



The Status of Tibet in the Diplomacy of China, Britain, the United States
and India, 1911-1959

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Abstract

From 1911 to 1951 Tibet was to all intents and purposes an independent country. From 1951 to 1959 Tibet, while formally acknowledging some role for China, continued to maintain its own currency, government, armed forces and way of life. During this period Tibet conducted its own diplomacy with a wide range of countries with very little involvement by the Chinese. Yet during this period not one foreign country formally recognised the independence of Tibet. When the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949 it was able to reassert Chinese control with very little interference, or even condemnation, from the outside world.

This thesis not only examines the changes in the diplomacy of China, the West, Tibet and India during this period, but also the cultural shifts in the political, social and military spheres in those countries. It assumes that the general trend in political life all over the world has been towards increasingly intolerant and extreme politics. This has had an effect on the way that diplomacy is conducted and has increased the costs of both political and military disputes. If Tibet remains part of China today, with little chance of resuming an independent existence, it is because the Chinese government and people were quicker to adopt radical Western philosophies than the Tibetans were.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

I consent to this thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

In the course of a thesis of this size I have accumulated many debts of gratitude. Above all I would like to express my gratitude for the support of my extended family; especially my parents, my brothers and sisters-in-law, my nieces, nephews and my grandmother. Without their help this thesis could not have been written. I would also like to thank Ms. S. V. Tang. I was given early and constant support by Ms. Debbie Hedger. I am grateful for support from Sean Peak, Roslind and Kathryn Winter, Susanna Hubarenko, Michael and Marie Lane. I would also like to acknowledge Wayne at Fenner Hall in Canberra.

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It is the policy of the University of Adelaide to treat all indigenous cultures with respect and to follow culturally sensitive naming practices. At the start of my thesis I asked the University administration if this applied to Chinese names. At the time of writing the University is still considering the matter and no policy guideline has been laid down. There is a risk of causing offence by either treating Chinese culture as an indigenous culture that requires sensitive treatment, or by ignoring traditional practices in this matter. This thesis will follow general Western norms and not use traditional Chinese naming practices for the deceased. Thus Dr. Sun Yatsen will be referred to as Sun Yatsen and not Sun Zhongshan. Dr. Sun Yatsen will also be the only Chinese person named according to the English version of his dialect name and not as Sun Yixian. This is to acknowledge his Cantonese origins and Anglo-American upbringing rather than suggest he was from the north as the use of *pin yin* might. Chiang Kaishek will be referred to as Jiang Jieshi, and not as Jiang Zhongzheng. Wherever possible Chinese place names are reproduced in *pin yin* as long as they are within China proper. Urumqi is called Urumqi and not Dihua, even though it is in China. There are several ways of representing Tibetan names in English. This thesis generally follows the usual Western practice and does not reproduce letters in Tibetan words that are not pronounced. It does not represent Tibetan according to the modern *pin yin* used in the People's Republic of China. In this thesis the Panchen Lamas lived in Shigatse and not in Xigazi.

War is less costly than servitude.....the choice is always between Verdun and Dachau

The Taxis of the Marne, Jean Dutord

Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis discusses the role of Tibetan independence in the diplomacy between Britain, the United States India and China between 1911 and 1959. The thesis is not meant to be just a discussion of the reasons behind the failure of the Tibetans to win international recognition of their independence in this period, but also of the intellectual and ideological background which frames the diplomatic issues. It will examine the cultural background of issues such as self determination. One of the most important issues in the diplomacy dealing with Tibet is the issue of autonomy rather than independence as such. The 1913-14 Simla Conference was to have provided Tibet with autonomy under the formal suzerainty of China.¹ The 1951 Seventeen Point Agreement between the Chinese central government and the Dalai Lama's administration promised the Tibetans "the right of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government".² The first public statement by the Dalai Lama after he fled to India in 1959 denounced the failure of the Chinese government to respect Tibet's autonomy.³ In 1965 the Chinese government formally announced the formation of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.⁴ Ever since the Dalai Lama arrived in India, proposals by the Tibetan Government in exile for settlement of the Tibetan problem have involved recognition of Chinese suzerainty in exchange for autonomy. The most recent of these was the 1988 Strasbourg Proposal which was in turn based on an earlier proposal put to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus.⁵ Given the long history and use of the concept of autonomy it is worth exploring exactly what is meant by the term "autonomy" and how it came to dominate discussions of Tibet's status.

Like many other terms used in modern diplomacy dealing with Tibet, autonomy is a Greek term widely used in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Originally to be autonomous was to be able to pass and enforce laws without reference to any other power. In short, to be autonomous was to be independent. By Hellenistic times the Greek-speaking world was dominated by a few big kingdoms each of which contained a number of city-states which were formally autonomous. As the histories of the period make perfectly clear, in practice autonomy was a highly flexible concept which

¹ See Text of the Simla Agreement in Sen 1960, 54-58 or Mehra 1979-80, 1:111-116.

² Sen 1960, 79-81. Ling 1968, 19-23.

³ Sen 1960, 145-148.

⁴ Shakya 1999, 302-303.

⁵ For the text of the Proposal see Donnet 1990, 227-229. For discussions see Norbu 1998, 325, 336.

meant very little. Usually cities which were autonomous had to pay taxes and obey royal decrees, which meant that in practice their autonomy was largely symbolic.⁶ The main successor to the Hellenistic world was the Roman Empire which also inherited the Greek legal and philosophical tradition. However autonomy as a practical concept meant little in the Roman world. Autonomous city-states gradually declined, becoming just local governments. It has become a cliché to describe the early Roman Empire as a large collection of small local city-based governments. Yet the concept of autonomous city life survived the Roman Empire and its fall in the cities and communes of the Middle Ages. All through Europe feudal rulers saw the sense of allowing cities to run their own affairs, if only because direct rule was too difficult and expensive for anyone else to manage. The defining feature of pre-modern European administration was the weakness of central authority and the high degree of autonomy, if not independence, in the regions. In extreme cases such as the Holy Roman Empire, there was very little distinction between outright independence and local autonomy.

This extreme localism is perhaps typical of all pre-modern governments. Where the technology and administrative structure for close centralised control did not exist, all pre-modern governments were essentially local governments, and local administrations had to be autonomous to some degree. The larger national level politics had only, at best, a minor impact on the lives of the majority of the world's populations. This is as true of the early British colonies in America, which were given elected assemblies to help with the otherwise impossible task of administration, as it was for the Qing Empire where a local magistrate needed the support of the local gentry if he was to govern.⁷ In the Qing Empire it is hard to see how things could be different given that, according to official figures, the average magistrate administered 100,000 people in 1749, which rose to 250,000 by 1819 and was around one million by 1911.⁸ The weakness of the central Qing authorities is demonstrated by the small size of Beijing. The capital cities of powerful, centralised governments are almost always large. If the central government controls the economic and social life of a country then everyone affected by that government's decisions, needs to keep

⁶ Green 1993, 196-200.

⁷ As is made clear in Chinese classics like *The Dream of Red Chambers*, the lower magistrate was unable to challenge powerful local figures. See Cao 1979, 109-14. Wright (1991, 125-47) has a good discussion of the problems of traditional Chinese government. For the American example see Finer 1997, 1398-1405.

⁸ Hsiao 1967, 5. Similar figures are found in Zinkin (1994, 295) for British India. Zinkin points out (295-6) that for this reason the British administration could not change India the way Japan changed itself.

representatives at the capital if only to lobby for them.⁹ Despite claims by the Qing government of a very high level of control, it was just not possible to rule without the consent of the local elites. S. E. Finer has described the situation in the Qing Empire as "*De Jure* Centralization, *De Facto* Decentralization".¹⁰ This probably explains the origin of the concept of autonomy in modern diplomacy and constitutional theory. As the modern technology that enables highly centralised control developed and spread, it has become more and more feasible to run local communities from distant capitals.¹¹

Although the concept of autonomy existed from the rise of the Greek city-state onwards, the right of an ethnic minority to autonomy within a larger country simply did not exist until the present century. The introduction of ethnic self determination had to wait until the end of the First World War to gain wide acceptance. The 1904 invasion of Tibet by the British did not produce any British commitment to Tibetan autonomy or even any discussion of the idea.¹² Rather British administrators in India such as Lord Curzon argued that the ability of the Tibetan administration to ignore the express instructions of the Qing government amounted to proof of Tibet's *de facto* independence and hence the need to conduct relations directly with the Dalai Lama. Therefore at the start of this century, independence for Tibet was defined in a highly legalistic traditional manner. Tibet was independent because it matched the formal behaviour of other independent countries regardless of the insistence of the Tibetan administration that they were in fact part of the Qing Empire. Yet this belief in Tibetan independence was never shared by the British government in London and was implicitly repudiated by them in their 1906 agreement with China.¹³ This treaty recognised China's rule over Tibet and in a subsequent treaty with Russia in 1907, the British formally recognised China's suzerainty over Tibet without any guarantee for Tibetan autonomy.¹⁴

⁹ Thus Tokyo is now the main commercial city in Japan replacing Osaka and Sakai which were Japan's largest cities until the Tokugawa. Washington and Canberra are both fairly small capitals of Federations. Berlin, Paris and London are not.

¹⁰ Finer 1997, 1147.

¹¹ Indeed Tibet was run directly from Beijing for a number of years in the late eighties supposedly because Hu Jintao, the Party Secretary, did not like living in Tibet. See Shakya 1999, 432.

¹² There are at least four collections of British documents dealing with Tibet similar to PRT (1904). The phrase does not appear.

¹³ Mehra 1979, 1:1-3.

¹⁴ Mehra 1979, 1:4-6.

What exactly the British meant by the term suzerainty is a difficult question as it has no real meaning in international law.¹⁵ It is likely that the British made the same sort of distinction between "sovereignty" and "suzerainty" as they did between "reign" and "rule". In British constitutional theory the Crown reigns but does not rule.¹⁶ Thus what the British government probably meant by "suzerainty" was that the Chinese government would preside over the Tibetan government in theory but would not govern in fact. In that case suzerainty implies a high degree of autonomy which not only verges on independence, but is rather hard to distinguish from the real thing. That the British held this position is supported by the terms of the 1914 Simla agreement and the 1912 Foreign Office memorandum which preceded it. In the 1912 memo the British claimed that, "His Majesty's Government, while they have formally recognized the 'suzerain rights' of China in Thibet, have never recognised, and are not prepared to recognize, the right of China to intervene actively in the internal administration of Thibet, which should remain, as contemplated by the treaties, in the hands of the Thibetan authorities."¹⁷ In the 1914 Agreement, while the British and Tibetans agreed to recognise that Tibet was part of China and that Tibet was "under the suzerainty of China", the Chinese also had to agree that Tibet was to be autonomous and that they would not interfere in the administration of Tibet, or convert Tibet into a province, or send soldiers there, or import civilian settlers.¹⁸ In this agreement the concept of autonomy for Tibet appears in a formal legal document for the first time, albeit one that China refused to sign. The other important feature of this agreement is that autonomy was linked to the concept of suzerainty and the level of autonomy that was implied was clearly very high.

Although the use of the term autonomy in diplomacy with China first appears at the Simla Conference, the concept of autonomy built on a basis of previous practice. The best examples of this come from the break up of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹ The use of autonomy in these cases was used typically as a fig-leaf to Turkish and perhaps Muslim opinion. Rather than supporting outright annexations or independence the Western powers supported a status that was something like a half-way house. Instead of direct foreign rule or independence for a former subject population, the Turkish government would be slightly less embarrassed by autonomy. This does not mean that any region was any less independent under some sort of formal Turkish suzerainty.

¹⁵ Richardson 1945, 97-102.

¹⁶ See the discussion of the role of the Crown in Bagehot 1896, 11-2, 33-88.

¹⁷ *Sir John Jordan's Memorandum to the Wai-chiao-pu*, Peking 17 August 1912. Mehra 1979, 1:66-68; Woodman 1969, 382.

¹⁸ Mehra 1979, 1:111-116.

¹⁹ This will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

The status was in a sense fraudulent. There is no reason to think that the British intended anything else in Tibet.

If the Ottoman Empire was an example of autonomy being used as a form of annexation and imperial expansion by stealth, Ireland provides a counter-example. Since the incorporation of Ireland in the United Kingdom in 1800 the Irish question had been a perennial problem for British politicians. After Catholic emancipation the Catholic Irish consistently voted for anti-British quasi-Nationalist platforms.²⁰ This proved so embarrassing that the British authorities tried to appease Irish opinion by proposing various forms of Home Rule; in effect, if not in name, giving a high degree of local autonomy for Ireland. Right up to the outbreak of World War I these Bills had all been defeated in Parliament. Despite the lack of formal autonomy during World War I Irish opposition to conscription meant that Ireland had to be treated as a special case.²¹ The problems the British had were underlined by the 1916 Easter Uprising during which the British, fighting for the independence of little Belgium against German aggression, had to use artillery in Dublin itself to suppress a campaign for Irish independence. The result of the Uprising and the IRA campaign after the war was Home Rule in both the north and the south. Yet this did not mean approval of independence. The main condition laid down for Home Rule was a continuing link with the British Crown.²² In theory the Irish had to remain attached to the United Kingdom, as Northern Ireland has remained to this day. The fate of Home Rule in Ireland is typical of the problems of autonomy. In the Free State De Valera was gradually able to turn Irish autonomy into outright independence by a series of small steps.²³ In the North oppression of the Catholic minority led to the suppression of Northern Ireland's assembly and the imposition of direct rule from London.²⁴ Whatever guarantees were written into law, the parties involved in Home Rule were unable to freeze the *status quo* and so prevent changes in public opinion undermining the whole process. As a permanent solution to the problem of troublesome minorities autonomy in the United Kingdom has comprehensively failed.

These cases point to a basic problem with autonomy. Although it is useful as a legal fiction, a way of imposing colonial rule or independence without formally doing so, it is not a stable state of affairs. Autonomy all too easily moves gradually into full independence or outright foreign rule. When the British first suggested that the

²⁰ Foster 1988, 288-317.

²¹ Foster 1988, 489-90.

²² Foster 1988, 504-7.

²³ Foster 1988, 550-4.

²⁴ Foster 1988, 588-91.

Tibetans be given autonomy, there can be little doubt that they intended Tibet to be both independent from Chinese rule in all but name, and yet at the same time highly dependent on the British. This can be seen in their refusal to recognise Tibetan independence.²⁵ As long as the Chinese government claimed Tibet, the Tibetans had a serious security problem. If Tibet was an independent nation, it does not follow that the Lhasan authorities would not need the British to protect them from the Chinese. Tibetan security needs could be met in other ways such as an agreement with Russia or even with China. Although by the mid-thirties the British had unilaterally decided that the Simla Convention had determined Tibet's status, the Chinese continued to deny that they had given up any of their rights over Tibet.²⁶

Traditionally diplomatic history has concentrated on the actual discussions between diplomats as well as the biographies and personalities of those diplomats. For most European diplomacy before the nineteenth century this is a perfectly reasonable approach. The majority of European diplomacy was carried out by well-educated, well-born gentlemen of similar class and cultural backgrounds. The main language of diplomacy was French and all the major European powers more or less shared a common world view. In fact many Russian diplomats, for example, probably had more in common with their French and British counterparts than with their own peasants. The major exceptions to this rule were the non-European countries which, to a large extent, were excluded from the "comity of civilized nations".²⁷ In the rare cases that their opinions were of any relevance to European diplomacy the way in which they were treated largely depended on the balance of power in their region. The Ottoman Turks, for instance, were actively courted by the French when they could still pose a significant threat to France's enemy, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the European states were growing in military power in comparison with all other countries on the planet. This meant that they could, and did, increasingly disregard the interests of any other powers except each other. Those non-European nations that wished to conduct diplomatic relations with European powers had to adopt European forms of behaviour. Even those that did not wish to do so, such as Qing-dynasty China, were forced to do so. This traditional system of Western diplomatic relations is usually presented as a non-ideological rational system which reflects universal values and assumptions. In reality there is no particular reason to deny that this system of relations between nations is as

²⁵ The idea that the British were trying to make Tibet dependent on Britain and so keep any independent Asian nation well away from India was noticed by Owen Lattimore (1951, 236-7) in the Twenties.

²⁶ On the border issue see Mehra 1979, 71-74, 78-79, 91-95.

²⁷ See BPPC (39:494) for the views of three Crown Lawyers to this effect.

ideologically-based as any other system.

In the modern world the survival of traditional administrative structures, and even entire cultures, often requires formal acknowledgment by some form of legal instrument such as a treaty or constitution. Unlike empires of the past, it is possible in the modern period for small numbers of people to completely dominate a subject population without the need to conciliate any significant segment of that population. It is even possible to replace an entire culture with one imposed from above. This was first exemplified by the French revolution which not only introduced the idea that the nation state containing a single dominant ethnic group was the only basis for political power, but it also introduced the political structures required to enforce that dominant culture on all the people within the state.²⁸ One of the striking features of France during the Revolution is that the majority of the French population did not speak French.²⁹ Yet the unintended consequence of the Revolution was that the French State had both the motivation and the ability to impose a uniform national culture on its citizens. After two hundred years of compulsory education, the majority of ethnic minorities within France are mostly immigrants. The impact of the West in Asia has meant adoption of Western administrative as well as diplomatic norms. This means that states which once imposed minor imposts on most rural communities, now actively interfere in the daily lives of most people even in the most distant villages. This is, perhaps, best demonstrated by the disappearance of banditry. Bandits had been an important part of rural life for as long as there have been written records.³⁰ Yet bandits have been on the decline everywhere the modern state extends.³¹ To varying extents virtually all the nations of the globe are trying to impose a national culture on all the inhabitants of their state.³² If any minority cultures are to survive this process, they need a formal, legally binding (and of course respected) agreement to protect their

²⁸ In the history of the West the Romans made very limited efforts to impose Latin culture on the whole empire. Latin failed to displace Greek from the Eastern Mediterranean and it is notable that in West Asia traditional Semitic place names returned once the Roman (by then Byzantine) empire was replaced by Arab rule.

²⁹ Weber 1976, 67-94.

³⁰ In a tiny country like Biblical Israel a powerful king like Saul was not able to catch David when he fled to the hills.

³¹ See Braudel 1995, 2:745-9. Banditry shows both the benefits and costs of modernisation. On the one hand the State (more or less) regulates everything it can, on the other it does (more or less) abolish obvious problems like banditry.

³² This is most obvious in the case of language. The "national languages" of most states derives from that of the region around the capital where, until recently, most people did not live and hence the "national" language was not widely spoken. In Britain the standard "received pronunciation" is not the native accent of any region but a creation of the education system.

uniqueness. Given the nearly self-evident value of preserving local customs and societies it is not hard to see why the *concept* of autonomy is so popular among thinkers and politicians. Indeed it is hard to imagine any reason why anyone would be opposed to the idea or why the concept should be a contentious issue at all.

The essential social factor underlying this thesis is the increase in technological and political sophistication in the West since the French Revolution. The basic assumption is that the increase in technology has led to the gradual extension of the powers of the state into every aspect of life including those regions which had previously been isolated by geographical factors. At the same time as this growth in technology, there has been a growth of the power of the state and the ability of the modern state to harness popular emotions in national causes. In the West over the last five hundred or so years European states have gradually been expanding the power of the centre at the expense of formally autonomous institutions and even governments. Martin Van Creveld can even describe the "Rise of the State" as a struggle against the Church, the Empire, the nobles, and the towns resulting in the triumph of the monarchs.³³ In each of these struggles the central government eventually won. It is hard to imagine, given the extreme weakness of the modern Western Churches, that the Papacy was once strong enough to humiliate Roman Emperors. At one time a mere bishop like Saint Ambrose could force the Roman Emperor Theodosius I to pardon a group of monks who had illegally attacked some Jews and destroyed their synagogues.³⁴ Pope Gregory VII (1073-85) could force the Emperor Henry IV to go down on his knees and repent his "sins".³⁵ By the eighteenth century the Papacy had not only failed to prevent the spread of, first, Protestantism and then Revolution, it was not even able to protect its property from Catholic rulers. In the same way in the fourteenth century many European states had local Parliaments within their boundaries which could defy the central authorities.³⁶ By the fall of Napoleon virtually all of these local authorities had been swept away in the majority of European nations. Thus the general trend in Western history has been towards strengthening the power of the central, national authority at the expense of the rest of society.

It will be assumed that the growth in Western technical and administrative sophistication has also had an impact on the way that wars are fought. It is a key assumption in this thesis that the military requirements of any modern state demand

³³ See Chapter Three of Van Creveld 1999, 59-125

³⁴ Ramsey 1997, 34-5. See also McLynn 1994, 315-23.

³⁵ Van Creveld 1999, 61.

³⁶ Grave 2001, 1-4, 14-25.

that the population be mobilised in support of national goals. Essentially this comes down to a process where the state introduces a particular world-view into the homes and hearts of the majority of the civilian population. William Duiker has claimed that nationalism "is not a phenomena that appears suddenly. It is the result of a process by which a people become conscious of themselves as a separate national entity in the modern world, a process by which they become willing to transfer their primary loyalty from the village, or the region, or the monarch, to the nation-state".³⁷ In the West this state of affairs has been easiest to recognise during periods of major warfare such as the two World Wars. During these periods in most of Europe, normal civilian life more or less ceased to exist. Not only did the various states absorb the vast majority of the productive capacity of the economy, but popular opinion was aroused and directed towards winning the war. This degree of popular mobilisation is a legacy of the French Revolution which in theory demanded the total mobilisation of the entire French population.

The most famous Western interpreter of Napoleonic warfare is the German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz. While this thesis has nothing to say of any importance about the practice or theory of war, it will discuss the growth in the power of the state as reflected in social and political theory in the period between 1911 and 1959. Even though Clausewitz is hardly a well known or respected political thinker, there is no doubt about the influence of his thought. Not only was he important to the militaries of Europe between 1870 and 1914, but he also influenced the development of Communism through both Lenin and Mao Zedong. Indeed Clausewitz is one of the few non-Communist Western writers Mao ever quoted (although, perhaps not surprisingly Mao chose to assign authorship to Lenin).³⁸ Clausewitz contrasted eighteenth century warfare and Napoleon's campaigns after the impact of the French Revolution.³⁹ He drew a contrast between "real war" (i.e. war as it is actually fought with all the restrictions that law, religion and social custom place on behaviour) with "absolute war" (that is war in the abstract, without any humane limits, and taken to its extreme, logical and violent end). Clausewitz claimed that the closer an army came to absolute war the more likely it was to win. "If one side uses force without

³⁷ Duiker 1976, 15. The only questionable issue in this statement is the implication that people spontaneously identify with sources of power far away from their homes rather than have nationalist opinions forced on them through schools and the media.

³⁸ For instance in his essay "On Protracted War". See Mao 1972, 266. There may even be a more direct connection between Clausewitz's views on guerrilla warfare (in Book 6, Chapter 26, "The People in Arms", 1989, 479-83) and those of Mao.

³⁹ For the nature and scale of eighteenth century war see Duffy (1998) and Weigley (1977, 18-20). Clausewitz also describes the old fashioned-style well.

compunction, undeterred by the bloodshed it involves, while the other side refrains, the first will gain the upper hand. That side will force the other to follow suit; each will drive its opponent towards extremes, and the only limiting factors are the counterpoises inherent in war."⁴⁰

Yet absolute war required the involvement of the entire population rather than merely leaving war to the monarch and a few nobles. The aims of absolute war, therefore, could not be the exchange of a minor province or two (as in eighteenth century warfare), but a fundamental change in the social order. "The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war, the more they affect the belligerent nations and the fiercer the tensions that precede the outbreak, the closer will war approach its abstract concept, the more important will be the destruction of the enemy, the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be."⁴¹

This assumes the existence of what might be called "absolute politics" similarly unrestrained by law, religion and social customs.⁴² Up to the twentieth century the link between "modern" politics and "modern" war is clear. As John Frederick Charles Fuller put it, "the musket made the infantryman, and the infantryman made the democrat: power to kill and, therefore, to enforce equality at the bayonet point was the essence of the question. Hence, one man one musket became one man one vote, until votes and muskets were to be reckoned in millions."⁴³ In the same way the rise of the totalitarian governments of the twentieth century is closely associated with mechanised warfare. The German commander Erich Ludendorff wrote *The Nation At War* to explain why Germany lost World War I and what needed to be done to prepare for the next war. Arguing that modern war demanded greater national mobilisation and ruthlessness than even Clausewitz claimed, Ludendorff wanted mobilisation to start in peacetime and in effect become a permanent feature of German life. This meant suppression of dissent, government domination of public opinion, rule by a single military commander, and putting the whole economy on a permanent wartime footing.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, 1989, 75-6.

⁴¹ Clausewitz 1989, 87-8.

⁴² Ludendorff (n.d. 23) wrote "Like totalitarian war, politics, too, must assume a totalitarian character".

⁴³ Fuller 1962, 33. Much the same point is often made about Greek democracy and the demands of hoplite warfare. Power went to those states that gave political rights to the peasant farmers who could afford the armour and weapons needed to fight.

⁴⁴ See Ludendorff n.d., 23, 34, 48-52, 55-85, 169-89.

In the case of Germany, the close link between the views of Ludendorff and the army and those of the Nazis is clear. Hitler's entry into politics was as a "propaganda commando" on behalf of the German army to counter Communist revolution.⁴⁵ If Communism did not arise out of the demands of modern war, it soon proved highly adapted to it.⁴⁶ For China the obvious lesson was that as long as it faced a serious security problem it would have to adopt more and more militant ideologies and become less and less "liberal" in the normal sense of the word. This is not part of some atavistic Chinese desire to be ruled with a firm hand, but rather the clear-sighted adoption of the leading schools of Western thought in the face of very real security problems. Thus the trend of modern Western history has been away from "civil society" in which society as a whole is stronger than the government towards more and more powerful central authority. It is a common assumption in Western literature that "modern" or "western" imply "better" or "good". There is no obvious reason to confuse the two. Indeed central to this thesis is the idea that being "modern" is a decidedly mixed blessing.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See the introduction to Hitler 1980, xxvii-xxviii.

⁴⁶ Lenin not only studied the German war-time economy, but he also frequently praised.

⁴⁷ Consider the difference between living next to a piece of early modern technology such as a steam engine, canal or wind mill and living next to a nuclear reactor.

Chapter Two: Background to the Tibetan Issue

2.1 Introduction

While modern politics is dominated by discussions of nationalism, there is little evidence that such a concept played any significant role in any pre-modern society anywhere in the world. The origins of Tibetan, Chinese and even British society lie elsewhere in traditional forms of political behaviour. These forms of behaviour might be cherished by their own societies but they are rarely "privileged" by international law, intellectual discourse or modern diplomacy. The assumption that the Yellow Hat hierarchy is ancient and that Western diplomatic contact with Tibet is modern, is widespread. Some degree of Western contact with Tibet is, by Western standards, a fairly long-established phenomenon.¹ Yet the social systems in both Qing China and Central Tibet are, by Asian standards, modern. In other words Western contact with Tibet occurs shortly after the establishment of the Qing dynasty and the Yellow Hat hierarchy in China and Tibet respectively. Western diplomacy with Tibet was fairly slow to emerge as a significant factor. Although there had been isolated British missions to Tibet, there was no degree of interest from either the British Home government or the British Indian administration until the late nineteenth century. Diplomatic documentation is, therefore, rare before 1880 and becomes more and more common as conflicts grew between the British Indian administration (but not necessarily the British Home government) and the Tibetans and Chinese. By that time there were very few independent Asian states left and so it could be assumed that the growth in British interest in Tibet was not due to any feature of Tibetan society, but simply because there were few remaining Asian states.

2.2 The Diplomatic Origins of Tibetan Theocracy

The origins of the theocratic Tibetan state do not lie in Tibet proper but in the steppe politics of the regions to the north. In 1227 the Mongols attacked the Tangut state of Xixia after the Tanguts refused to provide enough soldiers when the Mongol authorities demanded them. During this campaign Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) died and as a result the Tangut were all but destroyed by the Mongols in revenge. The Mongols followed this up by staging raids into Tibet. In 1244 the local Mongol ruler,

¹ Marco Polo may have passed through Tibet. Certainly there were Catholic missionaries in Tibet from the seventeenth century onwards. Many such missionary accounts are collected in Petech (1952-56).

Godan Khan, summoned the Sakya Pandita, a prominent Tibetan religious authority, to his camp. In 1247 the Sakya Pandita formally submitted to the Mongols and was, in return, given all of Tibet to rule on behalf of the Mongol rulers.² There is no evidence that the Mongols at this time controlled much, if any, of Tibet proper. The Sakya Lama died in 1251 and the Mongols invaded Tibet again in 1252. By this time virtually all the major figures in the Mongol ruling family had relationships with one or other Tibetan monk. The most important of these was between Khubilai Khan and the Phagspa lama with Khubilai starting lessons with and being initiated by the Phagspa lama in 1254 and 1258 respectively.³ Khubilai had become ruler of much of northern China, and the steppe regions to the north and west, under the new dynastic name of the Yuan. In 1260 he granted the Phagspa lama control over central and western Tibet. Khubilai also granted the Phagspa lama Chinese titles. According to the Tibetan historian and long-time Lhasan official W. D. Shakabpa the Mongols conferred on the Phagspa Lama supreme authority over Tibet.⁴ The Mongols exerted a degree of administrative control over Tibet which no previous ethnically Chinese dynasty had ever managed to do. The Mongols organised taxation, forced labour, census collections under the subordinate authority of religious figures from within Tibet. There is little evidence that the Mongols wanted, or even could have managed if they had wanted, to administer Tibet themselves. Rather they followed their usual practice of finding local sedentary collaborators who would administer their domains for them. At the same time they also continued their practice of supporting the local religious authorities on a hereditary basis.

This arrangement between a powerful nomadic ruler and a Tibetan religious organisation formed the basis for subsequent Tibetan history. Formally known as *Cho-Yon* (or Priest-Patron), after the Mongols these sorts of arrangements would be the normal form of political relations within Tibet and between Tibet and its neighbours. While the Ming dynasty was not particularly interested in playing this role, the Ming court did grant various Tibetan religious figures titles and provided gifts in exchange for nominal protestations of allegiance to the Ming emperor. An important relationship for the Tibetan religious institutions did not develop until the mid-Ming when the Yellow Hat sect found a patron in the Mongol Tümed ruler Altan Khan. In 1570 Altan Khan had been forced to make peace with the Ming when his favourite grandson defected to the Chinese. From the mid-1560s Altan Khan's relatives had been regularly

² Petech 1990, 8-9. Shakabpa 1967, 61-3. Goldstein 1997, 3.

³ Petech 1990, 14-5. Shakabpa 1967, 64-5.

⁴ As had been conferred on Sakya Lama before him. See Shakabpa 1967, 63-9. Goldstein 1997, 4-5. See also Petech 1990, 16-7.

invading the Kokonor region and on into Tibet proper. In 1578 Altan Khan and a prominent leader of the Yellow Hat sect, Sonam Gyatso, met and mutually recognised each other as the reincarnations of Khubilai Khan and the Phagspa Lama respectively.⁵ At this meeting Altan Khan conferred the title of "Dalai Lama" on Sonam Gyatso and, retrospectively, on two dead but very influential teachers.⁶ Needless to say these arrangements took place without the support of the Chinese Ming court who were unlikely to approve of the Tümed Mongols claiming to be ruled by a reincarnation of a Mongol ruler of China. Altan Khan, like his predecessor Dayan Khan, already claimed to be the ruler of China.⁷ The reason for the Yellow Hat sects' move into Mongolia has been explained as a result of their loss in sectarian struggles in Tibet proper.⁸ The people most immediately affected by this relationship were the Tibetans themselves. First under Altan Khan and then under his grandson (who was identified as the Fourth Dalai Lama after Sonam Gyatso died in 1588) the Mongols intervened decisively in Tibetan affairs. With the support of the Oriats, the Yellow Hat sect destroyed the power of the more traditional Red and Black Hat sects within Tibet proper. Since the late Ming the Yellow Hat sect has controlled most of Tibet proper with the other sects mostly surviving in the marginal regions of Greater Tibet. Thus the Dalai Lamas came to power within Tibet not as a result of their persuasive teachings but on the backs of foreign invasion.

2.3 Nationalism in the Tibetan Tradition.

The problems of writing history are above all intellectual and revolve around representation. What is actually done is rarely as important as the justification put forward for doing it. It is a well known and extremely common flaw to reinterpret the actions and behaviours of the past in terms of modern politics. As modern Western history is dominated by nationalism there is a constant temptation to claim past actions were part of a nationalist myth. For example, in 1996 Warren Smith claimed that "[t]he end of the Ch'ing dynasty was contemporaneous with the end of the feudal age and the beginning of modern nationalism in China, Inner Asia and *Tibet*. Nationalism

⁵ Even Altan Khan's name is a challenge to the Ming dynasty as Altan meant "Golden" and traditionally was applied to the rulers of China. The claim to be the incarnation of Khubilai Khan, a ruler of all China, was likewise a direct threat to the Ming emperors. The Qing Kangxi emperor also compared himself and his relation to Tibet with Khubilai Khan and the Phagspa Lama. See Mote 1999, 877.

⁶ Ahmad 1970, 88-90. Goldstein 1997, 7-8. Smith 1996, 106.

⁷ Dayan Khan derives his name from the mixed Chinese-Mongol title, Da Yuan Khan, i.e. the Emperor of the Yuan dynasty. This is a claim to be the rightful ruler of China.

⁸ Kam 2000, 165.

as a political ideology led to attempts by both China *and Tibet* to alter the nature of their relationship....Tibet, aware of the threat that the suzerain authority of the Ch'ing over Tibet might be transformed into Chinese sovereignty, attempted to achieve independence."⁹ The idea that the Lhasan religious authorities understood and supported the modern Western ideology of nationalism is extremely doubtful. Other historical acts in Tibetan history are open to varying interpretations. For example, in 1642, the Mongol ruler Gushri Khan is supposed to have conferred on the Fifth Dalai Lama temporal authority over Tibet. This conferral of authority could be represented in a variety of ways. The way it has *not* been written up until modern times is as a secular nationalist myth. Traditional Tibetan history is written by monks and as such has a strong religious flavour reflecting a particular ideological framework. The dangers of such religious histories are many and well-known. Religious writers tend to bring a quasi-historical religious point of view to their histories.¹⁰ In the West this is apparent in the treatment of Biblical figures such as Solomon who was, by any objective measure, including that of the Old Testament itself, a bad ruler.¹¹ He did, however, build a very big temple in Jerusalem which gratified the priests who controlled the historical records. As a general rule the Mongols did not write their own histories and so their point of view is virtually impossible to resurrect.¹² It is not surprising that traditional Tibetan religious histories represent the invasion of Tibet by a foreign nomadic group and the imposition of a particular religious school as a positive step. These historical representations are not historically neutral but carry serious political implications for later Tibetan history. In particular they provide a basis for understanding future Tibetan diplomatic relations. Just as the Tibetan Yellow Hat hierarchy came to power by seeking agreement with a foreign "patron" against, essentially, fellow Tibetans, so would future Yellow Hat leaders seek other patrons to intervene in their internal disputes. It is impossible to reconcile these acts as part of a long established indigenous proto-nationalist tradition.

2.4 Nationalism in the Chinese Tradition

Just as there is a trend to rewrite Tibetan history in a nationalist manner, there has been just as strong a trend to reinterpret China's history in nationalist terms. There is just as much doubt that this is justified by the historical evidence in China as there is in Tibet. The way the Chinese have traditionally viewed their foreign dynasties is an

⁹ Smith 1996, 151. Italics added. There are too many assumptions in this passage to examine them all. That feudalism only ended in 1911 in China is questionable.

¹⁰ For a brief description of the problems of Tibetan history see Petech 1973, 2.

¹¹ See Miller and Hayes (1986, 189-218) for a discussion of Solomon's flaws.

¹² There are Mongol histories from the Qing period such as the Altan Tobci.

example of this. In a formal sense the Ming dynasty ended in 1644 when the Manchus captured the then Ming capital, Beijing. The dating alone reveals a common Chinese historiographical attitude towards the new Qing dynasty and the Ming it replaced. The traditional dating for the end of a Chinese dynasty is fairly flexible. The Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279-1368) for instance has the shortest possible dates. The beginning of the dynasty is not dated by the fall of the Jin capital in 1234, nor by the fall of the Southern Song capital. It is dated by the death of the last credible Song pretender to the throne somewhere off the coast of Guangdong. The end of the Yuan is dated by the capture of the Mongol capital in 1368, not by the death of the last heir to the throne. The Qing on the other hand continued to fight Ming pretenders for over a quarter of a century after the capture of Beijing, and yet the traditional histories use the earlier date. The obvious interpretation of this is that the majority of literate ethnic Han Chinese did not object to rule by the non-Han Manchus. This ought to be seen as a reflection of the degree to which the Chinese gentry, the traditional compilers of Chinese histories, supported the Manchu Qing, but not Mongol Yuan, dynasty. This support for an alien dynasty by Chinese educated elite is not uncommon in Chinese history and, given the close ethnic links between the Mongols and the Manchus, has nothing to do with race or nationalism as such. Neither the support for the Manchus nor the opposition to the Mongols should be interpreted as a reflection of a quasi-nationalist point of view within China. Rather the Manchu Qing rulers formed, within a Chinese frame of reference, a good dynasty for most of their period in power.¹³ The Mongol Yuan rulers did not. There is no reason to think either race or ethnicity played any role in this judgement.

In a sense the Chinese gentry and the Tibetan religious authorities shared a common view of the role of the emperors. They were there to act as patrons to the Chinese educated classes and the Tibetan religious authorities respectively. As long as they performed these roles, the Chinese gentry and the Tibetan religious authorities were content enough. In China the Manchus clearly ruled, and ruled fairly well within the guidelines of traditional Chinese culture, until 1800 or so. They acted as patrons of the arts, they held power against all challengers, they supported traditional Chinese culture and above all else they allowed educated ethnically Chinese scholars to take part in the governing of China.¹⁴ Whether the Manchus ruled in Tibet or not is a more complex issue. The Manchus certainly claimed to do so, but in recent times Tibetan

¹³ Virtually every work on the Qing discusses their role as patrons of Chinese culture. For example see Fairbank 1994, 154-61.

¹⁴ Fairbank 1994, 154-61. Hsü 1995, 26, 30-2, 39-41, 123.

and pro-Tibetan historians have come to dispute this.¹⁵ Tibetan Buddhism was the religion of the ruling Manchu Aisin Gioro family which had members who were converts since at least 1630.¹⁶ The Qing court granted favours, titles and gifts to important religious figures. All this is within the traditional function of patron to the Tibetan religious establishment. In the 1720s the Qing government sent armies into Tibet proper at the request of figures within the Lhasan administration.¹⁷ The Qing authorities then garrisoned Tibet and on occasion executed Tibetan figures for crimes committed by Tibetans in Tibet.¹⁸ Indeed the Tibetan "constitution" such as it was, was largely the creation of the Qing Emperors. There is, therefore, a strong case that the Qing government did not merely act as a patron but genuinely ruled and exercised sovereignty over Tibet.

2.5 Sovereignty in Western Diplomacy

Sovereignty is usually defined as the right of a government to exercise a monopoly of power over its own people and territory. In Europe this definition, and especially the stress on the monopoly of legitimate authority, dates back to the Reformation. Prior to this period European nations were held to common international standard of behaviour that included orthodox religious belief. The penalties for violating or even not enforcing that standard could be serious. The Papacy actively encouraged the invasion of Ireland by the Normans, not to enforce Christian belief, but rather proper orthodox Catholicism. Recognition as a legitimate state ultimately depended on the recognition of the major European powers. For example the Russians Tsar Ivan the Terrible claimed (at least) equality with other emperors in Europe, but as the Papacy did not recognise his claim, no other European power did either. In this case the basis of the Russian claim, the conquest of the Khan of Kazan and hence succession to his title, was held to be invalid because it was not a European title. Thus early European diplomacy had a strong Eurocentric bias; extra-European titles were simply not held to be the equivalent of European ones. Nor did non-Christians have anything like the same legal rights that Western Europeans did.¹⁹ In 1488 a mission to Russia from the Emperor Frederick III even offered Tsar Ivan III help in obtaining a

¹⁵ Shakabpa 1969, 71, 324. Smith 1996, 133-7. MLMP 54, 214-5.

¹⁶ Kam 2000, 167.

¹⁷ Wu 1996, 122-3. Needless to say the request was by one Tibetan faction in order to punish the other. Even secular Tibetan politics relied heavily on foreign patrons.

¹⁸ Richardson 1962, 56-60.

¹⁹ For the Tsar's claims see Pipes (1974, 75-6) and Vernadsky (1953, 387). For the traditional Roman, and subsequent Christian, view on foreigners and the law see Mattingly 1965, 269-81.

royal title in exchange for going to war with the Turks.²⁰ This was not only a function of religious intolerance, although in a sense the Catholic Church rejected the validity of all non-Catholic governments, it was also an expression of European superiority. With the break-up of a religiously united Europe, each state was freer to follow whatever policies they felt appropriate. With the French Revolution the modern standard legal definition of sovereignty became the norm.

2.6 China in Western Diplomacy Up To 1911

Even though there was no common religious organisation that could define what was or was not orthodox after the Reformation, the validation of countries and rulers still depended on recognition by the major European powers. Recognition of a state's rights was like being in a club. If a state was a member of the club they tended to get the same sort of treatment the other members did. In China's case the main problem was getting accepted as a member of what was a rather exclusive, overwhelmingly European, club. From the earliest days of British trade with China, the British denied that the Qing Empire was part of the "comity of civilized nations" and hence did not deserve to be treated in the same way as normal European states.²¹ The best example of the European rejection of any inherent Chinese rights included the rejection of China's right to apply its own laws to foreign residents in China. This refusal to accept what was normal behaviour and part of the international legal system in Europe was not openly defended by the Europeans. It was a common practice by the British, but initially they did not argue it was part of international law. Rather than claim a prior legal right to be exempt from Chinese sovereignty, the British merely behaved as if they held this right and tried to get the Qing authorities to accept it. They were surprisingly successful and after the First Opium War this state of affairs became acknowledged by the Treaty of Nanjing. Although the British argument was challenged within the foreign community, what it ultimately meant was that China had no rights that the British had to respect. This was made clear by British lawyers such as George Keeton who argued, retrospectively, from "the period of early Western intercourse, and indeed until the close of the nineteenth century, China was not a member of that family of nations which is subject to the rules of international law, which apply only when both parties are subject to it. The same principles, therefore, which applied between one Western state and another had no place when a Western state was dealing with China....In conclusion, it must be observed that this circumstance of China's exclusion from the family of nations subject to international

²⁰ Pipes 1974, 74.

²¹ See BPPC 39:494.

law at this period operates both ways. If she had *no* capacity of sustain rights, she had equally no capacity to sustain obligations."²² In the case of the *Arrow* War it was argued that because a Chinese-owned and crewed ship, in a Chinese port, had held British papers in the past, and might, perhaps, take them out again in the future, the Qing authorities had no right to search the vessel and arrest several suspected pirates on board.²³ When this failed the British government argued that the Qing authorities had insulted the British flag.

In this the British government was undoubtedly legally wrong. Whether or not the *Arrow* was a British-registered ship, in international law pirates are enemies of humanity and cannot claim the protection of any flag. In the traditional view a pirate was *hostis humani generis*. In 1769 Blackstone wrote "As therefore he [the pirate] has renounced all the benefits of society and government, and has reduced himself afresh to the savage state of nature, by declaring war against all mankind, *all* mankind must declare war against him: so that *every* community hath a right, by the rule of self-defence, to inflict that punishment upon him, which every individual would in a state of nature have been otherwise entitled to do, for any invasion of his person or personal property."²⁴ In a Report dated 15 February 1854, a British legal authority wrote, "With reference to piratical Vessels under British or other Flags, I am of the opinion, 1st, that all persons (whatsoever their origin, or under whatsoever Flag or Papers they may Sail, or to whomsoever their ship may legally belong) will be pirates by the Law of Nations who are guilty of forcible robberies, or captures of Ships or Goods upon the High Seas without any lawful Commission or authority. They and their Vessels and Cargoes may be captured by the Officers and Men in the public service of *any* Nation, and may be tried in the Court of *any* Nations. For the purpose of Jurisdiction in capturing, or trying them it is of no consequence where, or upon whom, they have committed their Crimes, for piracy under the Law of Nations is an offense against *all* Nations, and is punishable by *all* nations."²⁵ The fact that the British government was willing to ignore well established legal principles demonstrates the basic problem for China. The problem was not just fitting into a system of international law, but getting the Western powers to accept that China had any right to be part of that international legal system on the same footing as any other state.

