasa. Provisionally, until such time as this make-shift structure could be transformed into an exact replica of the unified hierarchical network of indirectly elected bodies such as dispensed local government throughout the rest of China, all the posts at the various levels of the renovated apparatus of self-rule in Tibet were to be filled through appointments. To judge from official figures, the project made swift progress. Thus, by April, 1960, a communiqué from Lhasa described how, beside the capital's municipal people's government, equivalent public offices of commissioners had already begun functioning in the urban centers of Shigatse, Loka, Gyantse, Chamdo, Linchih, Nanch'u, and Oli. Likewise, district "people's governments" had been organized in every such territorial unit on the plateau and their subordinate counterparts now allegedly managed between 60 and 70 percent of the more than 270 *chou* and 1,300 *hsiang* in the region. According to these same reports, Tibetan cadres, drawn mostly from liberated former serfs and slaves, together with native trainees freshly returned from China, held most of the "leadership positions" on these various bodies to the tune of furnishing 300 district (*hsien*) and *chou* magistrates and 816 *hsiang* magistrates, while the more than 1,200 *hsiang* peasants' associations on the highland were purportedly run almost exclusively by Tibetans.¹ To keep pace with its rapidly expanding jurisdictional tasks, the Preparatory Committee itself steadily grew in size until it was being served, as of May, 1960, by more than 500 regular Tibetan cadres, said to represent nearly 90% of its total permanent staff.²

By April, 1961, the concerted drive to endow every local administrative division with its own organ of self-rule of the latest type had successfully come to an end, if one is to believe the official press, with 283 people's government organizations at the *chou* level and 1,009 like entities at the *hsiang* level currently in full operation.³ Barely a month later a radio bulletin from Lhasa revealed that the Panchen Lama's Council of *Khen-Pos* (the Panchen Kanpo Lija Committee) had petitioned the Preparatory Committee that it be terminated on the grounds that all its "patriotic and progressive members . . . had already taken up posts in the people's government" and that it "had, therefore, completed its historic task and was no longer necessary."⁴

¹ SCMP, No. 2236, April 12, 1960, p. 58; No. 2250, May 4, 1960, p. 17.

² SCMP, No. 2255, May 11, 1960, p. 14.

³ SCMP, No. 2410, January 5, 1961, p. 29; and No. 2489, May 4, 1961, p. 21.

⁴ SCMP, No. 2495, May 12, 1961, p. 26.

With its passing went another landmark in Tibet's annals and one of the few still surviving institutions of the country's traditional political system. On the model of mainland China, Tibet's regional administration was now totally centralized and stood unencumbered by any ties with the past, even if only of a symbolic nature. The next step, quite logically, envisaged the final metamorphosis of the administrative practices on the plateau and their transition altogether to the procedures obtaining elsewhere in China by means of election techniques closely copied from the Communist Chinese home experience.

Indeed, the Panchen Lama had gone on record once before, – in April, 1961 – as advocating “democratic elections in areas where conditions are ripe, to set up *hsiang* and *hsien* people's councils under the system of people's congresses.”¹ In July, 1961, he returned to the subject and in a directive officially attributed to him, and echoing his earlier statements, “pointed out that local elections should be held experimentally in a certain part of Tibet as one of the main items of work to be accomplished during the third quarter of this year.” Effectively, within a few weeks, the 40th enlarged session of the Permanent Committee of the Preparatory Committee enthusiastically endorsed a resolution “on carrying out test democratic elections in certain selected areas of the Tibetan region” so as to establish in short order “people's congresses and people's councils at all levels through democratic elections.” The assembly forthwith scheduled the first of these for the third quarter of 1961, the process to be “based on the actual conditions of Tibet and in accordance with the election law of the People's Republic of China and the directive issued by the Central Election Committee on April 3, 1953,” to gain experiences so as to “provide better guidance to elections throughout the Tibet region in the future.” As the Panchen Lama rationalized in his speech introducing the measure:

To carry out democratic reform to the end and further consolidate the people's democratic dictatorship, it is, first of all, necessary gradually to conduct basic-level democratic elections in Tibet. This step meets with the actual political and economic conditions of Tibet at present. The establishment of the people's congress at *hsien* level after the formation of the people's congress at the *hsiang* level will eventually create a favorable condition for holding the people's congress of the Tibetan region in the future.²

¹ SCMP, No. 2489, May 4, 1961, p. 21.

² SCMP, No. 2549, August 1, 1961, p. 17; and No. 2565, August 24, 1961, p. 21.

Once set in motion, work on the project slowly forged ahead and, by August, 1962, the Panchen Lama was able to preside over the first plenary meeting of the freshly constituted regional election committee for Tibet. Established pursuant to the decision of the 41st session of the Permanent Committee and with the approval of the State Council, the new organ immediately resolved to create branch election organizations at the various levels of local government throughout the plateau. Finally, in mid-January, 1963, a Lhasa broadcast noted that a series of local elections across the region was about 95 percent completed.¹

The gradual elaboration of an institutional framework of area-wide administration akin to the provincial apparatus evolved in the core territories of the Chinese Communist State went hand in hand with Peking's concurrent drive to refashion the social fabric of the Tibetan community in a like manner. The agricultural sector in particular continued to attract the attention of the Chinese and they never stopped pushing the multi-stage reform campaign inaugurated here right after the revolt. As indicated earlier, much had been claimed as accomplished on this score within the first year following the revolt, but still there was no let-up in sight.

In the agricultural districts, the opening phase of the program sponsored by the Chinese ostensibly met with rapid success. Members of the old propertied classes compromised by their role in the insurrection soon saw their estates expropriated to the accompaniment of mass accusation meetings, the burning of manorial records and debt-books, and the liberation of their serfs and personal slaves from bondage, often followed by the unceremonious arrest of the former owners on "counter-revolutionary" charges.² Others had to sell to the authorities what the latter defined as surplus holdings, that is, property privately held in excess of the ceiling presently imposed by law. According to official statistics publicized in January, 1960, the movement had by then swept 57 of Tibet's 72 rural counties, with a total population of some 790,000. Of these, 40 counties, with a population of around 610,000, had already finished the "three anti's and two reductions" preliminaries and 35 counties, embracing some

¹ SCMP, No. 2811, September 4, 1962, p. 24; *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1963, p. 1.

² For partisan descriptions of these proceedings, see Anna Louise Strong, *Tibetan Interviews* (Peking, 1959); *idem*, *When Serfs Stood Up in Tibet* (Peking, 1960); M. Domogatskikh, *Utro Tibeta* (Moscow, 1962).

470,000 persons, had moved on to complete the land distribution. The "three anti's and two reductions" campaign was also proceeding apace in 12 pastoral counties in which resided over 70,000 people.¹

Soon, government channels carried notices of further advances registered on this front. Through figures at the end of February, 1960, the authorities now showed that of the above 57 agricultural districts, 49, with a population of 690,000 persons, had at present carried out the push for the "three anti's and two reductions," and 47 of the latter, with a population of 610,000 (i.e., 77 percent of the total population of the 57 *hsien* in question) were, in turn, done with land distribution. Here, nearly 30,000 house slaves had reportedly been emancipated in the process. As for the pastoral sections, the drive for the "three anti's and two benefits" was by then said to have unfolded in 12 *hsien* falling into that category, with an overall population of about 75,000, and to have been duly consummated in an area where resided almost half of this population – 30,000 individuals.²

The tone of the official accounts transcribed just two weeks later sounded even more optimistic. Thus, according to the Panchen Lama, as of that date "democratic reform, which brought about the abolition of the feudal serfdom system, had been completed in 97 percent of the agricultural districts, inhabited by 870,000 people," i.e., in agrarian counties populated by a sum total of 850,000 Tibetans. A re-check of the first results obtained was well in progress in an area containing a population of 790,000, i.e., in the 57 *hsien* in which the movement had its start, and by now two-thirds of all the pastoral regions, with a population of 260,000 had apparently launched the "three anti's and two benefits" campaign.³

The government's policy of so-called "buying-out" of excess property of the wealthier families not involved in the March events moved somewhat slower. However, by March, 1961, it too was reported as nearing an end, with the authorities almost through distributing "redemption certificates" and paying out "redemption money due in 1960" in compensation of the former owners – to the tune of approximately 50 million yuan just for 750,000 *mow* of land thus bought from "friendly" manorial barons. Some idea of the scope of the expropriation scheme may be gathered from the fact that by February

¹ Chang Ching-wu, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

² *Jen-min jih-pao*, April 2, 1960; SCMP, No. 2240, April 19, 1960, p. 49. See, too, SCMP, No. 2233, April 7, 1960, p. 33.

³ SCMP, No. 2481, April 24, 1961, p. 22; and No. 2489, May 4, 1961, p. 20.

of that year some 1,300 households had been made to sell "their surplus means of production (including surplus land, houses, draft animals and farm implements)." Of the 23 estates which possessed the largest quantity of property earmarked for purchase by the State and whose cases were handled directly by the Redemption Office, 21 had already been subjected to the procedure and lost title to 57,000 *mow* of land alone. Again, the Chinese were proceeding with a check-up of what had been done so far, while steadily increasing pressure on those few who still held out so as to bring the project to an early close.¹

The one thing these figures make unmistakably clear is that not only the rich land-owners were affected by these measures, but the merely well-to-do ones as well and those enjoying a relatively more than average income from their farms. Thus, the process undoubtedly had a thorough levelling effect on the countryside in terms of expunging the imbedded property distinctions and cleavages which were so much the hallmark of Tibetan society in the past. It is also worth noting that the government first went ahead and took possession of the property in question and disposed of it as it saw fit, but paid for it only later, after an appreciable delay.

In any case, all of these interim steps represented but a prelude to two other developments which followed hard on their heels. The first of these consisted in the public distribution of land deeds to the poor peasants and the liberated slaves, giving them title to lots (at the rate of about three and a half *mou* per person) carved out of the former estates of the crown, the monasteries, and the nobility either confiscated or purchased by the authorities. By April, 1961, this phase of the program was described as almost completed, with some 200,000 such documents turned over to the new owners, confirming the legal transfer of over 186,000 hectares to more than 100,000 peasant households, including 6,700 hectares allotted by the end of 1960 to some 30,000 indigent former slaves, along with houses, draft animals and farm tools belonging to their erstwhile masters. Like action in the nomadic areas had allegedly resulted by November, 1961, in the

¹ *Selections from China Mainland Magazines*, No. 242, January 3, 1961, pp. 11-17 reproducing Chang Kuo-hua, "Tibet Reaps a Bumper Harvest After Democratic Reform," *Hongqi*, No. 23, December 1, 1960; *Jen-min jih-pao*, March 21, 1961; *SCMP*, No. 2467, March 30, 1961, p. 21. See, too, *SCMP*, No. 2385, November 28, 1960, p. 29, for further data on buying-out procedures, and No. 2464, March 27, 1961, p. 21.

endowment of more than 4,800 households of poor herdsmen with cattle once owned by lords who took part in the revolt.¹

The business of distribution of land grants, in turn, found itself organically tied to the Chinese Communists' determined drive for the systematic promotion of the organization by the peasantry of so-called mutual-aid teams, an opening wedge for the introduction in the villages of the regime's ideologically cherished concept of collective labor, with all the "socialist" overtones attached thereto. Given the material incentives available to the government to further these plans, to say nothing of the coercive power to which it could also resort at will for these purposes, it is not surprising to read subsequently in the mainland press that the movement to create these associations forged ahead without encountering any inordinate difficulties. By August, 1960, Peking reported that over 8,400 agricultural producers' mutual-aid teams had been established throughout rural Tibet, comprising more than 100,000 peasant households or 85 percent of the total number of peasant households where "democratic reform" had been accomplished. By the end of the year, the central authorities spoke of the existence of over 15,000 local cooperation groups, with a membership still estimated at "over 100,000 rural families." Three main types of such associations had emerged: those that were small in size and temporary and seasonal; the permanent teams - purportedly 90 percent of the total; and federations of permanent mutual-aid teams joined together as required by agricultural production for collaboration in the utilization of labor, animal power and large farming implements.²

Apparently, these associations then underwent a process of consolidation which reduced their number, although the size of their membership continued to grow. In April, 1961, the former stood at 13,000 units and the latter at 140,000 families. As of November, 1961, mutual-aid teams supposedly embraced over 90 percent of the peasant households in Tibet and a year later official accounts referred to 22,000 cooperation groups which now brought together 166,000 rural households.

These represented the more spectacular achievements rewarding

¹ SCMP, No. 2374, November 8, 1960, pp. 19-20; No. 2377, November 15, 1960, p. 32; No. 2471, April 7, 1961, p. 18; No. 2613, November 6, 1961, p. 26; No. 2625, November 24, 1961, p. 30; No. 2635, December 8, 1961, p. 29.

² *Jen-min jih-pao*, August 8, 1960; *Selections from China Mainland Magazines*, No. 242, January 3, 1961, p. 11-17.

post-revolt Chinese efforts to alter the face of Tibet. In most other fields of endeavor, according to Peking's claims, successes crowned its initiative too, but these reflected steady advances, important in a cumulative sense, of course, but not amounting to a qualitative breakthrough, so to speak. Nonetheless, they still deserve to be examined, even if only briefly.

In the years since the repression of the 1959 uprising, Chinese sources have regularly dwelled on the notable advances they say have been registered in Tibet during this period on the agricultural front. Credit for all this progress generally goes to the inauguration of universal collective labor techniques in the countryside – the mutual-aid teams, the cooperative peasant groups, etc. – on the grounds that these practices in themselves have allowed for a more efficient and rational utilization of the available manpower, draught animals and farm machinery, thus multiplying manifold the land's potentialities and the actual crop-yield. This pooling of resources, according to official commentators, has also benefited the villages in another way, – in permitting the rural population jointly to undertake and carry out amelioration projects useful to all, but not attempted heretofore because none of the households separately could manage to execute them on its own. Irrigation canals are frequently adduced in illustration of this phenomenon and, indeed, there has apparently been as of late much construction along these lines throughout the region, always described as in the hands of local volunteer brigades (working with or without the help of P.L.A. personnel) drawn from the ranks of the peasantry.² Intensive afforestation is another often cited accomplishment; extensive reclamation of waste land, increase in the production and storage of fertilizer also are frequently referred to in support of this thesis.³

The net result of all these major innovations, so the regime's spokesmen assert, has been a vast improvement in the living standards of the native peasantry. The opening-up of new land, better techniques of cultivation, more efficient organization of work have, according to them, combined to bring about crops larger than anything ever seen on the plateau before, with the profits allegedly going directly to the

¹ *SCMP*, No. 2489, May 4, 1961, p. 21; No. 2617, November 13, 1961, p. 22.

² *SCMP*, No. 2398, December 15, 1960, p. 23; No. 2416, January 13, 1961, p. 26; No. 2424, January 25, 1961, p. 30; No. 2487, May 2, 1961, p. 21.

³ *SCMP*, No. 2223, March 24, 1960, p. 33; No. 2227, March 30, 1960, p. 32; No. 2259, May 17, 1960, p. 30.

producer, resulting, in turn, in accumulated savings, more buying power, rising consumption and increased general welfare. These factors then acted as a effective stimulant to local trade and also reportedly created wide-spread demand for more modern farm implements, the proper use of which again led to record yields and the further spread of prosperity.¹

The new pattern of relationships in the agricultural sector resulting from the reform campaign carried a good deal of responsibility for making these advances possible, if one is to believe Peking's and Lhasa's persistent claims on this count. Thus, the elimination of the old order from the countryside supposedly swept away those conservative elements which in the past had obstructed the dissemination of modern tools, the introduction of the latest agronomic methods and technical know-how, even the distribution of various types of loans to the mass of the peasantry. With this obstacle no longer impeding the "march of progress," the Chinese were now able to communicate directly with the individual peasant household and, via the mutual-aid teams and their own cadres on the spot, ensure the implementation of the policies determined by the central authorities. Nor would the latter need fear anymore running into serious trouble with the local vested interests in trying to inculcate the Tibetan rural population with their particular approach to agrarian problems.

Chinese mainland press news-items dealing with accounts of successes achieved by Tibetan agriculture in the last few years are legion and to enumerate them alone would take an inordinate amount of space. Instead, mention of the contents of select reports representative of the daily output of the mass media may well suffice to establish the general picture and give an inkling of the kind of claims voiced by the Communist authorities in this sphere. In March, 1960, for instance, in writing of the "first spring sowing since emancipation," official sources described how in the main agricultural basins of Lhasa and Loka, most of the land was tilled 2 or 3 times to a depth of 7" to more than 12", in contrast to past practice in which the surface of the soil was barely scratched, and the overall cultivated area expanded by over 3,000 hectares. "Freed of serfdom," the peasants here were said to have built more than 1,500 reservoirs and ponds and 10,000 canals and ditches since the previous winter and brought under irrigation

¹ E.g., *SCMP*, No. 2341, September 20, 1960, p. 17; No. 2358, October 14, 1960, p. 19; No. 2398, December 15, 1960, p. 23.

almost 90 percent of the farmland in Lhasa, Loka and Shigatse. A week later, it was announced that to date more than 10 million trees had been planted in the warmer sections of the highland by communal effort in response to a call by the Preparatory Committee for afforestation.¹

In July, radio broadcasts spoke of how new farming methods had resulted in better crops in Tibet, mentioning irrigation facilities built over great tracts of land, use of improved seed, teaching of the value of weeding, loosening the soil, etc. Tibetan peasants were reported to have started organizing supply and consumer and credit cooperatives, pooling funds and electing managing committees for that purpose. In October, 1960, the year was hailed as an eminently successful one for local farming, with gains mainly attributed to the enthusiasm of over 10,000 new mutual-aid teams that made possible the extension of the sown acreage by 20,000 hectares and encouraging experimental cultivation of grain and vegetables at higher altitudes, as at Phari, 4,500 meters above sea level. In November, there was talk of how in the east and south portions of the plateau the peasants were busy harvesting a second crop of buckwheat and maize soon after a bumper yield of wheat and barley had been gathered, a hitherto rare occurrence, with the Chamdo area alone now cultivating 6,000 hectares of these crops.²

1961 opened with a news item concerning construction of a 4,400-meter irrigation canal on the outskirts of Lhasa designed to water more than 4,000 hectares of fields come spring (in May announced as finished). Concurrently, in the high-altitude Phari area a 9,700-meter canal had been completed to bring the melting mountain snow to the newly reclaimed land. Next month the press spoke of the increased bank savings of the Tibetan people, with deposits in the Loka area presently exceeding 2 million yuan or more than 5 times as much as in 1959. It mentioned, too, that 20,000 hectares of virgin soil had been opened that winter, and that the irrigated area in Tibet had expanded in the past year to 80 percent of the total arable land. According to Peking, by May, 1961, it had loaned the Tibetan peasantry 2½ million yuan in the form of farm implements and seed to help it

¹ *SCMP*, No. 2223, March 24, 1960, p. 33; and No. 2227, March 30, 1960, p. 32. See, too, *SCMP*, No. 2244, April 26, 1960, p. 31.