²² Keeton 1928, 1:12-3. Italics added.

²³ Hsü 1995, 205-6.

²⁴ Blackstone 1979, 4:71. Italics added.

²⁵ Reproduced in McNair 1956, 271. Italics added.

2.7 Western Recognition of Chinese Rule Over Tibet Before 1911

From the earliest period of British contact with Tibet, it was well known that Tibet was in some sense part of China. There was little doubt that the Tibetans thought and said so. The initial British policy towards Tibet was to accept this state of affairs. This was clear to the early British travellers to the region and indeed Warren Hastings sent George Bogle to Tashilhunpo specifically to try to open up trade with China *via* Tibet.²⁶ Although the Tibetans in this period concluded treaties with foreign powers independently of China (notably the 1856 treaty with the Gurkhas), they did not do so with the British. The British only signed treaties dealing with Tibet with the Chinese such as the 1890 Convention Relating to Sikkim and Tibet. This convention was intended to "clearly define and permanently settle certain matters connected with the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet".²⁷ Under Article I the British and Chinese agreed to the border between Sikkim and Tibet. Under Article III both the British and Chinese governments agreed to respect the border defined in Article I and "to prevent acts of aggression from their respective sides of the frontier."²⁸ These articles implicitly and explicitly recognise that the Qing Empire was the legitimate government of Tibet. This was followed up by the 1893 Regulations on Trade, Communication and Pasturage which again implicitly gave China rightful control of Tibet.²⁹ Yet British practice explicitly acknowledged *de jure* Chinese rule over Tibet at a time when *de facto* Chinese control was slipping away. The trade regulations were not enforced by the Chinese over objections from the Tibetan authorities.

When vague reports of Russian agents arrived in India around 1900, the British Indian administration decided to ignore whatever rights China still held over Tibet. This meant a forward policy which would, in effect, add Tibet to British India as a Protected Native State. Before deciding in favour of force, the British attempted to negotiate with the Tibetan authorities. Ignoring China's rights now that they were inconvenient, the British Viceroy, Lord Curzon, sent letters to the Dalai Lama in Lhasa which were not only ignored, but returned unopened. It was this snub that seems to have pushed Curzon into supporting a military expedition. The 1904 Younghusband Expedition fought its way to Lhasa over fairly trivial opposition and obtained a treaty with the Tibetans which simply ignored the Chinese.³⁰ If this treaty had been allowed to stand it would have put paid to any claim the Chinese had to sovereignty over Tibet.

²⁶ See Markham (1876) for a description of this visit.

²⁷ Reproduced in PRT 1904, 1:6-7.

²⁸ Reproduced in PRT 1904, 1:6.

²⁹ Reproduced in PRT 1904, 1:22-3.

³⁰ Reproduced in PRT 1904, 1:271-3. Snellgrove and Richardson 1995, 233.

Chapter Two: Background

The British and Tibetans had signed a valid legal document without any involvement by the Chinese government and came close to having it widely recognised. The problem was that the British government in London rejected the treaty, most likely because of the possibility of demands by the Russians for compensation in Persia or Afghanistan.³¹ The issue of sovereignty was important in both the decision of the Tibetans not to negotiate with the British and in the British decision to go to war. The Tibetans returned Curzon's letters unopened, claiming to be loyal subjects of the Qing Emperor and so all foreign affairs had to be conducted with Beijing.³² This would appear to have been a fairly specious excuse to avoid any sort of dealings with the British. In Western law it is also important in that it was a clear recognition of Chinese rule over Tibet by the Tibetan authorities. The Tibetan authorities might not have meant it, but they certainly intended the British to respect the theoretical claim to be part of China. At the same time Lord Curzon argued that because Chinese rule over Tibet was no longer effective, it no longer existed. It was precisely because the Qing authorities could not effectively control Tibet that they should not be recognised as the rightful government of Tibet even though the administration that did effectively control Tibet claimed to be part of the Qing Empire.

The rejection of the 1904 settlement was followed up with a series of treaties that explicitly recognised Chinese control over Tibet. This included the 1906 Treaty in which the Qing government paid the indemnity levied on the Tibetans, the 1907 Convention between Russia and Great Britain and the 1908 Trade Agreement signed between the British and the Qing government. Therefore the period before 1911 is a mixed bag. Put simply the British generally recognised Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, except when this conflicted with their interests. On the other hand the Tibetans were happy to claim to be part of China when it suited their interests. The only government with a consistent policy was the Qing regime. Despite the huge changes in the level of Qing control over Tibet and expenses incurred retaining Tibet, the Qing government stuck to its claim that Tibet was part of China. Although the international political scene was strongly biased against them, the Western legal process of recognition worked to a certain extent in their favour. In practice there was no automatic rejection of Chinese rights in the modern Western legal system as there might have been in, say, a system of international law based on Islamic law or perhaps even traditional Confucian ethics. The fact that most Asian governments were not accorded equal legal treatment was a feature of the way international law was applied, not inherent in the system itself. The international system of law as applied by the

³¹ Addy 1994, 18.

³² For example see PRT 1904, 1:125.

Western powers was intolerant of non-Western cultures. Relationships like the Priest-Patron ties that were supposed to exist between the Dalai Lamas and the Manchu emperors had no place within Western law. Tibet was either subject to China or it was not. This could work either way for the Chinese; on the one hand it could be used to argue that all degrees of authority over territory that did not approach the monopoly of control the modern Western system demanded were invalid, (as Curzon did in fact argue), on the other hand it could be used to claim that all degrees of authority were equivalent to total control. The present borders of Algeria and Morocco are where they are because the Western system of international law decided that the payment of small amounts of tribute by completely autonomous communities amounted to the equivalent of tax collection by the central state.³³

2.8 Sources of Conflict over Tibet before 1911

Following the 1890 Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet, the British policy was mostly concerned with the twin issues of securing a border and expanding British trade with Tibet. On the issue of cross-border raiding by the Tibetans the British had few problems as the region between British India and Tibet was largely desolate. However the 1890 Convention specified the Tibetan-Sikkim border as running along the watershed between the Tessa and Mochu rivers.³⁴ This meant that part of the territory around the region of Giaogong, which was used by Tibetan nomads in the summer months and which the Tibetans had a strong attachment to, was given to Sikkim. Initially the British were agreeable to compromise on this issue. The Convention had laid out the basis for the demarcation of the Sikkim-Tibetan border on the ground. When the British started to do this the Tibetans simply refused to send a delegation. While the British officials in Sikkim were determined to continue with the demarcation anyway, the Indian administration at Simla was not willing to impose a border and ordered that the process be stopped.³⁵ The result of not marking out the border on the ground was that there was no agreement with the Tibetans about where it should go. The Tibetans constructed some

³³ For instance see Gellner 1983a, 236n61.

³⁴ See Article One of the Convention Between Great Britain and China Relating to Sikkim and Tibet (1890). PRT 1904, 1:6

³⁵ *From the Foreign Secretary, Simla, to the Chief Secretary, Bengal Government, Darjeeling, dated the 30th May 1895.* PRT 1904, 1:39. *Letter from the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, to His Excellency Kwei Hwan, Chinese Imperial Commissioner for the Settlement of the Frontier Questions between India and Tibet, Chinese Resident in Tibet, and Manchu Brigade-General, dated Simla, the 13th June 1895.* PRT 1904, 1:41.

small scale fortifications in the Giaogong region and flatly refused to accept that the Chinese authorities had any right to sign away Tibetan territory without first asking them. The British recognised the justice in the Tibetan claim to the territory, but naturally refused to accept that the Chinese needed the agreement of the Tibetans to make valid treaty arrangements with the British. They were willing, however, to surrender their claims to the disputed region if the Tibetans were willing to continue with the demarcation.³⁶ Indeed the British Secretary to the Governor-General of India was later to admit that it would be inequitable to ignore the Tibetan territorial claims.³⁷

As far as trade went the British originally attempted to set up a trade market at the Tibetan town of Phari, some distance up the Chumbi valley. The Tibetans and Chinese both opposed this and instead argued for a market at Yadong (Yatung), a smaller town on the Sikkim border. This new site was ultimately acceptable to the British and it was agreed to open a market there in February of 1891.³⁸ Included in this deal was the right of the British to appoint an Agent, and for the Chinese to send a Commissioner of Customs, to Yadong. As was inevitable given the condition of the Qing Customs Service at this time, the Commissioner they appointed was English.³⁹ This was not the first time that an English Customs Commissioner had been appointed in Tibet. As early as 1889 James Hart had been sent to Rinchong to help negotiate the 1890 Convention.⁴⁰ The British presence on the Tibetan side of the border may well explain why the British Indian officials found it so easy to deal with the Chinese administration on the outstanding issues. Indeed the Political Officer to Sikkim (and in effect in charge of relations at Yadong), J. C. White, wrote "the Chinese officials have throughout treated me with the utmost courtesy and consideration, and have done all in their power to help".⁴¹ This consideration was, no doubt, very important in settling

³⁶ *From the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, 15th February, 1896. From the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy, 2nd March, 1896.* PRT 1904, 1:52-53.

³⁷ *Letter from W. J. Cunningham, Esp., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary of Bengal, 4th March, 1896.* PRT 1904, 1:60.

³⁸ *Letter from the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, to the Right Honourable the Earl of Kimberley, K.G., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, 4th July, 1893.* PRT 1904, 1:9-13. It is important to note that the British considered nothing short of free trade and free travel throughout the whole of Tibet as satisfactory in the long run.

³⁹ Initially the Commissioner, Mr. Taylor, had to live in the housing provided for the British Agent at Yadong because there was no acceptable houses in the region. *Letter from J. C. White, Political Officer, Sikkim, 9th June, 1894.* PRT 1904, 1:28.

⁴⁰ *Letter from A. W. Paul, British Commissioner, on Special Duty, Darjeeling, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, dated Darjeeling, the 9th December, 1893.* PRT 1904, 1:21.

⁴¹ *Letter from J. C. White, Political Officer, Sikkim, 9th June, 1894.* PRT 1904, 1:29.

the remaining points of dispute. In particular the Tibetan monks at Phari were levying a tax of 10 percent on all goods going down to Yadong. Although the British objected, the Convention only insisted on the passage of goods over the border without duty. It was decided, as the duty was both equally applied to all and long-standing, not to pursue the issue.⁴² The duty levied by the Tibetans was in fact rather like the *likin* taxes levied in China proper on the movement of goods between different regions of China. In China proper *likin* taxes were a matter of much greater importance to the British and the source of a great deal of conflict when applied to goods such as opium. Opium at this time does not appear to have been important in the Tibetan economy and it was permissible under the 1890 Convention for either side to ban its importation as a narcotic drug.⁴³ The equivalent of opium in the Chinese Unequal Treaties was Indian tea which the British and Chinese agreed would be legal to import into Tibet at a duty not greater than that faced by Chinese tea entering Britain. The British calculated that this would leave a healthy profit for British exporters and create a new market.⁴⁴

The main reason for the peaceful nature of British relations with the Tibetans in this period was the personality of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Elgin. Although Lord Elgin is perhaps better known for his hard line on the Chinese in earlier days, he was far more conciliatory in India. In the majority of potential sources of conflict with Tibet, the British Indian administration decided not to seek confrontation. The result was that there were no major conflicts over the Tibetan border during his administration. It was also, and perhaps not coincidentally, a period of massive expansion in trade between British India and Tibet. Although starting from a low base trade expanded by about five hundred percent. This was despite the fact that the British were soon disillusioned about the export of Indian tea to Tibet which they soon found could not compete with Chinese tea. The only major Tibetan export seems to have been wool while imports from Britain seem to have been made up mostly of woollen manufactured articles such as blankets. The level of trade remained pitifully small; in a good year total cross-border trade rarely rose above one and a half

⁴² *Letter from J. C. White, Political Officer, Sikkim, 9th June, 1894.* PRT 1904, 1:29.

⁴³ *Letter from the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, to the Right Honourable the Earl of Kimberley, K.G., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, 4th July, 1893.* PRT 1904, 1:9. However the ban on importation only applied to goods carried across the Sikkim border. There is no suggestion the British intended to ban the importation from China proper.

⁴⁴ *Letter from the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, to the Right Honourable the Earl of Kimberley, K.G., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, 4th July, 1893.* PRT 1904, 1:13.

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million rupees and never reached two million.⁴⁵ It cannot be the case that this level of trade was a major force in British foreign policy. There appears to be no basis for a Marxist interpretation of the Younghusband expedition as serving British commercial interests. If anything it is more plausible that the long period of peaceful relations with the British was due, in part, to the total irrelevance of Tibet in the world economy. Given the poverty of the Tibetan economy, the policy of conciliation with the Tibetans seems to have served the British well. Rather than economics driving British relations with Tibet, it is more likely that personality was the mainspring of British Indian policy. This became particularly apparent after Lord Elgin was replaced as Viceroy and Governor-General of India by George Nathaniel Curzon, first Marquess of Kedleston.

Despite the fact that the level of trade between India and Tibet had hardly changed except for the better, as soon as Curzon became Viceroy of India there was a far more aggressive approach to relations with Tibet. It was, claimed Curzon, unacceptable that the Dalai Lama's regime refused to enter into negotiations with the Indian administration and instead simply referred them to the Chinese Ambans. Given that the Ambans openly admitted to having no real influence over the Tibetans there was perhaps some reason for Curzon to be annoyed and yet the outstanding border issues were trivial. Trade had, the British claimed, been strangled at Yadong despite their own figures showing a massive increase in cross-border trade.⁴⁶ There had been no demarcation of the Sikkim-Tibetan border - yet there were no complaints about border violations. There had been no agreement with the Tibetans over the region around Giaogong - although it was useless for any other purpose but summer pasture.

A possible reason for Curzon's attitude was his dislike and distrust of the Russians which had developed as he grew older.⁴⁷ Even though the Russian border was still about a thousand miles from the border of Tibet, the fact that the Dalai Lama had, through the mediation of a Buriat monk, long resident in Lhasa but technically a Russian subject, sent a letter to the Russian Tsar while refusing to accept any of Curzon's own letters, was seen as a threat to the security of British India.⁴⁸ All along the Indian border Curzon had argued for a much stronger anti-Russian policy in Persia,

⁴⁵ One and a half million rupees was the equivalent of one hundred thousand pounds sterling.

⁴⁶ *Letter from W. J. Cunningham Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated Fort William, the 4th March, 1896.* PRT 1904, 1:58.

⁴⁷ And, perhaps, as he became involved in British India. He had, in 1889, been in favour of Russian expansion in Asia.

⁴⁸ Addy 1994, 17-27. Woodman 1969, 103-4.

Afghanistan and finally Tibet. The problem was that the British government declined to back him up on any of these issues, especially when it came to the use of force. Any dispute with Tibet, then, would first have to find a plausible pretext that the British government in London would accept. In Curzon's defence, it could be argued that British policy at the time could not accept a recalcitrant government sharing a border with its Indian possessions, but it would be hard to argue this given that it had been British policy to preserve small and weak Asian states along its Indian borders.⁴⁹ In the west British policy was aimed at keeping the Russians out of Persia and Afghanistan, in the east the British and French agreed to the neutralisation of what is now Thailand to ensure Britain and France did not share a significant border.⁵⁰ The fact that Qing authority in Tibet was now on the whole nominal only made the situation all the more satisfactory for the British. The British government would, after all, try to keep an effective Chinese administration out of Tibet for the next fifty years.

It is far more plausible that British policy towards Tibet was driven by the personality of Lord Curzon himself in the ideological framework of his time. If it seems odd that the most powerful figure in India should have spent so much of his time arguing over the summer grazing of a handful of Tibetan nomads, this should be seen in the context of the dominant British ideology which was to support a non-interventionist free market at home. British administrations had little cause to pursue active domestic economic policies as these sorts of schemes would only distort the proper workings of the free market. The British did build irrigation systems, schools and railways in India, but largely kept away from more interventionist policies. Any active encouragement of manufacturing could not be justified in the eyes of the men who dominated British economics at the time. For a young Governor-General with no previous record of particularly distinguished public service, glory could only be attained in foreign policy. If Curzon wanted to make a name for himself, this would mean an active foreign policy in India. As there were few countries near India that were not already under the control of the British, this in turn suggested intervention in Tibet. Elgin, with his distinguished and well rewarded service in China, could afford to stick to a peaceful policy with respect to Tibet.

The new administration under Lord Curzon could not simply intervene in Tibet without at least some cause. The case for an acceptable pretext began with a flat refusal to accept that the Chinese government had any authority over Tibet whatsoever. The fact that Qing authority in Tibet had been in steep decline was not

⁴⁹ Such as Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. See Maxwell 1972, 22-4.

⁵⁰ Tarling 1999, 40.

something that the British border officials had missed. Indeed J. C. White, the Political Officer to Sikkim in 1898, had concluded that,

Chinese authority has of late years much declined at Lhasa, and that now they have practically no authority over the Tibetans, and that the Tibetans are now asserting themselves and wish to throw off the Chinese yoke. The Chinese acknowledge they have no authority, and the Tibetans say the Chinese have no right to treat for them. The Chinese still have a certain amount of deference shown them in matters of etiquette, but in matters of importance they appear to be of no account.⁵¹

After coming into office Lord Curzon used similar arguments to claim that Tibet was now free of Chinese control and hence the refusal of the Dalai Lama to negotiate directly with the British was an affront to the accepted conventions of diplomacy. This hard line was not totally accepted by the British government in London, which continued to argue that Tibet was part of China.⁵² After this rebuff from London the British administration in India started a policy which can only be described as creating trouble for the Tibetans. Initially the British administration sent a small group of officials to investigate the possibility of levying an official tax on those Tibetans who grazed their animals in the disputed region around Giaogong.⁵³ As the ownership of the region was not clear and traditional arrangements had passed unremarked for over a decade, the timing of this move was certainly unusual. However it was soon realised that just as Tibetans grazed their animals on land the British claimed, the Sikkimese grazed their animals in undisputed Tibetan territory.⁵⁴ Moreover the Tibetans already paid a small fee to the traditional owners while the Sikkimese paid nothing for the use of Tibetan pastures. It was then proposed that the British Political Officer to Sikkim, together with an army escort, should visit the

⁵¹ *Letter from J. C. White, Esq., Political Officer, Sikkim, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, dated Yatung, the 23rd November, 1898.* PRT 1904, 1:91.

⁵² *Despatch from the Secretary of State for India to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council, dated 16th August, 1901.* PRT 1904, 1:122.

⁵³ *Letter from J. B. Wood, Esq., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to the Honourable Mr. J. A. Bourdillon, C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated Fort William, the 22nd March, 1902.* PRT 1904, 1:134-5.

⁵⁴ *Letter from the Honourable Mr. J. A. Bourdillon, C.S.I., Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to H. S. Barnes, Esq., C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India. Foreign Department, dated Darjeeling, the 23rd April, 1902.* PRT 1904, 1:135-6.

disputed territory, examine the region of the watershed, and physically remove all Tibetan posts and officials on the territory the British claimed.⁵⁵ As this would involve the open violation of the border the Tibetans had claimed, and had been in continuous occupation of, since a time well before the 1890 Convention, it was highly provocative to say the least. That this was known to the British administration is suggested by the fact that the escort was to consist of at least 150 Gurkhas. This action was so unusual it even drew a protest from the Qing government which objected to the violation of the border by British officers and some troops.⁵⁶ In return for the Giaogong tract the Qing authorities were willing to offer the British some new concessions in Tibet. These included a new market even deeper inside Tibet either at Gyantse or Phari, free trade in all goods, free movement for Sikkimese traders inside Tibet, and some sort of official British representative in Lhasa.⁵⁷ The inspection was ultimately futile as the Tibetans peacefully withdrew beyond the border claimed by the British and the British government did not respond to the Chinese concessions. It had, Curzon admitted, done nothing to materially improve the British position on the border and he argued that the whole border issue should be settled by a conference with the Chinese and Tibetans. This was not to be held on the border as in the past but in Lhasa; furthermore it would not just cover trade but a whole range of issues of importance leading to the imposition of a British Resident in Lhasa.⁵⁸ This in effect meant, either openly or implicitly, a British Protectorate over Tibet. The reason was because in the opinion of Lord Curzon British "interests [were] seriously imperilled, as we hold ours to be in Tibet, by the absolute breakdown of the Treaty arrangements hitherto made through the medium of China, by the obstructive inertia of the Tibetans themselves, and still more by arrangements freshly concluded with another Great Power to our detriment"⁵⁹ This sentiment was not entirely shared by the Government in London which replied to Curzon rejecting a Protectorate, the permanent occupation of any part of Tibet or an attack on the integrity of China which might endanger British relations with other European powers.⁶⁰ Although the Russians might have loomed large in

⁵⁵ *From the Foreign Secretary, Simla, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Darjeeling, dated 21st May, 1902.* PRT 1904, 1:136-7.

⁵⁶ *Note from Prince Ch'ing to Sir E. Satow, dated August 22, 1902.* PRT 1904, 1:142.

⁵⁷ *Letter from J. C. White Esq., Political Officer for Sikkim, to the Commissioner, Rajshahi, dated Gangtok, the 20th August, 1902.* PRT 1904, 1:165.

⁵⁸ *Letter from the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, to the Right Honourable Lord George F. Hamilton, His Majesty's Secretary of State for India, dated Camp Delhi, the 8th January, 1903.* PRT 1904, 1:150

⁵⁹ By "another Great Power" Curzon presumably means Russia although there was no real evidence the Tibetans had done any such thing. Naturally the Russians strongly denied it. See Kuleshov 1992, 25-6.

⁶⁰ *Despatch from the Right Honourable Lord George Hamilton, His Majesty's*

Simla, they did not appear to worry the British in London unduly. Indeed the Russians were still over a thousand miles from Lhasa at this time and the terrain of the region was hardly conducive to long range military campaigns.⁶¹

As unusual as it might seem, the failure of the first inspection did not stop a second group being sent out. This time the Political Officer White was not given total control of the party, a military officer called Younghusband, then on "Special Duty", was placed in charge. This time the military escort was to consist of two hundred soldiers with a further three hundred being available in case of need. Unlike the previous inspection when negotiations were to take place only in the event of the Tibetans being willing to do so, Younghusband was given explicit instructions to meet the Chinese and Tibetan delegation at Khamba Dzong. The demands the British officers were to make of the Tibetans were more explicit too. These came down to the end of all duties and fees, a new market at Gyantse with a Political Agent resident there and recognition of the watershed as the border between Tibet and Sikkim.⁶² This show of force did not intimidate the Tibetans who simply refused to negotiate with the British while such a large and uninvited force was in their territory. Curzon then claimed new outrages had been committed by the Tibetans. In particular he claimed in a letter to the Secretary of State for India that the Tibetans had arrested two British subjects at Shigatse and that the Tibetans had decided on war and were amassing troops from all over Tibet. Younghusband, claimed Curzon, had launched reprisals against the herds of the local Tibetans and foresaw a need to advance deeper into Tibet.⁶³ By November Curzon was claiming the two men were dead although Younghusband only reported that they had been beaten.

In isolation this particular unhappy incident would be of little interest, but it shows the moral universe and ideological framework in which Lord Curzon and Younghusband worked. It was not enough that the Tibetans refused to talk to the

Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council, dated February 27, 1903. PRT 1904, 1:183-5.

⁶¹ Even Dorjiev usually travelled between Tibet and Russia via India rather than the traditional route over land. The British were unlikely to let any Russian invasion force pass through India.

⁶² *Letter from the Secretary of the Government of India, in the Foreign Department to Major F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., on Special Duty, dated Simla, the 3rd June, 1903. PRT 1904, 1:198.*

⁶³ *From the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, dated 16th September, 1903. PRT 1904, 1:209.* Unfortunately for the Tibetans White also started seizing Tibetan animals grazing in Sikkim as a reprisal. See *Letter from Colonel Younghusband 14th August 1903. PRT 1:254.*

British; for the British government at least, they also had to provide a morally justifiable pretext for intervention. What might otherwise look like a squalid case of a vastly superior power bullying a small and weak people had to be justified by the bad faith and behaviour of the Tibetans. This particular claim must have been hard to maintain given the Tibetans did not in fact behave "badly". For the first few months, despite being uninvited and unwanted in Tibet, the Tibetans neither resisted nor made any real fuss over the presence of Younghusband's soldiers. They simply refused to negotiate with them although they did provide them with food.⁶⁴ The two men who had been arrested were in a part of Tibet where they had no legal right to be, nor was there ever any evidence that they had been murdered by the Tibetan authorities. Yet these two men plus the supposedly outrageous behaviour of the Lhasan authorities were enough for Curzon to eventually order the Younghusband expedition to Lhasa. Once there Younghusband was able to impose a punitive settlement on the Tibetans.

Every step of the way the British government objected to many of the actions of Younghusband and Curzon. As late as November 6 the British government was arguing that the advance should only be as far as Gyantse and no permanent occupation ought to be considered.⁶⁵ The issue of most relevance here is the way in which the ideological representations of all the people involved was shaped. None of them appear to have had any doubts about the rightness of the British Empire, indeed Curzon called it the greatest power for good in the history of the human race. Most likely the dispute originated in Curzon's perception of the world and the threats he perceived to the British Empire. It would be unfair to suggest that both Curzon and Younghusband were solely motivated by self-aggrandisement and glory. More probable is that they structured their ideological world, choosing from the range of options available to them, in such a way that they and their Empire were presented in the best light. To the British government in London the British were not the sort of people that attacked its neighbours without good cause. No doubt the same could be said of Curzon and Younghusband, but the perception of risk, as absurd as it appears in retrospect, to the borders of India was even more powerful. Even before the First World War had over-turned the paradigm, an act of naked aggression by the British administration in India was not entirely acceptable to the British government although there was never any specific repudiation of Curzon.

⁶⁴ *Letter from Colonel F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., British Commissioner, Tibet Frontier Commission, to the Secretary of the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, dated Khamba Jong, the 24th August, 1903.* PRT 1904, 1:260-261.

⁶⁵ *From the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy, dated the 6th November, 1903.* PRT 1904, 1:294.

Chapter Three: The Simla Convention

3.1 Introduction

The basic starting point for a discussion of the diplomacy between China and all the English-speaking nations over Tibet is the 1914 Simla Conference. At Simla the British, Tibetans and Chinese negotiated the Simla Convention which the Chinese initialled but eventually refused to ratify. This convention had two main points, on the one hand the India border in the east was pushed forward to the McMahon line, roughly speaking the watershed, on the other Chinese authority over Tibet, by then entirely theoretical, was excluded from Tibet proper although the Tibetans agreed to acknowledge China's "suzerainty". Following China's refusal to sign or ratify the Convention, the British and Tibetan delegates signed a separate Anglo-Tibetan Agreement agreeing to abide by the terms of the Simla Convention and debarring China from enjoying any of the "benefits" of the Convention until China also signed. This Conference, regardless of the fact that it ended without the Chinese signing the Convention, has provided the main source of ideas for thinking about Sino-Tibetan relations ever since. That is to say, the Simla Convention established a framework of ideas which, perhaps through inertia, has remained in place ever since. As this Conference was a major diplomatic event it has been strongly documented by the British and Indian governments. Large collections of relevant documents have been compiled by scholars and the precise interpretation of the events at the Conference have been extensively discussed over the years.

3.2 Background to the Simla Convention

The collapse of the Qing dynasty in February 1912 caused the longest period of disunity and civil conflict in modern Chinese history. It was a period of considerable weakness for the Chinese state when compared to most foreign nations and yet it was also a period in which China more or less successfully resisted the growing demands of foreign powers. The Qing dynasty had signed several Unequal Treaties giving Russia large parts of northern Manchuria, smaller bits of Xinjiang, concessions at Port Arthur and Dalian, giving Hong Kong to the British and leasing the New Territories and Weihaiwei, surrendering Taiwan and Korea to the Japanese and granting all foreign powers major legal and economic concessions within China itself. On the other hand, even as the Republic broke up, the Chinese Republican government signed virtually nothing away and even regained some of its own territory such as the foreign

concessions in major cities like Hankou (1927) and important naval ports such as Weihaiwei (1930). It is an unusual record of diplomatic success in the face of extreme pressure and serious military weakness.

The two big tests for the Republican government of China were Russian and British demands that the Chinese make considerable concessions in Mongolia and Tibet respectively. In 1911 the Revolution in China enabled the religious authorities in both Mongolia and Tibet to take over the administration of these regions. In neither region was the take-over peaceful; there was widespread fighting in Mongolia especially. Even in Tibet there were soon stories of fighting in Lhasa. On April 5, 1912, it was reported by the *New York Times* that the Chinese in Lhasa (mostly soldiers) had formed a Representative Council and proclaimed a republic. Fighting had broken out in Shigatse with the Tibetans threatening to exterminate the Chinese. By late April, it was alleged that the Chinese soldiers had mown down three thousand Tibetans, "including women and children" with Maxim guns.¹ Barricaded in parts of Lhasa, including a few monastic complexes, the Chinese soldiers held out until August when they surrendered and were allowed to leave Tibet *via* British India.² In 1912 the Russians signed an agreement with the Mongolian authorities which, in effect, made Mongolia a Russian protectorate. This can be seen by the fact the Russians insisted they would not tolerate "any violent change in the status quo of Mongolia."³ However the Russians also claimed that this treaty did not amount to recognition of Mongolian independence. Indeed when the Mongolians attempted to open diplomatic relations with other European powers the Russians prevented them from doing so.⁴

3.3 The Origins of the Simla Conference

There were two main interests in Tibet for the British Indian administration in 1912. The first was to prevent the Russians from gaining influence in Tibet which could potentially bring the Russians up to the Indian border. The other interest was to have a proper border between British India and Tibet. The British General Staff, in particular, were adamant on the need for a defensible border in the Assam region of British India. In these heavily forested and mountainous regions there were still tribal groups who had no contact with the British administration, retained some cultural practices the British found objectionable such as slavery and human sacrifice, and who

¹ NYT, April 21, 1912, 3:1:7. NYT, April 5, 1912, 1:6.

² NYT, August 22, 1912, 4:3.

³ Quoted in Klein 1971b, 139.

⁴ NYT, February 9, 1913, 4:6:2.

occasionally raided British subjects, particularly workers on tea plantations in Assam. This problem was entirely new and was probably the result of the expansion of British control, and tea plantations, in Assam. Previous disputes with the Tibetan and Qing authorities had been over barren grazing land in Sikkim. The British military clearly recognised that the circumstances of the Chinese government after 1911 presented both a problem and an opportunity. In 1912 the Chief of the British General Staff wrote a memorandum saying,

[t]hroughout this note the assumption is made that the pertinacity of the Chinese will not long permit their acquiescence in the present state of affairs in Tibet. Although their activity on our frontier may have received a temporary check on account of the Revolution, history proves that succeeding a Revolution, as a rule, a period of national vigour and expansion follows....There is therefore no time to be lost in declaring to the Chinese in unmistakable terms the line the frontier is to follow, in making our occupation of that line effective insofar as placing ourselves in positions whence we can watch developments and prevent further encroachments is concerned, and in improving communications on our side.⁵

The two main interests of the British government came down to more or less the same policy of getting the Chinese out of Tibet. The British Army's solution to any future military problems was, therefore, simply to present the Chinese with a *fait accompli* and defy any new Chinese government to challenge it. Even more ambitious aims were clearly spelled out by the Foreign Office which, in August 1912, decided that,

[w]hat appears to be so essential is that Tibet, while nominally retaining her position as an autonomous State under the suzerainty of China, should in reality be placed in a position of absolute dependence on the Indian Government, and that there should be set up an effective machinery for keeping out the Chinese on the one hand and the Russians on the other....What is essential at present is that we should obtain a completely free hand both by an agreement with Russia and by an agreement with China.⁶

This view was conveyed to the Chinese by Sir John Jordan in no uncertain terms. The memorandum sent to the Chinese agreed that the Chinese should have an

⁵ Quoted in Woodman 1969, 147-8.

⁶ Quoted in Woodman 1969, 149.

agent in Lhasa with a small guard of soldiers who could advise the Tibetans on foreign policy issues. However the British objected to any expedition to Tibet by the Chinese Republic or the maintenance of any large body of soldiers in the region. The British government demanded that the Chinese agree to a new Anglo-Chinese agreement on Tibet or there would be no recognition for the new Republic.⁷ It was at this time that the British first made it clear that the British government was prepared to recognise China's suzerainty but not its sovereignty. The solution could only be a "British-Russian-Chinese agreement for the preservation of the autonomy and neutrality of Tibet."⁸

The need for an agreement with Russia was all the more important because of allegations that the Russians were also negotiating with the Tibetan authorities. The negotiator these talks was the Russian Buriat monk, Agvan Dorjiev (1854-1937). Dorjiev had travelled from Russia to Lhasa and then enrolled to study in Drepung monastery in 1880. He had risen from a lowly position in the court of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to become a close adviser. In this capacity he had told the Dalai Lama to seek help from Russia to counter-balance recent British advances in Sikkim. Dorjiev claimed that the Dalai Lama had sent him to Saint Petersburg in 1898, travelling on a Chinese passport *via* British India. Dorjiev returned the next year with gifts from the Tsar, although there is no evidence of any agreement between the Russians and Lhasa at this time. According to Dorjiev, in Tibet public opinion, such as it was, was divided three ways,

[i]n those times, the influential people of Tibet had these things to say about politics. Some thought, "Since the kindness of the Manchu Emperor has been so great, he will not forget about us even now. Therefore, we should not divorce ourselves from China." Others said, "The Chinese government will collapse before long. Therefore so long as we have no agreements with the enemies nearby [the British], we will certainly be conquered. So it would be good if we had close relations with them." Still others said, "The Russians, being very rich and powerful, we would not fall into enemy hands. Also, since they are far away, they could not devour us. But for just that same reason, it is difficult to work with them."⁹

⁷ NYT, August 30, 1912, 4:5.

⁸ NYT, August 30, 1912, 4:5.

⁹ Quoted in Meyer and Brysac 1999, 276. It is striking that the entire sum of political thought in Tibet involved which nation was best suited to being a patron.

While there is no firm evidence of any agreement with the Russians before 1912, the fact that the Tibetan authorities were apparently talking to the Russians while refusing to negotiate with the British was one of the main factors leading to the 1904 Younghusband expedition. Indeed the purpose of the invasion was to drive out Russian influences which, at best, consisted of Dorjiev and a small number of other Mongolian monks from Russia.¹⁰ In 1912 this small pro-Russian party, if indeed that is what it was, continued to influence the policy of both the British Home government and especially the British Indian administration. In that year Dorjiev went to Mongolia and signed an agreement with the Mongolian authorities in the name of the Dalai Lama. It is not clear whether Dorjiev had the authority to sign this agreement or not. At times the Thirteenth Dalai Lama has claimed he did not, and at times the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has claimed that he did.¹¹ Regardless of the legal basis of his actions, in early 1913 Dorjiev announced to the Russian press that an agreement had been signed. Dorjiev certainly claimed to have the authority to negotiate a treaty. He also claimed that the purpose of the treaty was to ensure that Tibet would be protected by both Russia and Britain in exchange for "the rights of trade duty free, of exploitation of the country's natural riches, and of her construction of railways and telegraphs, &c."¹²

The difference between the last attempt to expand British influence in Tibet during the 1904 Younghusband expedition and the 1913 Simla Convention was that the original policy behind the Simla Convention was not that of the Indian Government, but of the British Home Government.¹³ It was not a policy based on the rights of the Tibetans or the slightest desire to make Tibet an independent nation, but a demand for a *de facto* protectorate. In this sense the modern Chinese claim that the "Simla Conference was designed by the British in collusion with Tibetan pro-British elements" and that "[b]oth sought to separate Tibet from Chinese territory" is not strictly true.¹⁴ The original impetus came from London and the British aim was not independence from China, but dependence on Britain.

A similar situation existed with "autonomous" parts of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, even though Egypt was to all intents and purposes independent from the

¹⁰ And should be compared with the Chinese Communist Party's insistence on driving out foreign influences in 1951 - which consisted of as many as six foreigners.

¹¹ The Thirteenth Dalai Lama rejected any official role for Dorjiev in discussions with the British in 1914.

¹² See NYT, February 9, 1913, 4:6:2 for a discussion of reports in *Novoe Vremya*.

¹³ Whereas the Younghusband Expedition was pushed by Curzon as Viceroy over the doubts and objections of the British Home government.

¹⁴ Wang and Suo 1984, 151.

mid-nineteenth century on, the European powers continued to treat it as if it were part of the Turkish Empire. There were several important advantages to this, one of which was that the Turkish equivalent of China's Unequal Treaties continued to apply there. These restricted Egypt's tariff autonomy and allowed Europeans to be tried in their own courts under their own laws.¹⁵ When Turkish rights over Egypt became a problem the foreign powers could defend Egypt's autonomy. When Egypt became too independent, the foreign powers could support Turkey's theoretical authority. This state of affairs remained until Egypt was forced to declare independence in World War I and so became a British colony in all but name.¹⁶ At the other end of the Ottoman Empire, Serbian autonomy was granted in 1817, the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople gave "autonomy" to the Romanian states of Moldavia and Wallachia and the 1878 Treaty of Berlin granted "autonomy" to three Bosnian regions and Bulgaria. The lack of any real power in the hands of the "suzerain" Turkish state can be seen by the fact that two "autonomous" states, Serbia and Bulgaria, went to war in 1885, and that in 1908 the Austro-Hungarian Empire (as the protecting power) annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina while giving Novipazar back to the Turks.¹⁷

Rather than supporting outright annexations or independence the Western powers supported a status that was more of a half-way house. Instead of direct foreign rule or independence for a former subject population, the theory seems to have been that the Turkish government would be slightly less embarrassed by autonomy. If there was an ideological basis to these claims it would appear to be an "Orientalist" argument that the Turks would not be concerned with the reality of power as long as they could make a theoretical claim. The real benefits would belong to the practical realistic Europeans who, supposedly, operated in the real world rather than in the realm of Oriental fantasy. In the Tibetan case, the Qing Empire had been the "Sick Man of Asia" just as the Ottoman Empire was. The British would play a role in Tibet similar to that which the Austro-Hungarians had played in Bosnia - an outside power would help administer the region on behalf of the suzerain state, but in fact would become the colonial rulers.

The British policy, however, did include the demand for a border which would eventually conform to the basic principles behind the McMahon line. Essentially this meant pushing the control of the Indian administration up to the watershed of the

¹⁵ Cleveland 1994, 99-105. Hourani 1992, 282-284.

¹⁶ Hourani 1992, 317-318.

¹⁷ Cleveland 1994, 129. Forbes *et al.* 1915, 53-64, 125-6, 142-4.

mountain chains that divide India and Tibet.¹⁸ The problem would be getting the Chinese to agree to such terms. Even getting the Chinese to agree to talk to the British about Tibet was a problem. In September 1912 the Chinese government flatly refused to talk to the British about the status and future of Tibet.¹⁹ In the end the British Home Government simply threatened to deal unilaterally with the Tibetans. In the face of this threat, which would be a *de facto* recognition of Tibetan independence, the Chinese reluctantly sent a negotiator to Simla in India to discuss Tibet's future.

The fact that the British government was attempting to replace the theoretical rights the Chinese still retained in Tibet with a very real British influence caused the British government some minor embarrassment in the British press. For instance Lucian Wolf, in *The Graphic*, wrote a long article contrasting Edward Grey's attitude to Panama (where he was insisting that existing treaties gave Britain the right to a say in the Panama canal and equality with the Americans) with Grey's views on Tibet.²⁰ According to Wolf,

[t]he integrity and independence of China are surely no less warranted by treaty than uniform shipping tolls in the interoceanic canal.

Over the treaty aspects of the Tibetan question, however, I do not propose to linger. If civilized nations cannot observe their solemn engagements among themselves they will certainly not do so to their hurt when the other parties to them happen to be yellow infidels equally unblessed by Christianity and Dreadnoughts....If after the Younghusband campaign we had done what he now has in view, I could have understood it. Moreover, it would have had a certain moral sanction. Instead of that we made fresh terms with the Dalai[sic], and got them confirmed and guaranteed in Peking. In other words, we insisted on China's ultimate responsibility....

Now suddenly and peremptorily, we have called upon China to restore home rule to the Tibetans. Why? No one seems to know....The question of right is, as I have already said, negligible. Nevertheless, it may be useful to point out that China's right to do as she pleases with Tibet is incontestable, and that by two treaties - the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906 and the Anglo-Russian

¹⁸ At least in the north-east part of the border. However there had been no real surveys done at this time and so McMahon relied on guesswork in places. These did not always correspond to the watershed and that fact was to be very important in the 1962 Indo-Chinese War.

¹⁹ NYT, September 2, 1912, 4:7.

²⁰ Sir Edward Grey was Foreign Secretary 1905-16. He was made a Viscount in 1916 and served as Chancellor of Oxford University, 1928-33. See Taylor 1967, 3n1.

convention of 1907 - we have pledged ourselves not to interfere in the internal affairs of Tibet.²¹

Well before the Simla Conference started both the Liberal *London Chronicle* and the *London News* condemned the British government's policy of Tibet.²² This policy was, according to these two papers, at its simplest, to insist that China was the suzerain in Tibet and not the sovereign power.

3.4 China and Tibetan Independence

On 13 October 1913, representatives of Great Britain, Tibet and China began talks to place relations between the three on a more formal and permanent basis. These talks began with an exchange of credentials and opening statements from the Tibetans and Chinese concerning their claims to Tibet. In these claims the three parties put forward differing versions of history and Tibet's relationship with China that would define the dispute. The Chinese insisted that Tibet was part of China and that all talk of independence was being fostered by aggressive foreign powers. The Tibetans claimed that their relationship was not with China but with the Manchu emperors personally and so Tibet was not part of China. The British case is more complex because in fact there were two main British views. The British Indian administration took a much harder line than the British Home government. Officially the British claimed to hold no views on this matter but in private acknowledged Tibet had been part of China, but now should be removed from Chinese control.

In a sense the struggle for Tibetan independence has been a struggle to get the rest of the world to accept a narrative constructed by the Lhasan authorities in the face of Chinese and even British narratives. This is especially important in Tibet because the traditional Tibetan state did not require (nor is there any reason to think they wanted) a politically aware population. To all intents and purposes what narrative the Tibetan *people* accept is and always has been irrelevant to the Tibetan authorities, all Chinese governments and also to the British. Therefore, perhaps the most important feature of the Simla Conference was who was not invited - the ordinary people of Tibet. If there was to be any basis for common agreement between the Dalai Lama's regime and the Chinese government they had to find an objective means to settle their dispute. In the modern world the most common is simply to ask people to vote. There are no guarantees that the Chinese government would have abided (or would today

²¹ Reproduced in the NYT, September 22, 1912, 4:3:3.

²² See the editorial in the NYT, September 3 1912, 10:2.

abide) by such a vote, but it is the most widely respected way of measuring which particular nationalist myth most people accept. The Tibetans did not do this in 1911 nor in 1914 nor at any date since. Nor has the Chinese Communist party chosen to do so since 1959. In 1913 the British would attempt to force a settlement of the Tibetan issue based on highly complex arguments derived entirely from the Western legal tradition.