² *SCMP*, No. 2290, July 6, 1960, p. 29; No. 2293, July 11, 1960, p. 24; No. 2362, October 21, 1960, p. 20; No. 2364, October 25, 1960, p. 22; No. 2377, November 15, 1960, p. 33.

expand the region's output. In August, experiments with cultivation of winter wheat at various locations on the plateau were pronounced successful. In October, the autumn harvest was described as slightly bigger than that of the year before, with the total sown acreage 7 percent higher than that of 1960 and autumn plowing helped by 20,000 new-type plows distributed free to the peasants by the government. In November, the authorities claimed that tea had successfully been grown in Tibet for the first time in history and that the winter crop area planted in wheat and barley had doubled by comparison with 1960.¹

The story repeated itself in 1962. Official sources praised the rapid growth of bank deposits by Tibetan peasants, noting that the credit cooperatives organized by the latter now granted loans on their own to peasants in remote villages where the State bank had no branch office. A current estimate claimed sown acreage on the plateau had risen by 30 percent during the past 3 years, the grain output had increased by 10 to 15 percent, and the government had furnished 300,000 implements and granted loans to the sum of more than 3 million yuan. By the end of the year, 200,000 hectares were allegedly sown to barley, wheat and peas, as compared to 180,000 in 1960.²

One interesting sidelight in this connection is the role played by the P.L.A. in the highland's agricultural development. Besides helping the local population on a large scale, the troops have reportedly engaged in extensive field work on their own, planting vegetables and fodder crops in an effort to become completely self-sufficient as regards the former and provide most of their personal needs in meat, many units, in the process, expanding the farmland worked by them by 100 to 300 percent. A news release appearing in August gave further details on this singular aspect of local army life, saying that the Chinese garrison not only raised grain and vegetables in river basins and on the steppe, but also did much in the way of acclimatizing various crops to high altitudes and experimenting with new plants. Moreover, it had begun to breed pigs, sheep and cows in large numbers and growing the

¹ *SCMP*, No. 2416, January 13, 1961, p. 26; No. 2424, January 25, 1961, p. 30; No. 2487, May 2, 1961, p. 21; No. 2431, February 3, 1961, p. 27; No. 2487, May 2, 1961, p. 23; No. 2558, August 15, 1961, p. 32; No. 2608, October 30, 1961, pp. 23-24; No. 2610, November 1, 1961, p. 27; No. 2620, November 16, 1961, p. 27.

² *SCMP*, No. 2651, January 4, 1962, p. 32; No. 2662, January 19, 1962, p. 24. A report in October, 1962, claimed that by then there were 22,000 mutual-aid teams in the region which included 166,000 peasant households, *SCMP*, No. 2830, October 2, 1962, p. 22.

necessary fodder and had organized special fishing and hunting teams. Soldiers were used on many other types of projects as well, digging, for example, 74,000 meters of irrigation canals during 1960, erecting dams and constructing reservoirs, repairing and manufacturing tens of thousands of farm implements.¹

The picture nevertheless remains difficult to assess, even in purely quantitative terms. Undoubtedly, a core of hard truth hides behind these statistics and, notwithstanding allowance for inflated figures and exaggerated claims, it would seem that net production did grow, not as spectacularly as Peking would have the world think, but still noticeably, after a reasonable discount and all. It is hard to conceive how it could be otherwise what with all the added acreage and more intensive exploitation of the land alone. To extrapolate from that, however, and attempt to evaluate the effect of these physical factors on the standard of life of the average Tibetan is quite a different matter. Granted for the sake of discussion that the Chinese statistics reflect a rough approximation of the true situation, this still does not establish that the population at large benefited in full from all these improvements and reaped all the dividends brought in by its heavy investment of time and energy in the venture. Some material amelioration very likely did result initially in the mode of life of the common peasant household, though much less than claimed by the regime, needless to say.

The reason for the modest dimensions of the progress recorded in this connection, if that is the right word, lies primarily in the fact that much of the region's output continued to be absorbed or siphoned off by the Chinese for their own use and for shipment to other areas of China. Moreover, the size of the Chinese contingent on the plateau began spiraling upward again after the 1959 revolt, with more troops, more administrators, more technicians arriving in an endless stream from the central provinces. The army might be nearly self-sufficient in food, but the rest of the Chinese colony consumed, without producing. This inevitably created a strain on the economy, effectively drained off whatever surplus new agricultural techniques had meanwhile managed to produce and, possibly, even cut into the stocks earmarked for the subsistence of the native population. When food shortages developed in China proper, the temptation to alleviate them by increased levies

¹ SCMP, No. 2242, April 22, 1960, p. 20; No. 2259, May 17, 1960, p. 30; No. 2315, August 11, 1960, p. 29; No. 2406, December 29, 1960, p. 22.

on Tibet's reserves must have proved irresistible, with a consequent general worsening of the conditions on the highland. Indeed, by September, 1962, it was widely reported in the outside world that adverse weather conditions, coupled with a heavy recent influx of Chinese, had driven the region literally to the brink of famine, with food strictly rationed and relief supplies anxiously expected from China itself, despite similar problems there.

To mention but one other point related to the above question, even the peasantry's mushrooming bank savings so often singled out by the regime's advocates as a sure sign of growing prosperity consisted, one must remember, of joint funds set aside for a specific purpose and not money the contributing person could draw upon for private needs. Even if he could, however, that still left the question of whether he could procure what he wanted, given assorted limitations on the quantities and choice of consumer goods offered on the regular market.

As usual, the authorities lavished much less space on what went on in the meantime in the pastoral sections of the plateau. They acknowledged, of course, that here too their policies had met with great success, but refrained from the normal round of daily publicity for fresh triumphs. Those claims that the government did make in this connection dealt for the most part with the marked progress registered in the enforcement of anti-epizootic measures which led both to an increase in the size of the herds and an improvement in the health of the stock. A 42-member animal-disease prevention team, for example, was reported touring the countryside in the summer of 1960, its target being to inject a million head of livestock during its 6-month stay on the plateau. By September, it had completed its task with the result that the official press already noted a sharp drop in the incidence of disease and death of cattle and spoke of a government decision to inoculate more than 6 million head the next year. In preparation for the big drive, the Ministry of Agriculture sent veterinary experts to distant corners of the plateau who organized scores of mobile teams and set up training classes which were said to have graduated over 1,000 veterinary workers in the period of a few months.¹

Another important feature of the policy currently pursued by Peking among Tibet's pastoral elements lay in its attempt to anchor them to more or less permanent winter quarters, in part to shelter the herds

¹ *SCMP*, No. 2294, July 12, 1960, p. 27; No. 2342, September 21, 1960, p. 15; No. 2395, December 12, 1960, p. 28.

from the extreme rigors of the cold season and assure them of a source of fodder, in part, it would seem, in order to get the native nomads used to the notion of a semi-sedentary mode of life prior to trying to get them to settle down for good. That represents the regime's ultimate objective, for not only would such a situation allow for a more rational and efficient program of cattle-raising, but, more importantly, it would enable the government and the Party to tighten their hold over the traditionally restive and independently-minded nomadic tribes. In the meantime, the Chinese concentrated their energy on building up a network of shacks and barns throughout the pastoral sections of the highland for the storage of fodder and the protection of animals from bad weather.¹

Thanks to these measures and systematic veterinarian care, Tibetan herds, according to statistics released by official sources, had grown in numbers to over 10 million by the beginning of 1962.

In other fields of endeavor as well, the figures issued by Lhasa and Peking always portray Tibet as irresistibly surging forward. Industry and construction are booming, to judge by stories featured in the mainland press. However, much of what the papers termed industry still consisted of crude installations operated by individual craftsmen or small groups of 2 or 3 men working together and providing rudimentary services for very simple local needs. For instance, the authorities took it upon themselves to publicize the fact that in the spring of 1960 Tibetan blacksmiths and carpenters had improved over 100,000 farm implements and that the native shops now operated with mounting efficiency. Likewise, by June, 1960, the Tibetan Trading Corporation and the Lhasa Department of Industry and Commerce reportedly had made notable gains in organizing workers of small factories and shops and individuals engaged in home handicrafts to seek "means of production and means of subsistence, using local materials and marketing the products locally." This cottage industry was supposedly turning out some 1,200 kinds of items already, 1,000 of them never before manufactured here, so that 167 commodities no longer had to be brought in from China at all or had to be imported in smaller quantities only, including iron shovels, hoes, new-type plows, water wheels, windmills, drills, cotton spinning machines, etc.²

One consequence of these developments was the emergence of a

¹ SCMP, No. 2375, November 9, 1960, p. 27.

² SCMP, No. 2223, March 24, 1960, p. 33; No. 2269, June 1, 1960, p. 37.

native working class, still modest in numbers, needless to say, but from the start the recipient of doting care from the Chinese as the nucleus of a local modern "proletariat." The holding of the first congress of Local Trade Unions in Lhasa in June, 1960, which elected a Trade Union Council, reflected these fond hopes. On that occasion, it was also disclosed that the "feudalistic guild system" had already been abolished in the capital and 16 trade unions set up in factories and enterprises, and that 80 percent of Tibetan artisans had by then joined mutual-aid teams. A month and a half later, the authorities announced that the first handicraft cooperative in Tibet, composed of blacksmiths and carpenters, had just been formed in Lhasa. Otherwise, one district of Lhasa alone boasted of 28 mutual-aid teams embracing 800 workers – blacksmiths, textile workers, tannery and shoe-making workers, etc. – who turned out 100,000 yuan worth of farm machinery and diverse items in the first six months of 1960. By the end of 1960, 96 percent of Lhasa's artisans had reportedly enrolled in such teams, manufacturing some 1,500 sorts of new products, including harvesters, threshers and assorted farm implements heretofore unknown to the Tibetan peasantry. Likewise, in the fall of 1961, official sources again heaped praise on the achievements of the capital's handicraft collectives for their sterling services, among other things, in the mass production of tools for agriculture, primarily sickles, and plows, and the repair and maintenance of such implements. All in all, 26 handicraft trades were now said to have been organized in Lhasa; in Shigatse there were 20 or more, with 23 percent more members than in 1960.¹

The beginnings of a modern industrial plant also appeared. Porcelain works were started, using local ceramic clay, with personnel especially brought in from China. A newly constructed 7,500 kw hydro-electric power station, biggest on the plateau, finally went into operation in 1960, providing lighting for Lhasa and power for various manufacturing facilities in the city and nearby. In the summer of that year, construction started on Tibet's first iron and steel plant and by October one blast furnace already began producing molten iron. As in China proper, all these activities were soon being conducted to the hectic strains of a "technical innovation campaign." And, authorities

¹ SCMP, No. 2269, June 1, 1960, p. 36; No. 2294, July 12, 1960, p. 27; No. 2327, August 29, 1960, pp. 30-31; No. 2338, September 15, 1960, p. 21; No. 2576, September 12, 1961, p. 25.

throughout continued to chronicle dozens of achievements: the total mechanization of a lumber processing works at Lhasa; the installation of labor-saving devices at construction sites; a record output of 40,000 motor vehicle accessories in a local repair plant; the assembly of a 4-ton lorry at another such shop in Karmu; the use of oil presses (Chinese-made) for the first time to extract oil from rapeseed (in Lhasa, Shigatse, Chetang, and Gyangtse); exploitation of a salt lake (100 Tibetans employed) and building of a State-owned salt plant. Lhasa itself was described as in the throes of a building boom, with additional accommodations going up at the People's Hospital, a new stadium, factory buildings everywhere. Chamdo was said to have doubled in size since 1951; a modern cement factory had entered production there and a hydraulic power station neared completion. Shigatse sported a recently finished residential center. Official estimates put the number of Tibetan workers employed on all these enterprises as of mid-1961 at 24,000, half of whom had entered those jobs since 1959. Now, according to the regime's claims, skilled and semi-skilled Tibetan labor helped run power stations, iron and steel works, motor vehicle repair shops, farm implement plants and other modern industrial facilities.¹

All this growth allegedly stimulated internal trade as never before. To handle the increasing demand, 230 branch offices of trading companies were scattered all over the plateau, presumably selling imported goods in huge quantities at much reduced cost and buying a large volume of local produce at high prices. In other words, Tibet's market was supposedly flourishing, with the population enjoying access to a wider variety of goods and able to afford them, and both supply and demand expanding all the time. By official accounts, prices for items made in China and locally declined steadily, while the Chinese paid more for what they bought from the Tibetans.² This

¹ *SCMP*, No. 2223, March 24, 1960, p. 33; No. 2244, April 26, 1960, p. 32; *Selections from China Mainland Magazines*, 1962, No. 302, p. 11, reproducing Yen Yu, "The Youth of Tibet," *Evergreen*, No. 8, December, 1961; *SCMP*, No. 2273, June 8, 1960, p. 23; No. 2311, August 5, 1960, p. 30; No. 2355, October 11, 1960, p. 18; No. 2364, October 25, 1960, p. 22; No. 2367, October 28, 1960, p. 16; No. 2384, November 25, 1960, p. 21; No. 2411, January 7, 1961, p. 23; No. 2492, May 9, 1961. For the situation right after the revolt, see *SCMP*, No. 2020, May 26, 1959, p. 25, and No. 2069, August 5, 1959, p. 27. See, too, *Los Angeles Times*, January 27, 1963, p. 1.

² *SCMP*, No. 2242, April 22, 1960, p. 20. For instance as early as April, 1960, the Panchen Lama had announced that "prices for nearly 3,000 kinds of commodities were reduced and hundreds of additional stores set up in Tibet last year," *SCMP*, No. 2250, May 4, 1960, p. 17. Likewise, *SCMP*, No. 2621, November 17, 1961, p. 28, claimed that new price cuts

idyllic picture falls somewhat short of the truth, however. There have lately been persistent reports to the effect that the region suffered chronic shortages even in staple items. Furthermore, while industrial goods may well have been relatively plentiful, consumer goods were scarce. Low prices often reflected Chinese policy of selling at a loss if need be in order to combat inflation and improve the economic situation and did not indicate solid prosperity, as asserted. Peking's pre-emptive purchasing program, too, contributed much to the depletion of local stocks and the devaluation of the currency.

An aggravating factor here lay in the gradual elimination of all Tibetan trade contacts with the outside world and complete Chinese domination at present of every aspect of the region's commercial life. Over the years, the once busy flow of goods between the highland and India dwindled to a thin trickle and lost all importance. This conscious diversion of Tibetan trade toward China (at first slowly, but at a rising tempo since the March uprising) was graphically illustrated by the statistics quoted by Nehru in August, 1959, to the effect that the value of imports into India from western Tibet alone had dropped from \$315,000 in February, 1959, to \$42,000 in May, and that exports for the same period had declined from \$210,000 to \$63,000. Indian and Nepalese merchants in Tibet suffered deliberate harassment by the Chinese, up to and including arrest, detention, refusal of travel documents, trade agencies originally provided for by treaty have since been closed, foreign merchants forced to leave under one pretext or another, their operations subjected to constant interference and hamstrung by every possible means. Special exemptions for border exchanges have all but vanished, to the point where the Chinese proclaimed in 1962 their immediate intention to set up regular customs houses at several points of the Tibetan border to levy import and export duties, control the entry and exit of certain goods, enforce the prohibition on the circulation of foreign currencies and silver dollars in the region, etc.¹

had been instituted for the 111 kinds of industrial goods in Tibet region coupled with higher purchasing prices for over 160 local items, this being the third price cut for Tibet consumers since 1959. The first cut averaged 3.5% on over 200 kinds of commodities in November, 1959; in January, 1960, another cut averaging 12% was effected for almost 3,000 kinds of goods; the last price cuts ranged from over 9% for farm tools and other implements to over 31% for industrial raw materials to manufacture such implements.

¹ *New York Times*, August 7, 1959, p. 1; August 12, 1959, p. 1; May 30, 1962, p. 1; *India News* (London), September 1, 1962, p. 4; *Ta-kung pao*, January 6, 1962; *SCMP*, No. 2741, May 18, 1962, p. 22.

With the recent frontier fighting between Communist China and India, what little still subsisted of the once flourishing trade between India and the border states and the Tibetan highland now came to a complete stop. Even if renewed, it is unlikely ever again to amount to much and, even so, will represent a purely Chinese venture, not a Tibetan one, as long, that is, as the Chinese retain their present strangle-hold on the country.

On the other hand, in three other spheres, communications, education, health and welfare, Chinese reports of progress can by and large be accepted without undue fear of falling victim to exaggerated propaganda claims. Thus, not implausibly, Peking announced in the beginning of 1961 that 70 percent of all districts in Tibet were, as of that date, linked by highways, that the local fleet of motor vehicles had doubled and that the necessary spare parts were produced on the spot. The length of the road network had reached an estimated 10,000 kms by March of that year, with the rate of transport by truck presently seven times higher than in 1958 and 15 times higher than in 1955. More than 4,500 Tibetans were employed in road maintenance service on the 2,000 km Tsinghai-Tibet highway alone, while 200 drove trucks or worked as mechanics and skilled help in the repair shops. Likewise, postal service had been extended to many pastoral areas, with newly established lines on which the mail was carried by car and and horseback covering more than 1,900 kms, and the number of post and telegraph stations had quadrupled. So runs the official version. As against this, one finds no mention in the Chinese press anymore of the current fate of the project for a railroad to link Lhasa to Lanchow launched with such fanfare in 1957 and originally scheduled for completion in 1961. Outside accounts dating from June, 1960, spoke of 35,000 Tibetans forcibly conscripted by the P.L.A. to work around the clock on the line and of Chinese determination to complete the task by the end of the year, but no formal announcement has marked so far the successful execution of this major undertaking.¹

Similarly, the figures released by the Chinese to show progress made in the field of public education in the main appear quite credible. In April, 1960, for instance, the authorities indicated that 1,100 primary schools serving more than 33,000 pupils had been set up throughout

¹ SCMP, No. 2415, January 12, 1961, p. 17; Chao Chia-lieh, "Showing the New Face of Tibet," *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 12 (February, 1961); SCMP, No. 2623, November 21, 1961, p. 29; No. 2740, May 17, 1962, p. 17; *New York Times*, June 4, 1960, p. 2.

the region since the abortive rebellion and that at present in Lhasa alone 228 primary schools taught 8,400 students, with 9 out of 10 school-age children in the city enrolled for classes. Concurrently, instruction was offered on a large scale to help train native primary school teachers. Thousands of adults reportedly attended special night-courses. Altogether, close to 2,000 schools now functioned on the plateau, with at least one in every district, sometimes one in each remote village. Enrollment in junior middle schools was up; in the fall of 1960 a senior middle school opened its doors in Lhasa. A month later the capital witnessed the organization of its first women's school offering part-time general education in evening classes and a year after that the setting up of the area's first teachers' training school with immediate plans to enroll 300 students to keep pace with the constant expansion of the educational system (800 teachers had been trained in the past 2 years, but the source indicated that supply still fell short of demand). Finally, in April, 1962, the government put at 58,000 the total of children then attending schools in Tibet, with yet a further rise in registration expected in the near future, additional construction of facilities forthcoming and more of the same type of work in sight.¹

Apart from documenting the depth of the Chinese preoccupation with the problems of youth education and indoctrination on the premise that in the control of the mind of the native junior generation lay the sure promise of Tibet's total and proximate assimilation into the Communist Chinese body politic, the rapid growth of the school system on the highland also demonstrated how complete the late Chinese victory over the region's traditional interests had been. Indeed, the spectacular progress recorded in this field so hotly contested in the past proves, as nothing else can, that after March, 1959, neither the monasteries nor the lay conservative elements any longer enjoyed any noticeable influence in local affairs or played any distinct, to say nothing of independent, role on the social scene as guardians of Tibet's historical heritage. Without them to contend with, the Communist Chinese encountered few obstacles barring the way to the imple-

¹ SCMP, No. 2242, April 22, 1960, p. 19; No. 2259, May 17, 1960, pp. 30-31; No. 2273, June 8, 1960, p. 22; No. 2318, August 16, 1960, p. 30; No. 2343, September 22, 1960, p. 22; No. 2344, September 23, 1960, p. 15; No. 2358, October 14, 1960, p. 17; No. 2364, October 25, 1960, p. 23; No. 2412, January 9, 1961, p. 18; No. 2430, February 2, 1961, p. 28; No. 2550, August 2, 1961, p. 23; No. 2570, September 1, 1961, p. 16; No. 2590, October 3, 1961, p. 20; No. 2625, November 24, 1961, p. 30; No. 2650, January 3, 1962, p. 27; No. 2723, April 24, 1962, p. 26; No. 2794, August 8, 1962, p. 25; Chao Chia-lieh, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Yen Wu, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

mentation of their plan to remold Tibetan thought according to their own ideological precepts, using for that purpose outright propaganda in deadening doses against the adult population and an ideologically permeated educational curriculum against the minors.

As for the health program, it continued on its generally uneventful course, raising no protests and engendering few difficulties. Various "health" campaigns were launched to clear up and beautify the larger cities. Existing hospital facilities were expanded, prophylactic measures taken against diseases endemic to the area, such as smallpox, new hospitals and clinics set up in big cities, district headquarters and even rural locations, mobile units dispatched to the more remote corners of the region. By March, 1961, 121 so-called "people's hospitals" and health stations served the population, compared to 3 hospitals and 21 health centers in operation two years ago. Tibetan medical cadres now underwent training both in institutions in China and on the spot and many hundreds were already said to be practicing in various capacities throughout the region, from doctor's assistants to elementary health workers, part-time health workers, first-aid men, midwives. In November, 1961, official sources revealed that by then every administrative area in Tibet had a "well-equipped" hospital, every district had a clinic, and the regular medical personnel had grown from 400 to over 1,300 of whom more than 560 were of Tibetan nationality.¹ Plans were under way for a further appreciable extension of the local system of medical care and by now some of it has probably already materialized, for this represented one sphere in which the Chinese could reasonably hope to gain considerable popular goodwill at relatively very little cost and with utmost certainty of not antagonizing in the process anyone that mattered.

¹ SCMP, No. 2243, April 25, 1960, p. 34; No. 2348, September 29, 1960, p. 17; No. 2372, November 4, 1960, p. 16; No. 2415, January 12, 1961, p. 18; No. 2430, February 2, 1961, p. 28; No. 2611, November 2, 1961, p. 20; No. 2625, November 24, 1961, p. 30; Chao Chia-lieh, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

CHAPTER V

TIBET TODAY AND TOMORROW

As shown above, the course of Sino-Tibetan relations since 1951 has passed through a number of distinct stages, differentiated by varying emphasis on alternate goals, changes in the modalities of operational strategy, shifts in the choice of tactics and executory instrumentalities. Nor is this process yet at an end, for one can safely expect further adjustments, improvisations, and mapping of new tactics in Peking's continuing struggle for undisputed mastery of Tibet. Still, a basic pattern has by now been set and much of what will be tried in the foreseeable future by the Communist Chinese leadership in its drive further to consolidate its hold on the region will be influenced and determined, both positively and negatively, by its experience so far on this score. So as better to gauge the prospects ahead of Tibet in its unwilling political association with the Chinese People's Republic and try to chart the country's likely path of proximate evolution under such conditions, a brief recapitulation of the record up to this point seems in order. Since the Communist Chinese profess to believe in historical determinism, one can with profit humor them on this occasion by best attempting tentatively to predict what the next few years hold in store for Tibet through extrapolation from, and projection of the lessons of, the first dozen years of the area's existence under the present regime.

In weighing the first decade of Communist China's intimate contact with Tibet, it may be useful to begin by recalling Nehru's apt characterization of the factors surrounding the 1959 uprising, when he admitted:

The circumstances were undoubtedly difficult. On the one side there was a dynamic rapidly moving society. On the other a static unchanging society fearful of what might be done to it in the name of reform. The distance between the two was great and there appeared to be hardly any meeting point. Meanwhile

changes in some form inevitably came to Tibet. Communications developed rapidly and the long isolation of Tibet was partly broken through. Though physical barriers were progressively removed, mental and emotional barriers increased. Apparently the attempt to cross these mental and emotional barriers was either not made or did not succeed.¹

Much of what is contained in that statement in effect offers a correct analysis of the situation which obtained between the Chinese and a certain segment of the Tibetan population and so can well serve as a starting-point for a quick review of the highlights of the period in question which, in turn, will furnish, it is hoped, the material from which to distill the core elements of the problem that can be counted upon to play an important role in the latter's subsequent progression.

The initial period of Tibetan contact with the Communist Chinese, i.e., the 1951-1954 interlude, was primarily marked, one must remember, by the tentativeness of Peking's handling of the assorted issues posed by the uncommon conditions prevailing in the outlying region and by its special position *vis-à-vis* the Chinese polity, both past and present. At first, then, the Chinese approach was moderate, notwithstanding the endless propaganda barrages preceding the invasion, the resort to military force, and other heavy-handed tactics, which, however, represented but an indispensable prelude to bringing about formal acknowledgment of China's sovereign rights to Tibet and not a foretaste of the permanent state of affairs which would reign once that recognition had been secured in due form. Indeed, this violence and coercion lasted but a short duration and, once Tibet signaled its submission, they were quickly discontinued. Even while forcibly "liberating" Tibet, it should be noted, the Chinese military made conscious efforts, judging from available reports, to impress the local civilian population with Peking's magnanimity and convince the native inhabitants of the central government's benevolent disposition toward them. The hostilities themselves were kept at a minimum and the Tibetan soldiers which fell into Chinese hands were in those early days treated with ostentatious consideration to win them over to the victor's side.

In part, of course, such a posture merely reflected the standard tactics of a conquering army in enemy territory when desirous of limiting the conflict, of weakening the resolve of the opponent to

¹ Prime Minister's Statement in the Lok Sabha on April 27, 1959, in Chanakya Sen, *Tibet Disappears* (New York, 1960), p. 190.

resist and of avoiding at all cost degeneration of the fighting into a difficult and protracted guerilla war feeding on the mass discontent of ordinarily non-combatant elements. Proper treatment of the peaceful citizenry, as well as of the prisoners-of-war, could be expected to advance the Chinese cause throughout the region, perhaps shorten the war, and meanwhile certainly help facilitate the administration of the occupied areas, besides improving the prospects of an early negotiated settlement and enhancing the possibility of gaining favorable peace terms.

Apart from these eminently pragmatic reasons for the P.L.A. to be on its best behavior, there were other, ideological motivations impelling it to act in such a manner as to create a favorable impression among Tibetans in general, to wit, a genuine conviction, it would seem, animating the military cadres that the campaign waged by them amounted in fact to a *bona fide* "liberation." Good evidence exists that the Chinese actually did view themselves as "emancipators" of the down-trodden Tibetans from imperialism and feudalism both and so believed that the average highlander would greet them with boundless enthusiasm as "deliverers." Even when they found that little joy was being manifested by the indigenous population at their presence, the Chinese could still console themselves with the thought that the native masses were too backward and unenlightened to appreciate their luck and draw comfort from observing that at least these very same people were not visibly bent on active opposition to the authority of the newcomers.

True, the absence of noticeable wide-spread zeal to make the "liberators" feel welcome might have proved a bitter disappointment for the Chinese, but, on the other hand, the lack of popular resistance to the invading troops showed signs of definite promise. The Tibetan commoner watched and waited and, in the process, his neutrality benefited the Chinese who also saw it in the long run as an encouraging factor for the eventual implementation of their political plans. In the meantime, it behooved the Chinese not to spoil through gratuitous alienation of their audience their chances of ultimately converting the bulk of the apparently yet uncommitted Tibetans to their own outlook and so they proceeded to conduct themselves in a way best calculated, in their opinion, to foster good relations and promote utmost understanding between themselves and the indigenous population.

Both of the above factors likewise dominated the initial posture assumed by the Chinese after the conclusion of the 1951 Sino-Tibetan treaty which now sanctioned the legitimate installation of Peking's authority in the region. This first post-*bellum* phase lasted for slightly more than four years and, throughout, was marked too by the cautious and conciliatory tone adopted by the Chinese in handling the explosive Tibetan issue. The rationale was basically still the same as the one which lay behind earlier Chinese pre-occupation with the need to placate native sentiment, even though hostilities were ostensibly over, peace had been restored and the Chinese had won, at least on paper. Nevertheless, the actual physical position of the Chinese garrison and corps of civil administrators on the remote highland long remained precarious, formal provisions of the agreement notwithstanding, and the instinct of self-preservation alone counselled moderation and restraint. That advice the Chinese heeded as long as isolation and relative weakness demanded that they do so in order to survive and perpetuate their presence on the plateau until such time as they had been able to entrench themselves there solidly enough to withstand possible pressure aimed at forcing them out. Negative considerations, then, contributed to Peking's formulation of and adherence to a policy designed to cause minimum friction with local interests and optimum conditions for maintaining intact the tenuous Chinese foothold in the region and, perhaps, bolstering it.

It is largely for these reasons that the Chinese, as noted at the outset, initially concentrated their energies on creating the technical wherewithal to insure the possibility of successful defense of their acquired positions in the area against potential challenge on the part of the Tibetans. Roads, means of modern communication, strongpoints at strategic locations, loyal Tibetans infiltrated into posts of authority, propaganda and indoctrination, all these indirect methods for strengthening the Chinese hand were effectively put to use. None of these measures overtly attacked the existing order nor seemed likely to bring down local retaliation at a crucial time when the Chinese could not seriously hope to cope with any concerted onslaught against their as yet imperfect defense system on the highland. In short, given the risks Peking simply could not afford, at first, to launch major projects likely to spark adverse local reaction such as could jeopardize its still uncertain control of the region. And, those undertakings it absolutely had to prosecute in order not to languish forever at the

mercy of the native population and escape the dilemma in which it now found itself were, fortunately for it, of the type that could be counted upon not to provoke further undue tension in the already sufficiently taut atmosphere reigning on the plateau.

By sheer coincidence, therefore, Chinese fears and the assorted remedies which bade fair to cure them combined and conspired to advocate a general "go-slow" approach at this time to the sundry problems raised by the Tibetan phenomenon. Chinese acceptance of this fact and their decision to abide by it, for a while at least or until the balance again tipped in their favor, deserves a good deal of the credit for allowing Peking to weather these first difficult years without running into serious trouble that might well have pushed it into jettisoning the foreposts it had secured here at a considerable cost, extricating its troops from a badly exposed position as best it could or, conversely, paying the high price of abandoning them to their fate, and in any event then starting afresh and at a marked disadvantage.

Ideological mystique happened to reenforce this particular orientation of the official line for it would seem that the Chinese remained steadfast in the belief in their role as "liberators" of Tibet and in the misconception that deep down the common Tibetan shared that feeling, even if outwardly he failed to show it, just as long as he also did not express the opposite sentiment. Since the great mass of the Tibetans had been thoroughly conditioned by past experience to refrain from meddling in politics and harboring delusions about participation in the exalted business of statecraft, it fully satisfied the Chinese on this last count, allowing Peking to draw from what amounted to merely a routine feature of the Tibetan social scene positive conclusions flattering to its *a priori* interpretation of the facts of the case. Hence, the illusion persisted to the point where the Chinese apparently thought that their program carried appeal not only to the lower casts of the native population, but to the upper strata of the local hierarchy as well. In China proper, after all, the so-called patriotic national bourgeoisie had been spared the rigors of class warfare and it would seem that Peking now felt that here a parallel group of "patriotic national feudals" could lend itself to similar bloodless manipulation and prove of immense value to the execution of Communist blueprints for the area's subsequent development.

Had the Communist Chinese sincerely held the opposite thesis, they would presumably have felt constrained sooner or later, but likely

sooner, to give effect to their oft-proclaimed promise of bringing emancipation to the Tibetan people by duly instituting a campaign to repress local agents of "imperialism" in the guise of the partisans of the *ancien régime*. That they did not proceed to do so, and showed no wish to embark on such a course, may in part be explained, of course, by their reluctance to test the power of the established authorities, lest they inadvertently lose the contest, and their preference to postpone the trial until a more propitious moment. More importantly, however, Peking seemingly saw no need whatever for a showdown of this sort, with its attendant disruption and other negative side-effects, since in its estimation the prospects for securing amicably the support of an adequate proportion of the former ruling group looked bright enough to obviate the usefulness of a resort to intra-communal strife along class lines prescribed by doctrine.

In either event, the case for a gradualistic approach received an added boost, and various diplomatic requirements further contributed to promoting that spirit. The net result of this conjuncture of forces, some accidental, others not, was nonetheless such as to render it possible, even as late as 1955, for an outside observer to comment on the prevailing situation in Tibet in these laudatory terms:

By mild and polite government, the Chinese have made themselves surprisingly popular. Their troops have behaved in exemplary fashion. China is using Tibet as a forward base for political penetration, not military threats. . . . Word has been disseminated throughout the Himalayas about the friendly and helpful Chinese administration.¹

The succeeding years, however, witnessed a radical change in the initial Communist Chinese attitude. Patience and forbearance soon wore thin as Peking's efforts to convert the native hierarchy to its philosophy and bring it under its will bore no fruit. Moreover, independently of that, Chinese expectations themselves mounted, thanks to the improved Chinese posture on the plateau in large part as a consequence of the intensive and successful road-building program pursued in the meantime, better communications with the rest of China, hence the possibility of rapid and centrally directed movement of troops onto the highland and between points there. This feeling of increased security in turn bred an optimistic outlook, a readiness to act daringly and face greater risks than heretofore had seemed advisable, and altogether less willingness to countenance unnecessary delays and

¹ *New York Times*, February 21, 1955, p. 20.

eternal procrastinations, deliberate or otherwise, on the part of the native spokesmen for the preservation of the past. Enthusiasm born of a realization of greater potentiality to have their own way, coupled with progressive disenchantment with the leadership of the Tibetan community, worked together to impart to the Chinese actions a new sense of urgency. Peking's plans grew in ambition, its purposes became more definite, its resolve stronger, its erstwhile toleration of obstructionism because of debilitating weakness vanished in the face of fresh determination to push ahead vigorously stemming from the enjoyment of knowledge that it now possessed the power commensurate with the magnitude of its self-appointed mission. The outcome was a concerted onslaught soon after on the traditional pillars of the centuries-old Tibetan society.