The Conference began with an open claim by the Tibetan representative, the Lonchen Shatra²³, for complete Tibetan independence from China. They did so in terms that were taken from a modern Western political discourse, but which were also highly coloured by Tibetan religious tradition. The letter of credentials the Dalai Lama gave Shatra claimed that the Dalai Lama was "the owner of both the religious and secular powers of Tibet".²⁴ The opening statement of Tibetan claims began with, "[f]irstly, it is decided that Tibet is an independent state and that the Precious Protector, the Dalai Lama, is the ruler of Tibet, in all temporal as well as in spiritual affairs."²⁵ The Tibetans also clearly stated their opinion that the relations between the Tibetans and Qing dynasty were those between a teacher and a disciple but they had been destroyed by the 1911 Revolution.²⁶

Since 1959 there have been attempts by all parties to push various versions of the events during the Simla Conference. The dispute, in part, has arisen from different claims about the legal nature of these events. The Chinese government, whether Nationalist or Communist, has always taken a strictly legalistic view of the events, describing the Simla Convention as "illegal", "null and void" and "an ignominious deed by British imperialism".²⁷ It also has been claimed, notably by Michael van Walt van Praag, the Dalai Lama's legal adviser, that the acceptance of the Tibetan negotiator's credentials by the British and Chinese amounted to implied recognition of Tibet's independence.²⁸ The legal basis of this is the *Deutsche Continental Gas Gesellschaft v. Poland* case in which it was held that Germany had implicitly recognised the new state of Poland when on 15 January 1919, Poland was admitted to the Paris Peace

²³ Paljor Dorje Shatra was a leading Tibetan noble who had been sent to Darjeeling to study the British in the 1890s. In 1904 he was disgraced for allegedly accepting bribes from the British. In 1907 the Dalai Lama, in exile on Mongolia, appointed him Lonchen (Prime Minister). He died in 1923. Shakabpa 1967, 203, 208, 221, 262.

²⁴ Mehra 1979-80, 68.

²⁵ Mehra 1979-80, 1:71.

²⁶ Smith 1996, 190-1.

²⁷ Wang and Suo 1984, 153. Although this is a Communist view the Nationalists have not differed greatly in their position.

²⁸ Van Walt van Praag 1987, 137. Also see Shakabpa 1967, 251.

Conference and "the full powers of [Poland's] delegation were, *without reservation*, recognized, admitted and accepted as being in order and valid by the delegation which negotiated in the name of Germany and represented that State."²⁹ This legally based argument has, of course, no basis in Chinese or Tibetan culture nor in their shared history. The Tibetan narrative on sovereignty and independence derives from a religious argument based on Tibet's history of Mongol and Manchu rule. The Chinese Communist government has adopted an anti-imperialist argument taken from a particular school of Western thought although Chinese tradition and culture must inform much of their policies. It is a sign of the political and cultural dominance of the West, even as the West's actual physical domination of the world was coming to an end, that the discussion of Tibetan independence should take place in terms that are almost entirely derived from Western political history. It is also an indicator of the intolerance of Western legal culture that two Asian cultural traditions have been forced to adopt a Western cultural frame of reference. Actions which took place in an Inner Asian cultural setting and were performed by Manchu and Tibetans are judged by the standards of Poland and Germany.

In any event there is no obvious way of telling what a real court of law might have decided in the case of Tibet. But in 1919 the legal judgement against Germany revolved around the fact that the powers of Poland's delegation were accepted without reservation by the Germans. This was certainly not the case for China at the Simla Conference. From the start China objected to Tibet's equal status and openly preferred to negotiate with the British alone.³⁰ In China's opening statement Chen Yifan (Ivan Chen³¹) went out of his way explicitly and clearly to reject the idea that Tibet was independent in the opinion of the Chinese government. Moreover Chen clearly stated that the new Republican Government had no intention of letting any part of China secede by stating the Republic "has no right to alienate any part of the territory which she has inherited from the Manchu dynasty, and she must maintain the extent of her territory the same as before."³²

It is impossible to describe this as either a traditional Chinese argument or a

²⁹ Quoted in Van Walt van Praag 1987, 137. Italics added.

³⁰ As Hugh Richardson (1945, 15) makes clear in his *Tibetan Precise*, claiming the Chinese "continued to harp on about the status of their delegates long after the other parties were ready".

³¹ Chen Yifan served in the Chinese Legation in London 1903-11. In 1912 he was appointed to a civil post on the Burmese border. From 1913 to 1914 he served as the Commissioner for Trade and Foreign Affairs at Shanghai.

³² Mehra, 1979-80, 1:75

modern Western one which the Republic had adopted. In fact it could easily be both. If there is any recurring feature of Chinese history it is that a larger China is usually a China in which the ethnically Chinese Han do not dominate. This is especially true of Mongolia which has been ruled from China intermittently. Yet, invariably, that Chinese state was formed by non-Han people from the north. The Qing, as one of the few non-Han states to rule all China, also happened to rule Tibet. In most cases any ethnically Han successor state tried, and failed, to rule the peripheral parts of the former Empire as well. The Ming dynasty, for instance, initially tried to rule all Mongolia capturing the old Yuan capital of Karakorum.³³ Just as typically the Ming failed and eventually retreated to build the Great Wall. Yet if this was a Chinese historical tradition that Chen drew on, it did not openly appear in his counter-proposal to Tibet's claim presented on October 30, 1913. Using entirely Western language Chen stated,

[f]rom what has been related it is evident that the claims presented in the Tibetan statement are inadmissible, and in answer to them the following demands are made as the only basis for negotiations of the Tibetan question:

i) It is hereby agreed by the undersigned that Tibet forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of China, that no attempts shall be made by Tibet or by Great Britain to interrupt the continuity of this territorial integrity, and that China's rights of every description which have existed in consequence of this territorial integrity shall be respected by Tibet and recognized by Great Britain.³⁴

From this opening statement it is clear that any claim that the Chinese delegates recognised the independence of Tibet without any reservations is not supported by the evidence. Chen, on behalf of the Chinese Republican government, made strenuous objections to the idea of Tibetan independence and rejected them even as a topic of discussion at Simla. The Tibetans may have believed they were formally independent in 1913, but it is also possible that such claims were merely ambit claims which the Tibetans did not expect anyone to take particularly seriously. In the Tibetans' opening statement of claims, the Lonchen Shatra also claimed that the border between Tibet and China should include Xikang, and that the revenue from this province should be returned to Tibet, that "the People of Mongolia and China send monks to the different

³³ For details of the early Ming attempts to conquer Mongolia see Barfield (1989, 119), Chan (1988, 227-9), and Dreyer (1988, 102-3).

³⁴ Mehra 1979-80, 1:72-3.

monasteries in Tibet and also pay vast tributes to the monasteries. The Buddhist monasteries and other religious institutions in Mongolia and China recognize the Dalai Lama as their religious head. All these facts will continue to be recognized as at present", and that "the Chinese Government will compensate the Tibet Government soon in money for all the forcible exactions of money and other property taken from the Tibetan government, for the revenue of Nyarong and other districts which they kept in their possession by force, for destroying houses and property of monasteries, officials and subjects of Tibet, and for the damage done to the persons or property of Nepalese or Ladakis".³⁵ It would be, of course, very hard to reconcile the independence of Tibet with the Dalai Lama being the head of all Buddhist and other religious institutions in China.³⁶ The Tibetan authorities could not expect the British and Chinese delegates to take these claims seriously, as they did not, and so perhaps did not expect them to take their claims of independence seriously either. However if these were not ambit claims then they suggest the Tibetan authorities were dangerously out of touch with reality given the inability of the Tibetans to force the Chinese to agree to them.

3.5 Britain and Tibetan Independence

Although it has been claimed that the Tibetan demands came as a surprise to the British, the Tibetans had in fact made their views known to Sir Charles Bell, then the Political Officer in Sikkim and hence in effect to Tibet.³⁷ The British were not prepared to recognise what amounted to Tibetan independence, and the Government of India decided not to oppose either China's claims or Tibet's, so it could appear to be an impartial mediator. However the text of the Simla Convention itself, although it exists in several different forms, explicitly states that Sir Arthur Henry McMahon³⁸, Chen Yifan and Lonchen Shatra had concluded the Simla Convention after "having communicated to each other their respective full powers and finding them to be in good and due form".³⁹ This seems to imply agreement by the Chinese that the Tibetan

³⁵ Mehra, 1979-80, 1:71-2.

³⁶ In fact this looks rather like an admission Tibet was still, somehow, part of China.

³⁷ For the surprise claim see Smith 1996, 191. Compare with Enclosure to *India to Crewe*, June 27, 1913.

³⁸ Sir Arthur Henry McMahon (b. 1862) held a variety of posts on India's North West Frontier and Afghanistan from 1891 to 1911. These included serving as political officer to the Durand mission to Afghanistan 1894-6, working on demarcating the boundary between Baluchistan and Afghanistan, 1899-1901 and various political offices in Dir, Swat, Chitral, Seistan, and Baluchistan. He was subsequently appointed High Commissioner to Egypt in 1919.

³⁹ See the powers in Mehra 1979-80, 1:68-9.

delegation's claims to independence were valid. However as the Simla Convention was never actually signed by the Chinese, it is hard to argue that this fact alone, over the objections of the Chinese delegate, amounts to a proper legal acknowledgment of Tibetan independence.

Explicit objections to the status of Tibet were made by Ivan Chen in talks with Archibald Rose on April 15, 1914.⁴⁰ According to Rose, "Mr Chen objected strongly to the status of equality given to Tibet vis-à-vis China and Great Britain. I referred Mr Chen to the despatch from His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Peking to the Wai Chiao Pu, dated 25th August 1913, and told him that the question of status could not be re-opened." Chen objected to the British claims and said that the recognition of equality between China and Tibet was out of the question. To this Rose replied that "until the seal of the Tibetan plenipotentiary had actually been affixed to an agreement such as was now under consideration, the status of Tibet was that of an independent nation recognising no allegiance to China."⁴¹ Chen also asked for an explicit reference to Tibet being part of China within the main part of the Simla Convention. Rose found this acceptable and such a declaration was made Note 1 attached to the Convention itself. Chen wanted the political limits of suzerainty clearly spelled out in a separate agreement. Rose rejected this pointing out that the term was vague, that no authority on international law had been able to define it properly and that the British Government would not consider the idea. The advantage of it to the British is obvious, given that a specific description of China's rights meant a specific limitation of the interference Britain could exercise in Tibet if the British authorities wished to do so.⁴² As an indication of what the Chinese also wanted, Chen requested that the article forbidding Tibetans to sit in China's Parliament be dropped. This was refused.

When Rose claimed that "until the seal of the Tibetan plenipotentiary had actually been affixed to an agreement such as was now under consideration, the status of Tibet was that of an independent nation recognising no allegiance to China" it certainly appears that the British recognised Tibet as an independent country.⁴³

⁴⁰ Archibald Rose (b. 1879) served in the British legation at Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion. Subsequently was appointed consul at Chongqing, Ningbo and Hangzhou. He represented the British Foreign Office at Simla before being appointed commercial attache at Shanghai and then Beijing. He retired in 1921.

⁴¹ Mehra 1979-80, 1:95.

⁴² In Egypt the British would soon stretch "autonomy" to mean the British could fight in Egypt, without Egyptian permission, against Turkey, Egypt's suzerain power, and Turkey's allies.

⁴³ Mehra 1979-80, 1:95.

However there are some doubts about whether this statement reflected the opinion of the British government, or just Rose himself, or was in fact a statement which Rose knew not to be true but which he was using to put pressure on the Chinese delegation. It is possible that Rose was stating a position the British Indian administration would like to have been true.⁴⁴ It is hard to argue that the statement alone bound the British Government to recognise Tibet's independence. This is especially true given that the British Home government did not intend to make Tibet independent. The objections Chen made to the draft Simla Convention make it clear that China still considered that Tibet was part of China, in particular the insistence that Tibet be represented in the Chinese Parliament. The British refused to consider this as an option, presumably because such representation would imply that Tibet was an integral part of China. On the 20 April the Chinese Foreign Ministry explicitly told Chen that the Chinese Government would never agree that Tibet could not be represented in the Chinese Parliament and they also objected to the border between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet.

When asked to sign the Convention as it then was, Chen had told the British that he did not have the power to sign without his government's approval. He was however prepared to initial it which he did on the 27th of April. The response by the British negotiator was to inform the Chinese that the Tibetans and British had initialled the agreement and if the Chinese did not sign then Articles Two and Four of the draft would be cancelled. The main points in these two articles were the recognition of Chinese suzerainty and the right of the Chinese government to send an Amban with an escort to Lhasa. On the 28th April, 1914, the Chinese Government formally disavowed the Simla Convention which Chen had initialled the previous day. On informing Sir Henry McMahon of this, together with assurances that China was prepared to continue negotiations, Chen was told that the Conference was over, there was no time for further discussions and Articles Two and Four were hereby cancelled. The British would sign the Agreement with the Tibetans alone as if they were an independent country.⁴⁵ Again there is no particular reason to view either of these claims as binding or other than tactical claims to put pressure on the Chinese.

By the end of June the talks had broken down irrevocably. On July 1, Crewe, the British Secretary of State, told the Viceroy that McMahon ought to end the conference on 3 July, and, if the Chinese refused to sign the Convention, McMahon ought to stop negotiations. As far as the Tibetans were concerned, McMahon was told

⁴⁴ Although Rose was a representative of the Foreign Office (i.e. the British Home government) unlike McMahon who was a representative of the Indian administration.

⁴⁵ Mehra 1979-80, 1:107.

to express "great regret at failure to arrive at a settlement and should also assure Lonchen Shatra that Tibet may depend on diplomatic support of His Majesty's Government and on any assistance in the way of munitions of war which we can give them, if aggression on the part of China continues."⁴⁶ The next day, July 2, Crewe took an even stronger line about what McMahon was to do. McMahon was told to tell the Tibetans that the British Government considered the status and boundaries of Tibet were as the initialled Convention showed. That is to say, the British were willing to go ahead as if the Convention was properly signed. Presumably this meant that the British Government did not accept that Articles Two and Four had been cancelled. The next day, July 3, Crewe formally told McMahon that "separate signature with Tibet cannot be authorized by His Majesty's Government" and that McMahon ought to do what he had been told to on the two previous days.⁴⁷ On the same day, July 3, McMahon signed a separate agreement with the Tibetans anyway. This separate agreement between McMahon and Shatra acknowledged the Simla Convention as binding on Tibet and Britain. Furthermore the two governments agreed that "as long as the Government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid Convention, she will be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing therefrom."⁴⁸

3.6 The Validity of the Simla Convention

It is not only possible, but, given the evidence, reasonably certain that McMahon signed the agreement in full knowledge that he had been told not to do so by the British Government. This raises the obvious question of whether the separate agreement was a legally valid document. If McMahon had been given full powers by the British government to negotiate with the Chinese and the Tibetans, then, arguably, that included the power to sign a separate agreement with the Tibetans independently, even though the British Government had told him not to. However the real issue is what the status of Tibet was prior to the Conference. There are two ways of interpreting the Simla Convention, it was either an agreement designed to push the Chinese government out of Tibet and provide a buffer zone for British India, or it was an attempt to push Tibet back into China and prevent an independent Tibetan government being formed on the border with British India. Common sense seems to dictate that the British thought of it as the former, as the British made clear in their own internal documents.⁴⁹ In fact all three parties seem to be in agreement that the

⁴⁶ Mehra 1979-80, 1:110.

⁴⁷ Mehra 1979-80, 1:111.

⁴⁸ Mehra 1979-80, 1:116.

⁴⁹ For instance see Woodman 1969, 149.

Conference was designed to push China out of Tibet.⁵⁰ The claim by Rose that Tibet was already independent can hardly be regarded as a statement of the position of the British government but rather a method of bullying the Chinese into agreeing to sign the Simla Convention. At best it represents the view of the British Indian administration, but cannot be considered as binding on anyone because of that fact. Similarly the cancellation of Articles Two and Four seems to have no validity and simply served as another threat. Certainly on August 17, 1912, Sir John Jordan, the British Ambassador to China, wrote to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs saying,

His Majesty's Government, while they have formally recognized the "suzerain rights" of China in Tibet, have never recognized, and are not prepared to recognize, the right of China to intervene actively in the internal administration of Tibet which should remain, as contemplated by the Treaties, in the hands of the Tibetan Authorities, subject to the right of Great Britain and China, under Article I of the Convention of April 27, 1906, to take such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfilment of Treaty stipulations.⁵¹

Thus in 1912 the British Home Government did not recognise Tibetan independence and did recognise the suzerainty of China over Tibet. What the British government meant by "suzerainty" was that the Chinese government would preside over the Tibetan government in theory but would not actually govern. In that case suzerainty implies a high degree of autonomy which not only verges on independence, it is rather hard to distinguish from the real thing.

In the 1914 Agreement, while the British and Tibetans agreed to recognise that Tibet was part of China and that Tibet was "under the suzerainty of China", the Chinese also had to agree that Tibet was to be autonomous and that they would not interfere in the administration of Tibet, or convert Tibet into a province, or send soldiers there, or import civilian settlers.⁵² In this agreement the concept of autonomy for Tibet appears in a formal legal document for the first time, albeit one that China refused to sign. In the absence of any explicit decision or behaviour by the British Government to the contrary, it is hard to argue that the British position changed during the Simla Conference. In legal terms Sir John Jordan's August 17, 1912 memorandum alone seems to be enough to create a legally binding recognition of China's rights in

⁵⁰ Which raises the question of why the Tibetans turned up at all if they were already independent.

⁵¹ *Sir John Jordan's Memorandum to the Wai-chiao-pu, Peking 17 August 1912.* Mehra 1979, 1:66-68. Woodman 1969, 382.

⁵² Mehra 1979, 1:111-116.

Tibet before 1913.⁵³ Whether or not McMahon's actions, in defiance of his Government, were legally binding, they do seem to represent a personal view which McMahon held and not one which reflected the views of his Government. The agreement between the British and Tibetans was certainly contrary to the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention which the British Home government seems to have considered still valid.⁵⁴ Indeed the British negotiators went into the Simla talks in the belief that Tibetans claims to independence were "of course not to be supported."⁵⁵

The 1914 Anglo-Tibetan agreement also stated that China would be "debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing" from the Simla Convention until such time as China signed it. This is also an interesting statement, but it is hard to see how it could reflect the legal reality or the opinion of the British Government. China's legal position in Tibet did not depend on the opinions of Sir Henry McMahon and the Lonchen Shatra. Nor did China's rights derive from the views of the British and Tibetan Governments.⁵⁶ Rather China's rights arose from the objective facts of the situation as well as past and present recognition of those rights by China, Tibet and all the other foreign powers. In international law a treaty between two parties cannot impose an obligation on a third party. Any such treaty "which purported to impose an obligation upon a third party would to that extent be null and void; for the general principle prevails that *pacta tertiis nec nocent nec prosunt*.[....] According to the principle *pacta tertiis nec nocent nec prosunt*, a treaty concerns the contracting States only; neither rights nor duties, as a rule, arise under a treaty for third States which are not parties to the treaty."⁵⁷ Thus after the Simla Convention the British and Tibetan Governments could not rely on a treaty which the Chinese did not sign to impose any obligation or duty on China or to take away any of China's rights.⁵⁸

The exception to the rule that the British alone could not unilaterally change China's rights in Tibet was British acknowledgment of Tibet's full independence. It is the view of some modern scholars, for instance Michael C. van Walt van Praag, that the British recognised Tibet's independence after the breakdown of the Simla

⁵³ i.e. by estoppel, the legal obligation of nations to adhere to positions they claimed to hold in the past.

⁵⁴ See Ahmad 1960, 20.

⁵⁵ Richardson 1945, 17.

⁵⁶ See Rubin 1968, 125.

⁵⁷ Oppenheim 1928, 1:713,735.

⁵⁸ Sinha (1977, 36-7) passes over the signing away of China's rights by Tibet and Britain. Tibet might have been able to sign away its own rights, but not those of China if it was still part of China.

Chapter Three: The Simla Conference

Conference.⁵⁹ The main British officials in the Indian administration who dealt with Tibetan issues did not behave as if Tibet was independent. What Basil Gould and Hugh Richardson did argue was that until China signed the Convention, China would in fact gain none of the advantages the Convention granted. For instance Richardson has argued that the Chinese could not claim any of the benefits of,

The operation in her favour of the 1890, 1904 and 1906 Treaties.

Recognition of suzerainty.

The right to appoint an Amban at Lhasa.

Admission that China is not a foreign power.

Any recognition of the conceptions of Outer and Inner Tibet.

Admission that Tibet forms part of Chinese territory.

Any concern in the appointment of a Dalai Lama.

Any limitation of the strength of British escorts in Tibet.⁶⁰

Few of these are real benefits unless it assumed that after 1914 Tibet became independent. This in turn depends on the validity of the Simla Convention and the subsequent Anglo-Tibetan agreement. However there is no sign that the British Government treated them as valid legal documents. For instance, the Simla Convention was not published in Aitchison's collection of treaties until the mid-thirties. If they had been legally binding in 1914, the British Government's subsequent refusal to recognise them probably was enough to allow the Chinese to claim the British had relinquished any rights under the Treaties.

In July 1914, while speaking on the House of Commons on appropriations for the Foreign Office, Sir Edward Grey, then the British Foreign Secretary, said,

[i]f China does not sign [the Simla Convention], but resorts to an aggressive policy the consequences must be disastrous for China. There certainly will be grave trouble on the Indian frontier which will require Great Britain to take up the matter seriously with the Government of China.⁶¹

There is no implication in this statement that, if the Chinese resorted to force in Tibet, they would be violating Tibet's independence. In 1918 the Western press reported, from China, that the Tibetans were in revolt from China and that the Chinese

⁵⁹ Van Walt van Praag 1987, 138.

⁶⁰ Richardson 1945, 20.

⁶¹ Quoted in the NYT, July 11, 1914, 3:1.

government had ordered troops into the region to suppress the rebellion.⁶² The problem, even at this stage, was that the soldiers ordered to intervene (from Gansu and Sichuan) were to all intents and purposes beyond the control of the Chinese Government. Indeed the Chinese authorities had much greater problems. At the same time as they were giving these orders, the Japanese had forced them to declare Kalgan, Guihua, Taonan, Hulutao, Tolun, and Chi-fu-no, all deep within China's northern inland territory, as commercial ports on the Treaty port model. They had also signed an agreement with the Japanese government for the construction of a railway from Shandong to Zhili and a massive loan from the Bank of Chosen.⁶³ There were also reports that the Tibetans were getting unofficial help from the British administration. The Chinese were not slow to appreciate the need to manipulate Western opinion. The *New York Times* reported from Beijing that the Tibetan revolt was part of a German conspiracy based on information received from the Chinese Government. There is of course no reason whatsoever to believe this, but it shows a degree of sophistication in China, and war hysteria in America, that such a report would ever be published.

Certainly the British Government did not behave as if the Convention was a legally binding document. In 1919 the British again tried to pressure the Chinese into signing an agreement on the Simla model. The Chinese Government, again, tried to put the best possible spin on this. In August the *New York Times*, reporting discussions with the Chinese Foreign Ministry, claimed the British and Chinese had agreed on a formula for Tibetan autonomy.⁶⁴ Significantly this agreement was reported to include agreement on Chinese *sovereignty* over Tibet. Yet a month later the *New York Times* reported that negotiations were still on-going and that claims that the British were pressuring the Chinese had been "authoritatively denied".⁶⁵ These talks opened up another area of disagreement with yet another Power. Until 1918 the British had disputed control of Tibet with the Russians and the Chinese. In 1919 the Japanese began to become interested in the region. In September 1919 the Japanese stepped forward in the somewhat unlikely guise of the defender of China's rights in Tibet. The Japanese press began to accuse the British of forcing the Chinese to give up Tibet.⁶⁶

In 1921, when Lord Curzon had returned to Britain and had become the Foreign Secretary, he attempted to get the Chinese to re-open talks on Tibet's status.

⁶² For instance NYT July 16, 1918, 5:6. NYT July 18, 1918, 6:5.

⁶³ NYT, July 16, 1918, 5:6.

⁶⁴ NYT August 19, 1919, 6:2.

⁶⁵ NYT September 12 1919, 8:2.

⁶⁶ See reports of the Japanese press claims in the NYT September 16, 1919, 5:4.

This effort failed and in response Curzon informed the Chinese Government that "His Majesty's Government [...] do not feel justified in withholding any longer their recognition of the status of Tibet as an autonomous state under the suzerainty of China and intend dealing with Tibet in future on this basis."⁶⁷ If the British only acknowledged Tibet's autonomy in 1921, then the obvious question was what was Tibet's status in 1920. As the recognition here is a punishment for China's refusal to reopen talks on Tibet or sign the Simla convention, it is clear that Curzon saw this as pushing China out of Tibet. Therefore, according to the British, the legal status of Tibet before this must have been as part of China. Thus any rights China had in Tibet still existed regardless of what the British and even Tibetan governments might have thought. The rights that China refused to sign away must include all the benefits conferred under the 1890, 1904 and 1906 Treaties unless the British had already repudiated them, the existence of Chinese suzerainty if not sovereignty, the non-existence of any Chinese recognition of Tibetan autonomy, the right to interfere in the administration of Tibet, the right to convert Tibet into a province, no recognition of any British rights in Tibet, the right to send as many soldiers as China liked into Tibet, the right to negotiate directly with the Tibetans, recognition that China was not a foreign power in Tibet and the non-recognition of the border between Inner and Outer Tibet, or even the existence of these two concepts. These must be regarded as rights that China had prior to the 1914 Conference and which, given China did not sign them away, China still held afterwards. The views of Sir Basil Gould, Hugh Richardson and van Walt van Praag simply represent their personal views which were, admittedly, shared by a large number of British officials in the Indian administration. In particular the claim by van Walt van Praag that Britain recognised Tibet's independence after the failure of the Simla Conference has no basis in the historical record.

The issue of the McMahon line is far more complex. The border with India was to be a source of friction between the newly independent Indian government and the People's Republic of China. Both countries would promote versions of the events during the Simla Conference as the objective truth. The truth of these conflicting narratives is difficult to establish. There can be little doubt that the exchange of notes between Sir Henry McMahon and the Lonchen Shatra took place in March 1914 without the knowledge of the Chinese delegate, nor were the Chinese subsequently informed of these discussions. Or, at least, if the Chinese were informed no acknowledgment appears in the Conference documents.

⁶⁷ F 1902/59/10. *The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston to Sir B. Alston (Peking), July 9, 1921, 7 PM.* DBFP 1966, 14:338-9. Richardson 1945, 28.

It has been claimed that one of the purposes of the Simla convention was to fix the border between British India and Tibet.⁶⁸ Yet the Chinese were never informed of the new border, nor was it a subject of discussion at the Conference. However Sir Henry McMahon did present a map showing the border between Inner and Outer Tibet to Chen Yifan who initialled it. It has been a long standing Indian claim, picked up from the British Indian administration, that by initialling the map during the Conference, Chen committed the Chinese Government to accepting the McMahon line. This has always been challenged by all Chinese governments ever since. In international law any treaty may be invalid if it is obtained by fraud. By not telling Chen that he was signing a map that included the results of private discussions on Tibet's southern border it is hard to make a moral case that the Chinese Government was bound by the decision. Certainly for an empire which, as Curzon often claimed, never behaved in an underhanded manner, getting a Chinese signature in this way was a particularly shameful trick. However if Tibet had some degree of "international personality" that allowed Tibet alone to make binding foreign treaties then it might be argued that the McMahon line is a valid border. The Tibetans certainly signed a variety of treaties with a range of other countries, including the British and Nepalese. Some of these the Chinese explicitly recognised such as the 1904 Anglo-Tibetan Agreement. If the Tibetans had the right to conduct their own foreign policy then the McMahon line would be legal. It is the strong implication of deceit in the manner in which the British obtained Chinese agreement that makes it questionable. Few countries could really want to claim openly that such a method is consistent with their national dignity. More importantly it is unlikely that the British public would have been happy about the manner in which China's "agreement" was obtained much less the Minister who had to stand up in Parliament and defend it. In fact, as it turned out, even the Indians have been less than happy to claim the Simla Conference made the McMahon line their legal border. It was always Nehru's line that the Sino-Indian border was defined by custom and usage rather than by treaty.

Since the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa in 1959 it has been claimed by members of his immediate staff that China no longer has any legal claim to Tibet. These claims have most frequently come from his former Minister W. D. Shakabpa and his legal adviser, Michael van Walt van Praag. One of these claims is that the Chinese implicitly recognised that the Tibetans were now independent by insisting that the Tibetans "rejoin" the Republic. Evidence that the Chinese accepted anything other than a temporary separation from China is hard to come by. Shortly after the failure of the Simla Conference, the Tibetans and Chinese began fighting after what appears to have

⁶⁸ For instance Alexandrowicz 1953, 498.

been an attempt by the Chinese Government to impose their view of the proper relations on Tibet by force. That is to say, what was left of the Chinese Army in Xikang crossed into Tibet proper and began to march on Lhasa. Backed by fairly small amounts of British weaponry, the Tibetans were, as it turned out, more than capable of looking after themselves.⁶⁹ The Chinese General Peng Risheng wrote to the Tibetans saying,

[y]ou must be aware that Tibet, which was formerly subject to the Emperor of China, is now subject to the President of the Chinese Republic. You Tibetans have rebelled, as servants revolting against their masters. Evil thoughts have entered your hearts and your lips have uttered falsehoods. The Chinese Emperor[sic] can protect his own dominions and has no need of British mediation. The Chinese soldiers who have advanced from Riwoche are travelling in their own country and can go where they please.⁷⁰

No more explicit refusal of the Chinese Government to accept the independence of the Tibetans could be imagined.

3.7 Results of the Simla Convention

The Simla Convention is not important because of what it achieved. Indeed it could be argued that it achieved nothing positive for any of the parties concerned. For the Tibetans it merely increased Chinese paranoia about British imperialism and guaranteed that all Chinese governments would claim that Tibetan independence did not reflect the wishes of the Tibetan people but of a corrupt and treasonable upper class. For the Chinese the Simla Conference increased their insecurity by providing an opportunity for the Tibetans to behave as if they were independent on the world stage. For the British it provided a sorry tale of clever British diplomacy with shabby tricks which was ultimately unsuccessful.

If the Simla Conference managed to achieve anything it was the creation of the framework for all future discussions of the Tibetan issue. From 1914 on the issues would not be open Tibetan independence, but autonomy within China. While the failure of the Conference might have justified a simple recognition of the independence of Tibet, the British did not choose this option. Rather they tried to get Chinese and Tibetan recognition of a half-way house - Chinese suzerainty over an autonomous

⁶⁹ Lamb 1989, 56-7.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Teichman 1922, 53.

Tibet. The main problem with this is the impossibility of any sort of real definition of suzerainty. In his *Tibetan Precis* written in 1944-5 for the British Indian administration, Hugh Richardson provided a definition of suzerainty from Fowler as "[n]ominal sovereignty over a semi-independent or internally autonomous state." He went on to admit that the term itself had "never been defined and, indeed, appears to be incapable of absolute definition and to take its colour from the particular circumstances of each case".⁷¹ Although the Chinese government did not ratify the Simla Convention, and for the time being the matter was dropped, the Simla meeting itself introduced some new concepts into British diplomacy over Tibet which were to shape the rest of "autonomous" Tibet's history. These concepts can be summed up in Richardson's own words as "Chinese suzerainty with Tibetan autonomy" with Tibet being represented by the Dalai Lama's administration. There would be no doubt in anyone's mind that the Dalai Lama represented in some way the central authority within Tibet at the expense of the Panchen Lama and the other local rulers. There were few people after Simla who would deny that the Tibetans had some sort of relationship with the Chinese government. The most contentious issues would be defining these terms and getting all parties to accept them. In particular the issue of autonomy has yet to be settled to the satisfaction of any of the parties concerned. The Dalai Lama's government may well have preferred independence, but in practice has accepted "autonomy" in 1951 and right up to the 1988 Strasbourg declaration. The majority of Chinese governments would probably have preferred to run Tibet as another province within China. Yet first the Nationalists and then the Communists have accepted "autonomy".⁷²

The problem has always been the interpretation both the central and Lhasan authorities place on autonomy. In the modern People's Republic of China it is fair to say autonomy essentially has no meaning whatsoever. But no matter which government places which interpretation on the word, the issue is increasingly irrelevant as long as Tibet remains within China. If there is an undeniable trend in the modern world it is for central governments to intervene more and more closely in previously autonomous areas of local government and private life. In large part this is because they can. Railways, telephones, government schools, and electronic media all mean that bureaucracies far away can decide more and more of what people can and cannot do in their lives. No matter what constitutional safeguards are put in place, central

⁷¹ Richardson 1945, 16, 97-102.

⁷² Of course the Dalai Lama's 1988 definition of autonomy was very different to the one he accepted in 1950 and different again to the Communists and Nationalist views.

authorities can easily find excuses to intervene if they want to.⁷³ For the Tibetans the legal possibilities of the Simla Convention really miss the point. Whether there are any formal guarantees of Tibetan independence in the Chinese constitution or in treaties signed with major foreign Powers becomes irrelevant in the face of roads from China, airlines, state-run education and the modern world generally. Not even independence would have protected Tibet's culture and way of life from globalisation. Thus the modern history of Tibet (and for that matter China) is really a long political struggle against the modern world and its intrusions while the underlying structures of Tibetan society and the economy are being changed beyond recognition.

*no more with rapid
roads for the first time,
isolated from outside of
the world. preventing
culture & language*

⁷³ The best examples are usually found in war time. But there are the examples of segregation in the United States or the oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland pre-1969. In both cases the excuse of discrimination was so severe that the central government had to limit local autonomy. As South Africa has shown some forms of racial discrimination are so offensive to "world opinion" that national sovereignty is limited too.

Chapter Four: Diplomacy and the First World War

4.1 Introduction

One of the unintended consequences of the First World War was a massive change in Western public opinion towards the legitimate use of state power. In general terms before World War I imperialism was widely seen in the West as a positive influence on the world, but by 1950 it had become a war crime which was in theory punishable by death. The underlying cause of these cultural changes rest with the human and material costs of World War I. Britain entered the war ostensibly to support the independence of "little Belgium".¹ In fact there are many reasons to be fairly cynical of British intentions which in retrospect look more and more like a desire to maintain a traditional balance of power in mainland Europe. The British public, however, were hardly likely to support a long and bloody war for such a trivial purpose. It is not surprising that the First World War saw a massive display of government supported propaganda designed to stir war-hysteria and hatred of the Germans. From the earliest days of alleged German atrocities in Belgium to quasi-racial arguments in favour of German inferiority the British government tried to persuade the Western public that the war was in fact a moral crusade.² Or to put it more cynically, as Nietzsche once said, enough bloodshed makes any cause sacred. This massive inflation of public rhetoric soon became part of international diplomacy *via* the Treaty of Versailles, international law and the League of Nations. The main result of these events was to over-turn the basis of international diplomacy since the Conference of Vienna and to bring forward principles of ethnic nationalism and self-determination that had been honoured only on rare occasions since the French Revolution, such as the Greek War of Independence and Italian Unification.

Virtually any interpretation of these changes and the reasons behind them is bound to be extremely controversial and beyond the scope of this thesis. In line with the basic assumptions of this thesis, it will simply be assumed that the reason for such changes is the demands of modern warfare, in particular the need for more modern "total" politics during times of war. Naturally the documentation that underlies such an interpretation is open to a wide variety of interpretations. However there is certainly a great deal of evidence from the Versailles Conference, from the Disarmament Conferences of the twenties and from the politicians of the time.

¹ Taylor 1967, 50-1.

² Taylor 1967, 18-9.

4.2 The Moral Revolution in Western Diplomacy

One of the basic criticisms of the old world order which supposedly caused World War I was of secret diplomacy. President Wilson called for future diplomacy to be conducted in public, based on the simple proposition that the public would not support the backroom deals that saw the Great Powers fight each other. If diplomats had to rely on "open covenants, openly arrived at", in theory they would have to conduct a foreign policy in line with public expectations. This view was clearly part of the same American populist view that saw the First World War as a massive trick perpetrated on an unsuspecting public by upper class cliques who "really" ran the government and the world. This same line of thought, of which there was considerable evidence in America prior to Wilson going to war, produced the isolationism of the Thirties and eventually the Nye Committee. This Senate Committee, under Gerald Nye (North Dakota) and Arthur Vandenberg (Michigan) "proved" that secret deals between the Wilson administration, the arms industry and the big banks pushed America into World War I. The result was the "cash and carry" rules that applied to Britain before Pearl Harbour.³

Superficially these theories seem to derive from a Marxist world view. In fact there is little evidence that this approach is Marxist (even though the two Senators were from the mid-north-west which has a much stronger Socialist influence than the rest of America) but rather is one of the 19th century Liberal ideas that coloured the rest of American diplomacy. This liberal view undermined a fundamental part of pre-war diplomacy. Until 1919 diplomacy in the U.S. and Europe was in both theory and practice an elite profession carried out by members of the upper class or reasonable approximations thereof. The earlier American view that "politics stops at the water's edge" in effect reserved diplomacy for the members of the State Department rather than the general public.⁴ After 1919 foreign affairs were in theory subject to far more

³ These laws specifically targeted the banks by preventing them from lending money to belligerent powers. The main result of the Nye Committee, the Neutrality Acts, were passed in August 1935, February 1936, July 1936, January 1937 (these last two applied to Spain alone), May 1937 and November 1939. For a discussion of Nye's efforts see Hull 1948, 216-7, 380, 298-405, 410, 464, 510-1, 516, 649. For the logic behind them see Williams 1936, 25-33. One of the effects of such laws was that American planes could not be flown directly to Britain. There is a picture of one being towed to Canada by horses in the *New York Times*, February 9, 1940.

⁴ As can be seen by Cordell Hull's later efforts to get the American government to approve the United Nations. This was to be a "bipartisan" policy (i.e. one with no real public debate in Congress) and he worked hard to make sure the media did not criticise

public scrutiny. After all the public was drawn into World War I in a way it had not been in any other war since the wars of religion. If the public was to pay such a heavy price for diplomatic blunders, such as the start of the war, then it was reasonable to assume the public would want some increased degree of accountability. In theory this ought to have worked to the benefit of peace and the Western publics.

In fact what the Wilson administration understood but did not do anything to prevent was that during the war there was a massive manipulation of public opinion in the Allied nations. Even in America Wilson himself felt the need for laws designed to suppress Socialist opposition to the war and even to arrest people for criticising the Red Cross. The degree to which war hysteria took over the Western publics was extreme. The British Royal family had to change their surnames and expel their German relatives from institutions such as the Order of the Garter because of public intolerance. The novelist Graham Greene claimed to have seen a crowd stone a dachshund to death in the High Street of Birkhamsted.⁵ Once public opinion became important, the political establishments sought to manage it rather than follow it when important issues were deemed to be at stake. In part Western politicians were being driven by the Russian Revolution in 1917. The Soviets had captured the Imperial Russian archives and were publishing the agreements struck between the Allies and various other Powers during the war.⁶ In the face of Soviet attacks on "un-democratic" diplomacy Wilson adopted a more comprehensive critique of old-style diplomacy.

4.3 Imperialism as a War Crime

Implicit in the new forms of post-war thought is the idea that traditional, if predatory, relations between states were now unacceptable. This introduced the concept of imperialism as a specially awful crime into Western politics. Until 1914 it was not common for people to condemn their own expansion as morally wrong.⁷ While the Western powers did not immediately apply these new ideological principles to what is now the Third World, there was a gradual expansion of their application to most parts of the globe during the period from 1914 to 1959. There was also a much

the idea and that it was not included in the 1944 Presidential campaign. See Hull 1948, 1259, 1659, 1656-70.

⁵ Fussell 1977, 176.

⁶ Taylor 1967, 50.

⁷ The typical example is those scholars who condemn China's control over Tibet. It is often the case that the condemnation of China is rarely applied to Tang-era Tibetan attacks on China. See, for example, Smith 1996, 59-75.

more rapid application of these principles to the so-called non-*status quo* powers such as Italy, Japan and Germany. That is to say, after 1919 the principles of self-determination were gradually extended to the older colonial possessions of the "have" powers, but they were immediately applied to the desires of the "have not" powers. This rapid and dramatic shift in Western foreign policy meant that non-western countries faced a double challenge; not only to adapt to Western, and supposedly universal, ideological standards in terms of domestic and foreign policy, but to keep up with them as they changed due, in the main, to events that took place elsewhere and were beyond the control of most non-western peoples.⁸ In other words the Chinese would find that after the Western powers had decided in the nineteenth century, on their own and without consulting any Asian people, that China had to be forced into the ideological diplomatic framework the Western powers had constructed, the Western nations would then decide in the twentieth century, on their own and without consulting any significant number of Asians, that the whole structure had to be torn down and rebuilt.

The standard example of a nation that failed to adapt to this change was Japan which soon found that actions the West found acceptable, or even praiseworthy, in 1895 and 1904 were totally unacceptable in 1937 and 1941.⁹ While it is tempting to see this in a Whiggish light as the inevitable result of a process of history, that is far too simplistic. Rather these standards evolved over time as the result of a series of short-term and even cynical measures on the part of the Western powers. The challenge for China, in its relationship with Tibet, was to find an ideological case for Chinese control that both the West and (increasingly as time went on) the Chinese public would accept as an acceptable policy. At the same time the problem for the Tibetan administration would be to find a claim for Tibetan independence that the British and Americans would find compelling enough to recognise over the objections of the Chinese. In the end the Tibetan administration did not find one sufficiently persuasive so that any Western power recognised their *de facto* independence, and as a result Tibet remains part of China to this day.

⁸ The obvious example is the fact the Western powers forced China to agree to things like diplomatic representation in Beijing. See Hsü 1995, 302-6.

⁹ Indeed the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance followed the 1894-5 Sino-Japanese War in which Japan seized Taiwan. It was unaffected by the 1904 Russo-Japanese War in which the Japanese expanded into Manchuria. Nor did the Twenty One Demands or the demand for Germany's settlements in China bother the British. The Alliance only came to an end in 1921 when the Americans insisted.

4.4 Traditional Diplomacy in the New Era

The dilemma the Western powers found themselves in after 1919, put simply, was that once they condemned German aggression and secret diplomacy in Europe, they lacked a firm ideological case to support their own aggressive foreign policies elsewhere. If the British went to war to defend the right of small European nations to be free from foreign aggression, they would look foolish crushing small non-European nations. Thus foreign policy became more and more a dispute between whether the appropriate basis for discussion was the new foreign policy framework of human rights and self determination or the much older post-Napoleonic system of internationally recognised borders and legitimate states. In the post-1919 settlement the Allies, under American pressure, formally chose to discuss the peace settlement in terms of the new policies.¹⁰ In actual practice they continued to use the older style balance of power and *Realpolitik* forms. This can be seen in the Commentary attached to Wilson's Fourteen Points and to the policies pursued by the Allied and Associated Powers even before the Germans had accepted Wilson's terms. The more extreme Allied demands called for the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and the punishment of Germany. Even the Americans were not above a little traditional diplomacy. In June 1918 the Americans had agreed that "all branches of the Slav race should be completely freed from German and Austrian rule."¹¹ Yet they did not include this in Wilson's Points (Article 10 of which merely promised the peoples of Austria-Hungary autonomy) and they also failed to mention it to the Germans or the Austrians. The lack of any consistency is even more clear in the application of these principles to East Asia. Over Chinese objections the Japanese were given German possessions in Shandong.¹² Over Japanese objections the Americans and Australians refused to allow a condemnation of racial discrimination be written into anything connected with the Versailles Treaty or the League of Nations.¹³ The implication of the Versailles settlement is that the public needs to believe that the government is doing the right thing. It is not necessary that the government actually do the right thing, although too great a distinction between what the government says it is doing and what it actually does will alienate at least part of public opinion.

¹⁰ Temperley 1920, 1:132-3.

¹¹ Quoted in Temperley 1920, 1:134.

¹² Spence 1990, 293-4.

¹³ Curry 1968, 253-5. In 1915 Wilson had opposed America's entry into the war on the grounds that it was necessary to "keep the white race or part of it strong to meet the yellow race". Curry 1968, 158.

4.5 Self Determination

The term self determination in its modern sense, applying collectively to ethnic groups, did not enter common Western diplomatic usage until the First World War. There was no discussion of the rights to self determination in, for instance, either the Boer War or the 1904 Younghusband Expedition to Tibet. Indeed the Younghusband Expedition relied heavily on the tradition of recognised borders; the intellectual issues involved were whether Tibet was independent or part of China, and the preferences of the Tibetans themselves remained irrelevant. In 1904 the only major political groups that supported the concept were the Communists and other assorted extreme leftists. Ironically, although the concept is most often associated with American President Woodrow Wilson, it was the French and British governments who first put forward the idea as a war aim. Indeed the American President rejected supporting self determination as a war aim as late as 1917.¹⁴ The reason for this was most likely linked to Wilson's publicly proclaimed desire for a negotiated settlement to the war. Self determination was promised to a range of groups, but the main ethnic groups targeted by the Allies were in the Austro-Hungarian empire. As the Austro-Hungarian empire lacked a single dominant ethnic majority, the right of self-determination implied its break up. Yet even Wilson's Fourteen Points did not explicitly demand that the principle be applied to the Central Powers' minorities. The only relevant points were:

9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary...should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development

13. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea."¹⁵

It would be unusual for the Central Powers (that is, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire) to accept a compromise peace that involved the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The irony in the situation is that both the British and French had

¹⁴ Kennan 1984, 66-7. Temperley 1920, 1:179-88. NYT February 12, 1918, 1:5.

¹⁵ Hoover 1958, 20-2. Taylor 1967, 119.

minority problems in their own homelands, let alone within their empires. At the same time their main enemy, the Germans, had one of the most ethnically homogenous populations in Europe. The British were forced to divert soldiers to Ireland to suppress the 1916 Easter Uprising in favour of Irish self-determination, and a delegation of Bretons later attended the Versailles Congress to demand the right of self-determination for Brittany.¹⁶ On the other hand after World War I the Germans only lost two provinces to Poland (Posen and West Prussia) and two to France (Alsace-Lorraine). They were also forced to hold plebiscites in four other disputed regions but Allenstein-Marienwerder, the Saarland, all but the extreme tip of Upper Silesia, and part of northern Schleswig voted to stay with Germany. The Germans might also have retained at least part of Alsace-Lorraine if the issue had ever been put to a vote.¹⁷

If the principle of self-determination had been applied fairly and evenly across the board, the Versailles settlement may have resulted in a massive shift in foreign policy and a new paradigm in international relations. However it was the refusal of the Allies to use the principle in any region where it did not suit them that caused much of the resentment against the Versailles treaties. In Europe the Allies decided to ignore Wilson's original proposal and use the watershed principle in deciding Italy's border with Austria and Czechoslovakia's border with Germany.¹⁸ This left large numbers of German speakers along, but on the wrong side of, the borders of Austria and Germany. In 1921 Czechoslovakia had 3,123,448 Germans to just 8,760,000 Czechs and Slovaks.¹⁹ Nor did the Allies allow the Austrians to merge with Germany as the principle seems to allow. The League of Nations put a French High Commissioner in charge of the undisputedly German city of Memel and then did nothing when the Lithuanians seized it.²⁰ Outside Europe the situation was, if anything, even worse. The Allies only paid lip service to the principle in the Middle East, taking over the most developed and useful parts by means of "Mandates" from the League of Nations, in effect Protectorates. Only the Turks and the Saudi Arabians emerged as genuinely independent nations, while the Kurds and Armenians were promised much, but given nothing at all.²¹ The principle was totally rejected in China with Japan getting Germany's former possessions in Shandong despite the fact that the Chinese fought on

¹⁶ Jackson 1999, 201-7. Foster 1988, 477-87.

¹⁷ Carr 1992, 259-262. Temperley 1920, 2:175,176-183,197-215. Mayer 1968, 759.

¹⁸ Even Wilson approved of the Austro-Italian border. Taylor 1967, 162.

¹⁹ Mellor 1975, 73.

²⁰ Carr 1992, 262.

²¹ Cleveland 1994, 154-5.

the Allied side in World War I.²² There is no evidence that Tibet was discussed at all. The wider use of self determination, even in a cynical manner to reward friends and punish former enemies, was never meant to apply to the colonies of Britain, France or the United States. Yet merely by applying it in Europe meant that other people had strong grounds to argue for a wider extension of the principle. The main Western powers had, in a sense, let the genie out of the bottle and there was no way to get it back. Not the least of those arguing for wider self determination were those European states that had either not had a large overseas empire or had been forced to give one up.

Despite claims that the Allies intended the principle of self determination to apply to individuals (i.e. all people, as individuals, had a right to have a say in their government), there is strong evidence that the principle was intended to apply to "peoples", that is, entire ethnic groups based on a common culture, from the start. As Woodrow Wilson himself said in early 1918 using the collective noun "peoples",

[n]ational aspirations must be respected; peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. 'Self-determination' is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril.²³

This collective usage was implicit from the start in the doctrines of the French revolution. When the French introduced nationalism to European political discourse they fundamentally changed the basis of state legitimacy. The new doctrine eventually supplanted the ideological basis for the old religion-based monarchies. Any European government had to make at least a show of representing the majority nation on which the state was based. This made any government which did not respect the "national will" somehow illegitimate.²⁴ One unintended consequence was that all European governments had to adopt policies aimed at the assimilation or repression of whatever national minorities existed within their borders. If "snap-shot" self-determination (i.e. the opinion of a bare majority of people of a particular ethnic group at one specific moment in time is taken as decisive) was adopted as the basis for state legitimacy, the state would inevitably act to protect its interests and borders. The logical consequence of nationalism is either the redefinition of borders in an attempt to reduce minorities to negligible proportions or the elimination of all minorities within the existing borders.

²² Fairbank 1994, 267. Hsü 1995, 502-5. Spence 1990, 293.

²³ NYT, 12 February, 1918, 1:5.

²⁴ Van Creveld 1999, 193-204.

4.6 The Origins of Totalitarian Politics

The problem for the Western powers was that as the war had become more and more "total", the aims of the Allies became grander and grander. The French Revolution had led directly to the concept of "total war" in which the entire resources of the state were thrown into battle.²⁵ In reality the French were never able to bring more than a fraction of their national resources to bear, but their armies were significantly bigger than anything seen in Europe since the Romans. The eighteenth-century style of limited war with modest war aims and small professional armies had been revived in Europe after the Congress of Vienna in 1813. Without highly ideologically motivated governments in Europe there was no point in fighting to death over limited war aims. The exception was when the European nations fought in the Third World. In the Americas, Asia and Africa the European Powers had, essentially, unlimited aims. Often the aim of the Western government was not just to take a piece of land, but to exterminate entire peoples.²⁶ The racial divide in the way Europeans fought can be seen by comparing even the most bitter wars between Europeans with those fought elsewhere. While the repeated defeats of France during the Revolutionary period only led to the restoration of the monarchy, the defeat of the Aztecs, the Sikhs, the Zulus, and virtually every other Third World power led to annexation and extinction of at least the state, if not the people. This extreme distinction between moderation with fellow Europeans and aggression against everyone else was expressed clearly in popular writings at the time. In 1885 the Reverend Josiah Strong wrote a best-seller claiming that "[t]he time is coming when the pressure of population will be felt [in America] as it is now felt in Europe and Asia. Then will the world enter upon a new stage of its history - *the final competition of races, for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled.*" According to Strong, Americans were "a race of unequaled energy, with all the majesty of numbers and the might of wealth behind it - the representative, let us hope, of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization - having developed peculiarly aggressive traits calculated to impress its institutions on mankind, will spread across the earth...And can any one doubt that this race, unless devitalized by alcohol and tobacco, is destined to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others, and mold the remainder, until, in a very true and important sense, it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind?...Whether the extinction of inferior races before the advancing Anglo-Saxon

²⁵ Forrest 1997, 48-55. Townsend 1997, 5-7.

²⁶ Weigley (1973, 153-63) has a chapter on America's Indian Wars called simply "Annihilation of a People".

seems to the reader sad or otherwise, it is certainly appears probable."²⁷ The difference between British behaviour in the American War of the Revolution and the Indian Mutiny shows the degree of violence the British were willing to use against non-Europeans, but not against English-speaking Americans.²⁸

During the later part of the nineteenth century the main continental European powers began to return to the mass mobilisation of the Revolutionary period. Ironically it was not the "leftist" Republican French that led the way, but the reactionary Prussians. Since well before Frederick the Great the Prussians had a larger army than its population would suggest it could support because of the ruthless administrative efficiency of the state. The Wars of German Reunification were so successful for the Prussians because of the efficiency with which they used their small resources. By 1870 when the Germans defeated the French, every other European state followed the German example in supporting as large an army as possible through mass conscription.²⁹ The inevitable result was that the First World War was fought as if it was a total "Revolutionary" war by all the European Powers including Britain. The general aim to end all wars implied a wholesale change in international politics and soon came to be the ideological equivalent of French nationalism during the 1789-1815 period. The need for a total war effort implied the mobilisation of as much support as possible, regardless of pre-war prejudices and interests.³⁰ The British and French promised independence to a whole range of minorities located within the borders of Austro-Hungary and Turkey if they would support the Allied war effort. The most famous of these were the Arabs who fought a low-key guerrilla war against the Turks with T. E. Lawrence.³¹ In general this was mostly a waste of time as the majority of minorities remained loyal to their states until the very end of the war. The most effective promise was for Czechoslovakian independence. The success of this promise can be seen in works such as *The Good Soldier Svejk*, written by Jaroslav Hasek, where Czech soldiers were characterised by a willingness to surrender to the Russians.³² Yet it is probable that the Allied Powers adopted the proposal for self-determination precisely because they intended to destroy the ability of their enemies to

²⁷ Strong 1963, 213-5. Italics in the original.

²⁸ The exception is the Irish. The 1789 Rebellion was put down every bit as brutally as the India Mutiny. See Foster (1988, 275-82) and Jackson (1999, 14-22). For a description of British behaviour in India see Hibbert (1978, 130-2, 204-6, 210-5, 311-3, 317-22, 331) and James (1997, 250-3). There was nothing in America like it.

²⁹ See French 1997, 66-73. Van Creveld 1999, 252-3.

³⁰ For the impact of mobilisation on Britain see Taylor 1967, 1-2.

³¹ For the start of British support for the Arabs see Lawrence 1964, 56-63. See also Schulz 1972, 43-5.

³² Hasek 1974, 232.

ever threaten war again.³³

4.7 The League of Nations

After World War I open aggrandisement by any nation was, in theory, no longer publicly acceptable. The Western governments had adopted a variety of moral causes which, in the post-war world, they had to reconcile with their traditional forms of diplomacy. At the Versailles Conference (1919) the Western powers had to hide their ambitions under what A. J. P. Taylor called ever more elaborate fig leaves. The invention of the League of Nations mandate is one such example of this process. Under the system put forward at the Versailles conference, those parts of the Ottoman Empire and the German colonies in the Third World would be administered by one or other of the victorious powers, in theory in the best interests of the local inhabitants. In effect these were simply colonies by any other name.³⁴ Ironically World War I itself had begun with a dispute over a similar territory. Bosnia had been ruled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire "on behalf" of the locals while the Ottomans had retained formal "suzerainty". When in 1908 the Austro-Hungarian government unilaterally annexed Bosnia and created another imperial province, they offended Serbian nationalists who viewed parts of Bosnia as being rightfully Serbian.³⁵ The logical development of the Mandate is shown by the Soviet Union's policy in the other majority-lamaist state, Mongolia. Although Mongolia was to all intents and purposes part of the USSR, (the Soviet Union only annexed Tannu Tuva in the north-west) the Soviet government was able to claim that what they were doing was something else far more benign.³⁶ Even the "Fascist" powers felt the need to pretend that what they were doing was something far more acceptable. In 1932 the Japanese created the "state" of Manchukuo to disguise what was, in effect, an annexation by Japan.³⁷ League of Nations mandates were in effect no more than colonies, but the theoretical and intellectual basis of control had changed. Eventually it would be the theory that prevailed over the reality.

³³ At least the British did not intend to apply such doctrines to their own empire. Harold Nicolson, at the Versailles Conference, suggested giving self determination to Cyprus. Sir Eyre Crowe told him if he intended to apply it to the British empire he had better go home at once. See Nicolson 1945, 200-1.

³⁴ Taylor 1967, 133.

³⁵ Forbes, *et al.* 1915, 143-5. The result was that a Bosnian Serb ultra-nationalist with links to the Serbian secret police shot dead the Austro-Hungarian heir in Sarajevo.

³⁶ Similarly the Soviet Union supported the East Turkestan Republic in Xinjiang. There is some dispute over how independent this group was. See Benson (1990).

³⁷ Hsü 1995, 551-2. Similarly the Americans promised "independence" to the Philippines but have retained a high level of control.

The solution proposed by the British and French to German revanchism was a more settled permanent security arrangement. The British and French governments would jointly prevent the Germans from ever again posing a threat to their positions in Europe. Although this is often represented as maintaining the Balance of Power, it was an attempt to prevent the Germans from winning a place in the world commensurate with their size and industrial power.³⁸ The American President Woodrow Wilson proposed extending these arrangement to include all the world's nations in a much greater scheme to prevent any war anywhere. In this proposal the Americans had simply taken up a long standing tradition in the West. Theoretical proposals for some sort of joint security had existed for over two hundred years. In 1693 William Penn had proposed a Parliament for all of Europe which would preserve the peace. In 1629 Cardinal Richelieu had proposed a system of collective security for Europe which influenced the final settlement of the Thirty Years War. Similar proposals were resurrected at the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815, mostly under Russian influence. However these proposals had all been reserved for European powers and did not include the Third World to any significant degree except as possessions of the Europeans.³⁹

Such utopian schemes were usually, as can be seen by the proponents, the domain of the intellectual and the academic lawyer. As practical propositions they left a lot to be desired and there is no real evidence that anyone took them seriously. From a practical stand-point there was always a contradiction in the Versailles Peace settlement between the practical realities of keeping the peace and the desire for a more perfect world. The Germans were not included in the peace negotiations as equals, but were lectured, bullied and presented with a *fait accompli* which they would inevitably reject. On the other hand Germany, and indeed every other power, was (eventually) included in the machinery for maintaining the peace. Even at the time, despite years of war propaganda, there were people in the West who thought that the settlement was too severe.⁴⁰ At the Conference of Vienna at the end of the Napoleonic Wars the French had negotiated as an equal and as a result the peace was not particularly vindictive. After World War II, NATO was restricted to those nations with a strong and direct interest in keeping the Russians out of Western Europe and so it remains a working institution. With the League of Nations the problem would be how far would members be interested in conflicts far away from home. Clearly

³⁸ Taylor 1967, 133-4.

³⁹ Roberts 1997, 283-4. Similar schemes were proposed by John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Kant and Johann Bluntschli. See van Creveld 1999, 350.

⁴⁰ John Maynard Keynes, who advised the British delegation at the Versailles Conference, wrote *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* in 1919.

Shandong was more important to China than it was to Britain. Tibet would always be of interest to China and India while the Belgians could hardly be expected to bear much of a burden one way or the other. This is not only a problem from the point of view of realistic hard-nosed diplomacy, but because of the inherently utopian nature of the League of Nations. The propaganda of the First World War had created unreal expectations in the minds of the British and American publics. It was not, perhaps, inevitable that they would be disappointed, but at some point the League of Nations needed to be backed up by force. If the League of Nations only served to allow the powerful nations to suggest someone else maintain the peace, then it would have a detrimental effect on the world. At the simplest level the League represents a half-way house on the road to modern total politics. Other forms of Utopian politics offered both a large carrot and a large stick. That is, the Communists and Fascists (for example) promised a better world and threatened violence against anyone who stood in their way. The League merely offered a better world.

4.8 The Triumph of Utopian Politics

The importance of the concept of self-determination and the rise of bodies like the League of Nations, dedicated to abolishing war, should be seen as an attempt to realise the promises that emerged from World War I. During the First World War the British government had promised to make the world a very different place, as the phrase went a "land fit for heroes". This should, perhaps, be seen as part of the ideological inflation that attempted to justify the cost of the war in terms of utopian aims. The British government came to claim that the war was being fought to "end all wars" and to establish a just international order. To justify the cost of the war to their own populations the Allied governments had claimed that they were fighting a different sort of war against a different sort of enemy. World War I was, in theory, a war of civilised people against a barbaric enemy. The British government had a long tradition of trying to justify wars to its own population. The British political tradition is decidedly "civil" with the aims of military glory and conquest being thoroughly alien to the British public.⁴¹ It is not surprising then that, as ideologies go, British classical liberalism was decidedly "civil" in nature.⁴² While Britain was still not properly democratic in 1914 it did have a long history of wide public involvement in politics as

⁴¹ So much so that in the Victorian period British shops and pubs were known to refuse to serve soldiers. In 1911 the American government even passed laws imposing fines on any shop that displayed such a sign. Van Creveld 1983, 20.

⁴² Even though that liberal attitude was complemented by a very aggressive posture towards non-Europeans. Compare with the Reverend Strong's comments above.

the right to vote spread to more and more people.⁴³ Therefore if the British government wished to go to war it had to justify its actions. Many British wars begin with an outrage committed by a potential enemy which the British government uses to justify going to war.⁴⁴ In World War I the British supposedly went to war because of the fate of Belgium and the atrocities that were said to have been committed there.

Like the British, although perhaps more extreme, traditionally both the Tibetans (at least after the sixteenth century) and the Chinese had dominant ideologies that were "civil" and generally speaking decidedly non-bellicose. Both Confucianism and the Tibetan interpretation of Buddhism rejected the idea that violence could be a positive good in itself.⁴⁵ Confucian officials were expected to "pacify" the people they ruled and were punished if the population was agitated. One of the well known sayings about Confucius is that he upheld the idea of the Golden Mean and opposed taking anything to extremes. Buddhism teaches angry thoughts can only lead to unhappiness and bad results in future lives. Ordinary Chinese people had even more extreme views about soldiers being made of "bad iron". That is precisely why these ideologies are not well suited to modern politics. It is clear that this traditional attitude was not particularly helpful for China in the post-1911 era. China's main problem from 1839 onwards was its relative weakness compared to the West. To be "modern" meant, first and foremost, being a lot stronger in a military sense. To modernise China was, therefore, at least in part, to change the attitude of Chinese people towards soldiers and the military. As Lan Tianwei put it in 1903,

[c]ountries that are militant are sure to enjoy the fortune of war. Countries that fear war will inevitably fall victims to it. Those who delight in killing glorify their countries. Those who abstain from killing will find their countries plundered. The object of a militant citizenry is to forge a national character bent on killing, for the sake of defending the country and thereby to maintain peace. Countries that despise the soldier but exalt letters cannot inspire awe and respect. Nor can they be trusted with the duty of protecting the people.⁴⁶

⁴³ Depending on how strict a definition of democracy is applied, Britain became fully democratic in 1918 or 1929 or 1944. See Taylor 1967, 93-4, 115-6, 568-9.

⁴⁴ As can be seen in the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739) and both the Opium Wars with China (1839-42, 1858-60). In 1738 Jenkin strode around the House of Commons holding up his ear (in a jar) which he said the Spanish Coast Guard had cut off.

⁴⁵ For the traditional Chinese view see Fung 1980, 89-99. By way of contrast it is very difficult to find any criticism of extremism in Judaeo-Christian-Islamic thought. Being "zealous" in obeying the Lord is always praiseworthy.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Fung 1980, 93.

It is extremely unlikely that these views were traditional ones. It is far more likely that they were a direct result of Western intervention in China. Just as Sun Yatsen was concerned about the future extinction of the Chinese people, Lan clearly put China into the category of those who were being plundered. Similar views can be found in other parts of the Third World that were modernising and Westernising in the face of Western pressure. In the 1930s the Iraqi Director-General of Education, Dr Sami Shawkat, said to a group of high school boys,

[t]he nation that does not excel in the Manufacture of Death with iron and fire will be forced to die under the hoofs of the horses and under the boots of a foreign soldiery. If to live is just, then killing in self-defence is also just.[...]

The spirit of Harun al-Rashid and the spirit of al-Ma'mun [both rulers of the Abbasid empire which, perhaps significantly, had its capital in Baghdad] want Iraq to have in a short while half a million soldiers and hundreds of airplanes. Is there in Iraq a coward who will not answer the call?...If we do not want death under the hoofs and the boots of the foreign armies, it is our sacred duty to perfect the Manufacture of Death, the profession of the army, the sacred profession.⁴⁷

There may be a common cultural link between this Chinese intellectual and this Iraqi official, although at first sight Islam and Confucianism have little in common. It is more likely that the similar views they espouse arise from a similar *Western* influence. Just as the conservative European monarchies had learnt the need for total war from the French, so too the surviving independent Third World countries were learning the same need from the Western colonial powers. Any Chinese or Iraqi intellectual could see what the West had done and was doing in Asia and Africa. It is common in Western literature to assume that the majority of good things come from Western culture and hence to argue that whatever any given writer approves of is Western. The insistence on the *Otherness* of unpalatable ideas is hardly new. In modern history this distinction is very apparent in the study of Communism. For a traditional Russian nationalist like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Communism is a disease Lenin smuggled into Russia from Western Europe. For a whole range of Western Europeans from the Fascist right to the soft-left, Communism is often represented as the threat of the Russian Bear sweeping into Europe from the East.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Quoted in Kedourie 1992, 282.

⁴⁸ Rupnik 1988, 21-3.

While there can be no clear-cut rule about why some nations and people adopted Communism and others did not there are some obvious linkages. In Asia as a whole Communism is, if anything, strongly associated with Western education and the presence of Western administrations. Mao Zedong is unusual among senior Communists in that he could not afford to go to France for his education, unlike Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai. Although there are some Western scholars who insist on reading Mao's ideology as a "northern" product from the hinterland of Yan'an, it is not clear that Maoism can be fairly categorised in this way. A leading proponent of such arguments, Edward Friedman, writes that "[f]ormer guerrilla soldiers sent down from the conquering North after the establishment of Mao's People's Republic had been ruling the South in state-imposed collectives of virtual serf (or slave) labor since 1949."⁴⁹ While there is nothing wrong with this as such, it remains true that neither Mao nor any of the top non-military Chinese Communist Party leadership were or are from the north of China. The vast majority are from the coastal south that Friedman claims is "progressive" modern and, of course, Western-oriented.⁵⁰ They are also often from treaty ports and Hakka are disproportionately represented among the leadership. There can be little doubt that the rise of the Communist Party in China is not an indigenous process, but part of the Western impact on China. The rise of the Chinese Communist Party is a direct result of the most Westernised sections of China's population adopting a Western totalitarian ideology that was very popular among Western intellectuals. Therefore it is perhaps better to say nothing "went wrong" with the Chinese Revolution. Chinese intellectuals were told to learn from the West and they did just that.

In a sense these policies can be seen as the continuation of a series of developments since the French Revolution. In particular the adoption of two "civil

⁴⁹ Friedman 1994, 10. This view extends across the political spectrum from the post-1978 hard left to the traditional right. See also Pye (1996) and Murphey (1970).

⁵⁰ That is, Mao and Hu Yaobang are from Hunan, Deng Xiaoping from Sichuan, Chen Yun from Shanghai, Zhang Guotao was from Jiangxi. Hu, Deng, Zhang, Zhu De, Chen Yi, Guo Moruo and Ye Jianyang are all Hakka. See Erbaugh 1992, 937-42. The Chinese Communist Party was founded by two people who were almost from the north, Li Dazhao from Hubei and Chen Duxiu from Anhui and its first Conference was held in the Treaty Port of Shanghai. Other groups formed in Beijing, Wuhan, Changsha, Jinan and Guangzhou. Hu (1994, 25-6). Beijing is unusual in that it has a lot of transients from the south. Jinan (Shandong) is really the only northern city. Friedman cites the ancient southern state of Chu as an "Other" (i.e. better, more liberal and progressive) China. What are Mao, Deng Xiaoping *et al.* but products of this region?

religions" in the West - nationalism and socialism.⁵¹ These Western ideologies occupy a unique place in modern political thought because they are, above all else, highly successful. Before the French Revolution nationalist and socialist politics were unknown over the vast majority of Europe much less the rest of the world. Even though the British won the Napoleonic Wars and the French monarchy was restored, these views spread over virtually the whole world. There may be many reasons for their success, but they are, as Elie Kedourie described them, millennial.⁵² In their extreme forms both claim that some extremely violent and undesirable political event is about to occur unless steps are taken to prevent it. Essentially this form of moral panic forms the basis of political action. An apocalyptic future would result in either national extinction or a bloody revolution or some combination of both. Socialism was not, strictly speaking, a doctrine associated with the French Revolution. Yet it is also true that during the Revolution the French state had made large amounts of land available to French peasants. The price of this was that the new French government also conscripted millions of Frenchmen to fight in far off lands. Although evasion and draft resistance were common the French Revolutionary armies were much larger than those of the traditional European monarchies.⁵³ Yet by the end of the Napoleonic period the conservative monarchies had learnt to imitate the French mobilisation. At the battle of Leipzig the French were decisively outnumbered by German and Russian soldiers nearly two to one.⁵⁴ If there was a lesson in France's defeat it was that, if challenged, the conservative side of European politics could imitate the methods of the Revolution. There was no reason why the non-European nations, or at least the most Westernised sections of their intelligentsia, could not also learn from the French Revolution.

4.9 Britain Retreats From Utopia

With the final defeat of Napoleon Europe as a whole returned to the eighteenth century military model. Post-Napoleonic armies were again small, professional and rarely used. Conscription was either abolished or restricted.⁵⁵ For whatever reason such restraint did not last within Europe. By the 1870s the Germans had introduced a more thorough welfare state and a far more thorough system of conscription. There was nothing particularly new about conscription as such. Chinese governments had

⁵¹ The literature on Nationalism is enormous. See Gellner (1983b). Van Creveld 1999, 259-60. For the comparison between German and British social reforms see Hennock (1987) and Ritter (1986).

⁵² Kedourie 1992, 268-70.

⁵³ Keegan 1993, 233-4. Van Creveld 1999, 245-8.

⁵⁴ Forrest 1997, 61-2. Van Creveld 1999, 248.

⁵⁵ Van Creveld 1999, 248-9.

been using it since before the Qin and Han dynasties. The Romans had something like a system of conscription to meet national emergencies in the event of a lack of volunteers.⁵⁶ But there is no evidence that either the Chinese or the Roman peoples liked it and as time went on many people clearly evaded both systems. The triumph of the late nineteenth-century European welfare states was to create a system of conscription that not only included virtually every able-bodied man, but was also very popular.⁵⁷ A large part of the reason for this was probably the state provision of welfare services, the centralised control of compulsory education, the far more pervasive control of the state over daily life and an increase in the fear that the weaker nations of Europe would disappear. This last cause, based on the prevailing notions of Social Darwinism, was just as apparent in China. In effect it was the fear that the more powerful nations of Europe would treat the weak as they had treated their own minorities and the peoples of their Empires. There is no evidence of anything that forced the Europeans to behave in this way. The two previous ideological wars in Europe, the Thirty Years War and the Napoleonic Wars, had ended with a tacit agreement to avoid such extremes. In the case of the Thirty Years War, since 1648 religion has never played such a prominent role in European warfare. The appeal of nationalism continued to grow in Europe despite the defeat of the French. There was nothing in the economic systems, for example, of nineteenth century Europe that demanded the adoption of nationalism. It may be that some countries did because their neighbours did first. Ultimately the growing scale of war in Europe was the result, above all, of a choice made by Europeans to pursue unlimited ends by violent means.

The inevitable result of the German victories during the Wars of German Unification was the total mobilisation of all the major European powers during World War I. During that war the British showed that they were just as capable of fighting a total war as anyone else. It is striking that the main development of modern warfare and the weapons it required started in Britain with thinkers such as John F. C. Fuller and Basil H. Liddell Hart.⁵⁸ Yet the changes needed were only taken seriously in totalitarian countries, most successfully in Germany and the Soviet Union. Indeed it is notable that in virtually every country the main authorities on various forms of modern warfare were either Fascists (such as Fuller and the Italian Giulio Douhet) or Communists.⁵⁹ Support for the British air industry was by and large the province of

⁵⁶ In the Roman Republic military service was widely seen as honourable and there is not a great deal of evidence that it was evaded at first. That came with the Empire and the end of participatory politics. Keegan 1993, 267-9. Van Creveld 1999, 30-1.

⁵⁷ See McNeill 1983, 254.

⁵⁸ Gat 1998, 30-3. Van Creveld 1999, 254.

⁵⁹ So striking is the link between Fuller's military ideas and his political views that, the

the radical and extreme right.⁶⁰ In Britain the main exception was Basil Liddell Hart who claimed to be a liberal to the end of his days but who had in fact come out of the army after World War I with decidedly less liberal views. On 28 November 1914 Liddell Hart wrote that,

[b]efore the war I, Basil Hart, was a Socialist, a Pacifist, an anti-conscriptionist and an anti-disciplinist, disapproving of all state checks on the liberty of the individual and one who hoped for internationalization. I held thinkers in greater admiration than warriors.

Now having studied the principles of warfare and undergone military training and seen the effects of it on my companions the following are my opinions:

1. I *believe* (i) in the supremacy of the aristocracy of race (and birth) (ii) in the supremacy of the individual.
2. In compulsory military service because it is the only possible life for a *man* and brings out all the finest qualities of manhood.
3. I have acquired rather a contempt for mere thinkers and men of books who have not come to full realisation of what true manhood means. Military service, if intelligently conducted develops and requires the finest mental, moral and physical qualities.
4. I exalt the great general into the highest position in the roll of great men and consider it requires higher mental qualities than any other line of life.
5. I consider the Slavs, by which I mean greater Russia, will rule both Europe and Asia and will have world domination, being the finest and the most virile civilisation and having the finest qualities of all races, and that the day of conquest and expansion is not yet over.
6. Socialism and its forms are an impossibility unless human nature radically alters.
7. There should be compulsory military service in order that all men may have the chance, which otherwise they would probably avoid, of developing true

Russian military thinker Tukhachevsky could describe him as a Fascist "in 1931 three years before Fuller joined the [British Union of Fascists] when it was founded in 1934, from a book published eight years before that". Gat 1998, 119. Admittedly Soviet writers called a lot of people Fascists. For the link between "modern" forms of political thought and warfare see Gat (1998).

⁶⁰ Edgerton 1991, 46-9. Gat 1998, 76-7. The pro-Fascist Lady Houston put up one hundred thousand pounds for the British entry in the 1931 Schneider Trophy Race after the Labour government refused to do so. The winner, the Supermarine S.6B, went on to become the Spitfire, and its engine, the Merlin, was used in the Spitfire, the Hurricane, the Mosquito, the Lancaster and the American P-51 Mustang. See Deighton 1977, 87, 101.

manhood.

8. Many of the German militarist ideas are very sound, but I oppose the Germans because I do not consider that the German type of mind is one to carry out their ideas.

I prefer brilliance to mechanical and methodical mediocrity....I certainly believe that absolute peace is detrimental to true manhood, but 20th Century war is too frightful. If you could have war without its *explosive* horrors it would be a good thing....My belief in the necessary inferiority of women is more profound than ever.⁶¹

Even assuming a degree of exaggeration, these were certainly unusual views for a British pre-1914 liberal to hold. There can be little doubt that Liddell Hart picked up such ideas in the British Army as indeed he said. Indeed the First World War could be seen as a way of infecting a huge number of young men, through universal military service, with radical and violent ideas which had been held by only a few intellectuals before 1914. The impact on the post-war world can be seen in the spread of political extremism. Not only were former soldiers important in the rise of Fascism in Europe, but they also played an unfortunate role in the Soviet Union, in Turkey, in the British Black and Tans in Ireland, and even in the post-war rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States. All over the world one of the main impacts of the First World War was the adoption of intolerant and aggressive ideologies by the young.

One of the few exceptions is Tibet, which was nearly completely isolated from Western political thought. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was born in 1876 and so was more or less the same age as Lenin (b. 1870), Stalin (b. 1879), Trotsky (b. 1879), Hitler (b. 1889) and even Mao (b. 1893). Yet he did not adopt either a Western totalitarian ideology or even moved Tibetan Buddhism in that direction. There is no evidence that the majority of Tibetans were ever politically active. However the only important political party in Tibet, the Tibetan Improvement Party, was influenced by the Guomindang and even Communism. Of the four main members, Pandatsang Rapga was born around 1900 and the monk Gendün Chömpel was born in 1905.⁶² There was no Tibetan party with an explicit commitment to liberal democracy.

In China itself Sun Yatsen (b. 1866) founded a party with a commitment to

⁶¹ Bond 1977, 15-6. Gat 1998, 139-40.

⁶² The other two supposed members were Canglocen Kung and Kumbela. Both were important figures in Lhasa who failed in their bids for power. See Goldstein 1989b, 449-63.

Western liberal democracy, but even Sun saw the advantages of a more totalitarian, more "modern", political party. In 1921 he held talks with the Communists and in 1923 the Comintern sent experts to reorganise the Guomindang. Sun's problem was above all a lack of discipline within the Guomindang.⁶³ For the early Chinese revolutionaries excessive autonomy was a serious problem. Speaking of the post-Napoleon future Clausewitz could not say whether wars would go on being fought with the same intensity. What he did say was "once barriers - which in a sense consist only in man's ignorance of what is possible - are torn down, they are not so easy to set up again."⁶⁴ The First World War had taught many people, not only in Western countries, not only what was possible, but what in the right circumstances was actually praiseworthy.

Although in the important area of military doctrine the British had been world leaders in the early 1920s, the British public as a whole did not adopt after the war the sort of "total" politics modern war demands. In writers like General J. F. C. Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart the British had some of the first theorists of modern mechanised warfare. Fuller himself came up with "Plan 1919" which described the use of mass tank formations and after the war conducted some of the first practical demonstrations of tanks. Despite such a promising lead, in 1928 the British government decided that it did not need such weapons and disbanded the experimental mechanised groups.⁶⁵ Moreover when tanks were being tested during manoeuvres in 1934 the army umpires made a series of highly unusual decisions.⁶⁶ British military policy was hampered by two main factors. The first was that the main purpose for the British military was, in the eyes of the London government, colonial control. British weapons were usually designed to be used in the Third World. The British army favoured armoured cars rather than tanks for instance because heavy tanks were not needed to control crowds of protesters. The British Air Force was designed for strategic bombing, but only of rebellious colonial subjects, and certainly not supporting the army.⁶⁷ Iraqi and Afghan

⁶³ Hsü 1995, 518-23.

⁶⁴ Clausewitz 1989, 593.

⁶⁵ Bond 1977, 27-8. Liddell Hart 1950, 66-7. McNeill 1983, 334. As an indication of how visionary Fuller's "Plan 1919" (named after the year) was, it called for 5,000 tanks. The Germans invaded the USSR in 1941 with about 3,500 tanks. Nor were the British technically backward. In 1918 the British planned for tanks of about twenty tons armed with a six pound (i.e. 57 mm) gun. Bond 1980, 128. The Germans did not produce an equivalent tank, the Panzer IV, until 1939. The British did not actually build one until 1942.

⁶⁶ Bond 1980, 163-71. There is little doubt that the army hierarchy was trying to make sure the mechanised force failed.

⁶⁷ See Liddell Hart (1932, 139-61) and Omissi (1990) for a discussion of British

villages did not have anti-aircraft guns, were reasonably close to British air bases and were small targets anyway. British bombers were, therefore, light, unarmoured and with small bomb loads.⁶⁸ What made them suitable for controlling the empire made them inadequate for dealing with Germany. The other factor can be described as an intellectual one. The British government did not intend to acquire any territory in Germany. They did not intend to rule any part of Europe as a colony. There has never even been a suggestion that any British government had intended to displace the locals and settle any part of Europe with British colonialists. Above all it did not intend to promote aggressively a particularly British world view in the rest of Europe. British liberals did not demand that everyone else in Europe share their views.⁶⁹ Even if the British army had the appropriate weapons in 1939 it is unlikely that the British government would have agreed to their aggressive use.

Given the failure to prepare intellectually for war in Europe it is no surprise that in 1939-40 the British and French were content to sit the Germans out. This was not an aberration in British political thought nor was it obviously military unsound at the time. In the years before the Second World War Basil Liddell Hart had been a prominent adviser to the British government. Liddell Hart had passed through what can only be called his Fascist phase and was again a committed liberal. He opposed total war, conscription, what he saw as the total war doctrine of Clausewitz and Napoleon (the Corsican Vampire as Liddell Hart described him) and the slow movement towards totalitarian politics Liddell Hart saw in Britain.⁷⁰ The rise of totalitarian politics was not an idle threat either. On 18 May 1940, Chamberlain claimed it was imperative for Britain to adopt a form of government "which would approach the totalitarian".⁷¹ It is hard to know whether Liddell Hart's politics drove his military theories or vice versa, but clearly the two went together in his writings. He

doctrine and practice.

⁶⁸ The British began with war with the Armstrong Whitworth Whitley V (2 engines, 5 .303 guns, capable of 230 mph at 16,400 feet carrying 7,000 lbs of bombs), the Bristol Blenheim IV (2 engines, 2 or 4 .303 guns, 260 mph at 12,000 feet, carrying 1,000 lbs), the Fairey Battle III (2 engines, 2 .303 guns, 260 mph at 15,000 feet, carrying 1,000 lbs), the Handley Page Hampden I (2 engines, 6 .303 guns, 230 mph at 16,500 feet, carrying 4,000 lbs) and the Vickers Wellington IC (2 engines, 6 .303 guns, 230 mph at 15,500 feet, carrying 4,500 lbs). By way of contrast the American Flying Fortress B-17F had four engines, 12 0.5 inch and 1 0.3 inch machine-guns, flew at 325 mph at 25,000 feet and carried 17,600 pounds of bombs. See Ellis 1995, 291.

⁶⁹ Although, of course, there is a long history of British liberals forcing the Chinese and other Third World peoples to adopt Western norms. It is not normal behaviour for the British in Europe proper.

⁷⁰ Bond 1977, 88-165. Gat 1998, 146-288.

⁷¹ Ponting 1990, 150.

argued for what is called "limited liability", that is, the belief that all Britain needed to do was provide a small, but professional, army contingent in Europe itself. Liddell Hart had come to believe that technology made the defence stronger and so any invasion of France could be countered quickly and easily. The only sensible policy for Britain and France was to provide a better alternative way of life to the German public and wait for the Germans to collapse or grow tired of the war.⁷² Thus the defeat of Britain and France in 1940 was not as a result of a shortage of men or the technology, as their tanks were just as good as the Germans and they had more of them.⁷³ It was above all an intellectual defeat. In a rather unfair description American WW2 veteran Paul Fussell wrote,

[f]rom an official photograph taken on a balustrated patio in Vincennes in October, 1939, you could almost predict that the British are going to be thrown out of France and the French totally defeated. Every one of the six high officers depicted there is wearing a spiffy uniform with ribbons. Four are wearing Sam Browne belts, three, light-colored cavalry breeches with boots. No one has a weapon. The Duke of Windsor is there, together with such losers as General Howard-Vyse and General Gamelin. All look entirely inadequate to the cynicism, efficiency, brutality, and bloody-mindedness that will be required to win the war.⁷⁴

Although none of these men might have been mentally prepared for total war, neither were they likely to be mentally prepared for the "total" politics that such warfare would demand. In the vast majority of circumstances that would have been entirely a good thing. Liddell Hart was probably correct in seeing that total war, conscription, strategic bombing of German civilians, and the demand for unconditional surrender all implied an end to the sort of liberal Britain that existed in the nineteenth century.⁷⁵ The problem was that in 1940 the consequences of a British defeat would have been far worse than Liddell Hart could have imagined.

The consequences of defending Britain's traditional society were plain in World War II and yet before the war the British government was not prepared to make the

⁷² No short summary can really do justice to Liddell Hart's views. See Bond (1977) and Gat (1998).

⁷³ See Ellis 1990a, 4-5.

⁷⁴ Fussell 1989, 7. Fussell also reproduces (10-11) two photos that indicate the nature of modern war; one of a pre-war British tank, the other of a German King Tiger.

⁷⁵ Of course many "traditional" governments have no respect for liberal values. The pre-war British government is merely one of a group of non-totalitarian societies.

obvious reforms. If the British government had seriously tried to attract the support of its colonial subjects it could have fielded a much greater army in both World Wars. To take just one example in August 1941 the British government started planning for "stay behind parties" in Malaya in case of a Japanese attack. According to F. Spencer Chapman "[o]bjection [by the Malayan administration] was taken to the employment of Asiatics on the grounds that a scheme which admitted the possibility of enemy penetration would have a disastrous psychological effect on the Oriental mind. Nor might any Chinese be armed, since many of them belonged to an illegal organization, the Malayan Communist Party".⁷⁶ Even after World War II broke out the British avoided recruiting literate (and hence perhaps politically aware) Indians if possible.⁷⁷ To draw another parallel with the French Revolution, in 1789 over ninety percent of the officers in the old French army were noblemen. The Revolution allowed a much greater degree of participation by ordinary Frenchmen. As John Keegan has pointed out "of Napoleon's twenty-six marshals, Augereau, Lefebvre, Ney and Soult had been sergeants before 1789. More remarkably, Victor had been a bandsman, and three others had been private soldiers, Jourdan, Oudiot and Bernadotte".⁷⁸ Given the social mobility the Revolution allowed, it is not surprising that ordinary French citizens responded to the Revolutionary regime to a much greater degree than they did to the Royalists. To the end of its days the British Empire remained in the same mould as the *ancien régime*, except that race as well as class were the great dividers.⁷⁹ As late as 1940 three boys, placed fifth, eighth and seventeenth out of 400 candidates in an exam for officer selection, were rejected as "unfit for naval service" by the Royal Navy because of their low social origins.⁸⁰ Winston Churchill's wife Clementine would not

⁷⁶ Chapman 1952, 25-6. Chapman was a noted Arctic explorer and skier. So sending him to Australia and then Malaya in 1940-1 was perhaps a little unusual. Admittedly he had some experience in Asia during his stint in Lhasa with the British mission.

⁷⁷ Edward Behr joined the Royal Garhwal Rifles in World War II. He (1985, 23) claimed that "the recruiting officers distrusted the 'plains' Garhwalis, who could read and write and were familiar with the big cities, rejecting them when possible on often flimsy health grounds."

⁷⁸ Keegan 1993, 350. Napoleon's generals often had lower class fathers as well. Augereau's was a domestic servant, Lefebvre's an NCO, Ney's a barrel-maker and Murat's an innkeeper. See Forrest 1997, 55

⁷⁹ It is probably possible to measure how "modern" Britain was by the social origins of army officers. There has undoubtedly been a rise in middle class officers and a decline in the number of aristocratic generals. In 1830 in the Home Army 70% of generals (57% of major-generals or above) were aristocrats compared to just 22% (11%) from the middle classes. By 1952 22% of generals (3% of major-generals or better) were from aristocracy, but 61% (and a massive 95%) were middle class. See Razzell (1963). Compare with the German figures in van Creveld 1983, 21-3.

⁸⁰ The first spoke with a slight Cockney accent. The fathers of the other two were, respectively, a Chief Petty Officer and an engineer in the Merchant Marine. Ponting

invite officers from the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry to Chequers, but would invite officers from the more socially acceptable Coldstream Guards.⁸¹ British colonial subjects could not rise to command, they could not administer their own people much less British people and the British government did little to improve their economic lot.⁸²

The result for the British government was that in World War II over three and a half million Indians volunteered for military service and the Indian Army had taken in 2.5 million men by 1945. British writers and historians are usually very proud of these figures. The more old-fashioned British writers usually claim that the Indian Army was "the biggest volunteer army the world has ever known; not one of them was a conscripted man."⁸³ While 2.5 million is a sizeable number it in no way reflects the sort of contribution that India could have made. Just over one percent of India's population actually served in World War II and only a tenth of them saw service overseas.⁸⁴ By way of contrast the USSR conscripted about 25 million men from a population somewhere between 150 and 200 million strong, a quarter to a third the size of India's population.⁸⁵ Both the Soviet Union and the Japanese conscripted their colonial subjects without any serious trouble.⁸⁶ Had the British been willing to share the Empire with their colonial subjects, had the British tried harder to bring economic development to their Empire, the British should have been able to defeat the Germans all by themselves.

The lesson for the Chinese, the Tibetans and indeed most other developing

1990, 143.

⁸¹ Ponting 1990, 144.

⁸² The one reform the British did carry out was to give democracy to their "White Dominions" and introduce limited representation for some of the others. However this is balanced by the fact that some British possessions regressed. Due to the large number of free blacks who were meeting the minimum property requirement to vote, the British government abolished elected assemblies in places like Jamaica.

⁸³ Moorhouse 1983, 243. The Chinese People's Liberation Army has never had to conscript, but until the 1980s had more than 2.5 million soldiers. In 1950 it may have even had 5 million soldiers. Elleman 2000, 265.

⁸⁴ Ellis 1990b, 396-7. Those that did serve overseas did die at a much greater rate than British or American soldiers though.