The chief result of the Chinese offensive, so to speak, against the ancient customs and institutions of Tibet lay in the fact that it immeasurably increased the chances of the antagonists coming to blows. True, progress registered by the Chinese during the previous four years in the development of the means of rapid, modern communication had eliminated much of the physical handicap under which Peking's emissaries had labored until then. The military position of the Chinese contingent on the plateau was no longer as vulnerable as heretofore, to be sure, and the P.L.A.'s chances of dealing successfully with a large-scale attack by native elements now seemed much better. Yet, the Chinese still could not feel totally out of danger or consider themselves completely in control of the situation.

In part, therefore, the decision to step up the pressure on the local authorities arose from a growing awareness that the achievement of supremacy on the highland now appeared feasible, given the various preparations made in the meantime to bolster Chinese power here. In part, seizing the initiative also reflected a latent desire to escape the uncertainty as to who actually held the upper hand in Tibet. Nourished on the one side by a feeling of increased optimism and on the other by a nagging doubt as to who would prevail if it came to a showdown, the Chinese action in pushing ahead represented both a tentative test of strength and a prophylactic measure designed further to improve Peking's prospects there at a moment which looked propitious for such an enterprise. In other words, while things were better locally, as far as the Chinese were concerned, they were nevertheless not quite good enough to give them absolute peace of mind, so,

at what they considered the right time, they moved to gain an ascendancy such as would banish forever all fears of losing what they now held.

Hence, to a degree at least, the rationale for the push stemmed from the same negative considerations as had been at play earlier, except that the changing equilibrium of power in the area at present impelled the Chinese to assert themselves whereas previously their relative weakness had forced them to take the opposite stand and behave with prudence and moderation. The old under-current of insecurity, however, which at bottom inspired the latest course of action as well, turning it into an essentially preventive blow, still ran sufficiently strong to make the Chinese prefer indirect assault tactics that would minimize the intensity of the victim's reactions, limit the conflict and lessen the over-all danger. Even after they mounted their political offensive against Tibet in 1955, then, the Chinese tried to avoid striking at the heart of the indigenous system, relying instead on the cumulative effect of innumerable marginal incursions, so to say, to undermine the whole structure and bring it close to collapse. A frontal confrontation would, hopefully, not materialize if Peking desisted from openly laying siege to the core of the Tibetan political structure and the latter could just as effectively end up isolated, neutralized and eroded by these devious techniques which, moreover, had the advantage of sowing confusion in the opponent's ranks without offering him any visible worthwhile target for decisive retaliation, or an adequate excuse to hit back, for that matter. Thus, the Chinese gradually gathered into their hands control of the country's commercial life, penetrated deeply into the field of education, conducted a carefully planned indoctrination program, maintained a monopoly in the fields of communications, construction and industrial enterprise, made deep inroads into other spheres as well, but most of the time left the monasteries and the Lhasan court alone.

Aside from all that, some of the Chinese compulsion to proceed with the attempt to dominate Tibet outright again drew inspiration from the realm of ideology, for despite occasional earlier setbacks to their dreams, the Chinese apparently still did not despair of acceptance by the majority of Tibetans in the capacity of "liberators." Indeed, the attitude of the Chinese authorities on the highland repeatedly demonstrated the continuing prevalence of this mentality. Sure of the superiority of their world outlook, imbued with a strong sense of

mission, which accounts, too, for the gratingly didactic tone as a rule discernible in Peking's mode of addressing the Tibetans, the Chinese apparently believed they had a duty to extend the benefits of their system to those they persisted in regarding as benighted brethren. Undoubtedly, too, they were now aware, from past experience, that the native local interests at least were not prepared to embrace their proposals of reform with open arms. The mute masses remained an unknown quantity, though their silence could with some justification be read as an encouraging sign. On the whole, the situation did not, therefore, call for recklessness, and the Chinese were quick enough to grasp the idea and pursue their aims without any show of undue temerity, but neither did it preclude forging ahead with plans of reform if rashness and doctrinal extremism were eschewed.

While realizing that the task of gaining the willing cooperation of the articulate segments of the Tibetan community might prove harder than they had at first thought, the Communist Chinese, it would seem, still conceived themselves capable of overcoming that barrier and relied heavily on the manifest (to them) superiority of their value system to accomplish by itself the job of conversion in a comparatively brief period of time. The ideology preached by the Communist Chinese, and embodied in the many practical advantages enjoyed by them over the native population, would presumably triumph on its own merits. Given undeniable proof of the benefits of the social philosophy expounded by Peking, the Tibetan ruling class would, so it was expected, concede the point, abandon its adherence to the dead past and voluntarily join hands with the Chinese in the task of remaking Tibet in the image of China. In their proselytizing zeal, Peking's spokesmen on the plateau never stopped hoping that by capturing the minds of the acknowledged native leadership and winning them to the Communist cause a bloodless revolution could rapidly be accomplished here on the pattern already tested in the rest of China.

As long as such a prospect lingered, the Chinese recognized that they would have to proceed circumspectly so as not to alienate beyond redemption the sentiments of the top rungs of the Tibetan hierarchy. Thus, while military calculations and missionary enthusiasm fully conspired to incline the Chinese to the view that further consolidation and immediate extension of the new order in the region were imperative both also provided endorsement for a positive, dynamic approach pursued with relative caution, without heedless storming forays,

immoderate expectations, overly ambitious objectives, and an unreasonably speeded up tempo. Admittedly, the moment seemed ripe for self-assertion, and Peking felt the need for it, but that does not mean that the Chinese failed to exercise due care or refused to stay within the proper bounds, as seen by them, or that they could have forged ahead even as much as they managed to had they acted otherwise.

To be sure, in spite of these elaborate precautions the Chinese drive peacefully to transfigure Tibet in accordance with their own conception of what constituted a desirable society must be pronounced a failure, but only a qualified one. Else, the setback might have been even more complete, perhaps disastrous. As it is, the check was galling enough, but it proved to be a momentary defeat and the losses were quickly recouped. In effect, the latest Communist endeavors to win Tibet ran into grave trouble very soon after they started. Scattered uprisings plagued the Chinese authorities throughout 1956, forced them to cut down drastically the size of their local establishment in 1957, spread with renewed vigor in 1958, culminating in the revolt at Lhasa in March, 1959, and the creation of pockets of resistance active to this day in various corners of the region. And, till the very end, the Chinese never really succeeded in recruiting the services of the leading elements of the native community for their ends.

The extent of and the reasons for the partial defeat Peking's plans sustained on these counts require careful analysis for therein lies the key to the understanding of conditions in Tibet today. First, as regards the sporadic armed conflicts between the Chinese and the native population, those that lend themselves to identification with some certainty can for the most part be explained by reference to special geographic and human factors. Indeed, the great majority of the reported clashes occurred in Tibet's eastern portion where an accidental blend of ingredients rendered the situation particularly explosive. Being nearest China and the handiest route between its interior and the inner plateau, these areas were the first to suffer the impact of large-scale Chinese emigration after 1951. The threat of some day ending up submerged in a wave of incoming Hans had perennially agitated the minds of the border residents who now suddenly thought they saw their worse fears realized. Their reaction was instinctive and, naturally, adverse to the Chinese.

Moreover, as it happened, concentrated in this sector were to be found some of Tibet's most warlike tribes, fiercely independent and

resentful of outside authority, whatever its source, traditionally hostile to their Han neighbors, contemptuous of sedentary people in general of their own as well as of foreign stock. Nor did the Chinese help matters by behaving here as at home on the flimsy pretext that the Chamdo province had once formed part of China proper. The tactless conduct of the Chinese on this occasion, quite out of line with the usual restraint they then displayed elsewhere on the highland in their dealings with the natives, combined with the militant temperament of the local clans, in itself quite unlike the passivity attributed to the average Tibetan commoner and now even further aggravated by the resolve to redress the many wrongs inflicted on them by the invader, some real, some fancied, spelled a loaded issue all around. Whether the Chinese could have avoided trouble altogether by acting differently remains a moot point at best, and the odds stand high against such a conclusion. Therefore, if one is to adjudge this case as proof of the failure of Peking's policies in Tibet, the fault, if fault there was, lies largely with fate, and not the Chinese personally, for saddling the latter with a well-nigh impossible situation which seemed susceptible to but one kind of solution – violence – regardless of what the Chinese did, short of removing themselves physically from the scene.

Upon first encountering this opposition in Kham and attempting to put it down by armed force, the Chinese saw it spill over into adjacent areas of Tibet, carried by refugees from the province. Thereafter they found these same elements in the forefront wherever fighting broke out on the highland between the Chinese garrison and the native population. Khambas, Goloks, and their roving cousins, spearheaded the Lhasa uprising in March, 1959. They still form the backbone of what survives of the resistance movement in present-day Tibet.

This aspect of the setback suffered by the Chinese could, then, perhaps be dismissed as an almost inevitable corollary to their adventure in invading the domain of these untamed clans. Of course, Peking added to the exasperation of its new subjects by its efforts at regimentation, its interference with tribal institutions and customs, its ill-advised and hasty attempts at foisting its particular brand of reforms, yet this only amounted to an incidental factor that worsened the crisis, but did not cause it.

The mental abyss which separated the Chinese from the eastern tribes and which both sides proved incapable of bridging, had a

counter-part in the gulf which divided the intellectual world of the Chinese from that of Tibet's ruling caste, even if the nature of the differences in the two cases bore little resemblance to each other. In this instance, native rejection of the value system symbolized by the Chinese bore the marks primarily of personal and class sentiment, in contradistinction with the earlier phenomenon which reflected essentially a cohesive group reaction cutting across social rank and involving the preservation of a common mode of life rather than particularistic rights attached to individual status or institutional categories. Either way, the adverse response to the Chinese-sponsored innovations crystallized into a passionate defense of the ancient *status quo*. But, as regards the nomadic tribes this attachment to the past for the most part simply represented the obverse side of the coin, so to say, an automatic alternative to acceptance of the new order, hence by and large a commitment tinged with a negative quality in that it stemmed less from blind adherence to the existing state of affairs than from refusal for sundry reasons to embrace what was offered in exchange, whereas for the elements habitually exercising socio-political leadership in the Tibetan community maintenance of the old patterns appeared as an intrinsically desirable condition *per se*, a *sine qua non* for the safeguarding of their traditional powers and prerogatives. By nature, then, as well as by interest, the top hierarchy was wedded to the proposition of the maximum protection of the established structure from such change as would endanger its vested privileges, its members ranging in this respect from the ultra-conservative extreme to the merely conservative shade, but, nevertheless, all organically dependent on and therefore devoted to the idea of the perpetuation of the *ancien régime*.

The fundamental inability of the Communist Chinese to communicate meaningfully with this group, comprising the staff of the monasteries, the nobility, and the officialdom, and to forge any real *rapprochement* between themselves and the latter, may thus be explained by reference to two separate sets of factors. First, insofar as in the eyes of the native ruling strata the Chinese, by very definition, loomed as a revolutionary force, any attempt to propound a commonality of interest between the two camps was foredoomed to failure: alliance with the newcomers, toleration of their creed alone, inevitably spelled the end of the entrenched position of the indigenous leadership rooted as it was in the standards of a milieu completely different from that which the late

arrivals sought to formulate. The Chinese, to put it bluntly, represented a threat, whether they liked it or not, their contentions to the contrary notwithstanding, so that any program envisaging joint action, such as proposed by Peking, could never transcend the level of an artificial and expedient endeavor, outwardly viable for a while, perhaps, but devoid of any genuine substantive *raison d'être*.

Within an association of this sort, the parties could, it is true, temporarily pool their resources in a short-lived partnership considered by both as beneficial, but, if they intended to remain faithful to themselves, they were bound in the long run to work at cross-purposes because of the inherent incompatibility of their respective goals. Consequently, soon each would have to try to gain for itself the upper hand within the alliance to secure victory for its own views, make them supreme and so assure them of optimum chances of survival, and as a result they would clash head on. Or, one would have to abdicate without a fight to resolve the matter peacefully and there was little likelihood of that unless either of them allowed its authority gradually to be undermined to such an extent that resistance would prove suicidal and surrender seemed the only solution left. The aversion of Tibet's upper classes which perceived this peril to let themselves be maneuvered into an arrangement with the Chinese which would permit the latter to accomplish precisely that type of operation accounts for a good deal of Peking's inability to organize a united front here that could vest its actions with a greater aura of legitimacy and spontaneity.

Second, and much more basic than this current non-coincidence in the immediate interests and policies of the competing régimes, was the general discrepancy between the historical stages of evolution reached by the two peoples and the profound divergence in the official cultural outlook of the two societies at the moment of confrontation. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine two more antithetical ideological codes than those animating a militant advocate of Peking's line and an articulate spokesman for old Tibet. The difference literally amounted to that dividing two strange worlds. The aspirations, criteria, aims, methods, rationale and experience that coalesced to produce the socio-political doctrinal infrastructure of the Chinese Communist State conveyed nothing to those who elaborated the norms regulating the Tibetan way of life. The values by which one set so much stock meant little to the other so that what seemed self-evident to the Chinese,

for example, often failed to carry any message to their Tibetan *alter egos* who made neither rhyme nor reason of it.

Had the difficulties of the problem been confined solely to disagreement on political ends and means, or political practices, or even the functional nature of a desirable polity, they would not have altogether foreclosed the likelihood of conversion from one view to the other. Admittedly, the hardships of such a transition should not be overlooked or the magnitude of the project underestimated. Still, compromise lay within the realm of possibility, perhaps remote, but not inaccessible. At least, on this plane, the lack of shared political ground or of common political orientation might find compensation elsewhere to enable the opposing sides nonetheless to engage in a sensible dialogue and eventually maybe strike a mutually satisfactory deal. When, however, the dimensions of the gap in ethical outlooks dawn as wide as in the present instance, covering the entire spectrum, the task of bridging it at any given point encounters the usual nearly insuperable obstacles rendered almost conclusively so now by the dearth of ancillary opportunities to establish contact in other sectors as well.

The net result, to which the Sino-Tibetan phenomenon stands ample witness, is persistence of the original fissure, leading to feelings of progressive aggravation and frustration in all concerned to a point where a decisive showdown alone can resolve the impasse generated by the fact that the actors had proved incapable of lifting themselves above their personal condition, cease behaving as prisoners of their own particular heritage or background or dogma, and evolve a language understandable to more than just the initiated. Yet, so rare are the occasions where these latter attempts to discover a harmonious way out of the dilemma have met with success and so many, by contrast, the cases which had to be settled by force, that here one is again all but tempted, and with sufficient cause, to pronounce the Chinese helpless victims of circumstances beyond their effective control and of historical forces which declined readily to submit to human manipulation, particularly if unilaterally prosecuted by only half the parties subjected thereto.

For various reasons, however, the protracted struggle between the Chinese and the governing classes of the Tibetan nation took on a course quite unlike that followed by the concurrent trial of strength between Peking's minions and the local border tribes. In the first place,

the very mechanics of the situation now worked against any overt challenge to the Chinese bid for supremacy of the type that, *ultima ratio*, rested on possible resort to force of arms to ensure the desired outcome. The simple organizational cohesiveness necessary to ensure the probability of victory in any such venture was conspicuously absent from the present scene. True, the nobility, the officialdom, the inmates of the monasteries formed a definite category of privileged persons, whether one broad class or three closely related classes is here immaterial, but, except for the monastic orders, the members of this group did not operate within the framework of a permanent structural entity. Even if of like mind, the component individuals continued to act as such rather than as a compact body for lack of a formal, institutional process to permit a general synthesis of these private opinions, to crystallize the views harbored by the majority into an operational platform and thus imbue them with goal-oriented dynamism. Bereft of ways and means to determine the presence of internal solidarity in their midst and promote this unity in a purposeful manner, the lay feudals and the civil servants not only did not manage to coordinate a plan of action with their ecclesiastical counterparts, but even neglected to marshal their own ranks into some semblance of a consolidated front.

The monasteries occupied a somewhat more advantageous position in this regard for they at least reaped the benefits that came from functioning each as an organic whole capable of formulating a collective will and seeking its realization. Of course, the lamaseries too stood handicapped by the fact that they seldom succeeded in coalescing into a nation-wide organization that could wield central authority and synchronize the efforts of the separate member-associations. Still, even when proceeding alone, each of these institutions represented a greater power factor than anything comparable their lay partners could muster into the field.

This does not mean, of course, that the upper classes of the Tibetan society were *ipso facto* incapable of concerted use of force. Psychologically, however, they seemed less prepared to resort to violence than the frontier clans for whom, after all, this almost constituted a mode of life. They also suffered from lack of mobility, the Church personnel particularly so, and were therefore more suited for defensive rather than offensive action. As such, the idea of fighting for their rights with arms in hand did not repel these men, but their condition compelled them to hew to a certain line of behavior and thus seriously circum-

scribed the freedom of initiative which, for example, the Khambas enjoyed on this score. As a consequence, they played an essentially passive part in the open contest between the Chinese and the native elements which opposed them. That is to say, when others raised the standard of revolt and physically defied Peking's authority, segments of this group either joined the rebels or furnished them aid, if geographical proximity favored such cooperation. In other words, given hostilities in the vicinity, neither the local nobility nor the local monasteries hesitated to support the enemies of the Chinese, the Church in particular which thereby fulfilled a traditional role for which it came fully equipped with secret caches of weapons, well-stocked granaries, and ample funds. The impetus for resistance, however, came from the outside and in general the human resources were likewise externally recruited.

Hence, the involvement of the upper rungs of the Tibetan hierarchy in the periodic uprisings against the Chinese bore a number of characteristic features: it was largely accidental in that others started the insurrections and spearheaded them while princes and prelates located nearby joined later; it was covert in that it usually expressed itself in material assistance rather than direct participation; it was the product of individual decision privately reached either by a man or a group of men affected by these developments or fortuitously provided with an opportunity to take a hand in them, ordinarily by virtue of the simple fact that the clash occurred in the immediate neighborhood and so offered the by-stander a chance to show which way his sympathies leaned. Finally, one must also remember that the response of these elements to the Chinese threat essentially had to tailor itself to the nature of the original gambit which brought on the reply. Since the Chinese had elected to project an image of moderation, had publicly extended offers of collaboration and repeatedly dwelled on the purported commonality of interests between them, it behooved the Tibetan leadership to answer in kind. Any outward show of violence not corresponding to a prior like demonstration of bad temper by the Chinese could only prejudice its cause and, accordingly, in the meantime it had to fall back on the same devious tactics as those used by Peking.