⁸⁵ Due to the Communist purges and the Civil War there is no way to estimate accurately the size of the USSR's population in 1941. See a brief discussion of the problem in Conquest 1969, 533-5. For a detailed break-down of the Soviet population see Simon 1991, 372-5.

⁸⁶ This is in contrast with the Tsarist government which tried to conscript Kazakhs in World War One leading to a massive revolt and the deaths of perhaps a quarter of the Kazakh population.

countries is that Britain and America, while very wealthy and rich in human rights, are poor political models. China's immediate problem in the post-1839 period was one of military weakness. If Britain, with its enormous potential power and wealth, failed to mobilise those resources properly then the British model was not the right one for any country struggling with modernisation. It could be argued that Western politics had become generational. Those Western or Asian people who were young and politically active in 1914 tended to join the newer more extremist parties. Those ethnic groups that lacked a nationalist movement in 1914 developed totalitarian, usually Communist, nationalist movements in the post-1919 period.⁸⁷ Modernisation should not be seen as a monopoly of the West. Nor does it follow that everything the West (or Britain, or America) does is inevitably better suited to the demands of the modern world than the alternatives. If there is any parallel it is with the decline of the Classical Greek world. Even though the Greek city-state was, and still is, a model for political thinkers, the size of the armies the city-states could field was dwarfed by the armies of the Macedonian kings, the Successor states and then Rome. After Alexander the Great the city-state became more and more a relic of the past.

⁸⁷ To some extent this can be seen by comparing the Indian Congress Party with virtually every other Third World nationalist party. Congress is an old party which held its first meeting in 1885. The younger generation of Indian politician, such as Chandra Subhas Bose or Jyoti Basu (both British-educated Bengalis), were often Fascists or Communists. The African National Congress, founded later but on the model of the Indian Congress, was strongly Marxist. Other Third World nationalists, like Gamal Nasser and Anwar Sadat, became Islamic fundamentalists, then Fascists before ending up vaguely Marxist. Sadat even went to prison for spying for Germany. Fascism is often represented as a generational issue, for instance in Sternhell 1976, 356-64. Most European Fascists, like many European Communist leaders, were born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. If Algeria or Vietnam had developed a nationalist movement a generation earlier they too might be liberal democracies.

Chapter Five: Britain and Tibet in the Twenties

5.1 Introduction

During the Twenties the Tibetans made an effort to modernise their state under the tutelage of the British Indian administration. There is no exact basic definition of a modern state, but it is often assumed that a modern state holds a monopoly on certain key social functions. One of these is a monopoly on violence. Another more important feature might be described as the monopoly on legitimacy. In a sense the modern state is a more legitimate feature of the political landscape in a way that other administrative units are not. If any given modern state comes into conflict with a lower administrative unit it is generally the case that the central state authority will win such a dispute. This is not only usually the situation in the West, it is also widely accepted as being a just solution. Under British guidance, and with the support of British scholars in the post-Liberation period, the Lhasan authorities attempted to build a modern state based on the special, and superior, legitimacy of the Dalai Lama. Recognising the logic of the modern world, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, his entourage and his British supporters attempted to build a modern state on the basis that the Dalai Lama was the only rightful ruler of all of Tibet. These sort of views were rarely of any interest to the British Home government or even the British Indian administration. They were of a great deal of importance to the British Tibet cadre.¹ The source material for this period is usually in the form of modern, and often political, interpretations of historical events by Western, Tibetan or Chinese scholars.

The importance of such ideological disputes can be seen in the interpretation placed on the Dalai Lama's role in traditional Tibet. There had been Tibetans who held clearly differing views on this matter before the 1911 Revolution. One such person was the Panchen Lama. Until the Twenties the dispute between the Dalai and Panchen Lamas was a traditional one carried out in the traditional manner. Traditionally the Panchen Lama claimed to be the reincarnation of a more important religious figure than the Dalai Lama. Amitabha was supposedly the superior of Avalokiteshvara.² In turn, as Hugh Richardson put it "it is arguable that the Panchen Lama is 'more spiritual' than the Dalai Lama; but he can only be true to his nature if he remains in spiritual

¹ The term "Tibet cadre" refers to those British officials in India who mostly dealt with Tibet such as Charles Bell, Basil Gould and Hugh Richardson

² Avalokiteshvara supposedly took his monastic vows under the supervision of Amitabha. In Tibetan Buddhism is this an important relationship. Stein 1972, 84.

contemplation and abstains from all contact with the temporal world. The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, is true to his nature when he influences the practical world. The argument of the spiritual superiority of the Panchen Lama, therefore, logically debars him from having any temporal power or political interests."³ It is not hard to imagine that these sort of arguments were welcomed in Lhasa by the Dalai Lama, but perhaps were not so widely accepted in Shigatse by the Panchen Lamas. As an indication of the limits of the Dalai Lama's powers, there is also a dispute between these two leading Lamas over which is the more ancient lineage. The Fifth Dalai Lama first granted the title of Panchen Lama. Yet just as the Third Dalai Lama made his line older by retrospectively recognising two previous Lamas as the First and Second Dalai Lamas, so too has the Panchen Lama recognised prior incarnations. This means that the Tenth Panchen Lama was referred to as the Tenth by his own entourage but as the Seventh by the Lhasan administration.⁴ If the Dalai Lamas held unquestioned power within Tibet it is unlikely that they would have tolerated this undermining of their prestige.

5.2 Autonomy in Traditional Tibet

While it is possible that the Fifth Dalai Lama ruled all of Tibet, his power was both contested and constrained by the Mongol tribes he had called in to place him in authority. In 1638 the Qoshot Mongol Khan Gushri exchanged titles with the Dalai Lama after the latter had sought out Mongol support in his fight with the Tibetan rulers of Tsang.⁵ As a result the Mongol ruler led his army into Kham to overthrow the pro-Bon ruler of Beri and also into Tsang. The theoretical justification was that these non-Gelugpa rulers were plotting together to destroy the Yellow Hat sect in Tibet.⁶ While this may have been true it may also be the case that this is a *post factum* rationalisation by the monks who, as the only large group of literate people in Tibet, controlled the writing of Tibetan history. The Mongol Khan Gushri certainly took the title "King of Tibet" and with that came claims to exercise power in Tibet. Zahiruddin Ahmad claimed that Gushri Khan "then assumed, *and subsequently transferred to the Dalai Lama*, the temporal rule of Tibet".⁷ Whether he actually did so or Tibetan monk historians just claim he did is another question.⁸ In 1642 Gushri clearly showed his

³ Richardson 1962, 55.

⁴ See Richardson 1962, 55.

⁵ Shakabpa 1967, 102-105. Ahmad 1960, 2.

⁶ It is of course possible that this was genuine, but the Yellow Hat authorities found letters disclosing similar plots so often at convenient times that it raises questions about their authenticity.

⁷ Ahmad 1960, 3. Italics added.

⁸ Similarly in Europe monks forged the Donation of Constantine and used it to justify

own opinion of the degree of power he exercised in Tibet. In this year, according to the Tibetan historians, Gushri declared "he conferred on the Dalai Lama supreme authority over all Tibet from Tachienlu in the east up to the Ladakh border in the west."⁹ This, according to Shakabpa, was the first time the Dalai Lama was the temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet, even though the actual exercise of power was left in the hands of Gushri's choice Sonam Chospel.¹⁰ However there are other accounts that claim Gushri Khan took control of all Tibet and then personally gave control of it to Sonam Chospel without any mention of the Fifth Dalai Lama at all.¹¹ In any event for the Mongols to confer such power is, of course, only possible if they possess it in the first place. It is possible that the Mongols did not see themselves as transferring power to the Dalai Lama so much as allowing him the right to administer Tibet in their name. This would have a precedent in the Mongol Yuan dynasty which allowed a series of Tibetan monks to administer Tibet in their name.¹²

The degree to which the Mongols did exercise power is not an easy question to resolve given that Tibetan historical records have traditionally been written by monks and not by Mongols. Given nomadic behaviour generally, it is likely that as long as the Mongols were left to graze their animals wherever they wanted in peace and were given large amounts of money, they left the Tibetans alone. However no pre-modern government could possibly afford to accept the presence of nomadic tribes within its own territory if it could prevent it. If the Tibetan Government had been able to drive the Mongols out, it undoubtedly would have done so. Indeed the Tibetan authorities made numerous attempts to get the Mongols to leave Tibet and to go back to Qinghai. In 1639 the Dalai Lama had objected to the Mongol campaign against Tsang to no avail, although this might have just been a way of avoiding attributing bloodshed to the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama did ask Gushri to return to Mongolia after destroying the ruler of Beri, but he was ignored by the Mongols. According to the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama tried to prevent the Mongols from invading Tsang and to go to Kokonor instead. The Mongols completely ignored this request. This constraint on their power suggests that the Fifth Dalai Lama was not in total control of Tibet and that the historical

Papal claims to temporal rule in Western Europe for nearly a thousand years. See van Creveld 1999, 65.

⁹ Shakabpa 1967, 111. Notice the choice of borders for "Tibet". This issue was to be very important after the Chinese re-established control over Tibet and so it is likely that Shakabpa was influenced by those later events in his description of the border.

¹⁰ Shakabpa 1967, 111.

¹¹ See Yamaguchi (1995) for a detailed description of these events.

¹² Although there is no common agreement on the degree to which the Mongol Yuan dynasty ruled Tibet or whether these monks had any influence in Tibet.

records, which suggest he was, have been written for religious and political reasons. According to the most generous definition possible, the Fifth Dalai Lama only held power in Tibet from 1660 until his death in 1682. Long before Communist "Liberation" made the issue so politically charged, Sir Charles Bell claimed that only two Dalai Lamas had actually exercised temporal power; the Fifth for a mere three years and the Thirteenth for the last forty years of his life.¹³

Similar problems with the Mongols were just as common for his successors. In 1705 a dispute between Gushri's grandson, Lhazang Khan, and the ex-Regent Sangye Gyatso, ended with the major religious leaders of Tibet asking the Mongols to leave Tibet proper for Kokonor. The Mongol response was to march on Lhasa which led to mediation after which Sangye was exiled and the Mongols were asked to leave Tibet. Instead of leaving, Lhazang captured the ex-Regent, executed him, took Lhasa and assumed full political power. This behaviour is not readily explicable if the Dalai Lama had complete and unquestioned power over Tibet. It is more typical of a Mongol ruler who thought that he held full power but had temporarily delegated it to the religious establishment to rule in his name and with his interests in mind. Therefore it is likely that the Dalai Lama's claim to supreme temporal authority had no particular basis in past precedent or the historical record, but only, if at all, in Tibetan theology.

5.3 British Advice and Nation-Building

One of the main impacts of Western imperialism was the insistence of the Western powers on the modernisation of Asian societies. Countries that did not follow Japan's example and modernise themselves were forced to do so by Western aggression.¹⁴ For the Tibetans in the post-1911 period there was little doubt about the Western model they would chose. The British were both geographically close and had a strategic interest in keeping the Chinese out of Tibet. After the expulsion of the Chinese from Tibet in 1911, the British Indian administration stepped in to provide military support and political advice. Formally neither was on a particularly grand scale. The military support was limited to a handful of guns, some rifles and the training of a small cadre of Tibetan soldiers. The political advice could only be intermittent given that the British had not yet permanently stationed a Political Officer at Lhasa. The most important support has been by British members of the Tibet cadre

¹³ Sir Charles Bell, "Pious Tibet Searches for a Little Child" in NYT, May 23 1937, 8:12,13,28. Presumably the "forty years" run from 1895 when the Dalai Lama forced his Regent to resign and assumed power to his death in 1933. See Rapgay 1977, 21-2.

¹⁴ The obvious example being China and to a lesser extent Thailand. The rest usually became colonies and so had no choice in the matter.

in retirement and after the Chinese "Liberation". Just as Hugh Richardson interpreted the Simla Convention in a way that did not exactly reflect the intentions or views of the British government at the time, so he would continue to support the Tibetan case long after he returned to Britain. The views of the British Tibetan officials have come to dominate the literature on Tibet and generally can be relied on to put the best possible interpretation on the actions and habits of the Lhasan administration. A typical example in the literature is Tibet's "National Assembly". In Lhasa a group of high officials, nobles and representatives of the leading monasteries, would meet when summoned. Their opinion would be given to the Dalai Lama and his administration but there does not seem to be any evidence that it was binding. In times of crisis an even wider body of opinion would be canvassed by summoning in addition representatives of professions. There is a reasonably good parallel in the Estates of pre-Revolutionary France. The French King also irregularly summoned the representatives of the First and Second Estates (i.e. the nobility and the Church) and every now and then included representatives of the Third Estate (usually the guilds) in an Estates General. Such bodies belonged to the old Europe. A National Assembly belongs to the modern world. There is little doubt about which term the Tibetan cadre has preferred to describe the Tibetan institution.¹⁵ The relationship between the Tibetan administration in Lhasa and British officials in Tibet became important because these officials represented Tibetan society in a manner that would appeal to the Western public.

What little advice the British Indian administration gave prior to 1950 was, in so far as it can be determined, mostly concerned with what is now called "nation-building". The Dalai Lama's administration was encouraged to build up a stronger administration and army. This can be seen as helping Tibet make the transition from a "pre-modern" state to a "modern" one. A "modern" state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force and on the administration of the state. Only the state may legitimately call out soldiers, raise taxes and conduct foreign policy. In traditional Tibet the central Tibetan state was very weak. There is even some doubt that the Lhasan administration can be defined as the central state. It did very little in the way of governing the country such as providing a centralised administration, collecting taxes or enforcing justice. What little it did was often challenged by other powerful forces in society, notably the Tibetan monasteries. Above all else the change to a modern state system is an intellectual change. For the Chinese the step was not so great as China had been unified for a large part of its history. The traditional Chinese state had always claimed to hold a monopoly on armed force and this was usually unchallenged by

¹⁵ See Richardson 1962, 24-5.

Chinese intellectuals.¹⁶ Tibet was a very different sort of state in that the main military power was usually held by non-Tibetan "patrons" of the religious establishment. Thus, even though neither traditional China or Tibet could be properly called a modern state, the Chinese were much closer to what might be considered modern than the Tibetans.

The main practical problem for the Lhasan administration was that the modernisation program the British set in motion would cost a considerable amount of money which the traditional Tibetan political system could not raise. Taxes in traditional Tibet had been largely confined to the provision of labour in the form of corvées or children for the military, monasteries or the Dalai Lama's Lhasan administration.¹⁷ The most obvious source of revenue was Tibet's foreign trade. Indirect taxes were widely used in Europe during the nineteenth century and are generally well suited to developing economies in that they tend to fall on consumption and not investment, are relatively easy to collect and, compared to income taxes, are hard to evade. Such taxes, usually in the form of customs on imports or excise on some domestic products, had been the biggest single source of revenue for the British Government for most of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ However the British Government obtained the right to export goods to Tibet with low or non-existent tariffs under the Unequal Treaties which precluded the raising of revenue from British trade. Under the Simla Convention the Indian administration argued that the Tibetans had no rights to impose any sort of tax of goods entering Tibet from India. The amount of trade between Tibet and British India was fairly small anyway. According to American consular figures in 1912-13 the Tibetans took exports worth \$423,000 from India while sending \$813,000 worth of imports into India. By contrast the exports of one Burmese tribal group, the Karenni, to India was worth \$842,000 in 1912-13.¹⁹ Trade with Tibet for the British was clearly an irrelevance. The main British alternative to customs and excise, an income tax, was clearly not an option for the Dalai Lama's administration as there were simply no significant numbers of literate Tibetans working in the wage economy.

¹⁶ The main exception is the non-Chinese minorities who were ruled by their own leaders. There are very few examples where any Imperial Chinese state allowed ethnic Chinese to raise soldiers. The Ming dynasty did give Yunnan to a feudal ruler.

¹⁷ There is a comparative wealth of information on Tibet's traditional economy. For a quick introduction see Cassinelli and Ekvall (1969, 232-288), Goldstein (1989b, 3-8), Richardson (1962, 7-11), Shakabpa (1967, 3-12) and Stein (1972, 92-138). For an auto-biography of a child taken as a tax obligation see Tsering (1997).

¹⁸ The best discussion of the role of such taxation in Britain is Brewer (1989).

¹⁹ Baker *et al.* 1915, 572. The level of trade was increasing. In 1913-14 the Tibetans took \$647,000 worth of exports and sent \$1,071,000 worth to India.

If the Lhasa administration wanted to pay for its army and administrators, some form of direct taxation would have to be levied on Tibetan landowners. Land tax was a problem for all modernising governments in the nineteenth century and for all colonial powers which had the problem of how to fit traditional ownership into a more modern Western system. It is essentially a problem of how to represent varying types of land-ownership within a greater ideological context. For instance, in the eighteenth century the British government had a situation in which the majority of land in parts of Scotland was collectively held by clans. The British solution was to declare clan heads the equivalent of English feudal lords and so to invest all land titles in the head of one patrilineal family. The result was the Clearances, once the former clan heads discovered they could profit by replacing their followers with sheep.²⁰ After the Meiji Restoration in Japan the process had been relatively simple. The new government simply declared that feudal property rights were not really private property rights, but rather the delegated right to raise land tax.²¹ The National Government was not seizing the property of Japanese citizens but reclaiming the right to collect taxes itself.²² In China the process was more difficult in that China did not have a genuinely feudal rural sector. By the Qing dynasty Chinese tenant farmers usually paid rent to private landowners. They did not pay dues to local feudal barons on the Japanese and European model. It would have been hard to begin a capitalist transformation with the wholesale dispossession of Chinese landowners. In China this process would have to wait until the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949. The British in India had followed a policy with respect to Indian tax gatherers that was similar to the one they had applied in Scotland. The British Indian administration had declared that those people who had the right to farm land taxes were actually land owners. The intent was to create a strong land-owning pro-British gentry class, but in effect it turned a large number of land-owning peasants into tenants of absentee landlords.²³ The enormous impact that recognition of land title can have on the development of a country can be seen in the case of the American railways. Abraham Lincoln had given the first trans-

²⁰ See Prebble (1963) for an account of this process.

²¹ Japan has a long history of land moving between government and private ownership. The initial Chinese-style reforms in Japan saw all land taken from clans and vested in the State. These lands gradually moved into the possession of powerful figures at Court and then into the hands of the local administrators.

²² Pre-modern property rights covered a much wider range of "possessions" than modern states usually accept. The pre-Revolutionary French government sold official posts which could be resold and inherited. British Army commissions were bought and sold until 1871. Even positions in the Anglican Church were gifts in the hands of rich landowners and others. At one time many British subjects owned slaves. In most of these cases the "owners" demanded and got compensation.

²³ James 1997, 189-92. Moorhouse 1983, 69-77.

continental railways \$65 million in direct grants and more than 100 million acres of land. Similar land grants followed most major railway developments. Overall the Northern Pacific railway received 44 million acres, the Southern Pacific 24 million, the Union Pacific 20 million and the Santa Fe 17 million from the Federal government. In addition the states granted 55 million acres. Railways were given roughly a quarter of Minnesota and Washington, a fifth of Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, North Dakota and Montana, a seventh of Nebraska, an eighth of California and a ninth of Louisiana.²⁴ This means that, for instance, Burlington Northern, which grew out of Northern Pacific, still owns 1.5 million acres of forest land, the oil and gas rights to 7.5 million acres, proven coal reserves of 14.7 billion tons and leases over 1.2 million acres of grazing land.²⁵ The bottom line was that because the Federal government did not recognise the rights of the original owners in any way, they did not have to pay a great deal for a comprehensive railway system. The majority of the price was paid by the original Native American owners of these lands who were displaced to make way for White settlement. Similarly in Japan the backward nature of land ownership made the simple dispossession of the feudal class possible. In China the comparatively "modern" system of private land ownership paradoxically made modernising harder. The Lhasan administration could have treated all the competing sources of power with the same disregard that the Americans and Japanese governments did. That is, *in theory* the Dalai Lama's government could have freed all the Tibetan serfs and taken over their "feudal" payments to build a modern state structure with far fewer problems than faced the Chinese revolutionaries.

5.4 The Limits of Reform in Tibet

In practice the Lhasan administration was more constrained than most modernising administrations. In particular it was limited in its freedom of movement by the two powerful groups of aristocrats and monasteries. Any form of direct tax would have to be levied against these two groups or it would have to reduce their income from their own peasants. The vast majority of Tibetan peasants could not afford a tax increase themselves as they were crushed by debt already. In the past the nobility and the monasteries had agreed to pay emergency levies during national emergencies, but there had been virtually no regular monetary taxation in Tibet before 1912.²⁶ There was also the obvious problem of whether or not to view Tibetan estate

²⁴ See Bonbright (1920) for a discussion of the processes involved.

²⁵ As Burlington Northern's President put it, today "[y]ou couldn't put such an array of assets together at any price." Quoted in Wood and Johnson 1983, 177-8.

²⁶ Goldstein 1989b, 3-6, 110-2.

owners as feudal fief holders (who presumably could be displaced without any problems by denying that their property rights were really property rights), or merely tax farmers who collected revenue for Lhasa (which meant the Tibetan administration could terminate their "contracts" by administrative *fiat*) or private land owners who, if the Tibetan Government wanted a productive private sector, should have rights to enjoy their own property in peace. There is no reason to think that traditional Tibetan land ownership fell exactly or neatly into any one of these categories, but in the process of modernising the Lhasan administration would have to decide which was more appropriate to the Tibetan situation. There would be no reason why, in the process of modernisation, the Lhasan administration would not choose whichever option strengthened their power at the expense of any other groups in Tibetan society. That is, the Lhasan government would inevitably opt for a solution which denied the autonomy of all other regions and bodies in Tibet.

The issue of land ownership has also been a problem for Western historians and other foreign supporters of the Tibetan government. To claim that the Lhasan administration was powerless to prevent abuses by estate holders excuses the injustices of the old system. Unfortunately it also weakens the Lhasan administration's claim to be the rightful central government of all Tibet. After all if Lhasa could not control the estate holders then perhaps it did not rule Tibet. There is no doubt on which side the majority of pro-Tibetan Western historians have come down on. The standard claim is that the Tibetan administration in Lhasa merely delegated the right to raise taxes to individuals or institutions, but that the land all belonged to the state. The attitude any given observer takes towards traditional Tibetan society is a good indicator of how they will decide into which Western category Tibetan land ownership fell. For instance the leading British member of the Tibet cadre Hugh Richardson claimed,

[i]n theory all land in Tibet belonged to the state from which the noble landowners and great monasteries held large estates. In return the nobles paid revenues to the state, largely in produce of various kinds and also by service - it being their duty to act as officials of the government. Estates could be, and not infrequently were, resumed; but, generally, once a great family was established in certain properties it acquired a hereditary right to them.²⁷

The Dalai Lama takes a slightly different line on land ownership in traditional Tibet. He claims that "[t]he whole land of Tibet was the property of the State, and most peasant farmers held their land under a kind of leasehold directly from the State.

²⁷ Richardson 1962, 14-16.

Some of them paid their rent in kind, with a proportion of their produce, and this was the main source of the government's stocks which were distributed to the monasteries, the army, and officials."²⁸ This account of the traditional land system neatly avoids any mention of the nobility. Indeed it gives a false impression that the central government collected taxes and then handed them out to monasteries and officials. Rather the estate holding nobility and monasteries collected rents, some of which they passed on to Lhasa. The account is not merely inaccurate, it seeks to represent a fundamentally flawed version of the Tibetan social system for, presumably, political purposes. The purpose can only be to strengthen the appearance of the Lhasan administration as the rightful, indeed only, government of all of Tibet. The Dalai Lama also fudges the issue of what is Tibet, since such claims would not be true of Kham or Amdo. However the Dalai Lama also disputes the claim that the Tibetan peasants were tenants (indeed this is a false argument anyway, as the real issue is whether or not the Tibetan peasants were serfs). He claims,

[i]t may be misleading to say that these peasants were tenants. It was a mere concept that the land belonged to the State. A peasant's land was heritable, and he could lease it to others, mortgage it, or even sell his right to it - though the right to land was rarely sold because a peasant's first duty was always to hand on the land intact to the next generation. He could only be dispossessed if he failed to pay his dues of produce or labor, which were not excessive. So in practice he had all the rights of a freeholder, and his dues to the State were really a land tax paid in kind, rather than a rent.²⁹

The best that could be said about this account is that it is highly ideologically coloured. The Dalai Lama fails to discuss the key issue of who owed what to whom. In particular, while it might be true that a peasant could sell his land, the real issue is whether by doing so the peasant escaped all obligations to the local landowner, that is was the peasant still a serf. The evidence suggests that the peasant was still unfree. Melvyn Goldstein discusses the *Mi-bo*, literally a "human lease", system where a peasant paid his lord for the right to live and work off the estate. The unfree status of such people was still inherited by any children.³⁰ The problem is that Tibetan history is part of a wider debate between Communist China and the Tibetans with Western scholars ranged somewhere in between. Some authors, generally of a leftist political viewpoint, such as Tom Grunfeld, clearly adopt a Marxist view of traditional Tibetan

²⁸ MLMP 1997, 44.

²⁹ MLMP 1997, 44.

³⁰ Goldstein 1971c, 5. There are parallels with slaves in America and Russian serfs.

society, classing it as feudal and describing Tibetans peasants as serfs.³¹ Melvyn Goldstein argues that Tibetan peasants were indeed "hereditarily bound to manorial estates and under the juridical/administrative authority of the lord of such estates". Furthermore while Goldstein admits there are differences between Tibetan *mi ser* and European serfs he does argue that the similarities are such that describing the *mi ser* as serfs is reasonable.³² This view has been disputed by Beatrice D. Miller and Franz Michael.³³ There are even more extreme claims that regardless of the nature of Tibetan "serfdom" the Tibetans were content, supported by their deep religious faith and a conviction that their lot in this life was determined by their actions in past lives.³⁴ The actual manifestation of Tibetan legal practices and social organisation is not, or at least rarely, in dispute. The ideological nature of this dispute is in the representation and the consequences that implicitly follow. To claim the Tibetan peasants were serfs is to agree with at least part of the Chinese Communist criticisms of pre-1959 Tibetan society.³⁵ To claim they were free rent-payers who suffered isolated abuses is to support the Dalai Lama's view of Tibetan society as basically benign. The whole "serf" issue remains one in which the facts are less important than the political interpretation that is placed on them. It is a sure indication of Tibet's modernisation that the interpretation of a social phenomenon are so politically important.

In practice the attitude of the Lhasan administration prior to 1959 seems to have been that the large estates were privately owned property whether held by monks or officials.³⁶ There is little doubt that the reason behind this was the power of the aristocracy and monasteries. Even if the Dalai Lama was theoretically the absolute ruler of Tibet, in practice the recognition of his authority depended on him only using it in ways with which the First and Second Estates of Tibet agreed. The Thirteenth Dalai

³¹ Grunfeld 1987, 11-16.

³² Goldstein 1988, 61. For a thorough examination of Tibetan serfdom see Goldstein 1971b, 1971c, 1986, 1989a.

³³ Miller 1987 65-7. Miller 1988, 64-6. Michael 1986, 73. Michael 1987, 78.

³⁴ Patt 1992, 21-7. It is interesting that the same does not apply to post-1951 Tibet. If the religious authorities did somehow manage to convince most Tibetans to be happy with a state of serfdom, that is a comprehensive indictment of pre-1950 Tibet.

³⁵ The irony being that the Communist government eventually imposed collective farming on all of China. The vast majority of pre-1949 Chinese farmers were free and had, at worst, rented land. After collectivisation they were tied to their farms by law and obliged to sell to the government. In effect they were state-owned serfs.

³⁶ That the Tibetan State could seize estates as punishment for criminal acts does not prove that the State owned such land. The British government seized all property of all convicted felons until 1870 and in modern times many modern Western states seize the property of those convicted of drug offences. That does not mean that the government owns all the property in these countries.

Lama could certainly destroy *individual* nobles and even monasteries. For example in 1910 a number of Tibetan officials and some monasteries had sided with the Chinese against the Dalai Lama. After the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa, Tengyeling monastery was destroyed and its monks dispersed for their pro-Chinese behaviour. The original head of the Tsarong family and his heir were killed by some soldiers under the command of the Dalai Lama's favourite, Dasang Damdul, on the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa in 1910. This may not have been on the orders of the Dalai Lama, but Tsarong had negotiated agreements with the British without consulting the Dalai Lama. The estates, and the Tsarong daughters, were given to Dasang Damdul.³⁷ But his powers over the nobility and the monasteries as groups were limited. Most notably the rejection of a modern army in 1924-5 is usually ascribed to the power of the conservative monks and nobles who forced the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to abandon the experiment.³⁸

Since 1959 the Dalai Lama and many writers, who might be fairly categorised as his supporters, have tended to view the large estates as gifts of one sort or the other from the Lhasan administration which really belonged to the Dalai Lama.³⁹ The Dalai Lama himself has claimed that "the most urgent single reform which our social system needed was in the large private estates. These estates had been granted long ago to aristocratic families. They were hereditary, and in return for the grant each family had to provide one male heir in each generation to be trained and to work as a government official."⁴⁰ The Dalai Lama's proposed constitution for the day when Tibet is independent simply nationalises all land in Tibet.⁴¹ Whether or not the Dalai Lama, when or if he returns to Lhasa to rule an independent Tibet, would be powerful enough to do so is questionable. When in 1965 Melvyn Goldstein wanted to look at a "pass" (a document giving a Tibetan *mi ser* permission to live off his estate) the owner was

³⁷ Shakabpa claimed that Tsarong and his son were shot for "having close relations with the Chinese". See Shakabpa 1967, 241, 249, 258. Oddly enough one of Tsarong's daughters, married off to the man who may or may not have had her father killed, thanked the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for his support. See Taring (1986). Dasang Damdul Tsarong's name is written a variety of ways. Dasang is a military rank. His son has written a biography. See Tsarong (2000).

³⁸ For example, Shakabpa 1967, 264.

³⁹ Smith 1996, 215n217.

⁴⁰ MLMP, 1997, 45.

⁴¹ Article 25 (1) states "[a]ll land shall belong to the State and shall be made available on payment of annual rent as may be fixed from time to time for building, agricultural and other purposes according to need." It would be hard to reconcile this with Article 19 which says "[n]o person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law and for public purposes on payment of just compensation." Ling 1968, 530-54.

reluctant to give it up, fearing he would be forced to become a serf again when the Dalai Lama returned to rule Tibet. Some Tibetans clearly doubt the Dalai Lama's ability to reform the system.⁴² The Dalai Lama claims that he attempted to pass land reform measures while he still held power in Tibet. The aim was to resume control of the larger estates with compensation being paid to the noble families. This alone makes it clear that these estates were to all intents and purposes privately-held land. After all if these lands really belonged to the Tibetan state they could be seized without any compensation whatsoever.

The main problem with these claims was that by the time the Lhasan administration had finished discussing the issue, the Chinese Communists were in charge and "they had come with their own Communist ideas of land reform, which the Tibetan peasants disliked very much, and if our government had put through this popular reform, the Chinese reforms would have been even more unpopular than they were. So, however hard we pressed [the Chinese Communists], they would never either say yes or no to this proposal."⁴³ Although His Holiness does not spell out exactly what policies were pursued and at what time, there are grounds for disputing a great many of his claims. First of all it is not clear where the money was going to come from to pay the nobility and the monasteries for their land. Presumably the Dalai Lama felt that the Chinese Central government ought to pay.⁴⁴ It is unlikely that any Chinese government, much less a Communist one, would seriously entertain the idea that poor Chinese peasants should pay compensation to rich Tibetan nobles for their estates. Given the debt and tax burdens of most Tibetan peasants, the local Tibetan taxpayers could not pay much for the land.⁴⁵

The Dalai Lama also seems to be blurring the line between two stages of Chinese land reform. "Democratic" land reform was similar to what the Dalai Lama proposed; that is land was taken from the land owners and given to the peasants who farmed it. However the Chinese government did not pay any compensation to the previous owners. In the later "Socialist" land reform, these small plots were combined into co-operatives and then communes. The first stage was always popular in the rest of China and probably would have been in Tibet too. The second stage was often bitterly resisted in every Communist country. What might have been done in Tibet if

⁴² Goldstein 1989a 59.

⁴³ MLMP, 1997, 46.

⁴⁴ At least that is the implication of, for instance, the Dalai Lama's comments at a press conference held at Mussoorie, June 20, 1959. See Sharma and Sharma 1996, 5:98.

⁴⁵ Unless they paid in the same way Native Americans did for the railways by being displaced. There has never been a suggestion that the Chinese contemplated this.

the Tibetan aristocracy had been prepared to give up its lands unilaterally is shown by the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup. When Thondup decided to flee Tibet, he, with the full knowledge of the Chinese, first went to his estates and divided up the land among the workers and burnt the records of their debts.⁴⁶

5.5 Defending Autonomy Within Tibet

There were several powerful autonomous regions within Tibet which would be hit by any attempt to impose direct taxes or to redefine ownership of the land. The most important of these was the Panchen Lama's administration in Tashilhunpo monastery at Shigatse. Before 1912 the Panchen Lama had not paid taxes to the Lhasan Government. Indeed Sir Charles Bell said "Ta-shi Lühn-po has long desired to be almost, if not entirely, independent of Lhasa, and many of its people look to Nanking to help in these designs."⁴⁷ In the late eighteenth century the Qing Government had enfeoffed the Panchen Lama in the Tsang region of Western Tibet thereby formally excluding Tashilhunpo from the control of the Dalai Lama's Lhasan administration.⁴⁸ In 1791 the Panchen Lama and Tashilhunpo monastery had paid a quarter of the costs of expelling the Nepalese.⁴⁹ In the early 1920s the Dalai Lama's administration in Lhasa used this as a precedent in requiring Tashilhunpo to pay a quarter of the revenue needed for the new Lhasa-based military and administration. The Ninth Panchen Lama and his administration showed no particular sign of wanting to pay to increase the status and strength of the Dalai Lama and they simply refused to do so.⁵⁰ This led to serious tensions between the two great monastic seats of power. Hugh Richardson was later to describe this conflict as being between "the determination of Lhasa to reduce Tashilhunpo to the status - on which there was fair reason to insist - of an honoured vassal, and the reluctance of Tashilhunpo to give up any of the privileges which it had acquired in the past century or more."⁵¹ There is no doubt that this largely reflects a point of view which the British Indian Government and Hugh Richardson, for political or personal reasons, wished to put forward, but it is not necessarily the only possible interpretation of these events. There is no special reason to think that there was any good reason to insist that the Panchen Lama and his entourage should accept the status of honoured vassals. This is a value judgement

⁴⁶ Craig 1998, 174-5.

⁴⁷ Bell 1931, 141.

⁴⁸ Petech 1972, 154. Richardson 1962, 53. Snellgrove and Richardson 1995, 219-20. Wang and Suo 1984, 97-8.

⁴⁹ Goldstein 1989b, 110.

⁵⁰ See F. M. Bailey's report on his 1924 mission to Lhasa in Mehra 1979-80, 1:34-5.

⁵¹ Richardson 1962, 126

which reflects the political view, common to the British Tibetan cadre and the Dalai Lama's administration, that only the Dalai Lama and the administration in Lhasa had any right to rule any part of Tibet. The Panchen Lama and his entourage might well have an entirely different, but still equally historically valid, point of view.

That the Lhasan regime was the rightful government of Tibet became a firmly held belief of the British Indian government, but, at various times, it had been prepared to consider other options. The first British contacts with any Tibetan administration was with the Panchen Lama and Tashilhunpo who, in effect, conducted their own foreign policy with the British.⁵² In 1904, when the Dalai Lama fled Tibet from the British invasion, the British were perfectly prepared to flirt with the idea of supporting the Panchen Lama as ruler of Tibet. This was also their response when the Dalai Lama again fled in 1909, this time from the Chinese.⁵³ During the 1904 occupation of Tibet by the British Army, the Panchen Lama made his opinion on his status very clear. The initial advance by the British Expedition had been into territory which the Panchen Lama claimed as his own, not Lhasa's. His response was to send a delegate to ask Younghusband to leave, in return for which he, the Panchen Lama, would use his influence at Lhasa to persuade the Dalai Lama's administration to negotiate with the British. Unfortunately for the Panchen Lama by this time the British were firmly of the opinion that they wanted to deal only with one central authority and that it should be in Lhasa. In August 1904, following the alleged seizure of two British Indian subjects by the Lhasan authorities, the Younghusband expedition began to seize Tibetan livestock in retaliation. The Panchen Lama's delegate claimed that these animals belonged to the Panchen Lama and not to the Dalai Lama and asked for their release. Younghusband claimed "this was, then, one more instance of the trouble the Lhasa authorities were bringing the Shigatse people into by their unfriendly attitude towards the Commission. I could not, of course, recognise any difference between Shigatse and Lhasa, and had to look to the Tibetan Government as a whole; but I would advise him to induce the Lhasa officials to pay without delay the sum of Rs. 2,000 which Mr. White had demanded from them as indemnity for the ill-usage to the two Lachung men, and to deliver them up as soon as possible. When that was done, the animals seized would be

⁵² See Markham (1876) and Turner (1806) for a account of the British missions. Although Hugh Richardson (1978, 24-5) does not discuss the implications of the affair, he does mention that in 1903-4 the then Panchen Lama's father was involved in a supposed poisoning scandal and was clubbed to death. Several prominent Shigatse figures were fined and disgraced. As these were the same people who negotiated with the British it is likely that they were punished for that, rather than for any poisoning.

⁵³ Lamb 1966, 1:16-31.

at once released."⁵⁴ If there is a pattern here it is that when Chinese authority in Tibet declined, the British authorities, presumably, felt they could strike a better deal with Lhasa than with Tashilhunpo. When the Dalai Lama was strong and favoured the Chinese, the British dealt with the "lesser" Incarnation.

There is no obvious reason why the Panchen Lama was not entitled to his traditional autonomy with respect to Lhasa just as the Dalai Lama was, according to Richardson, with respect to Beijing. The fact that the Dalai Lama's authority is specially privileged is a result of the ideological transformation of his office into the highest *political* authority in Tibet. Even Richardson accepted that, in some cases, the Dalai Lama's authority was purely nominal. These cases, perhaps not surprisingly considering Hugh Richardson's nationality and profession, always work in favour of the British Government. Richardson claimed that the "Government of the Dalai Lama did not exercise direct authority in Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan, or any area south of the Himalaya except for the Chumbi valley, nor was it represented in those countries by permanent envoys; but the ties of religious homage, trade, racial affinity, and a degree of common interest had given Lhasa a special position and influence."⁵⁵ In fact there is no question that the Lhasan authorities used to collect taxes (or "monastic contributions which it was not easy to distinguish from regular taxes") in many of these regions and especially in the Tawang region, as even Richardson implicitly acknowledged.⁵⁶ Certainly the British government in 1912 believed the then existing border ran "south of Tawang, running westwards along the foothills from near Odalguri to the southern Bhutan border".⁵⁷ As late as 1937 Basil Gould, the British Political Officer to Sikkim, could write "There is no doubt that prior to 1914 the Tawang area was Tibetan".⁵⁸ There is evidence that even as late as 1942 the British

⁵⁴ *Letter from Colonel F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., British Commissioner, Tibet Frontier Commission, to the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign Department, dated Khamba Jong, the 27th August, 1903.* PRT 1904, 262. BIT 1999, 106.

⁵⁵ Richardson 1962, 73-4. Other writers have no doubt that Lhasa used to include some of these areas. See Alexandrowicz 1953, 498. Interestingly enough when the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 he issued a press statement at Tezpur which, twice, clearly and specifically named the place where the Dalai Lama crossed the border. It more or less lies on the McMahon line. See the text of the press statement in Sharma and Sharma 1996, 5:95-6.

⁵⁶ Richardson, 1962, 149-50.

⁵⁷ *Confidential Note by Chief of General Staff, 1 June, 1912.* IOR, Political and Secret Files, 1910/1918, Part 2. Reproduced in Mehra 1979-80, 1:46. See also Mehra 1979-80, 1:34-5, 41.

⁵⁸ *Lhasa Mission, 1936-7: excerpts from report.* Enclosed in Gould to India, 30 April, 1937, in IOR, L/P&S/12/36/27. Reproduced in Mehra 1979-80, 1:78.

government was well aware that the Lhasan administration refused to accept the McMahon line in Tawang.⁵⁹ Thus the relationship between Tibet and the British Tibet cadre was an unusual one in that the British Unequal Treaties prevented Lhasa from raising adequate tax revenue to defend itself, the British Home government did not support Tibetan claims for independence (even Richardson wrote, perhaps expressing the view of the Indian administration rather than himself, these were "of course not to be supported" although they were useful for bargaining purposes⁶⁰) and the British Indian administration seized what were traditionally Tibetan lands.

There were other semi-autonomous regions within Tibet where the Dalai Lama held only a theoretical authority if any at all. Within "Greater Tibet" (i.e. what is now the Tibetan Autonomous Region, together with the province of Qinghai and parts of Sichuan, Yunnan and Gansu) the Dalai Lama had no authority outside Tibet proper. In 1938 the American Robert Ekvall wrote "All of Northeast Tibet is broken up into areas under independent tribal authority; robbery is an accepted diversion in no way affecting one's social status, and there is no general law of the land operative".⁶¹ The other major religious site within Tibet proper was the Sakya estate in Tsang.⁶² This region was ruled by the remnants of the Sakya sect which had once held theoretical power all over Tibet under the patronage of the Mongol Yuan dynasty. They had suffered severely from the Fifth Dalai Lama's Mongol allies and were now reduced to a small and remote region where they paid a token amount in tax to Lhasa every year. Outside Tibet proper there were other regions which actively resisted Lhasa's control between 1911 and 1950. Few of these put up much of a struggle against the Dalai Lama's army with its modern British weapons. One region that tried was Poyul in the far south-east of Tibet near the border with Assam. In 1910 the ruler of the region, Pomo Kanam Gyalpo, had successfully resisted the Qing Army. He then refused to allow Lhasan administrators into his kingdom or to pay the customary token tribute to Lhasa. In 1920 the Lhasan Government tried to resolve the problem without force by offering Gyalpo an advantageous marriage within the Lhasan aristocracy. When this failed to work the Tibetan administration was forced to send in the British-trained army in 1926. The first attempt failed when the Lhasan force was defeated and their commander killed. Another military expedition eventually succeeded in forcing the King of Poyul to flee to Assam. Not until 1931 was a Tibetan administration set up in Poyul.⁶³

⁵⁹ Goldstein 1989b, 405-6.

⁶⁰ Richardson 1945, 16.

⁶¹ NYT, October 16, 1938, 10:8:4.

⁶² See Cassinelli and Ekvall (1969) for a discussion of this administration.

⁶³ Taring 1986, 66, 98. Shakapba 1967, 266.

Other parts of Greater Tibet experienced even less control from Lhasa. The older Tibetan sects had survived in the remoter regions of Greater Tibet precisely because the Fifth Dalai Lama and his Mongol allies never had any control over these regions and they escaped the persecutions of Central Tibet. This was especially true of Amdo, Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh, and Kham. In these regions the usual forms of Tibetan Buddhism are not the reformed Yellow Hat sect. The Tibetan administration in Lhasa has not had any particular degree of control in Amdo (or, roughly, what the Mongols refer to as Kokonor and the Chinese call Qinghai) since, at least, the Qing Government organised an administration over the region in 1724. Religious divisions are also important in Kham where there are significant cultural differences as well. Both the Amdowas and Khambas are culturally distinct from Central Tibetans, although they are still Tibetans by any meaningful definition, and many of them are nomads rather than settled peasants. In Amdo many "Tibetans" are either highly Tibetanised Mongols or slightly Mongolised Tibetans. In both Amdo and Kham sub-ethnic tensions were important enough to disrupt Lhasan efforts to resist Chinese control.⁶⁴ The Khambas were never particularly resigned to any degree of sedentary control and there is no compelling evidence that the government in Lhasa ever exerted any degree of control in the region before 1911. Rather political power was left in the hands of the local kings and nomad chiefs who paid, at best, nominal tribute to Lhasa.⁶⁵ The tenuous degree of control exercised over this area was illustrated in the 1860s when the ruler of Nyarong, Gonpo Nyarong, rose and took control of all of Nyarong and several of the surrounding states. The Governor of Sichuan was unable to respond to this and had to approve an expedition from Lhasa which took control of the region in 1863.⁶⁶ The Lhasan Army supposedly offered to leave if the Qing Government paid the costs of the expedition. The Manchus refused and allowed Lhasa to organise an administration.⁶⁷ In 1890s Nyarong again rose only to be suppressed by the government of Sichuan which continued to allow the region to fall under the jurisdiction of Lhasa.⁶⁸ In 1950, in theory, power was exercised by the heads of the two main monasteries in the region, the Phagpa Gelek Namgyal and the Dargyab Rimpoche Loden Sherap, both of whom served on the Chamdo Liberation Committee.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ In particular allegations that a Central Tibetan soldier raped a Khamba woman led to fighting just before the People's Liberation Army crossed into Kham. Many Khams worked with the PLA largely due to their dislike of the Lhasan authorities.

⁶⁵ Rockhill 1891, 61, 72-4, 118-20, 127, 188-9, 216, 218-22, 242-3, 289-93.

⁶⁶ Shakabpa 1967, 187.

⁶⁷ Smith 1996, 141.

⁶⁸ Shakabpa 1967, 224. See also Adshead 1984, 57-8.

⁶⁹ When these two incarnations joined the Chamdo Liberation Committee they were

Given the high degree of autonomy that was traditionally practised in Shigatse it is not surprising that in 1923 the Ninth Panchen Lama chose to flee Tibet under pressure from Lhasa. This pressure began in 1922 with the arrest and gaoling of Tashilhunpo's representatives in Lhasa. The Lhasa government held that the monastery had to pay whatever Lhasa had assessed was Tashilhunpo's fair share. The Panchen Lama's administration appealed to the British to mediate in the dispute but the British refused on the grounds that this would have "constituted interference in Tibetan internal affairs."⁷⁰ There is probably no reason to take this excuse seriously and it is more likely that the British approved of the Dalai Lama's efforts even if they had not been inspired by the British directly. In December 1923 the Panchen Lama and most of his entourage fled Tibet for Mongolia and then Beijing.⁷¹ In doing so the Panchen Lama placed himself in a long Tibetan tradition of seeking a foreign patron to take his side in what was, to all intents and purposes, an internal dispute. In the same way the Sakya Pandita had sought the patronage of the Yuan Emperors, the Third Dalai Lama that of Altan Khan, the Fifth Dalai Lama Gushri Khan, and later Dalai Lamas with the Manchu Emperors. His flight also raises questions about the Dalai Lama's "constitutional" powers at the time. The British government in India and the Tibetan administration in Lhasa had a clear interest in arguing that the Dalai Lama was the unquestioned head of the Tibetan state. This is especially true given the British position in Tibet rested on their patronage of the Dalai Lama. In fact authors closely associated with the British government, most notably Hugh Richardson, have frequently claimed that the Dalai Lama was the unquestioned ruler of all Tibet, which in turn was defined in such a way as to include regions claimed by China but not those claimed by Britain. The Panchen Lama clearly had a different opinion about the Dalai Lama's rights. The Dalai Lama's response was to send the military after the Panchen Lama so as to prevent him reaching "foreign" soil. When this failed the Dalai Lama placed an administrator directly over Tashilhunpo monastery to run the region on behalf of the Lhasan Government.

5.6 The British Failure in Tibet

All in all the efforts of the British Indian administration to modernise the Tibetan state failed. In particular the reforms to the Tibetan armed forces were

ten and fourteen years old respectively. This does not mean that their entourages did not agree to such an arrangement. See Shakya 1999, 128.

⁷⁰ Richardson 1962, 127.

⁷¹ That Shakabpa (1967, 263) blames the Panchen Lama's advisers for this decision is due to a long Tibetan tradition of avoiding placing blame on Incarnations .

reversed in 1924 and 1925. There is no clear reason why the Lhasan administration should have turned against this experiment in modern administration although it has been suggested that the Tibetan army attempted a military coup in the early twenties. There is some circumstantial evidence that the British Political Officer Frederick Marshman Bailey and the Tibetan army chief Tsarong conspired to bring about the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the introduction of British soldiers to Lhasa.⁷² In one sense this represented the last good chance for Tibet to construct a modern state system under the guidance, presumably, of a Western-influenced military figure. At best this might have represented an attempt to remodel Tibet in roughly the same way that Kemal Attaturk did in Turkey. On the other hand if the British Indian administration had attempted to overthrow and perhaps kill the Thirteenth Dalai Lama they would have seriously betrayed their friends and allies in Lhasa. It is not surprising, therefore, that by and large British writers ever since have denied that any such attempt took place. The former British official Hugh Richardson has strongly denounced the suggestion that the British government would have helped any such group.⁷³ As Alex McKay puts it "British [and perhaps even Tibetan] interests today are best served by maintaining that the British officials who dealt with Tibet worked in conjunction with the Dalai Lama's Government, with the result that the 13th Dalai Lama has been seen as a supporter of the British."⁷⁴

5.7 The British Failure at Home

However if the Tibetans are to be condemned for their "reactionary" policies and rejection of the modern world, the British were hardly in a position to lecture others. During the same period the British Home government also rejected a series of "modern" reforms and sought to return to the certainties of the nineteenth century. Roughly in the period 1922-1925 the British government undid many of the reforms forced upon it by World War I. Even before the war Britain had moved in the direction France and Germany had pioneered with the introduction of old-age pensions and the beginnings of the welfare state. In 1922 financial pressure on the British government forced it to make severe cuts to a whole range of social welfare programs rather than raise extra taxation revenue. The Geddes economy committee, under Sir Eric Campbell Geddes recommended cuts to spending on education, health and on the

⁷² The only serious Western attempt to discuss this is McKay (1997). Melvyn Goldstein (1989b, 122-37) produces some very interesting circumstantial evidence although Goldstein does not infer that a coup was attempted.

⁷³ Richardson 1962, 137. The possibility that Bailey acted alone is not discussed by Richardson.

⁷⁴ McKay 1997, 424.

armed services. In 1925 the British government attempted to restore the Gold Standard at the pre-war rate when compared to the American dollar.⁷⁵

Along with these economic policies the British government attempted to return to the foreign policies of the nineteenth century. British politicians and writers claimed World War I was an aberration in Britain's tradition policy towards Europe. In the past the British had avoided a "Continental commitment" (i.e. sending large numbers of soldiers to fight in Europe) being content with colonial expansion and subsidising allies in Europe. Whether these "reactionary" policies were a well thought-out program for Britain or not, they were in fact an aberration in modern British politics. It took another World War before the British joined the rest of Europe in following a "modern" social policy. The introduction of the welfare state after the post-World-War-II Labour Party victory meant that to a large extent Britain rejected its classical liberal past. The British government nationalised the major industries such as steel and coal, introduced the National Health Service and made education far more widely available. The British government also retained National Service. It is certainly not the case that the plight of the poor was worse after 1945 than it was between the wars, much less during the Victorian period when classical liberal politics dominated British politics. There is no reason to think that British voters had suddenly developed more acute social consciences. It is more likely that the welfare state was seen as the price Britain had to pay for a large conscription-based army in the post-1945 years.

All this suggests that the British were not the best role model for the Tibetans to imitate by the 1920s. Indeed it is questionable whether the ruling British political classes had any real concept of what they were doing or where they were going. A measure of their competence in modernisation can be seen in their empire. Outside Britain proper the British government could follow any policy they liked to further the welfare of their empire, unconstrained by electoral politics. The results were not particularly impressive. When the British arrived in India, India was one of the most economically advanced countries in the world. Indian textiles, for instance, were so much better than what could be produced in Britain that in 1700 the British government had to impose protective tariffs.⁷⁶ In 1947 the British left India as one of the poorest countries in the world. Right up to the end of the British empire the

⁷⁵ Strictly speaking Britain did not return to the pre-war Gold Standard as consumers were not allowed to exchange currency for gold. It was a gold-exchange standard which fixed the exchange rate to gold. See Taylor 1967, 183-5, 223-4.

⁷⁶ Chaudhuri 1965, 111-39. Chaudhuri 1978, 11-2, 204-5, 237-40. Indeed English has a wealth of words for textile products derived from Asian place names, such as calico, damask and nankeen.

British followed an old fashioned policy of exploitation which did little for Britain and even less for the locals. The comparison that could be made is with Japan and the Soviet Union where industrial development was strongly supported by the relevant governments. To take just one measure of economic development, in 1910, the year before the fall of the Manchu dynasty, British steel production was 6.5 million tons, Russian 3.5 million and Japan a mere 160,000 tons. By 1938 British production was up to 10.5 million tons, but the Soviet Union was producing 18 million tons and the Japanese 7 million tons.⁷⁷ Even if Britain's home economy was "mature", the economies of Britain's imperial possessions were not. Although the British government provided some protectionist barriers in its Empire, for the Indian steel industry for instance, the British government was content to leave development to the market. Had the British government had the will or the desire it could have pushed for much greater economic development in its empire. By contrast even though Japanese rule over Korea was far more brutal than British rule over India was (at least by 1900), and in fact the Japanese aimed at assimilating the Koreans totally, the Korean economy grew enormously under the Japanese. In 1925 manufacturing represented 17.7% of Korea's gross commodity product, in 1931 22.7%, in 1936 31.3% and in 1939 it was 39%. Over the same period the contribution of agriculture declined from 72.7% in 1925 to 42% in 1939. Thus in 1939 manufacturing (39%) and mining (6%) together outstripped agriculture (42%) in the Korean economy.⁷⁸ The Koreans may or may not have been able to do this for themselves had they been given a chance, but in the event it was done under Japanese rule. Despite their desire to exploit (and of course success in exploiting) the Koreans, the Japanese left solid achievements in Korea.

There is no reason to think that this sort of economic development was unique to the Japanese or impossible for the British to imitate. After all the British Empire was a vast collection of resource-rich territories and included a quarter of the population of the globe. Yet the British ruling elites, just like the Tibetan leadership and for that matter the majority of Qing officials, either could not see the need for, or would not make, the necessary changes. Ultimately, the British chose to become a second-rate European power rather than share the Empire with any number of non-Europeans. In a way this means they had a great deal in common with the Lhasan administration and the Qing government. All three ruling groups chose to preserve their way of life based on what had been successful in the past rather than completely change their societies in the name of modernisation. Fortunately for the British they had the English Channel between them and their more aggressive neighbours.

⁷⁷ Kennedy 1987, 200.

⁷⁸ Lee 1984, 351.

Unfortunately for the Tibetan Lhasa administration they were not so geographically isolated and did not find a patron as generous as the Americans were to the United Kingdom.

Chapter Six: China and Tibet in the Thirties

6.1 Introduction

For most of the Thirties, just like the Twenties, Tibet was of very little interest to the Western powers. It did not, therefore, figure prominently in their diplomacy and diplomatic papers with China. For the Chinese, on the other hand, the main relevant issues were intellectual ones, as the Chinese attempted to reconstruct their nation on a new, modern and Western pattern. However in many ways the Thirties was a golden period for Western newspapers. The bitter politics of the Cold War had not yet rendered half the world inaccessible, Western colonial administrations protected Western correspondents wherever they went, and the Western publics clearly wanted to read about the rest of the world. There is a comparatively large amount of material on Tibet in Western newspapers during this period and as such they form the majority of the primary material for this period. Of course there is a serious problem of the inaccuracy and bias in all newspapers at the best of times. This is made worse by the fact that many "reporters" were actually involved in the events in question. Hugh Richardson, for example, combined being the London *Times* reporter in Tibet with being a Political Officer to Sikkim. On the assumption that the American newspapers had no specific agenda in Tibet during this period, as well as for a variety of practical reasons such as availability, the *New York Times* is the main newspaper source of information on what was happening in Tibet during this period.

6.2 China's Minorities and the Chinese Revolution

The Qing period was one in which the dominant ethnic group in China was not Han but Manchu. All through the Qing period this meant that there were (at least) two narratives dealing with ethnicity and power in China. In the dominant state-supported version, the Manchus were firmly in the Confucian tradition of virtuous rulers who were in power because they embodied support for a moral order. The other tradition was decidedly more Han-centric, even chauvinist. In this tradition the Manchus were represented as foreign usurpers who had overthrown the rightful Ming rulers of China and who needed to be thrown out of China. In various forms this other tradition remained important among Han people throughout the Qing dynasty. It was found in the anti-Manchu propaganda of Lu Liuliang and Zeng Jing during Yongzheng's reign (1723-1735), it reappeared in the Taiping's denunciation of the Manchus (as a people)

as Satanic, and it played a significant role in the lead-up to the 1911 Revolution.¹ Of the early revolutionaries perhaps the most famous anti-Manchu writer was Zhang Binglin, but even Sun Yatsen wrote frankly racist diatribes against Manchus. During the Revolution itself, the Manchu communities in places such as Xi'an and Wuhan were massacred *en masse*.² Even in Tibet, the work of Zhao Erfang was more or less totally undone as ethnically Han soldiers murdered their (usually) Manchu commanders. Yet from the 1911 Revolution on, Chinese nationalists started to claim that Tibetans were part of the same race as Han Chinese, and even that Tibetan was merely a dialect of Chinese. The reasons for this are not hard to see. If the Chinese adopted the Western post-Napoleonic model of a state dominated by a single ethnic group, then logically and by extension the minorities of China would also demand separate states in the regions where they dominated. Given that, as a rough generalisation, the minority peoples of China occupied over half the area of the Qing Empire, this had obvious drawbacks.

During the interwar years the growth of Chinese nationalism meant a change in the way that the Chinese had seen Tibet. If, under Western pressure, the Chinese had to change their traditional views on China and its place in the world, then Chinese intellectuals would have to undergo an intellectual modernisation as well. There was a wealth of ideological options to choose from, but all of them would involve grafting a Western philosophy onto Chinese culture. Just as the French Revolution had meant that all French citizens had to become properly French, there was a strong element of ethnically Chinese chauvinism in Chinese nationalism from the start of this century. One example of this line of thought was represented by Zhang Binglin who published violently anti-Manchu tracts for years before the 1911 Revolution.³ Another short-lived Chinese writer was the Sichuanese Zou Rong (1885-1905) who only produced one major work *The Revolutionary Army*. Zou begins his pamphlet with the claim that the Chinese should "[s]weep away millennia of despotism in all its forms, throw off millennia of slavishness, annihilate the five million and more of the furry and horned Manchu race, cleanse ourselves of 260 years of harsh and unremitting pain, so that the soil of the Chinese subcontinent is made immaculate, and the descendants of the Yellow Emperor will all become Washingtons."⁴ This interesting mix of Chinese and Western themes demonstrates the uneven and unpredictable impact of Western thought on China.

¹ Crossley 1990, 125-7, 178-86. Spence 1990, 173-4, 236-7. For a discussion of what happened to Lu's family see Waley-Cohen 1991, 223-5.

² Crossley 1990, 197. Spence 1990, 265.

³ See Laitinen (1990) and Shimada (1990) for a discussion of Zhang's views.

⁴ Tsou 1968, 58.

The term used by this group of revolutionaries for the new China was *Zhonghua*, meaning, explicitly, a China for the Han. The alternative was a China in which the abstract state was all important regardless of the ethnic make-up of its citizens. The term chosen to describe such a China is *Zhongguo*, an ethnically neutral term. The first expression could easily appeal to many overseas Chinese people in the diaspora as the state is merely the expression of an ethnic group. Ethnically Chinese resident in, and sometimes citizens of, other countries could look to a concept such as *Zhonghua* and feel explicitly included. They could also look to a new powerful China in the *Zhongguo* sense and feel proud, but in many ways it would exclude them. In theory ethnic Manchus, Mongols Uighur and perhaps Tibetans could feel part of a non-ethnically-specific state (*Zhongguo*) in a way they could not towards a Han-based nation (*Zhonghua*).⁵ The definition of any group is really about who is included and who is excluded and why. The price of including the non-Han peoples was a rejection of the ethnically Han overseas Chinese communities. Chinese as a language has the basis for considering the nation as representing an ethnic group and for the state being made up of its citizens. In Chinese patriotism, *aiguo*, is to love the state, but the usual term for a traitor, *hanjian*, is someone who has betrayed the Han people. Of course the modern usage of *hanjian* has been given a distinct ethnic, even racial, flavour the original term probably did not have. The Manchu Qing dynasty could use the term for those Chinese who bought and sold opium for instance or even those Chinese who collaborated with the Mongol Yuan dynasty, without the slightest sign of a contradiction.

Just why the early revolutionaries decided to adopt an ethnically neutral term for China is hard to see. A number of them were from the Chinese overseas diaspora. Sun Yatsen himself was educated in Hong Kong and raised in Hawaii. Dr Sun's future father-in-law, Song Yueru (Charlie Soong), was born on Hainan but ran away to America as a young boy. Sun Yatsen's Foreign Minister during the Guangzhou government, Eugene Chen, was born in Trinidad to a Chinese immigrant father and an Afro-Caribbean mother. Dr Sun's close friend, Liao Zhongkai, assassinated in 1925, was born in San Francisco. Another early associate, Xie Zuantai (Tse Tsan-tai), was an Australian-born Cantonese.⁶ All these people clearly had close ties to the Chinese *people* but not necessarily to all the territories which formed the Qing state. Yet the

⁵ And indeed in modern Xinjiang when offered a choice between five different terms to describe themselves, Uighur intellectuals chose Turk most often, peasants preferred Muslims, but Uighur merchants opted for *Junggoluq*, the Uighur for *Zhongguoren* without any obvious sign of contradiction. See Rudelson 1997, 118-20.

⁶ Schiffrin 1968, 47.

majority of the territory which made up Qing China was firmly under ethnically Chinese control in 1911 and for a long time after. The main losses were Taiwan, Outer Mongolia and Tibet with Manchuria soon to follow. The early revolutionaries had, in a sense, a choice between letting some territory go and accepting a more ethnically homogeneous state or demanding the return of all the territory of the Qing Empire. The more difficult option was demanding the return of lost territory. No appeal, without the backing of military power, was likely to make Mongolia or Tibet return to the fold, and the claim that the new China was for *Zhongguo ren*, rather than *Hua-* or *Hanren*, weakened China's claim to regions such as Taiwan.⁷

The main reason for the new China's indifference to ethnic ties is probably because, despite the importance of Western-style nationalism as a concept in the 1911 Revolution, the new theories did not sink far into the common political culture of China. For centuries the Ming and Qing dynasties had not cared over much for those ethnic Chinese who went overseas. They had always defended, with varying degrees of success, the state of China. When people went beyond the borders, they took themselves beyond the protection of the Chinese state. The Spanish, for example, could repeatedly massacre ethnic Chinese in the Philippines (in 1603, 1639, 1661, and 1686) and the Dutch likewise in Java (1740) without any particular impact on Ming or Qing relations with either European country.⁸ The idea that common ethnicity defined the nation was not as important as the idea that common citizenship defining the state. Thus the discussions of nationalism and the need to mobilise the Chinese people primarily involved the defence of the Chinese state, not the Han nation.

Throughout history states have failed to defend their territories at various times. To an ethnic group this may not matter, as the continued existence of a culture and a people does not automatically depend on the existence of a proper state. Those states which define their citizens in non-ethnic terms fail in a vitally important manner when they fail to defend their own territory. Citizenship depends entirely on the continued existence of the state. In modern times there has been a strong tradition of criticising the Chinese and especially the Manchu government for not creating a stronger emotional link between the Chinese people and state. As far as Sun Yatsen

⁷ This did not of course stop the Nationalists and the Communists trying. Jiang and the Nationalist government spent a great deal of money in 1939 "discovering" and reburying the remains of Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) with full honours. See NYT June 19 1939, 1:6. In the Fifties Mao also held ceremonies honouring the remains. All this was for a man who may have killed as many as 60 million ethnic Chinese civilians. Nor did any of it seem to appeal much to the Outer Mongolians.

⁸ See Andaya 1999, 5. Reid 1999, 152.

was concerned the Manchu government could never reform because it was determined to preserve the special place of the Manchus in China. Inevitably this would mean China would remain militarily weak. It is clear that the place of the Manchus was threatened by even a simple problem like appointing the most talented officials and soldiers to responsible positions.⁹ As Sun wrote in 1904,

It is absolutely impossible for the Manchus to reform the country because reformation means detriment to them. By reformation they would be absorbed by the Chinese people and would lose the special rights and privileges which they are now enjoying.¹⁰

The main problem for the Chinese revolutionaries was not the Manchus as such, but what many saw as the impending extinction of the Chinese as a race at the hands of the West. This is what gave the attacks on the Manchus a special edge. It is, in fact, an example of the spread of political extremism from the West to China. As a response to Western threats to render the Chinese extinct, the Chinese adopted a form of Western militant chauvinism.¹¹ Thus the earliest political documents from Sun's political party, the *Tongmeng hui*, denounced the Manchus in explicitly Han-chauvinist quasi-racist terms. The 1904 Manifesto for the *Tongmeng hui* began by claiming it aimed to,

cleanse away two hundred and sixty years of barbarous filth, restore our four-thousand-year-old fatherland, and plan for the welfare of the four hundred million people....The Manchus of today were originally the eastern barbarians beyond the Great Wall. They frequently caused border troubles during the Ming dynasty; then when China was in a disturbed state they came inside Shanhaiguan, conquered China, and enslaved our Chinese people. Those who opposed them were killed by the hundreds of thousands, and our Chinese have been a people without a nation for two hundred and sixty years. The extreme cruelties and tyrannies of the Manchu government have now reached their limit. With the righteous army poised against them, we will overthrow that government, and restore our sovereign rights. Those Manchu and Chinese military men who have a change of heart and come over to us will be granted

⁹ Assuming that talent is evenly distributed across populations, in a China where 94% of the people are Han clearly about 94% of the jobs should go to ethnic Han.

¹⁰ Sun 1945, 18.

¹¹ The threat of the future extinction of the Chinese can be seen through out Sun Yat-sen's works, for example Sun 1942, 16-21. As late as 1896 Lord Curzon could seriously discuss whether or not the Chinese would become extinct.

amnesty, while those who dare to resist will be slaughtered without mercy. Chinese who act as Chinese traitors in the cause of the Manchus will be treated in the same way.¹²

There are indications that the new political doctrine of Western nationalism was not widely spread in the Chinese population. The fact that so much of Sun's document is devoted to threats and insults towards those ethnic Chinese who remained loyal to the Manchus suggests that there were a significant number of Chinese who did not spontaneously rally to the "right" patriotic side. Yet the anti-Manchu feeling had very long-established roots in political thought among ethnic Chinese.¹³ Opposition to "Manchu weakness" continued to be an important part of Chinese political life. It eventually worked its way into the Manifesto of the Nationalist Party in 1924. In this Manifesto, the Nationalists condemned the Manchus by saying,

Since the occupation of China by the Manchus there reigned in the heart of the Chinese race a feeling of resentment for a long time. After the country had been thrown open to international commerce, foreign imperialism burst upon China like an angry tide. Armed plundering and economic pressure reduced the country to a semi-colonial status, and caused China to lose her independence. The Manchu government was not only unable to repulse foreign invasion, but also persisted in an increasing degree in the policy of subjugating the "slaves" at home, thereby currying favour with the foreign Powers.¹⁴

One of the main problems for the Chinese radicals was opposition to what they saw as Western imperialism. The Qing dynasty failed mainly because it failed to protect China against the West. The Manchus had been able to gain acceptance as rulers of China through the manipulation of traditional cultural roles, but that acceptance was conditional of how well the Manchus could fulfil their duties. These duties are almost always discussed in cultural terms. The Qing Emperors were certainly meant to act as cultural patrons and upholders of Confucian teachings. At the same time they were supposed to maintain order within China. This is implicit in the concept of a Mandate from Heaven. By 1911 the Manchus were failing to uphold this end of the "bargain" with the Chinese. During the Taiping rebellion they had been forced to rely on ethnically Chinese generals commanding ethnically Chinese soldiers

¹² Teng and Fairbank 1982, 227-8. Notice that Sun does not claim that the Manchus, being from Manchuria, came from *within* traditional China.

¹³ For instance, see Fincher (1972), Spence (2001), Dikötter (1992, 25-30), and Zhang (1984, 33-48)..

¹⁴ Sun 1945, 19-20.

to defeat ethnically Chinese rebels. The Manchus played no special role in this conflict except as beneficiaries of the victories of ethnically Chinese commanders such as Zeng Guofan. It must have appeared obvious to many ethnic Han people that the Manchus no longer played any useful role in Chinese life. This in turn would influence the views of Chinese revolutionaries towards the conflict. The Taiping Rebellion demanded a choice between supporting those who defended China's culture or those who wanted a new Western-influenced ethnically-Chinese state. Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalists eventually chose to support Zeng and his defence of traditional Confucian civilisation. Mao Zedong and the Communists chose the Taiping rebels.¹⁵

Given that the problem for Chinese nationalists was foreign aggression, to the extent that Sun Yatsen claimed that the extermination of the Chinese as a people was imminent, there were few Chinese nationalists who seriously considered giving up further chunks of Chinese territory just because these regions were inhabited by non-Han peoples. The Chinese Republic was, from the start, committed to a new China with the same borders as the old China. The repeated inability of the Manchus to fight effectively against the Western powers, or even Japan, meant that the new Republic defined itself mainly in terms of military effectiveness. Thus, for the new Chinese government, self determination did not mean more surrender of territory to the Japanese puppet Manchukuo, the Russian puppet state of Mongolia or the British-backed Tibetan theocratic state. Fatally for any sort of peaceful negotiated settlement with the Tibetans, the Chinese revolutionaries saw, with good reason, the Tibetan problem in the same light as the Manchukuo and Mongolian issues, that is as well-disguised foreign aggression.¹⁶ This of course meant that respecting Tibetan "self determination" was not analogous to respecting China's rights, but rather to imposing a similar injustice to the injustices inflicted on China in the recent past.

Just as the new Chinese Republic was defined by the perceived failings of the old regime, so it insisted on seeing the issue of racial discrimination through the prism of the Chinese experience under the Manchus. What the Chinese Republic was willing to promise the Tibetans amounted to an end to the sort of ethnic discrimination imposed on the Chinese by the Qing dynasty. These appeared in the two treaties the last Qing emperor negotiated with the new Republicans (or more accurately, with Yuan Shikai) before abdicating. The first of these was the so-called Manchu-Mongol-Muslim-Tibetan Articles for Favourable Treatment (*man-meng-hui-zang youdai daiyu*

¹⁵ Wright 1991, 300-8.

¹⁶ As is usually the case with modern Chinese publications. See TMTM 2001, 35. It is also common in larger works such as Wang and Suo (1984).

tiaojian) which tried to protect the political and civil rights of these four groups of minority peoples. In theory this agreement guaranteed equality between the ethnically Chinese Han and these four named groups. It also promised to continue paying stipends to those who still received them, recognised the titles of those who still held them, lifted residential restrictions on those minorities still part of the Qing garrison system, allowed members of these minorities to be listed in civilian registers and promised freedom of religion.¹⁷ In other words the treaty tried to protect the rights of the minorities who had formally been part of the ruling class by treating them more or less the same as the Han majority.

The Republicans seem to have thought that if they lifted the old restrictions which were resented to varying degrees by many Han, they would win approval from the minorities as well. This seems to have been the logic behind the Manifesto of the First Guomindang National Convention in 1924. In this document Sun Yatsen declared,

[t]he second aspect of the Doctrine of Nationalism is racial equality. ... Unfortunately, the present government of China is controlled by the surviving elements of old officialdom who know nothing of racial equality and freedom; and consequently the other races in China are discontented with the present state of affairs.... We have over and over insisted upon the common interest of all peoples within China and the necessity of their consolidation in the people's revolution and in solving all interracial problems. We hereby repeat solemnly that we recognise the right of self-determination for all peoples in China, and that a free united Republic of China based upon the principle of free alliance of the different peoples will be established after the downfall of imperialism and militarism.¹⁸

The manifesto lays the blame for problems between China's ethnic groups on the lack of understanding of racial equality. This is, to put it mildly, rather simplistic. The problem for many minorities was not that the crumbling Republic discriminated against them. Rather it was the fact that under the old Qing system China's "national minorities" were anything but discriminated against. Initially the Qing government was a coalition of steppe peoples who formed a ruling class over the Han majority. In this administration the Manchu ruling house held the top position, but beneath them came Manchu, Mongol and Uighur nobles, Manchu, Mongol and Chinese bannermen, and

¹⁷ Crossley 1990, 198.

¹⁸ Sun 1945, 19-20.

finally ordinary Chinese people. Somewhere in this hierarchy, much higher up than most ethnically Chinese people, but lower than the Manchus, came the Tibetan government. The main figures in the Tibetan regime, and to a lesser extent all Tibetans, were not fellow sufferers of racial discrimination, but the beneficiaries of an alien conquest regime. Thus appeals by the Chinese based on the idea of racial equality implied a lower status for many of China's minorities in the new state.

While the Manchu-Mongol-Muslim-Tibetan treaty might have, in theory, prevented discrimination by the new Republican government and hence a forcible redistribution of the wealth that various minorities had acquired under the old system, it was not as favourable to them as past treatment had been. Under the Qing the peoples who lived in regions that came under the Lifan Yuan were generally exempted from paying taxes to the central government. The minor exception is Mongolia and yet, even there, the majority of revenue was raised by taxing ethnically Han merchants visiting Mongolia rather than Mongols. Their administrations were usually subsidised from the centre (i.e. by Chinese tax payers) with gifts commonly given to leading minority figures including the Dalai Lamas.¹⁹

6.3 Autonomy and the Chinese Revolution

During roughly the same period the British government were also facing problems from their subjects. The British government thought that their discontented subjects, notably the Irish and Indians, could be appeased by more control over their own internal affairs and took steps in that direction. The early Chinese nationalists saw the problem very differently. They tended to argue that the problem with China was excessive autonomy in Chinese life. Even though many Western critics of the Qing empire claimed China's problem were caused by despotism at the centre of Chinese life, Sun Yatsen famously compared the Chinese to loose sand on a sheet of paper.²⁰ This was a view widely shared across the political spectrum with, for instance, Lu Xun's disgust at the passivity of the Chinese spectators at the execution of a Chinese man by the Japanese.²¹ Ma Yinqu, a non-Communist who remained in China after 1948 and had once been sympathetic to Fascism, wrote in 1935, "To sum up, in view of the position of China today, there is no way of survival, no hope, and nothing to be done besides [adopting] collectivism. On the contrary, the extremity of individualism would

¹⁹ Fletcher 1978a, 49-50.

²⁰ Or at least he was said to have done so, although an exact reference is elusive. He did say that foreign commentators said that China was like a sheet of loose sand. See Sun 1942, 2.

²¹ Spence 1994, 240.

only lead to anarchism. China's weakness is derived from the laxity of, and lack of control over, her citizens."²² The majority of Chinese writers seem to have shared the view that the China was weak because the Chinese state was weak and in a sense Chinese life too autonomous. The construction of a new, modern, strong China would require greater identification between Chinese citizens and the Chinese state.

As far as Tibet was concerned, the development of Chinese nationalism under the influence of the West meant a denial of the independent existence of a Tibetan people or nation. From the 1911 Revolution on, Chinese nationalists started to claim that Tibetans were part of the same race as Han Chinese, and even that Tibetan was merely a dialect of Chinese. This view was perhaps best put by Jiang Jieshi who wrote that the Yellow Emperor was "the forefather of both the Manchus and the Tibetans" and claimed that, "there are five peoples designated in China is not due to difference in race or blood, but to religion and geographic environment."²³ Naturally this point of view allowed for no degree of autonomy in Tibet, just as similar arguments in France had not allowed any autonomy for Brittany, Alsace or Corsica.

There is no particular evidence that this was a traditional Chinese policy. Rather this sort of political argument was introduced from the West. It was in fact part of the modernising and Westernising process in China. If Confucianism was not acceptable as a basis for diplomacy with the West or even political life in China, a new intellectual framework to justify the Chinese state had to be created. There were only really two possible choices for Chinese intellectuals in the early Republican period; they could either argue for the validity of the traditional holders of authority, that is the ruling Aisin Gioro family, or they could adopt a belief in the nation-state. Although there was certainly an important group of ethnic Chinese who argued in favour of retaining the Manchu Emperors, there can be no doubt that the nation-state model dominated public opinion, especially Westernised public opinion. The new China was to be a state created by and for Chinese.

6.4 Border Disputes

Even as the Chinese Nationalists argued over who was "really" Chinese, virtually everyone agreed the borders of this new China were to be the same as the old China. Even though the nature of the Chinese state was very different, in China proper there was no real attempt to reconsidered where those borders ought to be. As with

²² Sun 1977, 63.

²³ Chiang 1947, 39-40.

most political changes in the rest of the world, the change in the meaning of pre-existing borders did not mean a change in their location. This was unlikely to appeal to many minorities including the Tibetans. While the Tibetan monastic establishment accepted a state in which they held a special place as the leaders of the faith shared by ruling family, they were unlikely to tolerate a state in which they were simply marginal religious figures representing a small group of minority believers. After 1911 the Lhasan authorities clearly saw the likely outcome of any changes to the status of the Manchu family and broke with China.²⁴ Once the rulers of China had ceased to act as proper patrons the Tibetan hierarchy would have to find new supporters. Until 1950 no promise or action by the Nationalists or any warlord forced them to accept any degree of genuine Chinese control. Although in theory they would have accepted a form of autonomy just short of independence, this would, presumably, have involved China playing the role of patron in a traditional manner.²⁵ The basis of any diplomacy over Tibet in the Thirties would have to rest on negotiations and persuasion.

In the Thirties the main diplomatic issues between the Chinese central government and the Tibetans concerned fighting between the Tibetans and the warlords of Sichuan and Qinghai. In 1930 the Chinese government formally decided to create the new province of Xikang out of parts of western Sichuan and eastern Tibet. This was a reform that had been pushed by Zhao Erfang as long ago as 1910, but nothing had come of it in the years of disruption in the Chinese government.²⁶ In 1932 a dispute over where the border between China proper and Tibet was, led to fighting along the line of control between territory controlled by Sichuan and Tibet. Again, while the Chinese central government could do little to even influence the fighting, it could use the Western media to push its particular version of events. This did not have a great deal of success in 1932, probably because the Chinese were not yet seen as American allies against the Japanese. There were more promising signs for the Chinese Nationalist government in negotiations with the Tibetans during the last years of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. One of the more surprising indications of the Tibetan willingness to compromise was a criticism by the Tibetans of the choice of representatives on the Mongolian-Tibetan Committee. In October 1932 the Dalai Lama asked the British Indian administration to intervene with the Chinese government over this issue. The British claimed that according to the Dalai Lama "Tibetan representatives had been selected by the Chinese Government, but they did not really

²⁴ Shakabpa 1984, 246. Smith 1996, 182.

²⁵ For instance see the details of negotiations between the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the Chinese government in Li 1956, 149-53.

²⁶ Shakabpa 1967, 226.

represent the Tibetan Government. It would certainly facilitate a settlement of the Chinese-Tibetan difficulties if the Dalai Lama's own representatives were recognised."²⁷ It is likely that representatives of the Panchen Lama's court served on the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Committee in 1932 and the Dalai Lama's objections were to Chinese support for an implicit claim against the Dalai Lama's administration. Above all else this complaint shows that the Dalai Lama was prepared to take part in the Nationalist Government in China provided his administration was recognised as the rightful authority in Tibet. The fact that the presence of the Panchen Lama in China weakened the Lhasan administration was recognised by the British government which continued to try to persuade the Panchen Lama to return to Tibet. Into the Thirties the British officials in China attempted to convince the Panchen Lama that the "Government of India were very anxious to bring about a reconciliation between Dalai Lama[sic] and His Holiness, and [the Government of India claimed] that Dalai Lama[sic] was also genuinely anxious to attain the same end."²⁸

6.5 The Death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama

On Sunday, December 17, 1933 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Thubden Gyatso died in Lhasa. In keeping with what amounted to Tibetan tradition his death was quickly reported to have been the result of poison.²⁹ The first reports of his death in the *New York Times* were datelined from Lhasa and London and so indicated the lack of Chinese influence in Tibet. These newspaper stories also followed the British line on the position of the Chinese in Tibet. Tibet was, according to the *New York Times*' London correspondent "nominally part of China, but is under British overlordship."³⁰ This is a perfectly reasonable summation of the state of affairs in Tibet during the life of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, but of course neither the British, the Tibetans nor the Chinese officially recognised this state of affairs. The death of the Dalai Lama provided an opportunity for the Chinese to assert again their right to rule Tibet.

The first group to exploit the new situation in Tibet was the Panchen Lama and his entourage. Early in 1933 the Panchen Lama had left Nanjing to go first to Beijing and then to Mongolia.³¹ There could be any number of reasons for his journey but the fact that stands out is that the Japanese had occupied Manchuria in 1932 and were

²⁷ DBFP 1970, Second Series, 11:12.

²⁸ DBFP 1970, Second Series, 11:47.

²⁹ NYT, December 20, 1933, 22:1.

³⁰ NYT, December 29, 1933, 22:1.

³¹ DBFP, 1970, Second Series, 11:308.

openly trying to attract Mongols to their cause. On December 20, 1933, the Panchen Lama's representatives announced he would leave the monastery at Bailingmiao in Inner Mongolia to travel to Nanjing to consult with the Nationalist government about his return to Tibet.³² It was widely reported that the return of the Panchen Lama would lead to a decline in support for the British, as they had been especially associated with the Dalai Lama personally, rather than with any powerful political group in Tibet. The Panchen Lama certainly would play a part in the choice of the new Dalai Lama and might even have been able to play a significant part in the regency. Certainly the Western press was soon reporting that the Panchen Lama would choose the new Dalai Lama.³³ There does not appear to be any justification for this claim and neither the Panchen Lama nor his retinue played any role in the selection of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. At best the Panchen Lama's entourage tried to put forward candidates for the position, but none of them were accepted by the Dalai Lama's entourage in Lhasa.³⁴

However some elements in Lhasa clearly wished to have the Panchen Lama return. On March 6 1934, the *Calcutta Statesman* reported that the Lhasan authorities asked the Panchen Lama to return to Tibet *via* Calcutta. The important feature about this choice of route is that the Panchen Lama could hardly return to Tibet *via* Calcutta with a retinue of Chinese soldiers and officials. No armed soldiers could enter Tibet this way unless the British allowed them to pass through British India which was, to say the least, highly unlikely. In April 1934 a delegation of fifty Lhasan monks and officials passed through Hong Kong on their way to Nanjing to try to persuade the Panchen Lama to return to Tibet. It was led by a monk referred to as Ahchien Lama who said they,

shall persuade the Panchen Lama to return and become regent of Tibet until the new Dalai Lama attains maturity, as only thus will peace be certain.

The return of the Panchen Lama would greatly strengthen China's influence both in Mongolia and Tibet. The Panchen Lama has asked Nanking for the protection of 30,000 Chinese troops and a personal guard in the event of his return, but we shall assure him it is not needed. The people of Tibet are eager for his return and believe it would create stability. Tibet is not threatened with civil war.³⁵

³² NYT, December 22, 1933, 13:3.

³³ NYT, January 10, 1934, 10:2.

³⁴ For instance there was a report of a candidate put forward by the followers of the late Panchen Lama in 1938 in NYT, January 24, 1938, 25:5.

³⁵ NYT, April 20, 1934, 10:4.

On April 29, 1934, at the National Buddhist Convention in Hangzhou, the Panchen Lama announced that he intended to return to Tibet in order to succeed the late Dalai Lama.³⁶ His departure was not, however, immediate. On May 26 in Shanghai, he again announced he intended to return to Tibet to "assume control during the early years of the Dalai Lama".³⁷ Yet the Panchen Lama continued to put off his return for some time. In early 1936 the Panchen Lama was still waiting, but by this time he had hired an American and promoted him to what was described as "a Cabinet post in the Tibetan Government."³⁸ This American, Gordon B. Enders, gave an interview to the *New York Times* which clearly indicated the Panchen Lama's pretence to a much greater role in Tibetan politics than the Fourteenth Dalai Lama has ever allowed him. Not only is the claim that Enders held a Cabinet post in the Tibetan Government extraordinary, but Enders also claimed that the first thing the Panchen Lama would do on returning to Tibet would be to ordain the boy he had chosen as the new Dalai Lama. In the past various Panchen Lamas may or may not have had a role in confirming the new Dalai Lamas, but there is no reason to think it was ever their job to choose them. Nor did the present Fourteenth Dalai Lama get confirmed by the Panchen Lama until at least 1951. Conversely nor was the Panchen Lama confirmed by the Dalai Lama until the Seventeen Point Agreement in 1951.³⁹ These claims, however unrealistic, indicate the role the Panchen Lama thought he could play in Tibet in the absence of an adult Dalai Lama with Chinese support.

6.6 The Huang Mission

Given the fighting within China in 1934, the Nationalists were hardly in a position to force the Tibetans to agree to incorporation in China as a *de facto* province. The main issue for the Chinese Government in 1934 was Treaty Revision with the Western Powers. Both the 1844 treaty and the 1903 commercial treaty with America contained clauses stating they were automatically renewed every ten years unless either party demanded revision prior to expiry. In 1934 the Nationalists indicated that they intended to demand a revision including the right of extraterritoriality. Under the 1903 treaty the Americans had pledged to abolish the privilege when the state of China's system of law and order met American expectations.

³⁶ NYT, April 30, 1934, 1:2.

³⁷ NYT, May 27, 1934, 29:6.

³⁸ NYT, February 16, 1936, 2:10:1.

³⁹ Another effect of the Seventeen Point Agreement was to get the Dalai Lama's entourage to confirm the lineage of the Panchen Lama recognising him as the Tenth, not Seventh, Panchen Lama.

In the face of these sorts of problems the Nationalist central government attempted yet again to persuade the Tibetans to concede peacefully. The Nationalists had already rewarded the Panchen Lama and the leading Mongolian Incarnation, both of whom were seen to be more favourable to China, with positions on China's State Council.⁴⁰ In 1934 the Chinese Government sent General Huang Musong (Huang Musung) to offer condolences on the death of the Dalai Lama. This was in fact the main purpose reported to the Western press by the Chinese government. At the same time the Chinese government did not hesitate to put forward its view that Tibet had been part of China since the Tang dynasty and was only separated from China in 1900 because of "the ruling Dalai Lama's intrigues with Russia".⁴¹ It is likely that the real purpose was so that the Chinese Government could negotiate directly with the Tibetans without any British mediation and so could attempt to persuade the Tibetans to recognise Chinese authority. The Chinese Government presented a formal proposal to the Tibetan authorities which, summarised by Li Tieh-tseng, said,

A. Two fundamental points that Tibet is asked to observe (1) Tibet must be an integral part of the territory of China; (2) Tibet must obey the Chinese Government.

B. Declarations in regard to the political system in Tibet: (1) Buddhism shall be respected by all and given protection and its propagation encouraged; (2) In the preservation of the traditional political system, Tibet shall be granted autonomy. Any administrative measure within the authority of the autonomy of Tibet, the Central Government will not interfere with. On foreign affairs, there must be unitary action. All administrative matters which are nation-wide in character shall be administered by the Central Government, such as: (a) Foreign affairs shall be directed by the Central Government; (b) National Defence shall be planned by the Central Government; (c) Communications shall be managed by the Central Government; (d) The names of important officials of Tibet, after they have been elected by the autonomous government of Tibet, shall be submitted to the Central Government for their respective appointments.[....]

C. The Central Government shall grant Tibet autonomy, but for the purposes of exercising full sovereignty in an integral part of its territory, the Central Government shall appoint a high commissioner to be stationed in Tibet as the

⁴⁰ NYT, January 26, 1934, 12:2.

⁴¹ See for instance, NYT, May 26, 1935, 4:5:6.

representative of the Central Government, on the one hand to carry out national administrative measures, and on the other to guide the regional autonomy.⁴²

It is not clear what the Huang mission was told by the Tibetans and what their proposals were. This is mainly caused by the fact that the Tibetan administration agreed to conduct negotiations with the Chinese without the presence of any British officials.⁴³ In itself this represented a minor defeat for British diplomacy and an indication of a more pro-Chinese attitude in Lhasa. Excluding the British had long been a Chinese demand and the Tibetans had long been opposed to dealing with the Chinese alone. The lack of British witnesses means that the discussions could be represented to the British by the Tibetans in ways that perhaps would not support objective scrutiny. The Tibetan administration had, after all, survived so far by securing a patron to protect them. This implies the need for a great deal of flexibility in dealing with powerful neighbours. Certainly the British sought to make sure the situation never arose again by politely insisting on British representation in the future.⁴⁴ Naturally Hugh Richardson strongly implies that Li Tieh-tseng, a member of the Chinese mission, did not present a trustworthy account of the negotiations.⁴⁵ There is, however, no way of knowing which of the two accounts are more truthful and there is a strong suspicion that the Tibetans described to the British a slightly different version of events from what they said to the Chinese.