In the end, then, the very frame of reference applied by the Chinese to their relations with the native ruling strata estopped Peking from indiscriminate employment of military power once it saw its bid for

cooperation prove barren, for the enemy at this stage presented no visible target. Repression could be and was directed against high-ranking individuals and against monasteries which the Chinese were able to identify with reasonable certitude as having allied themselves with any of the several sporadic revolts which over the years plagued the P.L.A. stationed on the highland. Occasionally, abuses crept into the process and dire punishment was sometimes visited upon persons and institutions not connected with the events. Brutality born of exasperation, excesses arising from the heat of combat, here and there calculated acts of desecration of temples and sanctuaries or of deliberate mistreatment of civilians singled out on grounds of their social status or vocation undoubtedly took place and, what is more, all too frequently. Nevertheless, these still relatively isolated incidents never degenerated into systematic official practice, or became entirely divorced from battle conditions and turned into wanton persecution fostered for its own sake and in total disregard of objective facts. The charge of genocide in this matter therefore does not lie, at least as concerns the record prior to 1959, though indictment for intemperate reliance on physical power and for consistent exercise of poor judgment in falling back on it upon the slightest ill-founded suspicion could well stand.

What the abortive rebellion of March, 1959, inadvertently accomplished was to provide the Chinese at last with sufficient pretext to do two things: first, to relegate to oblivion the erstwhile policy of self-limitation Peking had voluntarily abided by in this context and substitute a program of outright political liquidation for its former proposal of formal collaboration; second, to consign to enemy status, without unduly bothering with technical distinctions, whole categories of persons and organizations selected in the light of an *a priori* ideological scheme, with exceptions made only on the merits of outstanding service to the cause, the burden of proof lying with those seeking to escape the punitive effects of such classification and the contrary presumption otherwise obtaining as the rule.

The adoption of the new line marked a turning-point in the evolution of the Communist Chinese attitude *vis-à-vis* Tibet's traditional leadership: it heralded the advent of an era of systematic expurgation of practices rooted in the country's past; it ushered in a period of mounting pressure against everything connected with the previous state of affairs, almost by virtue of association alone and independently

of concrete performance; and it branded as evil *per se* those attributes of the native way of life which could not be subsumed under the rigid code of the successor regime. In short, the change-over now frankly introduced the principle of class warfare, in its classical form, into the blueprint which Peking decided hereafter to implement on the plateau, an unwelcome ingredient it had hitherto lacked ostensibly as a concession to special local conditions that at present the central government either dismissed as not valid anymore or brushed aside as no longer deserving such singular dispensation, hence treated either as already moribund or as scheduled proximately to meet that fate.

While the Chinese endeavors to impose their will on the border clans and the influential native class eventually culminated in violence and thus did not achieve their avowed objective, a definite setback for Peking's plans, the Chinese experience with the bulk of the common people of Tibet turned out quite differently. As noted earlier, the newcomers did not, by and large, succeed prior to 1959 in carrying with them the Tibetan masses, in terms, that is, of actively enrolling the latter under their ideological flag and inducing them to join in their program to refashion the existing society. A number of reasons may be adduced in explanation of this phenomenon. One is that the Chinese remained handicapped throughout by the need to heed the wishes of the local equivalent of the old country gentry and so enjoyed little opportunity to approach the peasantry directly and to try to convert them to their views. Physically, the Chinese cadres working on the plateau generally found themselves insulated from personal contact with the rural lower class by a screen of land-owners and estate-managers through whom they had to operate, which effectively filtered out all their revolutionary proposals in any way detrimental to the established order.

Besides that, so deep again lay the gulf between the ideas propounded by the Chinese and the traditional outlook of the average Tibetan, that much time, energy, and persistence were required simply to span the distance that separated literally two different worlds. In theory, eight years ought to have been enough, as far as duration is concerned, but one must remember that without the other factors time alone could not be expected to accomplish a minor miracle. A systematic campaign of persuasion, area-wide in scope, reaching into every hut, monopolizing all channels of public information and brooking no opposition, tacitly backed by overwhelming power and relentless in

execution, such as could overcome these manifold difficulties within a reasonable interval, required in addition unobstructed access to the subjects of the experiment, an advantage which then was as yet denied to the Chinese.

In spite of this, Peking's efforts to foster the spirit of reform did not prove altogether barren in this field. Though the Chinese did not succeed in swaying the native masses into surging forth in their footsteps, neither did they ever alienate them so as to preclude such a contingency at a better moment, a negative consideration, perhaps, but an important gain nonetheless. By the same token, they certainly laid the groundwork meanwhile for possible future acceptance by the common people of their program in a positive sense, since their proselytizing activity undoubtedly had an impact on the native audience and left it with a latent residue of mixed awe and curiosity and a not unfavorable impression on the whole. Finally, the Chinese thereby managed quite well to neutralize politically the majority of the poorer Tibetans by driving a wedge between them and their superiors, awakening in them a vague consciousness of their own needs not coincident with those of their masters, and encouraging in place of the formerly implicit habit of obeisance to Church and Crown a discriminating self-interest seemingly best served now by not taking sides in the contest for supremacy which pitted Lhasa against Peking.

Such was the backdrop to the events of March, 1959, which changed everything, inaugurating a new phase in Tibet's history marked by the reality of the emergence of undisputed Chinese ascendancy on the plateau and the crystallization of a radically different local pattern of relationships based on a profoundly altered alignment of socio-political forces. Indeed, the situation in Tibet today looms as a drastic break with the past, a rift unlikely ever to be healed, for the process thus begun appears irreversible and clearly portends the future course the country seems fated to traverse, barring unforeseeable adverse developments.

As of the moment, the crucial element in the picture rests in the political downfall of the mainstays of the old order, not in the administrative purge which accompanied the suppression of the uprising, but through the concerted drive since to eliminate the power and influence of certain classes closely associated with the fabric of the *ancien régime* and liquidate the classes themselves as identifiable categories each formally enjoying distinct status and the prerogatives duly

attached thereto. The native nobility has already succumbed to this fate. To be sure, single representatives of this group still occupy nominally high positions in the regional government, as a price of their collaboration with the Communist Chinese authorities, but the feudal lords no longer constitute a privileged core of individuals, membership in which was determined by birth alone (or, on rare occasion, came in recompense for special services). Their traditional preferential rights have for the most part been cancelled and their various titles and ranks abolished, and they themselves downgraded to the level of ordinary citizens; offices which in the past had belonged to them as a matter of course, along with the prestige and remuneration which an official post always bestowed, have either disappeared or are presently assigned on a different basis.

Economically, they have fared just as badly. Their claim to support from the public treasury by deed of service to the Crown, actual or symbolical, has, needless to say, vanished together with the disappearance of the monarchy. Their slaves have been freed and their serfs emancipated, so they cannot depend for their livelihood on income derived from exploitation of this bonded labor. And, they also soon saw themselves deprived of another source of wealth – land – most of which fell under the agrarian reform scheme and found itself subjected to expropriation and distribution. True, those manorial barons who had not participated in the anti-Chinese revolt received compensation for their surplus holdings, but unredeemable bonds, even if interest-bearing, provided a poor substitute for freely convertible property and what cash they derived from the sorry transaction now meant very little too for lack of reinvestment outlets for private capital. Presumably, former owners of estates could still afford a relatively high standard of living since their liquid funds were left untouched and the government allegedly paid the full value of whatever they had to surrender and, moreover, each family retained possession of a farm-plot supposedly sufficient for its sustenance that it had to tend itself. But, this was a far cry from their old affluence and, anyway, the money would not last forever and could only be spent, since one could not plow it back into a profit-returning enterprise. What is worse, wealth did not connote social power anymore and brought no permanent tangible advantages in terms of superior status, authority or prestige.

As a recognized factor in the public realm, then, the nobility

virtually stands today on the verge of extinction. Its individual representatives may privately still command a modicum of influence among their former tenants and servants by virtue of ingrained habit or personal ascendancy. As an acknowledged political force, however, the secular lords have reached a dead-end and as a social phenomenon they undoubtedly will soon follow suit, leaving the Tibetan community bereft of one of its main links with the historical past in which they had fulfilled the role of one of the key pillars of the official edifice. In our time, the Tibetan national organization might have looked altogether archaic to outsiders, its leadership, including the lay peerage, an anachronism, but all evidence points to the conclusion that both could have managed to survive for quite a while yet if left to their own devices. The Chinese did not merely hasten here a trend already well on its way, but rather set the whole destructive process in motion, with the results noted above.

Tibet's secular aristocracy may have suffered total defeat at the hands of the Chinese, but its clerical counterpart, though badly mauled, has managed to emerge from the fray in somewhat better shape, judged in absolute not in relative terms. That is, proportionately the Church lost even more in every respect than the lay nobility, but, because it started with so much more, it still ended up ahead of the latter. The reasons for the clergy's superior ability to absorb punishment are many. In the first place, the ecclesiastical branch has always shown more internal cohesion than its civil rival over whom it had the advantage of a formal hierarchical framework, a semblance of central direction, and ideological solidarity cemented by the bonds of religious unity. This is not to say that the monastic brotherhood never fell prey to factionalism, intense personal quarrels, or inter-institutional strife, for it did and quite frequently, for that matter. Nevertheless, throughout it all, the Church remained an ideal whole, generally succeeded in recovering from the turmoil and reinstating inner harmony and, regardless of its private problems, always tried to present to the outer world a front unmarred by dissension. The priestly class knew its share of domestic disagreement, but always tried to close ranks in the face of an external threat, which did not hold true of the lay barons.

Less atomized than the secular nobility, enjoying greater inward consistency as a collective organism and greater unity of interest, the Church was simply better equipped to withstand outside pressures. Besides, it could draw on a much larger reservoir of political power,

authority and wealth as well, so that even on a worldly level it could muster more strength by far than the lay princes. Finally, its roots sank deeper into the fabric of the Tibetan community. The civil peers commanded obedience by custom, by virtue of possession of extensive estates and title to the peasantry settled on these lands, by grant of official rank – prosaic symbols of man-made values, conferring social ascendancy that rested on a human basis that was neither sacrosanct nor otherwise immune from scrutiny and criticism. As against that, the clergy could drape itself in the mantle of holy *imprimatur* and, as spokesman for heaven's will, effectively place itself beyond ordinary human ken and control. The sources of its authority transcended mortal knowledge; its behavior stood above judgment by the uninitiated; its undisputed monopoly as interpreter of the divine laws of the universe and their binding implications for the conduct of prince and commoner alike covered all its actions with a special mystery impenetrable to those not versed in the rites, putting the entire spectrum of its business, whether sacred or profane, equally beyond social sanction and completely insulating its policies from outside interference. Thus, the hold the Church gained over the Tibetan mind was, by its very nature, incomparably more durable, more invincible, more subtle and pervasive than that exercised by its secular opposites, and it used this fact to good advantage to accumulate such riches and other attributes of vulgar success, which it did not hesitate to parade ostentatiously, as to surpass its nearest competitors by a wide margin in this field too.

And yet, despite it all, the Church in Tibet today is but a shadow of its former self. To a great extent, of course, its downfall stems, purely and simply, from the enemy's superior force. In the east, where religious centers became involved or fell under suspicion of being compromised in the sporadic local uprisings against the Chinese, monasteries and temples were repeatedly bombed and gutted, sometimes with bad loss of life, and their surviving inmates either took to the hills or were dispersed by the P.L.A. or taken prisoner and pressed into labor service. Here, the ecclesiastical establishment suffered severely, was physically reduced to impotence, its buildings damaged or razed, its personnel scattered to the four winds, its treasuries looted. Elsewhere on the highland, however, the countryside at first witnessed little fighting on any significant scale and so the Church was spared the destruction that had taken such a heavy toll

of its resources in Kham and the adjacent areas. At least, prior to 1959, this portion of it managed to weather the storm, for after the abortive Lhasa uprising it no longer could avert the blow either. Indeed, the principal monasteries in the vicinity of the capital fell victim of armed repression at once for their part in the anti-Chinese outbreak. Others, which for one reason or another earned the displeasure of Peking's representatives were similarly dealt with later, as part of the concerted campaign against leading partisans and supporters of the previous regime and against its chief institutional mainstays. In short, the formal machinery of the clerical empire was soon smashed by brute strength; its organizational backbone has snapped under this overwhelming pressure. Its political star has set and its erstwhile absolute supremacy has evaporated in the face of Chinese military might, an altogether unwilling abdication brought on solely by the naked sword or the spectre thereof, but from a practical standpoint just as conclusive for all that.

Since then, the plans to curtail even further the Church's power have proceeded apace. Thus, in April, 1960, in his report to the 4th plenary session of the Preparatory Committee, the Panchen Lama emphasized that "a system of democratic management with the participation of rank and file Lamas had been instituted in the monasteries after feudal privileges and exploitation had been abolished." And, a year later, speaking before the Permanent Committee he reiterated that "the policy of freedom for religious belief was carried out more thoroughly following the democratic reform which abolished all feudal privileges and feudal exploitation in the temples and monasteries." As he had also assured the Preparatory Committee a few weeks earlier, "in the monasteries a '3-anti' movement against rebellion, feudal prerogatives, feudal exploitation and oppression systems had been carried out, democratic management practiced, and the political rights and the rights of religious freedom of the monks and nuns safeguarded." The Panchen Lama's own headquarters, the Tashilunpo monastery, did not escape these changes and duly staged a drive to "set up a democratic management committee." By May, 1961, the campaign had progressed sufficiently for the representative of the Central People's Government in Tibet to announce that:

Panchen Erdeni put forward five points for the work of the monasteries during the democratic reform. They are: the monasteries must give up exploitation; the monasteries must carry out democratic administration; the

monasteries must adhere to government laws and regulations and observe the Constitution of the People's Republic of China; the monasteries must undertake production; the government will guarantee the livelihood of the old and young lamas and professional reciters of the sutra. These five points are excellent and have been carried out step by step in the work of the monasteries.¹

Such is the situation on this front at present. In many respects, what happened in Tibet reminds one of the course taken by events in Mongolia in the years immediately following the revolution there in 1921, for the social structure of the two regions had once been almost identical and in the two cases the nature of the cataclysm was quite alike. What subsequently developed in Mongolia, then, may well cast a light on what can be expected to occur in the similar conditions obtaining today in Tibet. In both instances, it should be noted, the new regime began by using its monopoly of armed force to deal the religious establishment a physical blow from which it would be hard put to recover: destruction of monasteries, dispersal of their personnel, arrests, deportations, closures of temples liquidated in no time part of the Church's nation-wide organization. That portion which remained stood thoroughly cowed by the example of the treatment meted out to the other half, its spirit of resistance was left broken, and the victor emerged from the fracas having established beyond doubt the primacy of his will and the legitimacy of his policies. A brief interlude of overt appeal, often indiscriminate in its practical manifestation, to naked military power thus served to answer the basic question as to who was master of the current scene.

This key issue having been settled on both occasions in favor of the challenger, as it were, the loser now found himself at the latter's tender mercy, facing a future full of dark prospects. Henceforth, every new day would bring fresh restrictions, crippling regulations, constant surveillance, a process of slow erosion and strangulation that could only end in the complete atrophy of the object's freedom of action and its final demise as an independent body. As shown by the recent sequence of events in Tibet, the Chinese are well on their way toward achieving that goal. "Democratic management reform" has eliminated the traditional leadership in the monasteries and substituted for it creatures of the new regime, upstarts who owe their position to the

¹ SCMP, No. 2250, May 4, 1960, p. 17; No. 2489, May 4, 1961, p. 30; No. 2495, May 12, 1961, p. 26; No. 2533, July 10, 1961, p. 27. Chang Ching-wu, "On Correct Implementation of the Party's Policies and Measures for Democratic Reform in Tibet," *Jen-min jih-pao*, May 25, 1962.

Chinese alone and will serve them as pliant tools or be purged in turn without any trouble, since they enjoy neither real status nor personal following. Land confiscation and distribution, the emancipation of serfs and slaves, have deprived the Church of its permanent economic base. Its treasures that have somehow escaped the looting are useless, since they cannot be realized, and what can be converted by sale to the State represents a dwindling reserve that will soon be consumed. Its power of taxation is gone, as is too its ancient right to claim subsidy from the government in amounts such as it saw fit to demand and subject only to its discretionary sense of propriety.

In short, the clergy has become dependent on the Chinese authorities for its very livelihood. And, while Peking has pledged its word to continue granting the ecclesiastical branch such support as it deems necessary for the Church's sustenance, the funds forthcoming under this arrangement, besides being subject to the passing whims of the Chinese, will never match the vast wealth the monasteries could formerly command at a moment's notice. Not only then has the Church been shorn of its own sources of income and turned into a poor relative maintained by outside generosity, but there is no assurance whatever how long even these hand-outs will continue. Indeed, if the past is any guide in this matter, the perspective here looks very dim. With the monastic ranks depleted as never before, the sums assigned by Peking for expenditure for religious purposes will, at best, allow for marginal subsistence of the existing staff, but definitely will not permit the Church to rebuild its manpower pool to its erstwhile strength. Moreover, the allocations can safely be expected gradually to diminish as part of the standard practice of systematic squeezing out or starving out which in a case of this sort is used to bring the process to a close. Atheistic agitation among the younger generation of priests is counted upon to disenchant them with their vocation, hasten their departure from the cloister and bring about their rapid reintegration in the community's "production cycle." Niggardly subsidies, increasingly so, aim, for their part, at making daily life in the monasteries so poor and unattractive as to encourage the inmates to seek to improve their lot by repairing elsewhere, leaving behind only the old, the sick and the incapacitated, depriving the institutions of cult of young blood and thus condemning them to slow extinction, and, in the meantime, divesting them of all charm for the population at large as a means of attaining better life on this earth which in the

past was responsible for so much of their success in recruiting candidates for a career in the holy orders.

While the mechanics of the Church's downfall as a formal organization offer little mystery, the issue of the present and the future of religion as an ideal separate from the fate of its self-appointed servants poses some difficult questions. Given the universally acknowledged phenomenon of the pervasiveness of the religious ethos in the existence of the ordinary Tibetan prior to the coming of the Chinese, the failure of the masses to rally to the defense of their beleaguered clergy against an impious foreigner itself raises a perplexing problem. The tentative answer to all this lies, perhaps, in the peculiar quality of the Lamaist Church and its creed, to wit, in the extreme secularization of both. Indeed, much of the trouble which the clerical branch experienced in times of adversity in getting the masses to identify themselves with its woes stems from the fact that the Church as a socio-political machine, distinct from its role as interpreter of the scriptures, had in that capacity forfeited most of its claim to the population's loyalty. As the chief pillar of the established regime, if not the heart of it, the ecclesiastical empire fully benefited from its organic association with the prevailing order and, in so doing, had left itself wide open to the play of political passions. Religion may have permeated every aspect of Tibetan life, but the average Tibetan could, and did, differentiate between faith and the Church as purveyor thereof, and the Church as a mundane hierarchy actuated by vulgar aspirations and operating in the most devious ways. It is this dimension of the Church's activity which in the end proved its undoing: all too many of its spokesmen and members had over the years appeared in the ostentatious role of privileged, pampered, capricious, power-hungry, unscrupulous men of the world for the public image of the Church to have remained untarnished throughout and for much of its moral authority abroad not to have evaporated through the dissipation of its foremost representatives.

To a degree, the faith preached by the Lamaist Church took on some of the attributes of its servants and fell heir to their afflictions. Altogether too much of country's official cult consisted of mimicry and empty ritualism, meaningless incantations learned by rote, superstitious nonsense and the like. This is not to say that the average Tibetan refused to subscribe to this congeries of ignorance and quackery put to selfish use by an illiterate horde of monks, for he

definitely did. It is to suggest, however, that this agglomeration of magical prescriptions on how to allay the gods and ward off the demons and of exhortations to pay homage to the true Church and support it in the style to which it was accustomed lacked the intellectual coefficient to sustain critical scrutiny. A religion so unsophisticated, so wedded to the phenomena of the material world, operating at such a low level of abstraction presented as easy target for refutation. The Chinese, armed with an elaborate theory of their own, found it of little use to them in this undertaking, given the chasm separating their way of thinking from the Tibetan outlook which rendered one side's set of values completely irrelevant to the other's and, in fact, quite un-understandable. But, common sense and improvised reasoning were enough for the task at hand. The old religion was by no means defeated outright, but the Chinese did succeed in exploiting its numerous weaknesses and its vulnerability to disparage it, to parade its fallacies and deride and ridicule its naiveté, to denounce it and cast disrepute on it and those devoted to its propagation. What impact this had on the ordinary Tibetan is hard to say precisely, but some there undoubtedly was – again enough to keep him neutral before the spectacle of the clergy in distress or to reenforce his latent feeling of alienation from the Church as an institution enough to preserve his impartiality in the contest between the formerly omnipotent monasteries and a sacrilegious invader, that much is certain.

One very practical reason why the run-of-the-mill Tibetan failed to rush to the aid of his ecclesiastical compatriot hinges on the factor of Chinese ability during this crucial period to convey the impression that the interests of the two groups did not coincide. In short, while attacking the clerical faction Peking consciously strove to maintain good relations with the peasant class so as to disassociate it from the strife and prevent the coagulation of the various elements into a powerful united force. Its success on this score deserves much of the credit for its ultimate triumph in the struggle. The same can be said of the situation today as regards relations between the underground resistance movement and the general population. In effect, as things here now stand, the mass of the Tibetan people do not, as far as can be ascertained, represent a ready reservoir of recruits for the guerrilla element simply because they have no cause to feel strongly disgruntled with the Chinese authorities or, at least, to be disaffected to such a point. As a result of the land reforms and companion

measures, the villager has acquired title to a farm-plot and has nominally entered into possession of his own parcel of soil. True, he has had to pay a price for that – submission to a plethora of regulations issued by the various organs installed by the Chinese and membership in assorted cooperative ventures which have told him what to do and how and when to do it. However, this process has not, it would seem, been pushed yet to the extreme where the initial gains turn into empty promises and where satisfaction with the personal benefits derived from the new policies gives place to disillusionment and frustration born of the realization that these improvements had proved ephemeral and the whole scheme merely an overture to quite a different phase of development. What the post-revolt “democratic campaign” bestowed on the Tibetan commoner in the form of emancipation from serfdom, grant of land deeds, cancellation of debts, and the like, has not up till now been repealed by forced transition to a “higher stage of agricultural production” marked by collective ownership and the submersion of private rights.

It has often been written, both by foreign travellers and educated Tibetans, that the Tibetans were a remarkably happy people before the advent of the Chinese, inferring that the traditional communal and political system on the plateau suited everyone fine, had no enemies to speak of, and, by and large, commanded the undivided loyalty of citizens in all walks of life. Undoubtedly, there was much truth in the observation. But, as regards the average inhabitant of Tibet, one may well speculate whether his cheerful countenance bespoke less of a genuine conviction that he faced the best of all possible worlds than of a patient resignation and tolerant acceptance of his fate. It seems extremely improbable that the lower class Tibetan, no matter how gullible or ignorant, should not have occasionally wondered at his lot or silently resented the social inequities so evident all around him, without knowing how to articulate his suspicions and grievances. One can concede that the ordinary Tibetan was happy in these terms, that is, that he mutely shouldered his burden, appeared to believe that such was the natural order of things and showed no outward signs of revolt. However, this passive and stoical attitude ought not to be confused with positive attachment for the existing state of affairs such as would breed automatic revulsion against any change in the established pattern. The rank-and-file Tibetan may not have known enough to question his environment or perhaps did

not care about worldly matters sufficiently to do so, expecting recompense in the hereafter, but this does not mean that he was completely blind to the possibility that things might be otherwise on the mortal scene too or always deaf to blandishments of immediate material improvement.

Passionate loyalty for the past, then, was not a factor militating against the idea of reform as such. What is more, to reach this conclusion, one need not accept the current Communist Chinese efforts to paint a picture of old Tibet as a record of unrelieved brutality, inhuman exploitation, medieval torture chambers, and chattel slavery. To be sure, individual estate owners and their hired managers were guilty of abuses and excesses *vis-à-vis* their servants and tenants, but these constituted exceptions and not the rule. Still, conditions were bad enough even without taking into account these extreme cases, and the assurances of the Chinese to bring amelioration into the lives of their sorely beset native brethren did not encounter an altogether unsympathetic audience. Of course, Peking's reforms, no matter how enticing in theory, in practice came accompanied by increased regimentation in all spheres of activity, a factor which detracted from their attractiveness. On the other hand, the habit of obedience was deeply ingrained in the native peasantry, so that the Chinese practice of forever issuing directives from above did not in itself arouse violent antipathy. It may even plausibly be argued that where such control is couched in general, impersonal form and sets tasks in the hallowed name of the nation or the people, it is very likely to spark less resentment than orders stemming from the private whims of some overlord and designed to further his own enrichment.

This is not to imply that the Tibetan commoner today is ecstatically happy with his lot and that he harbors no reservations regarding the new order – that thesis sounds too unrealistic, constant Communist Chinese contentions to the contrary notwithstanding. He does, however, seem to be appreciably better off in terms of enhanced civil rights, public status, certain personal attributes, access to new opportunities. In respect to material improvements, the picture is mixed and the path of progression uneven, but, on balance, the results are positive here too. On the whole, it is probably safe to say that the average Tibetan is now modestly ahead of where he formerly was, judged not by concrete items alone but by intangible commodities as well. Hence, it would be a grave mistake to view the mass of the native population

as actively hostile to the present authorities or only waiting for an occasion to rise in arms against the hated occupation army. The prevalent spirit still strikes the objective observer as one of neutrality: the Tibetan rustic is not yet completely sold on the benefits of the latest regime; neither is he convinced of its evilness; so far his mind is not made up. In the meantime, he and his ilk will not budge one way or the other, preferring to wait and see what these current experiments hide in store for them and until then refusing to flock in droves to the ranks of the guerrilla bands or rush in the opposite direction.

The Chinese probably think it just as well. Their primary concern as of the moment is not to beguile the ordinary Tibetan into joining the Communist Party and becoming a militant disciple, but rather to prevent him only from identifying himself with the organized opposition and thus deny the latter grass-roots support. To this day, there exists in Tibet an underground movement waging irregular warfare against the Chinese garrison. For the most part, it consists of scattered pockets of guerillas operating from mountain bases, using hit-and-run tactics against small Chinese detachments, convoys, and isolated posts. Tribesmen constitute the bulk of the membership, but other elements disenchanted with Chinese rule have also chosen this path. The total number of persons involved remains small and some unfortunate private experience has led each of them to take this desperate course. By no means, then, is this a mass manifestation or even an off-shoot of a widespread sentiment, but a rather specialized venture resting on a narrow social and political base, limited in internal composition and outward appeal.

Militarily, this force showed itself capable of minor offensive action against units of the P.L.A. Its hope, however, always lay not in sporadic sallies against the Chinese, but in the expectation that an early general uprising would allow these nuclei of seasoned troops to descend into the plains and spearhead the drive to expel the Chinese from the plateau. Plans for the final reckoning were predicated on this eventuality, with the guerrillas simply holding themselves in reserve for that contingency, nursing their strength for the last battle and meanwhile keeping fit by occasional raids against the enemy. No thought was given as to what was to be done if the opportunity to settle matters with the Chinese for good should not soon materialize and yet this is precisely the quandary in which the rebels now find themselves.

Continued underground resistance to the established authorities when it lacks prospects of success quickly becomes a losing proposition which brings diminishing returns. As hopes of proximate victory fade, guerrilla bands turn into a liability for the rest of the population, rapidly forfeiting what sympathy they once met with in its midst. Their levies in supplies and men are increasingly seen as an irksome burden; their presence in the vicinity is rendered more and more unwelcome for it triggers reprisals by government troops and the blows sometimes fall indiscriminately to include the by-standers too. In the face of the growing sullenness of their unwarlike compatriots, the raiders are nevertheless forced to insist on the satisfaction of their material needs, thus setting off a self-defeating spiral of mutual recrimination. As the gap widens, the resistance faces a crucial choice: to persist regardless of the improbability of winning the fight and risk ending up as an assortment of bandit gangs living off the land and their peaceful countrymen, hindering constructive efforts to develop the area and striking out blindly at the mainstays of law and order, as so many enterprises of the sort have done in the past; or, to disband and withdraw piecemeal across the frontier or seek pardon and attempt to reintegrate into the community.

Of course, where the adversary commits the deadly mistake of antagonizing the mass of the population before all foci of guerrilla warfare are extinguished, that cross-roads is never reached. Not only does the underground then feed on popular discontent, replenishing its ranks from among those the regime managed so short-sightedly to push away from itself, but the whole atmosphere is suddenly propitious for counter-action, with the distinct possibility of fanning the flames into a general conflagration. This is precisely the trap the Chinese were careful to avoid and have so far succeeded in not stumbling into. Indeed, the relatively moderate pace of the reform campaign so far pursued by Peking on the plateau reflects this very awareness. What has been done here until now shows a marked class character, in the sense that those groups which dogma visualized as the historical enemy were attacked and their political power emasculated, but without venturing to the next step of unilaterally herding the theoretical ally, the proletariat, further onto the path of supposed progress, meantime riding roughshod over its true desires. The Chinese on the highland have, in other words, stopped short of introducing the more advanced agrarian policies which ideology called

for, but which as a rule generated tension among the peasantry, could produce trouble and cause unforeseen repercussions, as long as the country was not altogether pacified. By so doing, they effectively cut the ground from underneath the feet of the resistance movement which betrays signs of already having reached the stage of decomposition: reports of guerrilla activity have become rare and even at the time of the late large-scale Chinese thrust across the Himalayas into northern India no noticeable action materialized in the rear of the Chinese army, though one could not wish for a better moment to launch such an offensive.

Unfinished business with the roving bands of tribesmen furnished one of the reasons for the Chinese decision to proceed circumspectly with the implementation of local reform schemes. The touchy diplomatic situation on this exposed remote land perimeter provided another. A third was simply the fact that the vocal cry of reform had to a great extent simply served as a useful, and inexpensive, ploy to embarrass the old regime and curry favor with potential friends among the restive native elements. Now that this consideration no longer obtained, the rationale for the artificially engineered urgency disappeared with it and everyone reverted to a more normal tone in discussing prospective changes. Lastly, economic setbacks in China proper have since cooled off some of the erstwhile unbridled enthusiasm for social experimentation and slowed down the tempo of development even in those sectors not affected by theoretical second-thoughts just as a consequence of ensuing physical shortages and like shortcomings.

This is not to say that Peking has abandoned its plans to carry out radical reforms in the area, but merely that Chinese policy on the plateau is today passing through a phase of "entrenchment." The initiative will be revived once the difficulties ease up a bit, but right now the Chinese are taking stock of what has been accomplished so far, improving on it, ironing out wrinkles,¹ consolidating their position, and drafting blueprints for the future. Construction continues; com-

¹ In the above article by Chang Ching-wu, for instance, he mentions in connection with the land confiscation and distribution program that "in the course of the reform, while the overwhelming majority of cadres were able to appreciate and carry out the Party policies fully and seriously, there had once been a small number of cadres who failed to arrive at an all-round understanding of the Party policy of 'buying out'. The Party educated them on this policy, and explained to them the necessity and possibility of enforcing the 'buying out' policy in the democratic reform in Tibet. As a result, this small number of cadres had since raised their ideological understanding, and promptly corrected their shortcoming in work."

munications expand, designed to turn the region into an effective forepost of Chinese power on the periphery of south Asia; the search for natural resources goes on for the day where modern methods will permit their commercial exploitation; and the influx of Chinese has resumed. The schedule of execution has been revised, deadlines postponed, but the long-range objectives remain unchanged. From the start, the regime officially indicated, for instance, that the commune project would not be tried in Tibet, – as yet, – although it tendered no such assurances for the future and so left the door ajar for a possible subsequent reversal on this point, lest the program be terminated in China itself by then. And, through thick and thin the Communist Party has been busily building up its local organization in preparation for the moment when it will receive the signal to redouble its efforts to draw the troublesome province completely into the fold. Progress in this field has not been spectacular, but the authorities claim they have steadily forged ahead, so that, at last report, “more than 1,000 cadres of Tibetan nationality in the region have been admitted to the Party and over 2,000 to the Young Communist League. More than 100 Party branches and more than 300 League branches have been set up in the rural areas. The number of cadres of Tibetan nationality is growing rapidly.”¹

Actually, the pause means precious little. Tibet today lies firmly within Communist China’s sphere of jurisdiction. No insuperable barriers stand in the way of total Chinese assimilation of the Tibetan nation. The fate of the old system seems indelibly sealed; the timetable for consummating the transformation of the region in the image of the rest of the Chinese polity hereafter hinges on Chinese calculations dictated essentially by extraneous domestic considerations and foreign policy expectations and not by concessionary recognition of the

¹ *Jen-min jih-pao*, May 25, 1962. *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, Vol. 4, No. 9, p. 58 (September, 1961), claimed that “last year . . . over a thousand in Tibet” joined the Communist Party of China. Exactly the same numbers as those cited by Chang Ching-wu, however, are reported as having been produced by Fan Ming, Secretary of the Chinese Communist party’s Tibet Work Committee as far back as late 1957, F. Moraes, *The Revolt in Tibet*, p. 75. Either the statistics given by Chang Ching-wu represent new increments to the Party’s ranks and not its total effectives, with the added possibility that of the 1,000 new members mentioned by *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, only a few were of Tibetan origin and the rest local Chinese settlers, soldiers and cadres; or, if Chang Ching-wu’s figures are a total count and represent fresh membership, then all the Tibetans recruited to the Party prior to 1959 either fled or resigned or were purged from its ranks during the revolt, and the Party had to start all over after the failure of the uprising. Available data does not permit to determine which of these alternatives is the right one.

singularity of local conditions. The country's salvation by its own unaided efforts looks like an impossible feat. Either massive assistance from the outside would be required to turn the tide, break the Chinese grip and liberate the land, or an internal collapse of the Communist Chinese regime at home could perhaps pave the way for throwing off Han domination.