Before the Huang mission departed for Tibet, these proposals were first discussed with various groups in Nanjing. Among these were a number of Tibetans, at least one of whom, Khung Chin-tsun,⁴⁶ has left an account of the mission. This account, taken after the arrival of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in Tibet in 1951, more or less agrees with Li's account. The possibility that the Chinese Communist Party made this Tibetan write an account which agrees with a Nationalist exile is not very likely. Indeed Khung's account suggests that the Nationalists were more hard-line than Li claimed. The response of the Tibetans was even more

⁴² Li 1956, 39.

⁴³ Although the mere presence of British officials would not guarantee an objective account. The British were more interested in documentation than the Tibetans were.

⁴⁴ F 1036/4/10. *Extracts from the Report of the Mission to Lhasa in 1935*. BDFA Part 2 Volume 44, 69.

⁴⁵ Richardson 1962, 142-3.

⁴⁶ Clearly this name represents an attempt by the Chinese to write a Tibetan name in Chinese. It is somewhat unusual because it does not even use proper modern *pin-yin*. No attempt has been made to reconstruct the original Tibetan.

important. According to Li, the Tibetan Government accepted that "[i]n dealing with external affairs, Tibet shall remain an integral part of the territory of China. But the Chinese Government must promise that Tibet will not be reorganised into a province." According to Khung the Tibetans did in fact agree to this point. The Tibetans also agreed to "listen to whatever China says with regard to such things as external or internal authority, and laws, regulations, etc., provided they do not harm the Tibetan dual religious-secular government." As these were the only two proposals that actually worked in favour of the Chinese there is no particular reason to doubt the honesty of Khung's account. It is unlikely that the Chinese would have forced him to claim that the Tibetans wanted a series of demands the Chinese Government would have objected to. In particular these included a promise to refrain from interference with Tibetan civil and military power, to allow the Tibetans to continue friendly relations with other countries, restrictions on the number of soldiers the sole Chinese representative in Lhasa could have, exclusion of the Chinese from the selection of the Dalai Lama or higher officials in Tibet, a demand to hand over territory under the control of the Chinese and above all a demand that the Chinese "should not give asylum to, or acknowledge as representative, any Tibetan, ecclesiastical or secular, who has rebelled against the Tibetan government and escaped to China".⁴⁷ Clearly this was a blunt reference to the Panchen Lama who was still in China at the time. According to Li, the Dalai Lama told the Chinese that "[i]f the Central Government of China would treat the patronage relationship between China and Tibet with sincerity and good faith, as it previously did, Tibet on its parts ... would, from now on, make an even greater effort to give full support to the Central Government."⁴⁸ This too is either a truthful account or a very clever forgery given its use of terminology associated with the patron-priest relationship which the Chinese denied existed between the Dalai Lama and the Qing Emperor.

The issue of reliability arises because the British representative in Lhasa, Rai Bahadur Norbu Dhondup reported a slightly different version to the British Indian administration. This report was based on what the Tibetans told Norbu they had said to the Chinese. Norbu's report took the form of a series of proposals from Huang and responses from the Tibetan authorities. Number Three was "Tibet has religion, men and, complete administrative arrangements. Therefore China should consider Tibet to be independent (?autonomous) and should not interfere in its internal administration."⁴⁹ The question mark against "independent" appears in the *Tibetan Precis* written by

⁴⁷ Goldstein 1989b, 241.

⁴⁸ Li 1956, 153.

⁴⁹ Richardson 1945, 51. Goldstein 1989b, 236. Smith 1996, 235.

Hugh Richardson in 1944 and perhaps could reflect the recognition of the problems of translating these terms into Tibetan. It is extremely unlikely that the Chinese would have agreed to such a proposal and it is far more likely that the Tibetans were asking for autonomy within China. This is supported by the other conditions laid down by the Chinese. Point Five was to allow five thousand Tibetans soldiers to be selected, paid, equipped, armed and trained by the Chinese Central Government, posted to guard the borders and called Frontier Guards. This is not compatible with Tibetan independence. However the British account of these talks formally and repeatedly stresses Tibetan independence even in discussing terms which would give China a huge influence within Tibet.

There is no doubt about the reason for this according to Richardson who strongly suggests that the Chinese lied about the Tibetan claims. The most important issue for the British was that the Tibetans claimed that they had insisted on British involvement in Tibetan affairs. Specifically the Tibetans claimed to have insisted on the right to correspond with foreign countries, especially the British authorities. The Tibetans, the British claimed, only agreed to recognise Chinese authority to the extent laid down by the Simla Convention and they argued that the British should be a party to any agreement struck with the Chinese. On the whole it is only to be expected that the Tibetans would have insisted that the British be a party to any agreement they reached with the Chinese, although it is not certain that they would have mentioned the fact in discussions with the Chinese authorities. It is by no means certain that they would have insisted on the terms of the Simla Convention alone. It is entirely possible that the Tibetans carried out discussions with the Chinese on terms more favourable to the Chinese than they were willing to admit to the British. After all if the Chinese had occupied Tibet in 1910, as the Tibetan authorities no doubt kept clearly in mind, the British had invaded Tibet in 1904. Any sensible administration was perfectly capable of telling the two great powers on Tibet's borders two different things. It is also, of course, just as possible that the British representative (or indeed the British administration in India) heard only what he wanted to hear, as it is that the Chinese representative and Central Government did.

If there was any immediate result of the Huang mission it was to get Tibetan agreement to the establishment of a central government office in Lhasa. While some authors play down this official establishment there is no doubt that it marks a significant change in Tibetan attitudes. The Huang mission itself consisted of about eighty people.⁵⁰ After beginning with just two officials and a radio set, the Chinese

⁵⁰ Goldstein 1989b, 228.

expanded it until it included a school, a hospital as well as the radio station. Indeed when the Tibetans expelled the Nationalist Chinese in 1949 between 300 and 400, mostly Chinese, people were expelled with the official mission.⁵¹ By way of contrast the Gould Mission the British sent to counter-balance the Huang Mission left one Political Officer, two clerks, a medical officer and a wireless operator.⁵² Given that the Tibetans were under no compulsion to be generous to the Chinese, this "leaning to one side" must reflect a slightly warmer attitude in Tibet to the Chinese following the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. On returning to China proper Huang made much greater claims about the success of his mission. The Tibetans had, Huang said, pledged their support for the Nationalist Government. According to statements made to the press, the Tibetans had "promised to co-operate with the Chinese Government" and "agreed to the return of the Panchen Lama, considered here [i.e. Nanjing] as strongly in favor of the Nanking Government, as ruler of the region."⁵³ If the Huang Mission demonstrated anything it was that the Lhasan authorities did not regard the state of affairs with respect to China as the result of a nationalist quest for independence. On the contrary, the Tibetans were happy to consider renewed links with China on the condition that the Chinese did so within the traditional Tibetan framework of a Priest-Patron relationship. The key for the Tibetans was support from the Chinese government for the religious structures in Tibet.

6.7 The Nationalists and Autonomy

There could also easily have been confusion between what the Tibetans were telling the British they wanted and what the Tibetans were saying to the Chinese about the level of autonomy promised by the Chinese government. The problem of relations between the central Government, the Han people and China's minorities had been a problem from the birth of the Chinese Republic. Traditional China had a long history of interaction with non-Han peoples. Part of this interaction inevitably involved the facts of assimilation and intermarriage which then had to be represented in some way by Chinese historians. Assimilation was not a problem for traditional Chinese historians as the usual manifestation of assimilation was a minority member who moved into the Han community.⁵⁴ The movement of people from minority

⁵¹ Goldstein 1989b, 614.

⁵² Richardson 1962, 148. The best account of life in Tibet is Williamson (1987).

⁵³ NYT, February 10, 1935, 24:2.

⁵⁴ This is not to say that assimilation from the Han population into a minority culture never took place. It is just that within China the dominant form of assimilation was of minorities adopting Han culture. The representation of this assimilation in Chinese culture is from minority to Han and not the other way around. Gladney (1991, 315-

communities into the Han population was older than recorded history in China. According to China's first great historian, Sima Qian, the Lord of Shang said "[i]n the beginning the people of Ch'in [Qin] practised the customs of the Jung [Rong] and Ti [Di]. There was no distinction between father and son; they shared the same room. Now I have changed their customs and made distinctions between their men and women".⁵⁵ Indeed when the founder of the Ming dynasty wished to eliminate the foreign communities that had become established in China during the Mongol Yuan dynasty he supposedly passed laws requiring all "foreigners" to intermarry with the Han community. Yet within Chinese culture the representation of intermarriage is a far more complex issue, given the place in Chinese literature of the "royal bride". In Chinese history in periods when the dominant state within China was weak, the military powerful "minority" peoples on the borders often demanded women from the Imperial family. This was invariably represented, and probably was intended to be, a humiliation for China.⁵⁶ Thus Chinese culture has the basis for a variety of possible views towards minority groups.

Due to the influence of the Japanese in Manchukuo, in 1934 the Nationalist regime promised autonomy to Inner Mongolia. The regulations that would govern Inner Mongolia, issued in March 1934 by the Central Political Council, guaranteed that Mongolian pasture land would not be alienated for agriculture or settled by ethnically Chinese farmers, the traditional Qing banner system would remain in place and would be exempt from control by the provincial authorities, the Mongolian authorities would be allowed to collect their own taxes and would be exempt from provincial taxation

21) disputes the assimilationist assumption. Naquin and Rawski (1987, 127-30) do not. Ch'en (1966) gives an extended version of the traditional Chinese view. This is also the way that assimilation appears in the historical record of the period covered by this thesis. There are a number of ethnic Chinese of mixed parentage or who were raised in Tibet who became important in Tibet's history. For instance in 1930 the Chinese government decided to send a semi-official mission to Lhasa led by Liu Manqing. Liu was the daughter of a Chinese father and a Tibetan mother, born in Lhasa and married to a Tibetan employed by the Nanjing government. Bell 1931, 143. Wu Minyuan, a translator for the Chinese mission in Lhasa, was born in Lhasa. See Richardson 1962, 142.

⁵⁵ Sima Qian 1994, 93. This, at least, strongly implies assimilation in both directions.

⁵⁶ The steppe people who dealt with the Byzantine Empire also demanded Imperial women and it was also seen by the Byzantines as humiliating. The Qing emperors had a long standing policy of marrying Mongols rather than ethnic Chinese. As the Manchus became more and more "Sinicized", many Manchus became more and more reluctant to marry their daughters to Mongols. See Jagchid (1986). Sechin Jagchid is himself a Mongol who worked for the Japanese puppet government in Inner Mongolia before taking up an academic position in Taiwan.

and the central government would provide a subsidy to the Mongolian local authorities.⁵⁷ As autonomous regimes go this is extreme autonomy. If it had been implemented the Mongols would not only have gained virtually all the benefits the foreign communities had obtained under various "hard" interpretations of the Unequal Treaties, but they would also have been paid for the privilege. It was extreme autonomy for any modern country to be granting a traditionally violent, aggressive and disloyal minority in a sensitive border region. The Mongolian religious authorities were more than happy with the arrangement with the leading Mongolian Incarnation in Inner Mongolia claiming that the plan "effectually checked Japan's political plans" in the region.⁵⁸ Given the weakness of the Nationalists who by 1934 were unable to prevent the establishment of the Japanese-controlled Manchukuo, the only policy they could sensibly pursue as far as the more distant minorities were concerned was appeasement and accommodation. The new policy on autonomy did not have much success in Inner Mongolia and does not seem to have been applied to Xinjiang, Qinghai or Tibet. The only policy the Nationalists followed with anything like success was an attempt to create a group of Chinese-educated minority members. To this end in 1935 the Nationalist government opened an institution for the training of students from Mongolia and Xinjiang.⁵⁹

6.8 The Fall of Lungshar

Within Tibet itself the state of Lhasan politics could not remain deadlocked indefinitely. Immediately after the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama there was an outbreak of political in-fighting within the Lhasan administration for power during the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's minority. This struggle eventually came down to a choice between three of the Dalai Lama's favourites, Tsarong, Kumbela (Dechen Chödrön), and Lungshar. Tsarong came from an impoverished peasant family and was taken up by a monk official who followed the Thirteenth Dalai Lama into exile in Mongolia in 1904.⁶⁰ He attracted the attention of the Dalai Lama and became one of his favourites before rising to command Tibet's new modern army. Kumbela was an only child who was sent to Lhasa as his family's tax obligation. Originally trained as a scribe, he too attracted the attention of the Dalai Lama and became a personal favourite. Lungshar on the other hand came from an established Tibetan family and had travelled in Europe. On April 24, 1913 Lungshar and nine other Tibetans, including his wife, arrived in

⁵⁷ NYT, April 22, 1934, 8:3.

⁵⁸ NYT, April 30 1934 1:2

⁵⁹ NYT, April 14, 1935 4:12:3. Presumably one of the students of this institute was the Dalai Lama's oldest brother Gyalo Thondup.

⁶⁰ Goldstein 1989b, 66. Spence 1991, 34-57.

Plymouth and stayed near Aldershot.⁶¹ Two of the three, Tsarong and Kumbela, had a peasant background and both had been associated with the military. Tsarong fell from favour, but not from all his official positions, in 1925 after, it has been alleged, attempting a pro-British *coup d'état* against the Dalai Lama. This event marked the start of the slow decline of the British-trained military in Tibet.

By 1934 the dispute was largely confined to that between Kumbela and Lungshar, in which Kumbela had the support of what was left of the Tibetan army. Lungshar on the other hand came from a more respectable family and was able to manoeuvre Kumbela out of power and into disgrace. Part of this involved raising questions about the unexpected death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama with the implication that Kumbela had poisoned him. In Tibetan history accusations of poisonings are extremely common and perhaps some of them were true. It is often claimed that the majority of Dalai Lamas between the Fifth and the Thirteenth had been poisoned, most likely by the Qing Ambans.⁶² It is true that most of them tended to die unexpectedly just before assuming full power on adulthood. The Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso (1683-1706), died at 23, the Ninth, Luntok Gyatso (1806-1815), at nine, the Tenth, Tshultrim Gyatso (1816-1837), at twenty-one, the Eleventh, Khedrup Gyatso (1838-1856), at eighteen and the Twelfth, Trinle Gyatso (1856-1875), at nineteen. The two main exceptions are the Seventh, Kesang Gyatso (1708-1757), and the Eighth, Jampel Gyatso (1758-1804), Dalai Lamas.⁶³ While these two lived fairly long lives, they did not actually rule. Their reigns coincided with the period of greatest Qing control over Tibet. The Seventh Dalai Lama was even sent into exile by the Qing Government in 1728.⁶⁴ The Thirteenth Dalai Lama had been born in 1876 and so was in his late fifties when he died. This is perhaps a little early, but not unexpectedly so, and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama lived about as long as the Seventh and Eighth Dalai Lamas. It was reported in India that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had been poisoned too although no specific person was named.

Despite the fall of Kumbela, Lungshar did not survive in power for long. On

⁶¹ This might suggest the purpose of the trip was military help from Britain. Four of the party were boys being sent to study at Rugby. See NYT May 11, 1913, 3:3:3.

⁶² Bell (1928, 124-5) discusses the alleged attempt to poison the Fifth Dalai Lama. Richardson 1978, 24-5 discusses alleged poisonings in Shigatse.

⁶³ For a list of Dalai Lamas and their dates see Wang and Suo (1984, 182) or Sharma and Sharma (1996, 5:26).

⁶⁴ Petech 1950, 152. Thus the short-lived Dalai Lamas reigned during the period the Tibetans were gaining greater control over their own administration. If these men were poisoned then it was probably done by the Tibetan regents rather than the Qing Ambans.

May 20 1934, Lungshar had his eyes put out and boiling oil poured into the sockets for plotting against the Tibetan "Prime Minister" and "Cabinet".⁶⁵ In the tradition of Tibetan politics and the very personal nature of power in Lhasa, Lungshar's son was also blinded. Lungshar later died in prison with allegations, frequently reproduced in the literature, that he was poisoned.⁶⁶ These events demonstrate one of the main features of traditional Tibetan politics. The disputes over power could have dire consequences for those involved but there is little evidence of any particular ideological influence in these struggles. The disputes were between the Dalai Lama's favourites relying on traditional sources of support such as the monasteries, the nobility and the extended families of the participants. In this Tibetan politics does not differ in any particular way from pre-modern politics in other countries including the West.⁶⁷ It does differ from modern politics in the vast majority of countries in which different philosophical programs are put forward and supported by a range of people drawn by the appeal of the idea rather than merely personal links. Tibetan politics remained far more limited (although of course the consequences could be very unfortunate for the participants) than the "total" politics that have characterised the twentieth century. Tibetan society simply lacked the intellectual basis for the sort of "total" politics common in Europe since 1789.

6.9 The Death of the Panchen Lama

The Panchen Lama's determination to return to Tibet was reaffirmed in February 1936 when half a million Mongolians, Tibetans and others gathered in the Kumbum monastery in Qinghai. Yet again the Panchen Lama announced that he intended to depart within a few weeks for Lhasa.⁶⁸ On November 30, 1937 the possibility of the Panchen Lama returning to power in Tibet vanished when the Panchen Lama died while waiting for permission to enter Tibetan territory. He was 54 years old at the time. During his thirteen year stay in China he allegedly developed a taste for a more Western style of life. The *New York Times* in its obituary (December 4, 1937) claimed that "[t]he Tashi Lama adopted Western fashions in his exile, insisting on shaking hands and riding about in expensive American-made automobiles. He was fond of American jazz music, motion pictures and the radio. He entertained in Western style at the best hotels of China's international cities". It also claimed that the

⁶⁵ Goldstein 1989b, 199-212. Richardson 1962, 140-1. Shakabpa 1967, 274-6.

⁶⁶ NYT, May 31, 1934 9:2.

⁶⁷ The one great exception to the rule is provided by monotheism. Where politics revolve around forms of Judaism, Christianity or Islam, politics very quickly become "modern", i.e. total, repressive and involving the entire population.

⁶⁸ NYT, February 14, 1936, 10:5.

Panchen Lama "had attempted to bring educational and administrative reforms" to Tibet. This is somewhat unlikely but it does indicate that some people around the Panchen Lama was well aware of the need to put forward a "progressive" image. The fact that what held up his return to Tibet was his insistence on an entourage of Chinese officials and a Chinese escort was shown when the Tibetan administration in Lhasa continued to refuse to let his followers take his corpse back to the Tashilhunpo monastery for burial.⁶⁹ This was despite a Chinese promise to the British that the Chinese government would "take the utmost care to see Panchen Lama's return to Tibet gives rise to no international complications which might cause His Majesty's Government or Government of India to suffer any disturbance of peace on account of geographical propinquity."⁷⁰ For months the Panchen Lama's body was held up while the Lhasan authorities would only offer to allow his body back if it was taken to Lhasa without his retinue of followers, and soldiers.⁷¹

The Tibetan tradition of bloody changes of power continued with the fall of the Regent Reting in 1938.⁷² In the West this was presented as a conflict between "the landed gentry, the Young Tibet party, the heads of the three large monasteries near Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, and the army."⁷³ Whether the dispute was this complex or just a struggle between personalities for private reasons is not as important as the representation of these events in the historical literature. Hugh Richardson, for instance, has denied that there was anything like politics in Tibet and that all Tibetans were united in their respect for the Dalai Lama and the institutions that surrounded him.⁷⁴ There can be no question that the main beneficiary of this view point is the Dalai Lama himself and the Lhasan authorities. By denying that there was any political disputes in Tibet the British Indian administration made it look as if their favoured authority within Tibet was the undisputed government of all of Tibet. At the same time the now traditional Chinese insistence that the Tibetans were faction-riven with a large pro-China lobby in the Tibetan capital makes it look as if their division of Tibetan society into "progressive/patriotic" and "reactionary" elements has a stronger basis in Tibetan history than perhaps might be justified.

⁶⁹ NYT, August 11, 1938, 7:2.

⁷⁰ F 689/11/10. *Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Mr. Eden*. Nanking, February 2, 1937. BDFA Part 2 Volume 44, 342.

⁷¹ NYT, March 17 1938, 9:5.

⁷² Reting monastery is about 100 kilometres north of Lhasa. The monastery was given to the teacher of the 7th Dalai Lama and all subsequent reincarnations have been called Reting Rimpoche. See Goldstein 1989b, 187n2.

⁷³ NYT, August 29 1938, 7:4.

⁷⁴ Richardson 1962, 129.

6.10 Finding New Reincarnations

In the meantime the choice of the new Dalai Lama was a process that the Chinese Government was determined to be involved in, or at least to be seen to be involved in. It used the Western media to report the Chinese side of the Tibetan story. Early in 1939 Kong Xiangxie (H. H. Kung, who had married the eldest sister of Jiang's wife), then President of the Executive Yuan of the Nanjing government, gave a lengthy review of China's position to the People's Political Council. The text, which was given to the foreign press and reported in the *New York Times*, referred to Tibet and Xikang as "great 'back territories' upon whose resources China could rely". Kong also stressed the "necessity of leaving Tibet under the government of Tibetan political and religious leaders".⁷⁵ There is no reason to think that the Chinese Government could have pursued any other course at this time given that their best means of influencing the choice, the Panchen Lama, had died the previous year. However the Panchen Lama's retinue did put forward their own candidate for Dalai Lama, but there was apparently no chance that the Lhasan authorities were going to accept their choice.⁷⁶ Yet the mere public declaration of the fact created an appearance in the Western media that China did have options in the matter.

It was extremely fortunate for the Chinese government that a delegation of Tibetan monks saw a vision of the words "A Ka Ma" which strongly suggested that the new Dalai Lama would be born outside Tibet proper in areas controlled by non-Tibetans.⁷⁷ Kong also tried to give the impression that the Chinese Government was involved in the choice of the new Dalai Lama. There were, according to Kong, three candidates for Dalai Lama: two from "Tibet"[sic] and one from Qinghai. The *New York Times* reported Kong as claiming the Qinghai baby was "being escorted to Lhasa by General Wu Chung-hsin, Chairman [of the] Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, and Je-chen Hutuktu, Regent of Tibet, will supervise the drawing of lots." This report is obviously derived from the Chinese Government with its claim that the drawing of lots would take place at a time when the choice of the new Dalai Lama had all but been made. Nor is there any good evidence that the Tibetans did draw lots to choose among the candidates. When it was first reported, from Simla in India, that the new Dalai Lama had been chosen, the report claimed that the child was chosen by a "conclave or[sic] the leading Tibetan officials of Lhasa" without any

⁷⁵ NYT, February 24 1939, 4:4.

⁷⁶ NYT, June 4 1937, 25:7.

⁷⁷ For instance see NYT, May 28 1936, 10:6.

mention of the lottery.⁷⁸ Only later did the *New York Times* China correspondent report the choice and claim "[b]y tradition the Dalai Lama's name is drawn from among bamboo slips in a golden bowl" and that "[r]epresentatives of the Chinese Government went to Lhasa from Chungking to witness the drawing."⁷⁹ This is not quite the full Chinese claim as it does not say the Chinese representatives supervised the drawing, just that they witnessed it. The use in this report of the Chinese form of the Tibetan Regent Reting's name together with the Mongolian title Hutuktu is also a clear indication of its origins. Nor was the Dalai Lama being escorted by any Nationalist General; he was under the control of Ma Bufang, an independent warlord in Qinghai, before being handed over to the Lhasan officials. Indeed the first Westerner to see the new Dalai Lama, the American YMCA executive George Fitch, saw him half an hour before he departed from Kumbum in Qinghai for Lhasa in September 1939.⁸⁰ However the report did create an illusion of Chinese control over the process and so backs up the central government's claims to control over Tibet.

The arrival of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa in October 1939 was another grand event which the Chinese contrived to have reported in a manner that best suited them. In the *New York Times* the Dalai Lama was reported to have been born in a village in China rather than in Tibet and so placed Qinghai within Chinese territory. However the Chinese representatives in Lhasa were down graded to be on a level, or worse, with the British and Nepalese delegates. The paper's correspondent reported that,

After visiting the Rigya monastery, the Dalai Lama was carried to a peacock tent hung with brocade in the center of a large encampment, where British, Nepalese and Chinese representatives paid him homage and, in the custom of the Tibetans, presented scarves to him.⁸¹

In this report the Chinese followed the British and Nepalese in precedence and, worse from a Chinese perspective, were said to have paid homage to the Dalai Lama. This report differed from the usual run of *New York Times* reports in that it did not in any way even suggest that the Chinese ruled Tibet or that the Chinese were anything other than another foreign power in the region. The main reason is probably that the report came from a correspondent in India rather than in China proper. In India even American reporters were subject to much greater British influence.

⁷⁸ NYT, September 15 1939, 21:6.

⁷⁹ NYT, September 29 1939, 12:6.

⁸⁰ NYT, August 7 1939, 17:2.

⁸¹ NYT, October 9 1939, 21:7.

The British were also struggling to get their own version of the events out and into the world's media. Hugh Richardson, then the British Representative in Lhasa, wrote stories for the *Times* of London and the Associated Press of India about the arrival of the new Dalai Lama in early October. There is no doubt that Richardson reported the events faithfully, repeating some of the unusual details found in the American reports such as that the Dalai Lama was escorted by a group of Qinghai Muslims on their way to Mecca. Richardson also said that the Dalai Lama was offered scarves by the "British, Nepalese and Chinese representatives" but did not say that they paid him homage. Originally Richardson did not even describe the Dalai Lama's birthplace as being in China, but said it was in "Ch'ing-hai".⁸² His description of the scene made the reliance of "official" Tibet on Chinese forms and material culture very clear, although Richardson did not spell it out explicitly. The Dalai Lama was "wearing a coat of yellow brocade and a hat with a yellow conical crown." He was carried in a "golden state palanquin" and "[a]t the door of a bright yellow enclosure he was lifted out and led to a throne inside a gaily coloured reception tent, hung with golden brocade."

This scene is probably best described as a Manchu-kitsch version of the traditional Chinese treatment for an emperor. It is also a highly significant indicator of the nature of Tibetan society. This wearing of old-fashioned and extremely expensive clothing clearly divides the rulers from the ruled. It is, and is probably meant to be, alienating to the mass of the population. The famous distinction between the soldiers of the French Revolution and the old Monarchies is that the French soldier was supposed to carry a Field Marshal's baton in his knapsack (i.e. that he might rise to the highest positions in the Army). The average Tibetan could not hope to rise to wear such brocade any more than the average Englishman could expect to ride in the Queen's old-fashioned carriage.⁸³ This distinction is constantly made in the literature when the Communists arrive.⁸⁴ Any Tibetan could reasonably hope to rise in the Communist Party whose leadership emphasised such hopes by wearing aggressively plain clothing. As part of the modernising process of World War II not only would the

⁸² His report published in the *Times* on November 4 1939 did refer to the Dalai Lama as being from "the distant Chinese province of Siling [Hsining]".

⁸³ Except of course if they were chosen as children to be important Incarnations like the Dalai Lama. Petech (1973, 16) writes "The administrative machinery functioned as a partnership between clergy and nobility; no commoner was normally admitted to middle or high office."

⁸⁴ Especially in films on Tibet where the distinction between the pre-1950 clothes and the post-1959 drabness is obvious.

British Prime Minister not wear the Victorian frock coats common until that time, but he would wear his "romper suit" or a military uniform.⁸⁵ British Army officers too would give up their cavalry breeches, play down signs of rank and generally flatten out the obvious signs of command.⁸⁶ Just as the wearing of cavalry breeches indicates an unwillingness to deal with the brutality of the modern world (at least according to Paul Fussell⁸⁷) so does the wearing of brocade indicate, in the circumstances unfortunate, an attachment to the past.

In the meantime the Chinese government continued to ignore these accounts and push its own version of events on the Western press. On January 27, 1940, the *New York Times* reported that the Chinese government in Chongqing had received a telegram from Reting which "expressed [Reting's] grateful acceptance of his Chungking[sic] appointment as special commissioner to supervise the installation of the new Dalai Lama to rule over the theocratic Tibetan domain." The previous year (October 14, 1939) the *New York Times* had reported that the Kashag had sent a telegram to the British Indian administration *via* the Political Officer in Sikkim thanking "the British Government and the Viceroy and Government of India for their messages wishing the new Dalai Lama long life and prosperity during his reign."⁸⁸ The earlier report included a statement from the Kashag claiming that the Qinghai candidate was definitely the right one, while the later report from China claimed that the new Dalai Lama had not even been chosen yet. Indeed the Chinese Executive Yuan only "appointed" the Qinghai boy as Dalai Lama on January 31 1940 "in accordance with a petition of the Mongolian Tibetan Affairs Commission".⁸⁹ The Chinese government even took time out from the war with Japan to vote four hundred thousand *yuan* to the Lhasan administration to pay for the enthronement of the fourteenth Dalai Lama.⁹⁰ Despite the problems of building a new China, the Nationalist government had clearly learnt that the only way to win support in Tibet's major institutions was to play the role of Patron to the religious hierarchy.

⁸⁵ As would both Hitler and Stalin.

⁸⁶ Fussell 1989, 6-7. Ellis 1990b, 90.

⁸⁷ Fussell 1989, 7. Quoted in Chapter Four.

⁸⁸ In theory the Kashag was Tibet's highest administrative body under the Dalai Lama. It usually consisted of four officials. See Goldstein 1989b, 13-6.

⁸⁹ NYT, January 31, 1940, 8:3.

⁹⁰ NYT, February 6, 1940, 14:2.

Chapter Seven: Tibet During the Second World War

7.1 Introduction

The period from 1937 to 1945 was, even for the Tibetans, dominated by the Second World War. This is a period with a wealth of Western documentation dealing with diplomacy over Tibet. While the fighting never reached Tibet as such, there are certainly materials that deal with the war and its impact on Tibet. There are even larger groups of documents that deal with China, which emerged from World War II with a new and enhanced status. China entered the war too weak to prevent a minor power like Japan taking large parts of the North East. China ended the war as one of the five veto powers in the United Nations. There is still no convincing explanation for why this occurred. However this thesis will not concentrate on those issues so much as the general theme of the impact of modern politics, technology and communication on Tibet and its neighbours. Most of the dealings of the Lhasan administration with Britain and America revolved around the construction of roads through Tibet to China. There are a large number of British and American documents dealing with these road proposals. There are also personal recollections, often by China scholars of some note and, of course, a wealth of documents on the war itself. In the end no such roads were constructed, nor was any sizeable amount of Western aid delivered to China through Tibet. The general mobilisation for the war and the need to support the Nationalists did, however, cause the British to rethink their relations with Tibet.

7.2 The New Geography of War

After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on July 7, 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army had advanced down China's coastline and into China's interior, usually along China's major rivers. By and large their advance was restricted to areas with good transportation, which also meant that the Japanese were in possession of most of China's industrial base.¹ The Chinese Nationalist Government withdrew into Sichuan in the south-west of China and set up its wartime capital at Chongqing, taking considerable amounts of industrial plant and material with them. The critical issues for the Nationalist government were simple survival in the face of the greatly superior Japanese military, and the control over the parts of China the Japanese had not yet occupied. Most of these areas were of no particular economic importance, were very isolated and lacked any form of modern transportation. Indeed the Japanese

¹ De Crespigny 1992, 147-9. See also Ellis 1999, 457-8.

occupation had been up the larger rivers and along China's new railway lines, stopping only where modern transport was difficult. The Japanese did not control the areas the Nationalists did, precisely because these regions lacked proper transport and had no economic importance. The other defining feature of those parts of China the Japanese left alone was that they were usually inhabited by minorities.

In the first years of the war the Nationalist war effort received most of its support from the Soviet Union and Germany. The United States only provided significant amounts of aid from 1940 onwards.² The first order of business for the Nationalists was to try to manage to survive on their own resources. In order to do so the Chinese government began to think of exploiting more effectively the resources of the regions where they still retained some degree of control. The purpose of this would be to create a self-sufficient Chinese regime in those parts of China not controlled by the Japanese. One of these regions, where the Nationalists did not actually exercise any particular degree of authority, was Tibet. There were no specially valuable economic resources produced in Tibet itself in 1937. Indeed one of the few occasions on which Tibetans contributed anything to the war effort was in 1938 when a group of Tibetans presented the Nationalist government with 10,000 sheep skins said to be worth 500,000 Nationalist dollars.³ It is not even clear whether they came from Tibet proper or from Xikang or Qinghai. It was not a great contribution for a region larger than all of western Europe and a good indication of the undeveloped nature of the Tibetan economy.

In late January 1940 Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), the leader of the Nationalist Government, announced that the Chinese government would be hastening measures to consolidate Chinese control over Tibet in order to make "that formerly semi-independent state" an integral part of Nationalist China. The problem with this was that Jiang also insisted that China had to preserve good relations with Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Any level of increased Nationalist control over Tibet, Xinjiang or even Yunnan would annoy one or other of these governments. Jiang's response was to reassure the British that the "intensification of Chinese penetration of Tibet will not mean any discrimination against British interests in that region".⁴ The logical implication of this is that the traditional way of life in these regions would be fundamentally altered. Just as oil development in Alaska brought thousands of English-speaking non-Native Americans to that state, development of the "base areas"

² Cohen 1967, 559. Hsü 1995, 600.

³ NYT, November 28, 1938, 6:3.

⁴ NYT, January 31, 1940, 8:3.

of the Nationalist government would seriously affect their ethnic balance and political systems. In a sense the Nationalist government was faced with a choice between the lesser of two evils. Either the Nationalists could fail to mobilise their resources properly, in which case they might lose the war, or they could exploit every region and resource available to them, in which case they would destroy whatever remained of the local autonomy of the remote regions they still held on to. This was never much of a choice for the Nationalists simply because their commitment to autonomy for China's minorities was at best paper-thin. But, even if there had been a much deeper belief in the wisdom of leaving minority regions alone, no nation would have done so if it meant detracting from its war effort.

If Tibet had no significant natural resources to contribute to the Chinese war effort, it did occupy a place in the world of some strategic importance, standing between British India and China proper. As such it had potential for the transport of supplies from the West to the Nationalists. The few foreign supplies available had to reach the interior of China while avoiding the Japanese. This meant that there were really only three routes available to the Nationalists. The first was the French Vietnam-to-Yunnan railroad which ran from Haiphong to Hanoi, up the Red River valley to Kunming. The second was the Burma road which was opened on December 2, 1938 and connected Kunming with Lashio and Mandalay.⁵ The third was overland from the Soviet Union *via* Xinjiang. The Red River railway line was cut in 1940 when the Japanese pressured the Vichy government into granting the Japanese military bases in French Indochina. The Chinese had spent a great deal of effort to improve the road to Burma. It ran over some of the worst terrain in China with the average height of the Yunnan plateau being about two thousand metres. The British had repeatedly carried out surveys of the region in order to build a railway from Burma to counter the French Red River railway, but did not find a feasible route.⁶ In the early years of the Sino-Japanese War the Nationalist government had built a road through Yunnan using the labour of some 150,000 workers.⁷ Trucks did run over this route for a while but the Japanese eventually pressured the British into closing the Burma road.⁸ For a short while this was successful and the Nationalists were virtually cut off from contact with the West.

⁵ Spence 1990, 458.

⁶ British proposals for a road to Yunnan from Burma go back at least to 1861. Lord Curzon vetoed the extension of the railway from Lashio (in the northern Shan States) to China in 1901. For details of the route and the construction see Leach 1940, 10-4.

⁷ See Henry H. Douglas in *The New York Times*, August 6, 1939, 4:5:3.

⁸ One person who drove trucks over this route was Rhoads Murphey. See Murphey (1994). See DSB July 20 1940, 3:56:36 for the American response to the closure.

China clearly needed to find alternative routes along which military supplies could reach the Nationalist Army. The obvious choice was for a route *via* Xinjiang. However in 1941 the province was controlled by a pro-Soviet but ethnically Chinese regime which was not keen to see the Nationalist government re-establish central control over the region.⁹ The next choice was for a road further to the west of Burma running through Tibet. The level of road infrastructure in Tibet was negligible with what little long distance movement of goods being done by animals including yaks and sheep. This was clearly a problem for the Chinese who had been quick to adopt railways for the control of their outlying regions. Even where the Qing government had opposed railway construction until yielding to foreign demands, the construction of modern transport had decisively reversed the traditional weakness of the central government in places such as Mongolia and Manchuria. Indeed Manchuria was gradually swamped by ethnically Chinese settlers who expanded along the Russian-built railway lines. Inner Mongolia was even more thoroughly changed with the northward expansion of Chinese farming estimated at ten miles a year.¹⁰ These technological changes had been introduced virtually at bayonet-point by foreign powers over the objections of the Han population and the Manchu government. Yet the ethnic Chinese who formed the central core of China's population were the greatest beneficiaries of the changes at the expense of the minorities who occupied the peripheries. Since the Han dynasty Mongolia had been more or less continually occupied by hostile nomadic groups. Now railways and trucks were to give an overwhelming advantage to the government of richer agricultural regions who could afford and maintain sophisticated equipment.¹¹ The local autonomy of all the peripheral regions of the world was weakening in the face of railways and telegraphs.¹² Since the war closed off the more promising areas of development in China, it was obvious that it was only a matter of time before the Chinese brought these changes to Tibet. Proposals to build a railway to Tibet had been made at least as far back as 1907 when the Qing court had considered proposals to build such a railway, to convert Tibet into a regular province and to enrol Tibetans in the army.¹³

⁹ Wu 1940, 232-7. Benson 1990, 27-9. Lattimore 1962, 203-4.

¹⁰ Lattimore 1962, 203.

¹¹ Even the cost of gunpowder gave an advantage to wealthier, and agricultural, nations, as was noted by Adam Smith as long ago as 1779. See Smith 1909 470-1.

¹² One of the reasons Younghusband's 1904 Expedition did not go as planned was that Younghusband had to drag a telegraph line after him. London was constantly demanding reports and issuing instructions. The days when Nelson could ignore his orders were long over. For the extension of the telegraph to Lhasa see King (1924).

¹³ NYT February 20, 1907, 4:3. In the event the Chinese still have not built a railway to Tibet.

During 1941 the National government received a boost in support when America abandoned its previous neutral policy in favour of "leaning to one side" and opposing the Axis powers. President Roosevelt introduced the Lend-Lease Act into Congress in January 1941. In that same month, before the Act was passed, Lauchlin Currie was sent to China to assess what the Nationalists needed.¹⁴ Also in January, the American government approved Colonel Claire Chennault's plan to obtain fighter planes from America to fight in China.¹⁵ Indeed the American government was so strongly in favour of this plan that they gave Chennault 100 P-40s which had been intended for the British Royal Air Force. Chennault was allowed to recruit some 100 American pilots and 150 ground crew for the American Volunteer Group (a.k.a. the "Flying Tigers"). On April 15 1941 Roosevelt authorised any reserve personnel from the American armed services to join the AVG. On May 6 President Roosevelt declared, in accordance with the Lend-Lease Act passed on March 11th, that the defence of China was vital to the defence of the United States. However this clearly put more pressure on the Chinese logistics. Airplanes require large amounts of fuel and many spare parts to keep them flying. The initial American plan was to provide technical support to the Chinese government in constructing and maintaining the Burma road. In 1941 the American government even set aside fifteen million dollars to construct a railway from Burma to China but the Japanese advanced too rapidly and conquered Burma before any progress had been made.¹⁶

In early 1941 the British Ambassador to China was told that Jiang Jieshi had given orders that a road be built from Sichuan to Assam in British India *via* what the Tibetans might call Tibetan territory. The initial Chinese suggestion, dated February 22, 1941, was for a highway from Xichang in Xikang to Sadiya in India *via* Yungning (or Yakala) and Taching (or Rima) in Yunnan and *via* Yenching (Yanjing) and Chayu in Xikang.¹⁷ The British Ambassador's recommendation was that the British "should not allow outmoded political conceptions to stand in the way of progress". These conceptions seem to have been a fear of Chinese invasion of, or interference in, Assam

¹⁴ SDB April 15, 1944 359.

¹⁵ Chennault was the leader of the US Army Air Corp's acrobatic team when he was offered a job with the Chinese Airforce by the Chinese Nationalist government. On April 30 1937 he took early retirement and left for China the next day. See Deighton 1994, 515-9.

¹⁶ SDB April 15, 1944, 360. The Japanese also had their communication problems once they were established in Burma. This is what led to the construction of the now infamous Thai-Burma Railway.

¹⁷ *Memorandum from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 22, 1941*. BDFA Part 3 Volume 4, FCRFEA 16, 98.

and British support for Tibetan autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty.¹⁸ As the plan was reported in the Western press, the Chinese would build a road from Ningyuan (Xichang) across what the Chinese claimed was southern Xikang into British Assam to meet the railway at Sadiya. The road would head more or less directly westward from China and not pass through any part of what the Chinese claimed was Tibet. The *New York Times* (Wednesday, March 19, 1941) claimed that differences with the British over the boundaries between Xikang and Tibet "are expected to be ironed out without difficulty."

To some extent the British were prepared to support this scheme and to pressure the Tibetans into agreeing to it. There is little doubt that by early 1941 the Chinese were probably in need of new routes to the outside world. The Japanese, while not yet at war with any European country, were certainly putting pressure on the French to close the railroad from Vietnam to Yunnan and the British to close the Burma road. The route through Xikang was just one of several schemes including a highway from India to southern Xinjiang *via* Leh and Khotan or Gilgit and Hunza.¹⁹ However there is little doubt that the main driving force in China was an attempt to get the British and Americans to agree to a reassertion of Chinese rule in Tibet.

By 1942 the negotiations with the British were not going well. While the administrations of China, Tibet and Britain were in basic agreement about the road, there was a great deal of dispute about the desire of the Chinese to survey the route on the ground and to send workers into Tibet. At the same time the British were concerned to get the Chinese to agree to striking a tripartite deal which would have made it appear that Tibet was an independent government with the same status as China. In discussions between Dr. Lone Liang and Sir Eric Teichman on September 15, 1942, the main issues were the problem of finance, which currency would be used for repayments, the routes through Tibet, supervision of the route and the negotiation of carrier contracts with the Tibetans.²⁰ Each of these, except the first two, had implications for Tibetan independence. The British initially preferred a route that

¹⁸ In 1943 the British Indian government decided to enforce their claims in Assam and sent out J. P. Mills to determine just where the border that they claimed was. He was also given orders to find a route for a "really good motor road right up to Tibet". See Mills (1950) for a discussion of the process. There had been a number of British reports supporting a road or a railway through the NEFA region and into China since 1907 at least. See Choudhury 1977, 182-3.

¹⁹ F 8497/78/10. BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 20, 122-3.

²⁰ F 7169/78/10. *Interview at Waichiaopu between Dr. Lone Liang and Sir Eric Teichman. September 15, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 20, 121-2.

avoided Tibetan territory altogether, going through Fort Hertz in Burma.²¹ The Chinese government attempted to get Chinese officials placed along the route. A precedent was probably the use of Russians (and then Japanese) along the South Manchurian railway. This allowed a sizeable foreign military presence in Manchuria without actually formally infringing China's sovereignty.²² Naturally, given China's claim to rule Tibet, the Chinese declined to negotiate contracts with the Tibetans directly.

The main issue at stake was the support of the Tibetan government. The British declined to become involved in the project if the Lhasan administration did not support it. The route proposed by the Chinese skirted the very edge of Tibet and in fact may not have crossed any territory controlled by the Tibetans at all. The route suggested by the British certainly did not cross any part of Tibet. Given the heavy reliance of the Tibetans on the British (and the only alternative being the Chinese) it is unlikely they would have been able to persist in their objections in the face of British pressure.²³ Exactly how concerned the British were for the feelings of the Tibetans (or perhaps how determined they were to avoid appearing to support China's claims in Tibet) was shown by their objection to surveyors on the ground. The surveying for the route should be done, according to the British, by air and the Chinese should not send any officials to look for viable routes if the Tibetans were unwilling to have them. The British objected to the fact that the Chinese did initially send a party to survey the route on foot.²⁴ These two parties, one surveying the northern route and entering India *via* Chayu, the other surveying the southern route into Burma, were expected to cross into British territory in late August 1941.²⁵ At no time were the Tibetans able to prevent, halt, arrest, or impede these parties even though they had expressed strong objections to their passage. It is therefore an open question as to how far the Tibetans controlled the route. Like the Chinese, the Tibetans also had their claims about what they thought they rightfully controlled, which did not necessarily reflect what they actually did rule.