Else the Tibetans will have to share the fate of China's millions and since both of the above contingencies have a poor chance of materializing in the predictable future, barring unforeseen accidents of improbable magnitude, it appears that such will be the inevitable outcome of the current trend. One of these days, before too long, the area will accede to fully autonomous status and the Preparatory Committee will then be redesignated in keeping with its new role, none of which will make an iota of practical difference in the territory's administration. Some of the outward vestiges of the ancient theocratic order might be allowed to linger for a spell, shorn of substance and meaning. Again, just as in Mongolia after 1921, where the authority of the chief Living Buddha of Urga was permitted to exist, albeit in thoroughly emasculated form, only until the Khutukhtu's death, after which no fresh incarnation was tolerated, so the spiritual leadership of the present head of the Tibetan ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Panchen Lama, will most probably be preserved temporarily, only to vanish by default upon his earthly passing. When that occurs, Tibet's last link with the past will have been severed, but, if so, it will represent hardly more than a belated formality, a gesture merely underscoring the realities of a situation acknowledged by all and which no amount of specious official play-acting could ever mask. Sad to say, odds are this is precisely what will happen and how the story will end.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE: PEKING-LHASA-NEW DELHI

Recent outbreaks of violence in Tibet and northern India have once again drawn world attention to these remote, but strategically important, spots on the surface of the globe. Yet, actually these incidents cannot be termed particularly novel or entirely unexpected occurrences. They come as an almost inexorable culmination to a long series of political, diplomatic and military conflicts which have during the last ten years frequently embittered relations between Peking, Lhasa and New Delhi, and which were caused, primarily, by the incompatibility of the three capitals' aims and desires in an area where their spheres of influence and interest overlapped. In order to understand the current crisis, therefore, one must study the historical antecedents of the present problem, as well as the more nearly contemporary circumstances in which Red China has emerged as the dominant Power on the Tibetan highland and as a rival of India for supremacy over other vast tracts of territory along their mutual frontier.

The immediate background for today's situation is provided by the dramatic events of a decade ago.¹ In 1949, when it became evident that the days of the Chiang Kai-shek régime were numbered – at least in so far as its rule on the mainland was concerned – the native authorities in Lhasa decided that the moment was ripe for divorcing themselves from the internecine strife between China's two political factions. Chiang's public representative in the Tibetan capital was ceremoniously escorted out of Lhasa, along with his official retinue, and the Regency formally proclaimed Tibet's independence. Various missions were immediately got ready and some actually sent to the

¹ For the events leading to the re-imposition of Chinese *de facto* and *de jure* authority over Tibet in 1951 and Peking's early policies in the region, see Levi, "Tibet under Chinese Communist Rule," *loc. cit.*, pp. 1-9.

outside world, but no really serious efforts were made to establish permanent contacts with other states. Shortly thereafter the triumphant Chinese Communists publicly made the traditional claim of all Chinese governments that Tibet was an integral part of China. The 1949 declaration of Tibet's independence was denounced by Peking as an illegal gesture fomented by foreign imperialist forces, the Red régime insisting instead that both the Chinese and the Tibetan peoples were anxiously awaiting the region's "Liberation" from oppressive colonialism and reactionary exploitation. This "liberation," Radio Peking made clear, would be effected very shortly, with the use of the might of the People's Liberation Army, if need be.

In 1950, carrying out its avowed intention, the Central Government dispatched large contingents of troops into the eastern and north-eastern portions of the plateau, at the same time keeping up an intensive barrage of propaganda exhorting the Tibetan masses to rise and assist the P.L.A. in its "liberation campaign" and to rejoin the fraternal family of China's nationalities. Lhasa's plans to oppose the Chinese invasion by force of arms proved completely ineffectual; an attempted appeal by the Tibetans to the United Nations was discreetly shelved;¹ and various missions which were to solicit outside assistance in arms and matériel either never left the plateau or were stranded in India. The Dalai Lama and his personal entourage fled to Yatung, on the Tibetan-Indian border. There they were poised to resume their flight further south at a moment's notice, but also torn by uncertainty about their best course in view of the heavy pressure exerted by influential sections of the Tibetan hierarchy (notably the leaders of the Lamaist Church) favoring a peaceful settlement of all differences with the Chinese and an acceptance of Peking's claim to suzerainty over the region.

During these developments the outside world either ignored Tibet's plight or confined itself to sparse and lukewarm indications of sympathy. This equanimity of world opinion in the presence of a clear breach of the peace must chiefly be explained by the fact that Tibet still remained, by and large, a mysterious *terra incognita* and that no foreign government had much knowledge of or material commitment in the area. Moreover, direct interference by third parties was difficult since Chinese suzerainty over the region had long been openly or tacitly

¹ "Tibet's Appeal to the United Nations Against Chinese Aggression," *United Nations Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 9, pp. 675-676, (December 15, 1950).

acknowledged by most Foreign Offices, this fiction having been conveniently maintained even when Chinese control over the highland was almost nonexistent. Nor, it should be added, did the Tibetans themselves ever make any serious effort to break out of their traditional isolationism and join the family of nations, as they certainly had ample opportunity to do in the past fifty years.

This strange state of affairs was quite in keeping with historical precedent. Few foreign states had ever shown any serious or long-continued interest in Tibet. At the height of tsarist Russia's expansionist drive around the turn of the century, it is true, some official circles in St. Petersburg nourished territorial ambitions in this remote province of China over which the Manchus exercised no real authority. For a time it seemed that the Russian Imperial Court harbored real intentions of disassociating Tibet from China in the same way in which Mongolia was then being drawn away from Peking. However, the 1907 agreement between London and St. Petersburg effectively blocked Russia's aspirations in Tibet, and Russian infiltration, once stopped, was never resumed, either before or after the Bolshevik revolution.

In fact, the only European Power which was ever able to wield any substantial influence and authority in Tibet was Great Britain in her capacity as mistress of India. For a number of years England's interests on the plateau were judiciously extended and protected through the efforts of leading members of her India service who, often on their own initiative, gave support to the reigning Dalai Lama's rule, especially against various Chinese encroachments. Thus, they gradually gained considerable personal ascendancy over the local potentates, consolidating their hold by means of concessions and privileges extorted (by force of British arms if necessary) from both the Tibetan and the Chinese authorities. The latter included the right to station military garrisons at certain strategic points along the main commercial arteries from India or Nepal to Lhasa, the permission to install various communication facilities and operate a network of roadhouses, and the privilege of trading with the Tibetans directly without having to proceed first through the intermediary of the Imperial Manchu Court.

The political situation prevailing along the Indian-Tibetan Chinese border in modern times may therefore be described as follows: Russia had ambitions in the area, but these had been largely abandoned under pressure from London; the British were firmly established in India and had extended their influence into Tibet where they obtained for

themselves an undisputed most-favored-nation position; nominally, Chinese suzerainty over the plateau continued to be acknowledged by all concerned, but in fact the British government tolerated only a minimum manifestation of Chinese authority. The net result was a balance-of-power situation in Asia's heartland. A precarious equilibrium of force and influence was made possible by the presence of British arms and the Crown's willingness to use them to prevent any encroachment on the *status quo*, and was dependent on the preservation of China's lack of power to enforce her recognized sovereign rights over the highland. Tibet thus constituted a neutral buffer zone. Formally a part of the Chinese Empire, she was in fact completely independent of Peking and ruled by her own local theocratic government. She could depend on the military and political power of the Viceroy of India for protection from any external threat to her existence or domestic authority.¹

When, following World War II, Great Britain was forced to grant independence to her Indian possessions, the traditional British policy *vis-à-vis* Tibet was inherited by the new Indian government which, however, lacked both the military strength and the political inclination to practice the overt power politics so indispensable for the successful implementation of this policy. Nevertheless, for a short while, India and Nepal continued to operate the facilities formerly owned by the Crown at important points of the highland. They also continued to show strong interest in political developments in the region partly because of the religious, cultural and ethnic affinities between their own and the Tibetan people, but especially for economic and military reasons.

The Indian government was vitally concerned about the Communist Chinese "liberation" drive against Tibet in 1950. A perturbed Nehru addressed a series of diplomatic notes to Peking tactfully deploring the Red régime's resort to armed force and urgently appealing to Mao to find an amicable way to settle his differences with the Tibetan theocracy. This expression of interest, however, met with the curtest rebuff from Red China. Chou En-lai pointedly informed New Delhi

¹ A historical and legal survey of Tibet's position in international affairs is found in C. H. Alexandrowicz-Alexander, "The Legal Position of Tibet," *loc. cit.*, pp. 265-274; Tieh-Tseng Li, "The Legal Position of Tibet," *loc. cit.*, pp. 394-404, and *idem*, *The Historical Status of Tibet*.

For an analysis of Tibet's record from a Soviet point of view, see V. P. Leontiev, *Inostrannaya ekspansiya v Tibete, 1888-1919gg.*

that Tibet was, and had always been, an integral part of the Chinese state, that this was an exclusively domestic dispute, and that India was meddling in a matter which was beyond her proper jurisdiction, thereby giving encouragement to certain "reactionary" Tibetan circles in their futile resistance to China's lawful rights.¹ The exchange of official communications proved completely fruitless. The steady advance of the Chinese troops into Tibet soon brought about the capitulation of the Dalai Lama's régime and the conclusion, on May 27, 1951, of the fateful so-called Treaty on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet.²

Much of the present controversy and bloodshed in Tibet and, indirectly, in northern India can be traced to the document signed and sealed in Peking in 1951. Red China's present position on the plateau and the current Sino-Indian differences with regard to the highland to a great extent stem from Peking's manner of interpreting and implementing the provisions of the accord. By the terms of the treaty the Dalai Lama's government acknowledged that Tibet was part of China, consented to entrust foreign relations and defense to the Chinese authorities, agreed to the establishment of a Military Area Headquarters of the P.L.A. and a military-administrative committee on the plateau, acquiesced in principle to a proposed program of future socio-economic reforms in the region, and promised loyally to aid the Chinese in freeing Tibet from all imperialist influences. In return, the Central Government undertook to preserve the existing administrative system in Tibet, granted the area "regional autonomy" within the Chinese state, and bound itself not to modify in any way the titles, rights, privileges and powers of the traditional Tibetan officialdom, on the sole condition that the Panchen Lama, then residing in exile in China, be reinstated in his lawful birthright.

The Sino-Tibetan agreement in fact withdrew the Tibetan question from the international arena. Formally, of course, the newly defined relationship between Peking and Lhasa closely resembled the traditional pattern of Sino-Tibetan ties, even to the extent of not openly encroaching on the historical rights of third parties such as India and Nepal in the area. To judge from the written language of the document,

¹ Text of Sino-Indian exchange of notes, in *Peoples' China*, December 1, 1950, Supplement, p. 9.

² Text of the 1951 treaty, in *People's China*, June 16, 1951, Supplement, pp. 3-5; *Pravda*, May, 29, 1951,

China had merely succeeded in reaffirming her age-old juridical claim to suzerainty over the area, while Tibet would continue to enjoy internal autonomy as she had in times past. Moreover, the solution had apparently been reached with a minimum use of force, although not without repeated threat of resort to such means. In view of all these factors and seemingly satisfied that China would abide by the terms of the 1951 treaty, Nehru, who had always recognized Chinese claims to sovereignty over Tibet, gave the accord wholehearted approval. Other states found in the document a convenient device for divesting themselves of all responsibility in the matter without flagrantly compromising their moral principles.

In addition to these considerations, the relatively easy reassertion of Peking's sovereignty over Tibet was aided by a number of incidental developments in international diplomacy: the United Nations preoccupation with the Korean war; the geographical remoteness and physical inaccessibility of Tibet; and also, perhaps a general impression that preservation of Tibetan independence at the cost of armed intervention would not materially contribute to the strengthening of Western defenses in Asia. Furthermore, most governments seem to have expected Nehru to take the lead in dealing with Peking, since India was the party most affected by Red China's show of force in Tibet, only to find him first adopting a hands-off policy and then hastening to recognize Tibet's newly defined status.

But the Chinese success in Tibet was also due in part to Peking's timely adoption of, and, for three or four years, genuine adherence to, a policy of moderation and of respect for native customs and socio-economic and political patterns.¹ In the period immediately after the "liberation" and for some time subsequently the presence of the Chinese on the plateau made itself effectively felt without causing undue friction between the Han elements and the local vested interests. In part this phenomenon can be explained by the apparent desire of the Chinese representatives to concentrate on assuring their physical survival in and material means of control over the territory, a preoccupation which did not require any serious intrusion in Tibetan domestic affairs. Large contingents of Chinese troops were gradually

¹ George Ginsburgs and M. Mathos, "Tibet's Administration in the Transition Period, 1951-1954," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 162-177 (1959).

A Communist and fellow-traveler estimate of this initial period is in B. P. Gurevich, *Osvobozhdenie Tibeta*, and Alan Winnington, *Tibet: Record of a Journey*.

moved in. Highways were built at great expenditure of life and labor to provide relatively easy communication on the plateau and with other areas of the mainland and to permit rapid movement of troops and supplies from bases in inner China into Tibet. Finally, decisive control over most aspects of Tibet's economy, including her trade, was achieved within two or three years, with little opposition either from the local officialdom or from the population at large.¹

Even in this initial period, however, the representatives of Peking also attempted to extend their influence and authority into other fields of activity than those directly relating to Chinese military control. These first untroubled years of Sino-Tibetan coexistence were used by the Chinese to lay the groundwork for the moment when their government would move toward a closer social and economic integration of Tibet and China. There were early indications of these intentions. Beginning in 1953, and at a rapidly increasing pace, many innovations were introduced, unobtrusively at first, but more and more openly as time went by, designed primarily to win widespread acceptance for large-scale reforms to aid the underprivileged strata of Tibetan society and thus to facilitate the later transformation of the Tibetan way of life in the image of the rest of China. In addition, Tibetans loyal to the Communist régime and hostile to the Dalai Lama's rule were infiltrated into many departments of Tibetan administration, secular as well as ecclesiastical. Public services were introduced, especially free medical care, with the obvious intention of currying favor with the Tibetan masses. First steps were taken, too, to break the Lamaist Church's heretofore unchallenged monopoly of education by instituting free secular schooling that would eventually satisfy the needs of the entire population.²

Despite the impact of these innovations on the traditional Tibetan mode of living, and the underlying incompatibility of the traditional, feudal, spiritual Tibetan outlook on the world, completely dominated

¹ For a pro-Tibetan and anti-Chinese description of Peking's policies in the period before March 1959, see International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law. Per contra*, and cf. V. Kassis, *Vosemdesyat dnei v Tibete*, pp. 87 et seq.

An essentially pro-Communist, yet discriminatingly critical, survey of Chinese efforts in Tibet by a Hungarian journalist may be found in I. Patkó, *Tibet*; excerpts in English in *East Europe*, Vol. 8, No. 8, pp. 12-19 (1959).

² Ginsburgs and Mathos, *loc. cit.*, and *idem*, "Tibet's Administration during the Interregnum, 1954-1959," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 249-267 (1959), and the documentation therein. M. L. Niemi, "Recent Trends in Chinese Communist Control of Tibet," *loc. cit.*, pp. 104-107.

by religious ethics, and the materialistic, revolutionary and atheistic *Weltanschauung* of the Chinese Communists, Han authorities secured some popular acceptance of their ideas without violently disrupting the pattern of social relations in the area.¹ As a consequence, effective native opposition to the presence of the Chinese did not crystallize in the first years. Now and then, it is true, there were flare-ups of violence and rebellion by nomadic tribes resentful of alien regulations, officials and tax collectors, as well as among sections of the Church and high nobility who were aware of the danger to their privileges if the Chinese encroachments were allowed to continue unprotested. These clashes, however, did not attain critical proportions before 1956 and, by and large, through a judicious blend of armed firmness and administrative tact Peking did manage to consolidate its authority over the plateau during this phase without arousing widespread popular resentment. It even seemed to gain the tacit support of the bulk of the laboring classes for some parts of its program.

To this policy of official moderation, to Peking's apparent willingness to respect Tibetan institutions and customs, and to China's public acceptance of the principle of peaceful coexistence with the neutralist nations of South and Southeast Asia, the credit must be given for the total elimination of all foreign influences from the Tibetan plateau without resort to any overt political pressure or military coercion. Believing that Red China would abide by the 1951 agreement and would preserve the region as an autonomous buffer zone between China and India, Nehru acceded to China's repeated requests for the termination of all the privileges which the Indian government had inherited from its colonial era and which it continued to enjoy after achieving independence. With the conclusion of the Sino-Indian agreement of 1954,² the last important foreign force in Tibet was removed. Indian garrisons in the trading posts were evacuated; trade missions were no longer maintained as of right, but only on the basis of strict reciprocity; a trade agreement for Tibet was signed with the Chinese in Peking, no longer with the Tibetans in Lhasa; and all

¹ Cf. *New York Times*, January 13, 1957, p. 1.

For a Soviet analysis of the administrative reforms in Tibet since the Chinese occupation and the changes in Tibetan social customs since 1951, see, in particular, G. M. Valiakhmetov, *Organy vlasti i upravleniya Tibeta*, pp. 40-41. The Chinese viewpoint may be found in Phuntsogwanggyei, "Tibet Forges Ahead," *People's China*, Vol. 13, July 1, 1954, pp. 15-17.

² The text of the agreement is in *Jen-min jih-pao*, April 13, 1954; Russian translation in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, 1954, No. 1.

installations heretofore owned and occupied by the Indian government were sold and transferred to the Chinese authorities. In 1956 Nepal followed India's example and surrendered what few special privileges she had enjoyed in the areas of Tibet adjoining their common frontier.¹ Thus, for the first time since the British appeared at the foot of the Himalayas, Tibet was wholly and undisputably relegated to China's sovereign dominion. For the first time in modern history, moreover, the Central Government exerted effective control over the area instead of merely being satisfied with an acknowledgment of its juridical claims by the *de facto* independent local government of Tibet.

Increased Chinese pressure on Tibet began to make itself felt in 1955, gaining momentum in 1956 and manifesting itself with varying degrees of intensity throughout the next three years. Having established firm physical control over the territory, Peking apparently decided in 1956 that there was no need to postpone any longer the execution of its real plans, namely the total integration of Tibet into the rest of the Chinese community. This new drive to bring about a "socialist transformation" of Tibetan society took the form of increased pressure by Peking to secure certain changes. Among these were the inauguration of large-scale programs of education and indoctrination under the guidance of imported Han teachers and officials; the encouragement of Tibetan youth to enroll in various institutes for national minorities opened in China proper; an increase in the power of Chinese banks and trading corporations over the local economy; the growing dependence of the native producers, merchants and consumers on Chinese imports and Chinese outlets; and discriminatory fiscal policies designed to increase the popularity of the Central Government among the laboring classes (which these measures favored) while slowly undermining the economic position of the monasteries and the nobility.²

During the same period the officially encouraged influx of Han settlers from China's overcrowded lowlands to the sparsely populated highlands of Tibet assumed threatening proportions. The Chinese authorities, now also much more self-confident, began to interfere directly in administration, introducing Chinese laws, bureaucrats and practices into every branch of the local government. As a final step, under unrelenting pressure from Peking the Dalai Lama reluctantly

¹ Text in Russian in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, 1956, No. 11, pp. 154-155.

² *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, pp. 17-67; R.F., "Tibet under Communist Occupation," *The World Today*, Vol. 13, July 1956, pp. 292 *et seq.*

gave his approval to the creation of a so-called Preparatory Committee for the Creation of a Tibetan Autonomous Region, which began functioning in Lhasa in 1956.¹

The establishment of the Preparatory Committee marked the high point of Peking's campaign of indirect subversion to supplant the autonomous local administrative system by an apparatus of its own creation, completely subordinate to the Central Government's wishes and negating all actual exercise of regional autonomy while formally preserving the pretense of Tibetan "local government." Hedged in with Chinese civil and military advisers, as well as Chinese-trained Tibetans, the authority of the Dalai Lama and his Cabinet and the influence of the local hierarchy, both secular and ecclesiastical, over matters Tibetan became more and more shadowy after 1956. Henceforth, either openly or *sub rosa*, the Chinese were gradually to gather into their own hands control of all the significant posts and functions on the plateau. The continued existence of the traditional organs of theocratic rule was tolerated by Peking only as a useful fiction serving to mask the real centers of power.²

The heightening of Chinese pressure on Tibet resulted in increased resistance by the local hierarchy and some sections of Tibetan society to the growing menace of complete Han domination. Periodic flare-ups of violence and sporadic armed uprisings were reported throughout 1956, 1957 and 1958, generally necessitating suppression by Chinese military might. Beginning in 1957, a rise was also observed in China's pressure on her neighbors to the south, on Burma and all along the Tibetan frontier, often in the form of armed incursions by Chinese border troops into adjoining territories and unobtrusive encroachments on and occupation of scattered districts in Burma, north India and the smaller border states. To a considerable extent these periodic fits of aggressiveness seem to be linked to the continuing deterioration of China's domestic situation, including the growing difficulties experienced by Peking in its all-out effort to absorb China's recalcitrant minorities.

¹ "Brief Regulations on the Creation of a Preparatory Committee for the Formation of a Tibetan Autonomous Region," adopted at the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Congress of People's Representatives, September 26, 1956, *Kuang-ming jih-pao*, September 27, 1956; B. P. Curevich, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-209.

² See Ginsburgs and Mathos, *loc. cit.*, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 249-267 (1959); also, *Tensions in Communist China: An Analysis of Internal Pressures Generated since 1949*, Senate Document No. 66, 1960, pp. 48-59.

In part, then, Peking's occasional show of military strength along its southern periphery was clearly designed to keep any help from reaching dissident elements within its territory from alleged anti-Communists on the outside. In part, too, it was an effective way to demonstrate to her neighbors the power of Red China's displeasure with any actual or potential deviation from an attitude friendly or acceptable to Peking. Moreover, such actions served the useful purpose of testing the military preparedness and will to resist of the states in question, and provided a definite possibility of improving China's strategic position in these remote regions and even of acquiring additional territory at negligible risk. In addition, in some instances Chinese seizure of strategically situated passes in the mountainous approaches of India's northern provinces was apparently intended to close off avenues of escape from Tibet and inner China and possible routes of infiltration into them.

A final, and major, factor helping to explain China's resort to probing tactics along her southern perimeter is the nature of South Asian geopolitics. The newly independent nations of this area are constantly combating widespread secessionist movements in their outlying provinces that are peopled by ethnic and cultural minorities and characterized by an ingrained opposition to centralized authority on grounds of principle. A successful manifestation of Red China's presence in these areas, without effective counteraction from their respective capitals, would encourage the local dissident elements in their centrifugal tendencies and further undermine their bonds of allegiance to distant and sometimes culturally alien governments. Repeated demonstrations of power by Peking, particularly in so dramatic a form as military occupation, would be bound eventually to discourage any vocal opposition to its ambitions in these areas and foster a definite orientation of local opinion and loyalty toward this dominant influence, at the expense of New Delhi, Rangoon, Katmandu and other seats of official, but ineffective, authority. These consequences would apply equally well to the situation in Burma's Wa districts and the troubled Shan States, as it would to Sikkim and Bhutan and the Ladakh region and even Nepal herself, all of which look for help and protection to their Central Governments or protecting power and often find it not forthcoming.

In any case, regardless of what other policy calculations may have inspired Peking's increasingly aggressive tactics in 1957, it is certain

that the growing Tibetan opposition to all things Chinese during that year, combined with vocal anti-Communist agitation by Tibetan elements residing in the border areas of Nepal and India and veiled, but obvious, official concern in those two states over the more and more frequent Chinese resort to armed force in order to maintain peace and order in the region, played a major part in goading Peking into these fitful shows of military might. The use of these methods did not, however, materially improve the Chinese position in the area and toward the end of 1957 Peking was even forced to withdraw the bulk of its military and civilian occupation forces from Tibet in the face of mounting local rebellion against its rule.¹ Yet, barely six months after suffering this serious reversal the Red régime once more returned to the attack and its determined offensive against all obstacles to its absolute control seems to have been partly responsible for provoking the March, 1959, uprising in Lhasa and Kham and all the ensuing bloodshed. In analyzing the pattern of diplomatic intercourse now prevailing in this disputed area, then, it becomes necessary to distinguish between three different sets of political relations, which though essentially interdependent and mutually complementary, nevertheless each possesses a rationale and *raison d'être* quite its own: (1) the Sino-Tibetan prospects; (2) the Peking-New Delhi relationship; and (3) Chinese and Indian positions in and with relation to their common Himalayan periphery.

So far as Tibet is concerned, it seems quite clear that Peking is resolved to make the region part and parcel of the Chinese nation, perhaps endowed with some form of "paper" autonomy, but in reality directed, exploited and ruled from Peking just like any of the other national-minorities regions and areas of the Chinese People's Republic. In the pursuit of this goal the Central Government is apparently determined to brook no outside interference in its relations with Lhasa. Nor would it seem that Peking is willing to tolerate any longer the Tibetan delaying techniques which, for eight years, prevented China's Communist régime from reaching its main political objectives of carrying out "socialist reforms" in the area.² Thus, even granted that

¹ Hsinhua News Agency, *Daily News Release*, December 11, 1956, p. 91; *New York Times*, October 12, 1957, p. 2; *SCMP*, No. 1527, May 10, 1957, p. 34, and No. 1634, October 18, 1957, p. 35.

² For first reports of Chinese progress in introducing large-scale social and economic reforms in the wake of the abortive March 1959 uprising, see *New York Times*, November 14, 1959 p. 1, and February 29, 1960, p. 8; also *SCMP*, No. 2120, October 21, 1959, p. 5.

the desperate 1959 uprising of Tibet's conservative, anti-Han elements was not deliberately provoked by the Chinese authorities in order to furnish them with an excuse to liquidate the tradition-oriented local government of Tibet and its die-hard supporters – otherwise a not altogether implausible explanation of the revolt's origins – it does, nevertheless, seem to have provided them with a welcome pretext ruthlessly to wipe out, once and for all, the few remaining obstacles to Peking's exercise of absolute authority on the plateau.

For the present, Tibet must be treated as within China's exclusive jurisdiction and control. Even though vestiges of her age-old theocratic form of government continue to be tolerated by the Chinese authorities, this is at best a temporary concession. Barring unexpected developments, then, Tibet within the foreseeable future seems to be scheduled for total assimilation (economically, politically, socially and culturally) into the main body of the Chinese state and nation.

While Peking's intentions in Tibet are unmistakable, considerable ambiguity and vagueness suffuse its official attitude toward neutralist India. On the whole, however, it seems safe to conclude that Peking does not, at least at present, plan any large-scale territorial aggrandizement at India's expense. Rather, Chinese tentative probing of India's northern defense perimeter apparently serves to gauge the strength of India's determination to resist any potential encroachment, to discover the weak points in New Delhi's security system, to throw the Indian government off balance and perhaps render it more amenable to Chinese demands or blandishments, or to undermine its internal authority. Each of these considerations or a combination thereof must in turn dictate Peking's decisions to increase or abate the intensity of its pressure on India, for, even at their amicable best, relations between the two countries are never completely devoid of an element of tension and suspicion, for the most part originating with the Communists.

While India proper is not, therefore, in any serious danger of invasion by Chinese forces or even under serious threat of Communist subversion supported and directed from across her northern border, the same cannot be said of the small border states lying athwart the Indian-Tibetan frontier. In effect, the pattern of political relations in this twilight zone has since 1950 undergone a fundamental transformation. The withdrawal of British military might from the area and its replacement by the much weaker forces of the Republic of India, coupled with the rise of China as a military and economic Power of the

first rank, have resulted in a shift of the sphere of struggle and power-balance from Tibet southward.

The Tibetan plateau can no longer be viewed as a neutral glacis, a sort of political no-man's land insulating the British outposts in India from China's millions, a region where the ambitious pretensions of the Manchu Emperors, and their Republican successors, were effectively stymied by natural obstacles and British diplomatic maneuvers and thus kept at a safe distance from the Crown Jewel of the British Empire. On the contrary, Tibet now represents an advance base of Chinese penetration into South Asia and a forepost of Chinese military power in that continent's strategic heartland. The border states which once served as convenient *places d'armes* for British expeditions to Lhasa have in turn become the arena in which the portentous struggle between Peking and New Delhi for influence and control, and for the possession of the vital Himalayan passes, is now being decided. Long safe behind the British front lines (then drawn deep in Tibet), Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Kashmir have now been projected into the very center of the battle for political domination, while Tibet has receded into the background, a rear-guard zone no longer an active prize in the contest for local supremacy between India and China.

The struggle for primacy between Asia's two great Powers in this crucial area of the globe is still in progress, with no clear outcome yet in sight.¹ As of now, however, it would seem that Communist China holds a significant edge in the clash and that, unless India soon undertakes a complete reappraisal of her present attitude toward the problem and institutes a drastically revised policy, China will progressively strengthen her current efforts at expansion and further increase her already important gains in the disputed sectors. Thus, while it is almost certain that Peking does not at present envisage any large scale occupation of territory unquestionably belonging to India, it is equally clear that no such reservations apply to a number of areas where Chinese exploratory thrusts have, as of late, been particularly active. India's title to Kashmir, and with it Ladakh, is, for instance, far from unclouded; historically, as mistress of Tibet, China also has some definite, albeit quite obscure, rights in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim on grounds of immemorial tradition, and ethnic, cultural and religious

¹ H. A. Steiner, "India Looks to Her Northern Frontiers," *Far Eastern Survey*, November 1959, pp. 167-173.

affinity between the populations of these lands and China's Tibetan minority.¹ To detach these territories from India and integrate them into the Chinese orbit, by means short of war if possible, seems to be the chief aim of Peking's current manipulations in this region, an aim long nurtured by Mao's régime, but postponed for lack of the effective means for its realization.

The measures that China has taken since 1951 to strengthen her initially precarious foothold in Tibet have now provided the means for further penetration to the south and south-east. Both areas of significant Chinese advance into Indian territory, in Ladakh and south of Yatung, are terminal points of major highways constructed during the last eight years by the People's Liberation Army's garrisons on the highland. Tibet herself, just a few years back entirely devoid of any means of communication more complex than a footpath or caravan route, has since 1951 been traversed by a series of all-weather motor highways crisscrossing the country from north to south and east to west, with intermediary trunk lines connecting all centers of any importance.² As a consequence, certain points within the northern crescent of India's border provinces or territories nominally under New Delhi's protection are at present more accessible to forces stationed within Tibet than to India's own troops, especially in the case of mechanized units. In these underdeveloped lands the flag often tends to follow the road and Peking's large-scale highway-building program, sometimes, as in Ladakh, laid out in alien terrain, could well persuade these peripheral areas to gravitate into China's sphere of control, as it is apparently intended to do.

When to military preponderance and communications supremacy is added yet a third factor, namely prospective population superiority in the region, the threat of Chinese domination over the northern approaches to the Indian plains assumes even greater reality. What are, in effect, officially sponsored migrations of Chinese settlers into Tibet have been proceeding at a considerable, and ever increasing, rate during the past five years. Mao publicly stated, as far back as 1952, his desire to see ten million souls permanently residing on the

¹ For a suggestive survey of the conflict of legal claims in this area, see A. P. Rubin, "The Sino-Indian Border Disputes," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 96-125 (1960).

² Three main highways now link Tibet with Sikang, Sinkiang and Szechwan. Within Tibet proper 10,000 kms. of motor roads and highways are said to have been built by the Chinese authorities since 1951.

highland within the foreseeable future.¹ Should this plan be fulfilled, a population ten times greater than the one which has traditionally occupied the plateau will be facing the relatively empty, and inviting, spaces across the Tibetan-Indian frontier. And populations, like cold air, tend to move from high pressure to lower pressure areas.

In short, unless drastic steps are undertaken by New Delhi without delay, the outlook for a successful containment of Red China at the Indian-Tibetan border seems very dim – as dim as the hopes once so fondly cherished by most Foreign Offices that Tibet's impossible landscape, with some slight assistance from the Tibetan army, would defeat any Chinese invasion. Should such countermeasures not be taken in time or in sufficient number, the repercussions could prove fatal for the free world's survival on the Asian continent. To paraphrase a well-known and undeservedly abused proposition of geopolitics, "He who holds Tibet dominates the Himalayan piedmont; he who dominates the Himalayan piedmont threatens the Indian subcontinent; and he who threatens the Indian subcontinent may well have all of South Asia within his reach and, with it, all of Asia."

¹ Between 1954 and 1956 there were reports that 500,000 Chinese emigrants had been resettled on the plateau under the auspices of the Central Government, *New York Times*, November 28, 1956, p. 7, and February 6, 1957, p. 10. The resettlement scheme, which slowed down considerably during 1956-1959, seems to have gained new impetus in the wake of recent armed disturbances in China's border areas; e.g., "Chinese Migrate to Border Areas," *New York Times*, April 5, 1959, p. 9, estimated a proposed influx of an additional 5 million Chinese into the border regions by 1962.

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INDEX

- Agreement on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, 10-16; 18-19; 80-81.
- Agriculture, 62-63; 69-70; 103-105; 110; 149-152.
- Administrative Agencies, 26; 110.
- Amnesty for Political Prisoners, 8.
- Animal Husbandry, 103; 106-107; 153-154.
- Appeal to the United Nations, 8.
- Army, 32; 54-55.
- Border Tribes, 39; 65-66; 119-126; 171.
- Chamdo Region:
political changes, 41-43; 65-66.
representation in NPC, 79.
trade, 62.
- Church:
administrative powers, 30-31.
post-revolt position, 181-184; 187.
relations with the Chinese, 174-176.
relations with the State, 34-37.
- Communications, 61; 101-102.
- Constitution of the CPR, 79-81.
- Dalai Lama XIII, 32-34; 36-37.
- Dalai Lama XIV:
administrative system, 67.
agreement with Panchen Lama, 82.
attitude during revolt, 121-122; 126-129.
enthronement, 8.
flight to Yatung, 9-10.
official court, 21.
personal status, 48-49; 78-79.
traditional powers, 20-21; 32.
- Delegations Abroad, 8.
- Economic and Industrial development, 91-92; 107-110; 154-156.
- Economic Reforms:
debts and taxes, 58-60.
foreign trade monopoly, 60-61; 72-73; 113.
- Education and Indoctrination, 57; 71-72; 92-95; 132-133; 139-140; 158-160.
- Elections, 143-144.
- Foreign Office, 26; 54.
- Guerrilla Resistance, 162-163; 189-191.
- Health and Welfare, 63-64; 68; 107; 160.
- Highways and Transportation, 61; 68-69; 93; 97-101; 158.
- Invasion, 7-8; 10.
- Kashag*:
abolition, 130-131.
functions, 23.
reform, 52.
relations with Assembly, 26-27.
structure, 22-23.
- Land Reform, 135-139; 144-149.
- Local Government:
district government, 29-30; 52.
municipal government, 30.
regional government, 28; 132.
village government, 30.
- Lord Chamberlain, 21; 24.
- Military and Administrative Committee, 15-16; 53; 55-56.
- Mimang*, 74-75.
- National Assembly, 9; 26-28.
- Ngaboo, *Kalon*, 8-9; 91; 131.
- Nobility:
administrative powers, 30-31.
political ambitions, 34-37.
post-revolt position, 180-181.
- Panchen Ngoertehni:
administrative powers, 45-46.
differences with Dalai Lama, 38.
1951 Agreement, 15.
political changes in Shigatse, 41-44; 66; 142.
Preparatory Committee, 87-89; 131.
reforms, 183-184.

- traditional relations with Dalai Lama, 44.
 Pastoral Reforms, 137-138; 153.
 Preparatory Committee:
 administrative structure, 110-111; 114-115.
 background, 82.
 composition, 87-89.
 post-revolt reforms, 131-132; 142.
 Regulations 83-86.
 Prime Minister (*Silon*):
 appointment, 9; 22.
 dismissal, 49-50.
 history, 21-22; 24.
 Proclamation of Independence, 6.
 Regency, 22; 24; 33; 37-38.
 Residents' Committees, 137.
 Settlers, 75-76; 104-105.
 Social and Political Organizations, 57-58; 96-97; 41; 193.
 Trade:
 with China, 62-63; 73-74; 102-103; 156-157.
 with India, 102-103; 157-158.
Tse-kor, 25; 51.
Tse-kang (Accounting Office), 23-26.
Yik-tsang, 23-25; 51.