The other transport option for the Chinese was an air route from Xikang to

²¹ Enclosure to F 11222/846/10. BDFA Part 3 Volume 4, FCRFEA 16, 99.

²² Hsü 1995, 347-8. Spence 1990, 251.

²³ Just as the Chinese were forced to agree to the terms granted to the Soviet Union by the Yalta Conference without the support of the Americans.

²⁴ F 6966/846/10. *Mr. Eden to Sir A. Clark Kerr. Foreign Office, July 30, 1941.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 4, FCRFEA, Supplement to 16, 317.

²⁵ F 7968/846/10. *Sir A. Clark Kerr to Mr. Eden. Chungking, August 19, 1941.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 4, FCRFEA, Supplement to 16, 319.

British Assam. The main supply route for most of the war was by air, "over the Hump" (i.e. the Himalayas) from British India to China. Given the extreme heights, this route clearly was not going to provide a huge amount of supplies. According to the American State Department a C-87 transport plane could carry four tons of 100-octane fuel into China, but needed three and a half tons to do so.²⁶ The British Indian administration was willing to go along with this plan to some extent. However the route was roughly the same as that for the Xikang-India highway. The British were willing to agree to a Calcutta Kunming route as long as reciprocal services were granted to a British airline.²⁷ This would appear to have been the beginning of the famous "Hump" supply route to China. The main alternative road route was the southern route to Burma. On February 9, 1942, the British embassy in China reported that the Chinese had agreed to the southern route. The Chinese would build the eastern section of the road from Xichang to Chongtian while the British would build a road between Ledo and Myitkyina *via* Langtao and Sumprabum.²⁸

Although the idea for a road through Tibet had not worked out, it was not formally dropped until July 1942.²⁹ However other ideas for supplies to reach China *via* Tibet continued to be discussed. The main alternative was for supplies to be sent to China *via* pack-train (i.e. by mule) which would avoid the need to build a special road. Before the war the state of communications between China proper and Tibet was such that even mule trains had not provided transport in the region.³⁰ Quite heavy pressure was put on the Tibetan government to agree to pack trains. In March 1942, the British informed Lhasa that "Tibet could make a distinct contribution for freedom and civilisation and could best protect her own future interest by coming forward to help His Majesty's Government and China."³¹ The Tibetans refused to co-operate on the grounds that if they allowed war materials to pass through Tibet other countries would attempt to follow suit. Presumably they were worried that the Chinese would

²⁶ DSB, April 15 1944, 362.

²⁷ F 7968/846/10. *Sir A. Clark Kerr to Mr. Eden. Chungking, August 19, 1941.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 4, FCRFEA, Supplement to 16, 319.

²⁸ F 1450/78/10. *Mr. Allen to Mr. Eden. Chungking, February 9, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA, 17, 56.

²⁹ F 4958/78/10. *Mr. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, July 10, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA, 19, 283.

³⁰ Robert Ekvall discusses the problem in NYT, October 16, 1938, 10:8:4. Pack animals were important in the trade with India. The traditional route involved a large number of animals. F. Spencer Chapman (1953 93-5) counted between 1200 and 1300 pack animals in one day.

³¹ F 3470/G. *Mr Eden to Viscount Halifax. Foreign Office, May 15, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, 63.

send military goods the other way and perhaps leave some in Tibet. This was far more important than it had been in 1941 because in April 1942 the British Army had collapsed in Burma and the Burma road was closed.³² Worse still the vast majority of supplies passing along the Burma road had been lost.

Whether the British administration in India lent quite as heavily on the Tibetans as they claimed, the Tibetan administration was still not willing to allow war material to pass through Tibet. What they would agree to was non-lethal goods such as medical supplies, lubricating oils, and mail.³³ As these are "dual-use" goods the Tibetan objection to being involved in the war effort was not exactly total. The Chinese government claimed that even if little material could be moved through Tibet it would be a morale boost for the Chinese soldiers to see that something was getting through.³⁴ There are some reasons for suspicion of the Chinese attitude at this time. Right through 1942 the Chinese government continued to suggest that routes to the west of their "line of control" should be used and to insist that Chinese Ministry of Communication specialists supervise the route.³⁵

7.3 Renewed British Pressure on China

There are just as many reasons to be suspicious of the motives of the British government. In a telegraph from Anthony Eden to Sir H. Seymour on June 7, 1942, the British Foreign Secretary claimed that the Tibetans had "every moral right to their independence,...., and we are committed to support them in maintaining it".³⁶ This appears on first sight to indicate a major shift in British policy which had not been to support Tibetan independence but Tibetan autonomy. In practise the distinction was a

³² Spence 1990, 470-1.

³³ Enclosure 3 to F 5220/78/10. *Sir E. Teichman to Dr. Liang. Chungking, July 2, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 19, 287.

³⁴ F 3872/1289/G. *Telegram from Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden, May 22, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 18, 172.

³⁵ For instance see F 5897/78/10. *Telegram from Sir H Seymour to Mr. Eden, August 19, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 19, 291 F 6533/78/10. *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, August 19, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA, 19, 296-304. In the event there was at least one trip made from Tibet into China with a pack train under the supervision of the United States Army. In June 1944 Lieutenant Robert R. Forsyth and Sgt. James Taylor arrived in Kunming after a twenty one day trek, covering 450 miles with fifty horses and fifty mules. There is no evidence that the route played any significant role in World War II. Mules did play a role elsewhere, notably in Italy, but not over such distances. See Ellis 1999, 245-7.

³⁶ F 4095/78/10. *Telegram from Mr. Eden to Sir H. Seymour, June 7, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 18, 173.

minor one given the degree of autonomy the British wanted for Tibet. However Eden may well have been moving towards recognition of the Tibetan government; if so he was probably alone in this. He went on to say that the British had "offered India virtual independence, and it is for the Chinese to do as much for Tibet".³⁷ The end of British rule in India was not far off and in 1942 Churchill, under pressure from the Americans, had declared that the Indians would get self-government after the war. In a famous comment, on July 28 1942, King George VI, after a lunch with Churchill, wrote in his diary, "[Churchill] amazed me by saying his colleagues & both, or all 3, parties in Parlt. were quite prepared to give India to the Indians after the war."³⁸ Eden, as Churchill's son-in-law, perhaps knew more about British Indian policy than most. It follows that any long-term British interest in Tibet was declining along with the prospects of continued British rule in India. What the British did expect from the Chinese was "a more definite and public undertaking of their intention to respect Tibetan autonomy and to refrain from interference with the internal administration of the country."³⁹ This was nothing more than a continuation of the traditional British Indian policy of getting the Chinese to agree to Tibetan autonomy under a formula that closely resembled the Simla Convention. Naturally while the Chinese claimed they had nothing against the proposal in theory, in practise they were not willing to make such a declaration. The British Home government was only willing to push this issue so far. Although there was no let up in their attitude towards Tibetan independence, they continued to try to avoid controversial issues. The most obvious one was the question of Tibetan independence. By September 5, 1942 the British Ambassador to China was recommending to the Home government not to push for a tripartite agreement precisely because it would raise the controversial issue of Tibet's status.⁴⁰ Presumably the British did not think that raising the issue would be helpful as far as the war effort was concerned, and perhaps did not think the Tibetans had a strong case. The need for a tripartite agreement was more in line with the thinking of the British administration in India.

When the American Secretary of State tried to find out what was going on with the Tibetan route proposal, Roosevelt's personal representative in India reported that

³⁷ F 4095/78/10. *Telegram from Mr. Eden to Sir H. Seymour, June 7, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 18, 174.

³⁸ Wheeler-Bennett 1958, 703.

³⁹ F 4095/78/10. *Telegram from Mr. Eden to Sir H. Seymour, June 7, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 18, 173.

⁴⁰ See F 6302/78/10. *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, September 5, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 19, 294. F 6301/78/10. *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, September 5, 1942.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 5, FCRFEA 19, 294-5.

the Chinese and British Indian administration were both blaming each other for Lhasa's attitude. The key, as far as the Government of India was concerned, was the need to obtain "joint arrangements with both Chinese and Tibetan Governments".⁴¹ Given the British objections to the Chinese attitude and the problems with Tibetan obstruction (which may or may not have been closely connected), the plan for a road was ultimately dropped although discussions about the use of Tibetan routes continued for some time. The next step for the Chinese government was to threaten the use of force in Tibet. On 22 April 1943 British diplomats in Sichuan reported that Jiang Jieshi had given orders to the governor of Xikang, Liu Wenhui, to move soldiers up to the Tibetan border. The British suspected that the Chinese were going to attempt to use force to bring Tibet back under their control.⁴² As Liu and his Twenty-Fourth Army were more or less independent there was probably little chance of that.

At this time the Japanese Army was operating on a relatively small scale, but virtually unhindered, across much of China proper. In April 1943 the British Embassy reported that the Japanese Army attempted to create a "scorched earth" belt along the western bank of the Salween river in Yunnan and the Japanese army had advanced more or less unopposed north of the Yangzi river in an attempt to protect their lines of communication to Yichang.⁴³ The British were therefore unimpressed with the use of Chinese troops against the Tibetans. On May 7, 1943, Sir Anthony Eden wrote to the British ambassador to America and told him that British "obligations to Tibetan Government require that we give them diplomatic support against any Chinese military aggression".⁴⁴ Eden blamed the Chinese insistence on treating Tibet as a vassal State as the cause for the problems with the supply route. He admitted that the Tibetans had refused to allow supplies through unless they were guaranteed that no military supplies would be sent, no Chinese supervisors would be allowed along the route, and that a tripartite agreement should be signed between the Tibetans, the Chinese and the British. But the British Ambassador was told to ask the Americans to support the British in deterring the Chinese government from any military action. In Eden's words "since, in view of our commitments to the Tibetans, it would be intolerable for India to

⁴¹ 893.24/1520. *The Personal Representative of President Roosevelt in India (Phillips) to the Secretary of State, February 8, 1943.* FRUS, 1943, 621.

⁴² F 2174/254/10 *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, April 5, 1943.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 22, 283.

⁴³ F 2174/254/10. *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, April 5, 1943.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 22, 283.

⁴⁴ F 2245/40/10. *Mr Eden to Viscount Halifax. Foreign Office, 7th May, 1943.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA, 22, 290-1.

be used as a source or channel of war supplies to China for an attack on Tibet".⁴⁵ When confronted by the British concerns about any military actions, the Chinese Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs was reported on May 8th as denying any knowledge about troop movements but insisted that Tibet was part of China.⁴⁶ On that same day the British Ambassador consulted with Hugh Richardson who had talked to the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. Richardson reported that orders had been given for troops to be sent to Tibet to "neutralise unsatisfactory elements". However these orders had been given to the Governors of Yunnan, Xikang and Qinghai. They had either refused to do so or had only moved a token force somewhat closer to Tibet.⁴⁷

In later discussions between the Chinese and British reported to London on May 11, the Chinese admitted that there were no military considerations to be taken into account. The issue was purely one of prestige, as well as trying to bring Tibet "into line with modern conditions and enabling them to make a greater contribution to the war effort".⁴⁸ On the British side the main concern seems to have been that the issue would "raise the political question of the status of Tibet".⁴⁹ There was absolutely no desire by the British to do this or even any real desire to discuss the issue with the Chinese. This suggests that the British were well aware that their view of Tibetan autonomy was not widely shared, much less shared by the Chinese. There is certainly nothing to suggest that the British considered Tibet an independent state at this time or the issue simply would not have arisen, at least in the form it did. Chinese threats to Tibetan autonomy had to be dealt with by quiet diplomacy. Chinese threats to Tibetan independence could be met by any number of device such as a mutual non-aggression pact with the Tibetan government. The fact that the British did not even try to assert that Tibetan independence was threatened, suggests they did not think it existed at this time. The few talks that did take place between the British and the Chinese suggest that the British were only interested in asserting Tibetan autonomy. On July 28, 1943, the British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Song Ziwen (T. V. Soong), held talks in which the subject was raised. Eden

⁴⁵ F 2245/40/10. *Mr Eden to Viscount Halifax. Foreign Office, 7th May, 1943.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA, 22, 290-1.

⁴⁶ *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, 8th May, 1943.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 22, 291-2.

⁴⁷ There may not have been any real basis to these British concerns. The poor state of British information at this time cannot be underestimated. The British Ambassador, for instance, referred to the warlord Ma Bufeng as General Mapu Oeng.

⁴⁸ F 2418/40/10. *Sir H. Seymour to Mr. Eden. Chungking, 11th May, 1943.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 22, 364.

⁴⁹ BDFA Part 3 Volume 6, FCRFEA 22, 399.

claimed that "Tibet must be recognized to have autonomy under Chinese suzerainty".⁵⁰ Presumably the verb "must" applied to the Chinese and not to the British. This conversation was first reported to the Americans by the British, but the Chinese were not slow to put their side of the story to the United States government. Song had returned to China and held discussions with the American Ambassador by September 26.

The fact that the British had claimed in the strongest terms their interest in a united and powerful China did have the desired effect on the Chinese. Song claimed that Tibet was an integral part of China, that relations between the Tibetan authorities and Chinese authorities were an internal matter and that the British government should not raise the matter with the Chinese government. He went on to deny there were large numbers of troops massing on the Tibetan border, or that there were any serious tensions with the Lhasan administration, and claimed that if there were, the matter would be dealt with as with any other part of China.⁵¹ Gauss, the American Ambassador asked about how many Chinese even knew Tibet existed. But for the Americans, the Tibetan problem was clearly related to a raft of other border issues. Gauss also wanted to know if the Chinese regarded Mongolia in the same light and what was the Chinese attitude to Korea and Indochina. The official response was that Mongolia was much the same as Tibet and definitely part of China, but that Korea and Indochina were not and after the war should be put under some sort of international trusteeship.⁵²

It is perhaps a measure of the growing importance of the United States that not only the British and Chinese Governments wanted to give their side of the story to the Americans, but so did the British Indian administration. The Indian government sent an Aide-Mémoire to the Department of State which reproduced a full account of the British Indian position. It included the claim that the Tibetans had been under the suzerainty of the Manchu Empire but that since the Chinese Republic had refused to ratify the Simla Convention, the Tibetans considered themselves independent. The Government of India position was that "Tibet is a separate country in full enjoyment of local autonomy, entitled to exchange diplomatic representatives with other powers".⁵³

⁵⁰ *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Ballantine)*, August 5, 1943. FRUS, 1943, 84.

⁵¹ 740.0011 Pacific War/3461. *The Ambassador to China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State*, Sept. 26, 1943. FRUS, 1943, 134.

⁵² 711.93/538.5. *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser of Political Relations (Hornbeck)*. FRUS, 1943, 134-5.

⁵³ 893.24/1594. *The British Embassy to the Department of State. Aide Mémoire*.

Furthermore the British administration in India claimed that the admission that Tibet was under Chinese suzerainty would not be tantamount to an admission that Tibet was a province of China. The British Indian Government also claimed that the status of Tibet could not be unilaterally decided by the Chinese, but was a subject to be negotiated with the Tibetans during which the Lhasan administration could count on the support of the British. The only response the Indian administration received from the Americans was an assurance that the Americans did not "believe that a useful purpose would be served by opening at this time a detailed discussion of the status of Tibet".⁵⁴

7.4 The Decline of American Support for China

All through Jiang Jieshi's period in office he had been dogged by persistent criticisms of his style, personality and political beliefs. They tended to come from the left of the political spectrum and as such have a fairly minor role in American diplomatic papers. However by 1944 there were increasing criticisms of Jiang from American diplomatic circles. To some extent this prompted a search for a "Third Force" in Chinese politics. For some Americans the Communists should play that role, and a large number of State Department officials and Army officers favoured much closer relations with the Chinese Communist Party. It also prompted a re-think of American attitudes towards some of the remaining warlords.⁵⁵ By 1943 at the latest one of the main American criticisms of Jiang was that he was not fighting the Japanese adequately. What the Americans expected of the Nationalist government was grossly disproportionate with what the Chinese were capable of delivering. The aim of at least part of the American government was to transfer responsibility for fighting the Axis powers onto other nations. As Admiral King put it at the 1943 Casablanca Conference,

In the European theater Russia was most advantageously placed for dealing with Germany in view of her geographical position and manpower; in the Pacific, China bore a similar relation to the Japanese. It should be our basic policy to provide the manpower resources of Russia and China with the necessary equipment to enable them to fight.⁵⁶

FRUS, 1943, 626-8

⁵⁴ 893.24/1594. *The Department of State to the British Embassy. Aide Mémoire.*

FRUS, 1943, 630.

⁵⁵ For instance the report on the Muslim warlord in Qinghai, Ma Bufang, in FRUS, 6:391.

⁵⁶ Cline 1951, 334-5. Also quoted in Weigley 1977, 282. King was a naval officer.

In effect this is an early statement of what became known as the Nixon doctrine, namely that the main manpower burden of any conflict ought to be carried by America's allies.⁵⁷ This is very similar to Britain's traditional policy of avoiding any large-scale direct role in fighting on the mainland of Europe. The British have always tried to find an ally to subsidise while confining their efforts to peripheral areas. The American government's attitude was coloured by disappointment that the Chinese government could not do more to fight the Japanese, in order that the Americans would not have to instead. That is, the short-term need for an effective ally was more important than the long-term consequences which would be mostly local anyway. Those Americans who supported closer ties with the Chinese Communists were perfectly prepared to strengthen the Communists, and so perhaps help them to power, on the assumption this would help in the war against Japan.⁵⁸ Yet it is apparent that the Chinese Nationalists were doing a fairly good job of keeping the Japanese busy. Throughout the war the Japanese kept about a million Japanese soldiers stationed in China proper and another 780,000 or so in Manchuria. This was considerably more soldiers than were in the South Pacific confronting the American armed forces.⁵⁹

The obvious conclusion is that the democratic American government, which by the end of World War II produced perhaps half the world's gross domestic output, was motivated by a desire to limit the number of American casualties. At first sight this is a cynical policy for the Americans to follow. It meant shifting the burden of the war onto dictatorships in, usually, economically underdeveloped nations whose citizens had little say in the make-up or policies of their governments.⁶⁰ The American average soldier, who had virtually every benefit a government could provide, was not expected to pay the price for defending the American way of life. The American government expected the Soviet and Chinese soldiers to do so instead. This is the inevitable result of an obvious problem with the traditional Anglo-American political system. The benefits of American society and its economy were comparatively large for those who lived to enjoy them, but made very little provision for those who were injured or died.

He may have felt differently had he been in the army, as a naval career would not be hurt by lack of ground combat.

⁵⁷ And hence to claims that World War II was won by Russian blood and American steel. For instance Ellis 1990a, 538.

⁵⁸ Similarly Churchill supported the Communists in Yugoslavia saying he did not intend to live there after the war.

⁵⁹ Kennedy 1987, 350. See also Ellis (1995, 187, 190), Table 25 in Ellis (1990a, 519) and Ellis (1999, 460-1). Admittedly many of these were guarding Manchuria against a possible Soviet attack.

⁶⁰ In particular onto the soldiers of the USSR and China. Precisely as King said.

Liberal democracy is not a heroic ideology nor does it make great demands on its followers. In peacetime this may contribute to the benefits of civil society, but in wartime it is not all that useful in mobilising the public.

There is plenty of somewhat circumstantial evidence that American society did in fact fail to mobilise properly for World War II.⁶¹ There is some evidence of widespread avoidance of conscription by the American public. While the British rejected 2.5 percent of those called up for psychiatric reasons (12 percent of all rejections), the Americans rejected 10 percent (32 percent of rejections) or about 2 million men. That the American psychiatric exam was extremely short and often consisted of just "Do you like girls?", strongly implies that a large number of Americans did not want to serve.⁶² Worse still was the degree to which *intelligent* (or rather educated) Americans avoided serious involvement in the war. Not only were the front-line infantry soldiers more likely to be poor (as indicated by height, a measure of childhood nutrition, and education), but American officers were actually *less* ideologically motivated than their men. Twice as many American soldiers reported that they fought for idealistic reasons as their officers. By way of contrast, German NCOs and junior officers were significantly more likely to report a high ideological (i.e. Nazi) motivation than their men.⁶³ This affected their chances of being wounded or killed. If the large number of officers in the American Army Air Corp are ignored, American ground officers were killed at roughly their proportion of the ground forces as a whole (i.e. no more or less likely than anyone else). At the start of the war German officers were twice as likely to be killed as their men and by the end were still 150% more likely to die in combat.⁶⁴ Assuming that there is a connection between years of education and being an officer, the more time spent being educated by the government, the more likely Germans were to be Nazis, but the less likely Americans were to be ideologically motivated.

One explanation is the appeal to many intellectuals, at least German

⁶¹ In perhaps the best description of the contrast between WWI and WWII for the English-speaking world Ellis (199b, 53) writes "World War I gave us *Journey's End*, World War II *South Pacific*".

⁶² Ellis 1990b, 10-11. There is also the example of America's Ivy League Universities who, faced with the call up of their students lobbied for a student exemption, which they got. As entry was non-competitive, if an upper class American boy did not want to serve, he could do a four-year degree instead and so miss the war.

⁶³ Ellis 1990b, 12. Van Creveld 1983, 70-1, 87-8. Of course these figures might mean a lot of things. Anyone who asks teenagers their opinions should not expect honest answers. The Germans were questioned in captivity, the Americans were not.

⁶⁴ Van Creveld 1983, 155-9.

intellectuals, of a modern totalitarian ideology.⁶⁵ That this had an impact on the course of World War II is not so demonstrable, but it is probably safe to assume that it did. In Western armies soldiers of "substantially below average intelligence" were twice as likely to desert as the average soldier.⁶⁶ It is therefore, not surprising that the Germans should have done so well in World War II.⁶⁷ Again the lesson for the Chinese and the Tibetans could not have been clearer. In large part American support for the Nationalists declined because Jiang and the Guomindang were unable to prosecute the war in a total, Clausewitzian, manner. Although there is no evidence the American government actually articulated the thought, it can be argued that their attitude towards the Nationalists were so negative because Jiang was just too attached to traditional China, and not ruthless enough.

Americans officers may well have had little enthusiasm for the war, but a similar, even more thoroughly, disillusioned attitude was common among Chinese liberals. Summarising the attitude of Chinese liberals towards Jiang, the American Consul General in Kunming reported that they thought Jiang was "an ignorant, vain man of limited ability and vision, who has emerged as a full military dictator through his native shrewdness and political strategy superior to his possible rivals. He has no conception of democracy and constitutional government and is ideologically committed to fascist principles....He and his clique, the members of which are completely subordinate to him and could be dismissed if the Generalissimo desired, are incapable of building a modern nation in China....The future of China is dark under his leadership, but the only alternative is the Chinese Communist Party - an alternative opposed by the majority of Chinese liberals....His ideological concepts and anti-foreign bias and Kuomintang machinations directed toward bordering countries bode ill for the future of China and the Far East."⁶⁸ There is of course a great deal of truth in this which cannot be denied. A great deal of it is also sour grapes from a section of the privileged classes who failed to gain power for themselves either by successfully appealing to the majority of Chinese people or by building a power base strong enough to support their own ambitions. Indeed their total irrelevance to Chinese politics is

⁶⁵ Naturally German student groups were dominated by Nazis well before Hitler came to power.

⁶⁶ Ellis 1990b, 245.

⁶⁷ The fact that Germany should have lost the war is not that surprising. What is unusual is that such a small country fought for so long. At least two major works have tried to show that, and explain why, the German Army was so good at what it did. See Dupuy (1977) and van Creveld (1983).

⁶⁸ FRUS, 1944, 6:494.

shown by the bitterness with which they denounced, from exile in Yunnan,⁶⁹ those with the responsibility to solve China's problems.

Significantly a large number of these non-party intellectuals were from the south of China and were educated in Britain or the United States. There is a contrast here with the large number of the Communist Party's leaders who also came from southern provinces, but were usually educated in France. There is little obvious difference in backgrounds between, say, Hu Shi (b. 1891 into a Anhui office-holding family) and Chen Duxiu (b. 1879 also into Anhui office-holding family) except that Hu was educated in the United States and Chen in France. No doubt Hu's American education taught him traditional Anglo-American liberal values, such as the importance of the rule of law and civil society generally. It is not unreasonable to assume it was precisely these values that meant he did not lead a significant political party in China or play much of a role in Chinese political life. Many American educated Chinese served in positions of power in the Nationalist government. Not only did Jiang's brothers-in-law Song Ziwen, (T. V. Soong, Harvard University) and Kong Xiangxie (H. H. Kong, Oberlin and Yale) hold responsible positions under the GMD, but Gu Weizhun (Wellington Koo, Columbia University), Si Shaoji, (Alfred Sze, Cornell), Yan Huiqing (W. W. Yen, University of Virginia) among others worked for Jiang. These men were not particularly discriminating about their employers, Gu, Si, and Yan had all worked for Yuan Shikai as well.⁷⁰ However this merely points to the dilemma of the English-educated who expected to rule, but were not able to rule in their own right. China's problems were so great that only those intellectuals who could mobilise their fellow intellectuals and hence the population had much future in politics. However appealing traditional Anglo-American political values were in the abstract, they simply had no relevance to China when it was suffering from revolution, civil war and foreign invasion. This had been apparent to many Europeans well before 1939. Adrien Marquet, an early French proto-Fascist, had shouted at Léon Blum "No one gives their lives for thirty seats in the Chamber".⁷¹

The Chinese liberal criticism of Jiang and the Nationalist government also misses the point. Neither the British or the United States fought, or perhaps could have fought, World War II without putting aside a great many human rights. In June 1941, in the United Kingdom a woman was given five years in prison merely for saying

⁶⁹ Then under the control of the Lolo warlord Long Yun (1888-1962) who gave shelter to many opponents of the Nationalist government.

⁷⁰ See Craft 2001, 196. Song was the brother of Jiang's wife Song Meiling. Kong had married the eldest Song sister Song Ailing.

⁷¹ Quoted in Sternhell 1982, 356.

"Hitler was a good ruler, a better man than Mr Churchill".⁷² Indeed after August 1939 the British government had the power to detain anyone without trial and made it an offence to do anything prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of the war.⁷³ The Japanese-American communities on the mainland were clearly domestic victims of the American war effort. The American government simply uprooted them all and interned them for the duration. The American practice, although not political theory, is that human rights play no particular role during wartime. In every major American war except Vietnam, basic human and legal rights in the United States have been suspended. During the War of Independence loyalists were tarred and feathered, driven into exile and lynched. During the Civil War Lincoln suspended *habeus corpus* and arrested people opposed to the war. In World War I even Woodrow Wilson felt the need to pass the Sedition Act. Outside the English-speaking world the situation was far worse. Lester Thurow has claimed (referring to capitalism where perhaps liberal democracy might be a better term) that in 1941,

the United States and Great Britain were essentially the only [major] capitalist countries left on the face of the earth....All the rest of the world were fascists, communists or Third World feudal colonies. The final crisis of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s had brought capitalism to the edge of extinction. The capitalism that now seems irresistible could, with just a few missteps, have vanished.⁷⁴

The idea that China, with far more serious problems than the United States, ought to have become *more* democratic during the War just does not reflect the problems of wartime. Indeed a large part of Jiang's problems arose from the fact that he lacked proper authority over the population at large and significant sections of the military. The Nationalists did not even properly control basic things like wages and prices during the war.⁷⁵ The result of the inability of the central government to control

⁷² Ponting 1990, 153. Deighton, 1994, 417.

⁷³ Ponting 1990, 149.

⁷⁴ Quoted in de Soto 2000, 190. More importantly, it is hard to find any intellectuals outside Britain and America who supported capitalism in 1941. For, say, French intellectuals, the basic problem was either that France was next to a large and powerful neighbour who held territory the French wanted, or that the working class was threatening to murder everyone with any money.

⁷⁵ As an indication of the weakness of the GMD government, on December 28, 1929 the Nationalists decreed the abolition of extraterritoriality as of January 1 1930. Even though the British and Americans agreed to its eventual abolition as far back as 1902 and 1903 respectively, the Nationalists were unable to enforce their own laws in their own country. See Williams 1936, 142-3.

the economy, together with the lack of taxation revenue, was run-away inflation.⁷⁶ The problem of corruption was essentially one of insufficient surveillance of officials and not enough punishment of the guilty. After the war Jiang said "[t]he disastrous military reverses on the mainland were not due to the overwhelming strength of the Communists but due to the organizational collapse, loose discipline, and low spirits of [Guomindang] Party members."⁷⁷ Those sections of the military of which Jiang had the most control and which received the most Western-style modern education performed well in the war. The less control the Guomindang party had over any particular unit the worse it likely to be in terms of military effectiveness, basic competence, the food and clothing of the soldiers and even in the likelihood of conscripts dying in large numbers well before they reached the battle field.⁷⁸ The best army divisions were those which received the best German training and the most ideologically committed officers such as the 87th and 88th Divisions. Unfortunately for Jiang the fact that they fought long and hard against great odds meant that by 1942 they had suffered a great many casualties.

There is also a strong suggestion that the Democratic opposition was not merely friendly towards the Communists but in fact had been widely infiltrated by them.⁷⁹ This penetration was not only common in Europe and America, but it was an important part of the Chinese Communist Party's United Front program. However there is also no doubt that a large part of the liberal's complaint reflects the opinion of the American Consul-General Langdon himself, especially as he went on to repeat some of the claims, especially those about machinations against bordering countries. Langdon criticises Chinese "aspirations in Indochina and Burma" and the "Chinese preoccupation with Tibet, Outer Mongolia and Korea at a time when the full attention and effort of the Chinese Government should be concentrated on the war against Japan and on co-operation with her Allies in that war. The Kuomintang almost openly proclaims Soviet Russia and Great Britain as China's real enemies."⁸⁰ This line of thought inevitably led Langdon to consider other political groups within China. He

⁷⁶ Inflation is usually caused by printing too much money which means the government is spending more than it is raising. Or it is caused by overly large wage demands by workers. Strong governments (the extreme example being Communist dictatorships) do not usually suffer from inflation.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Wright 1991, 307nc.

⁷⁸ With the obvious exception of the Communists. The problems of the Nationalist Army are often described. See, for example, Ellis 1999, 465-7.

⁷⁹ Fung 2000, 248-55. Of course it is just as likely that the same sort of Westernised intellectuals made up the majority of membership in both groups and so one group naturally tended to support the other.

⁸⁰ FRUS, 1944, 6:495.

nominated just four groups: the Communists, the provincial warlords, the Federation of Chinese Democratic Parties and "Chinese cultural elements". Essentially Langdon admitted that only the Communists posed any real alternative to the Nationalists and Jiang.⁸¹

The Americans did in fact keep an eye on the Democratic League and reported a meeting to be held by the League on September 1, 1944, in which delegates attended from Guilin, Kunming, Chengdu and Chongqing. Some anonymous Communist party members discussed the meeting with American embassy staff and told them it had their tacit backing. Given the lack of any credible opposition to Jiang, the Americans became more interested in the Communists. Favourable reports on the positive attitude of the Communists to being merged into the Nationalist Army were sent off by American embassy officials such as John S. Service.⁸² These included reports of discussions by prominent Communists such as Mao Zedong, Zhu De, and Zhou Enlai. The discussions pushed the usual Chinese Communist Party line that the CCP was only interested in rent reduction, democracy, working with the Nationalist party, opposition to the Soviet Union and so on. Whether Service, a fluent Mandarin speaker raised in Sichuan, believed the substance of these conversations or not, he certainly became both a strong critic of the Nationalists and a warm supporter of American aid to the Communists. In the discussions Mao mentioned the problems of China's minorities. He was alleged to have claimed "China must first recognize Outer Mongolia as a national entity and then organize a sort of United States of China to meet Mongol aspirations. The same is true of Tibet, and the Mohammedans should be given a chance to form their own state."⁸³ This sounds like a thoroughly liberal, well meaning statement of policy and does, in fact, basically reflect what the Communists claimed, in public, that they wanted. The Communists went further in saying that they did not intend to overthrow the Nationalists or to set up a Socialist, much less Communist state in China. In a sense this was perhaps true in that the "objective" conditions did not yet exist for the establishment of a Communist state. That the CCP fully intended to overthrow the Nationalists eventually and set up a Communist state is undisputed. That these leading Communists were working as hard as they could to bring about the conditions under which they could overthrow the Chinese government is equally clear in retrospect. Quite probably it was apparent to those on the ground such as John

⁸¹ The only people in this group who were not usually Western-educated, middle class and from the South or Coastal regions were the warlords. Often poor, rarely educated, usually from peripheral regions like Shaanxi and Yunnan, the warlords may have been the only group that genuinely represented China's population.

⁸² FRUS, 1944, 6:536-43.

⁸³ FRUS, 1944, 6:537.

Service as well.

The irrelevance of the criticism of Jiang for having authoritarian and "fascist" tendencies is shown by the success of the Chinese Communist Party in attracting positive views from China's Western educated elites, Western intellectuals, members of the American diplomatic service and even from Western missionaries in China.⁸⁴ The Communists won this support without any particular regard for human rights in practice or in theory. Although the Communists did moderate their past policy of promoting class conflict (which in practice meant killing anyone who happened to own too much land), they still paid almost no attention to the expressed values of the liberal democrats. In the spring of 1942 Mao launched the "Rectification Movement" against "incorrect ideas" held by Party members. On the specific issue of art and culture in 1942 Mao laid down Communist policy in his Yanan Forum on Literature and Art.⁸⁵ The basic Marxist point Mao was trying make was that art could not be separated from the working class which in turn meant the interests of the Chinese Communist Party. As Mao put it "we must adhere firmly to principle and severely criticise and repudiate all works of literature and art expressing views in opposition to the nation, to science, to the masses, and to the Communist Party." The result of this policy was that leftist intellectuals who were insufficiently supportive of the Communist Party suffered very badly indeed. In 1942 the long-time Marxist intellectual Wang Shiwei for instance was arrested for nothing more than criticising the misbehaviour of some cadres. After many years in prison without charge or trial Wang was summarily shot in 1947. Other cultural figures such as Ding Ling suffered years of criticism and abuse merely for being outspoken.⁸⁶ On the other hand Jiang and the Nationalist government was completely unable to prevent criticism by Chinese intellectuals of the government, the war effort, and of Jiang personally.⁸⁷ The degree to which the Chinese Communist Party controlled their Liberated Areas was much greater than the degree to which Jiang controlled most of China. Not only did Jiang not have any real degree of control over regions such as Yunnan, but he also did not fully control the "National" army,

⁸⁴ Missionaries frequently praised Communist rule, even without brain-washing. There were plenty of areas of agreement between them such as a strong Puritanism and dislike for China's traditional Confucian-educated elite. For example see Yule 1995, 201, 213-4. As a measure of how disliked the Nationalists were by liberal America by the end of 1948 see the *New Republic* (November 15 1948, 10 and also December 6, 8-9, December 13, 16-8, December 20, 5-6, February 21 1949, 17-19 as well as a longer article by John K. Fairbank on August 22, 1949).

⁸⁵ Mao's talk is reproduced in Mao 1965, 69-98.

⁸⁶ Leys 1977, 123-7.

⁸⁷ This is despite the fact that the Nationalists did kill some leftist intellectuals such as Ding Ling's husband Hu Yepin.

parts of which remained under the control of "former" warlords.

Even though the Communists were fighting a "patriotic" war against an invader (as opposed to a "revolutionary" one against fellow Chinese), they still faced serious problems winning the support of the Chinese countryside. According to Elizabeth Perry in 1928 the Communists had attempted to set up a Peasant Association in Anhui which had been easily crushed by the Guomindang. It would take the introduction of armed forces from outside Anhui in 1939-40 before the Communists could build up any sort of control. Even then the Communists relied on the most absolutely destitute landless peasants, as the majority of the locals preferred the leadership of their local elites.⁸⁸ If anything this shows the success of "total" politics. Clausewitz claimed that war "is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will" and that "war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst."⁸⁹ Applying this sort of philosophy to politics rather than warfare gives an idea of modern totalitarian politics. It is precisely through such very modern political ideas, whether directly borrowed or independently invented, that the Chinese Communist Party came to dominate China.

7.5 The End of the War and the Peace Treaties.

By the beginning of 1945 it was obvious that the war would soon be over and that a new basis for international diplomacy had to be found. This re-assessment of the old world order provoked some rethinking on the part of the British Home government. Giving the Indian administration a fairly broad hint, the British Foreign Office asked the British Government of India to reconsider Britain's Tibetan policy. The occasion that caused such a rethink was the request by the Tibetans to be represented at the Peace Conference and demands by the Tibetans that the British would continue to support the Tibetans in getting the Chinese to recognise Tibetan autonomy. Given that the Chinese had never given up their claims to Tibet it was apparent that after the war the Chinese might well attempt to reassert their control by force and so create an international incident. As the British Foreign Office put it to the Indian administration,

[i]n these circumstances, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Eden to suggest that it may now be desirable for His Majesty's Government to review their Tibetan policy once more with the object of determining the degree and nature of the

⁸⁸ Perry 1980, 208-247.

⁸⁹ Clausewitz 1989, 75-6.

autonomy which they consider it essential, in the interests of India, that Tibet should enjoy; how far they are prepared to go in the pursuit of this aim; what line they would propose to take in any international discussion on the subject; and, in fact, whether or not they wish to encourage such international discussion.⁹⁰

Given the constraints and conventions of the British Civil Service this was a fairly direct indication that the British Home government was considering a discrete withdrawal from their support for Tibetan autonomy. But the real question would be whether the British would support full Tibetan independence. In 1946 the new British Labour government produced its first long-term plan for the defence of the British empire. In it the Labour Party promised independence for British India in the near future. The plans also mentioned Tibet in the context of old fears of a Russian push down through Afghanistan into a newly independent (and presumably weak) India. The *New York Times* reported that "[a]s a possible counter the British are understood to be supporting Tibet's claim to independence from China and to be angling strongly for a treaty giving Britain rights to certain bases in Tibet".⁹¹ The logic behind such thinking, if indeed the reports were accurate, is hard to work out. The British were going to give independence to India which, if the Indian granted bases, made any bases in Tibet irrelevant. If the Indians refused (and this is probably the only context in which bases in Tibet make any sense) then the British were unlikely to be able to support their bases in Tibet. In 1946 Tibet was entirely landlocked by China and India.⁹² In 1948 it was entirely landlocked by China, India and Pakistan. None of these countries were likely to look favourably on any British bases in Tibet. However clear and logical thinking was not a strong point of the British plan. According to the *New York Times*, "Prime Minister Atlee and Foreign Minister[sic] Bevin have taken the stand that instead of trying to sit tight on bayonets, Britain will try to base its strategy in the Middle East and elsewhere on the friendship of the various Governments and peoples." Recent experience with an independent Ireland should have shown that independent governments were inclined to resent past policies involving bayonets, regardless of what the former Colonial government promised. Indeed the history of Britain in the Middle East and elsewhere is that by 1945 the British had lost its chance for friendly relations with the majority of countries and no amount of compromise and accommodation was going to change that.

⁹⁰ F 1/1/10. *H. Henderson to the Under-Secretary of State for India. Foreign Office, 2nd January, 1945.* BDFA Part 3 Volume 8, FCRFEA 27, 90.

⁹¹ NYT, August 11, 1946.

⁹² Depending on where Tibet's borders are. The largest claims for territory would give "Tibet" borders with Burma and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region.

In January 1945 Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill sat down to work out the terms on which the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan. The Chinese government was not invited to attend this conference held in Yalta in the Crimea. Although all three parties at this conference had previously agreed to refrain from annexing parts of weaker countries, the main issue discussed was what the Soviet Union would get for entering the war. Under Article 5 of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of Alliance (26 May, 1942) Britain and the USSR had pledged to "act in accordance with the two principles of not seeking territorial aggrandisement for themselves and of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states".⁹³ The Atlantic Charter signed by the British and American governments on 14 August 1941 stated that the allies sought "no aggrandizement, territorial or other" and that they "desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely-expressed wishes of the peoples concerned".⁹⁴ These principles later became part of the United Nations Declaration of 1 January 1942. The Atlantic Charter in particular showed continuities with the old British "liberal" gunboat diplomacy, while also pointing towards what might be called the new Bandung style.⁹⁵ On the one hand it promised that "sovereign rights and self-government would be restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them", on the other it tried to prise open world markets for American trade. This was reflected in conversations between Roosevelt and Churchill on the subject of free trade. In his own mind Roosevelt linked peace with the equality of peoples which included "the utmost freedom of competitive trade".⁹⁶ Thus Article IV of the Atlantic Charter promised that both the American and British governments would "further the enjoyment of all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world".⁹⁷ As Roosevelt put it "of course, after the war, one of the preconditions of any lasting peace will have to be the greatest possible freedom of trade.[...] It's because of [British Imperial trade preferences] that the people of India and Africa, of all the colonial Near East and Far East, are still as

⁹³ BFSP 1952, 144:1040.

⁹⁴ BFSP 1952, 144:683.

⁹⁵ There were other areas where similar rhetoric appears. Cordell Hull's memoirs (1948) are full of terms like "liberation" usually associated with the Communists and the Non-Aligned movement. When the British Army landed in Europe in WWII it was officially called the "British Liberation Army".

⁹⁶ Roosevelt 1946, 37.

⁹⁷ BFSP 1952, 144:684. By 1943 this had been accepted by the (often exiled) governments of Britain, China, the Soviet Union, Belgium, Poland, The Netherlands, Greece, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Yugoslavia, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The commitment of the USSR to this principle is questionable. See Hull 1948, 1211.

backward as they are."⁹⁸

Essentially this was the extension of the American Open Door policy towards China to the whole world. From the British perspective, the very policies that supposedly pushed the British into both Opium Wars with China, were now aimed firmly at them and the British Empire. It was the closed British markets that the Americans objected to, and the British policy of regulating trade that now the Americans presented as a threat to world peace. Indeed the Americans saw in these principles not only a way of regulating post-war foreign relations, but a way to end all war for all time. As Cordell Hull told the US Congress, the United Nations would create a climate in which there would "no longer be any need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, nations strove to safeguard their security or promote their interests."⁹⁹

All in all this provided a great opportunity for the Chinese. The Americans were demanding very little compared with past demands made on China. There were several aspects of the arrangements which might have posed a problem in the future for the Chinese. The right to self-government might, for example, have been applied to the Tibetans. However the Americans went into the Yalta conference with the most strongly pro-China position they had held for some time. This included an open statement of support for China's claim to both Tibet and Outer Mongolia. As the Background Briefing paper said,

[w]e believe that China's territorial integrity should be respected, including her claim to sovereign rights over such outlying territories as Tibet and Outer Mongolia. We would not oppose, however, any agreements respecting those territories reached by the process of amicable negotiation between China and other interested governments. We hope that the Chinese Government will meet the aspirations of the native peoples of such territories for local autonomy.¹⁰⁰

Yet this positive pro-China attitude at the start of the Yalta Conference did not last long once Roosevelt was there. The terms on which the Soviet Union would enter

⁹⁸ Roosevelt 1946, 35-6.

⁹⁹ Hull 1948, 2:1648.. See also a broadcast by the Secretary of State on September 12, 1943 in DSB, September 18, 1943, 9:221:173-9 as well as a report on the results of the San Francisco Conference establishing the United Nation in DSB, July 15 1945, 13:316:77-83.

¹⁰⁰ FRUS, *The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, 357.

the war against Japan were mostly at China's expense and ultimately the Americans did not object to those terms. They were basically a return to the high point of Tsarist influence over China, but with a few added bonuses. Stalin demanded that the *status quo* on Outer Mongolia be respected which meant recognition of *de facto* Soviet control over what was formally still part of China. The Soviet Union also wanted leases on both Port Arthur and Dalian, but accepted a lease on the naval base of Port Arthur and the internationalisation of Dalian without prejudice to the "pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union" on that port.¹⁰¹ The Soviets also demanded "the rights possessed by *Russia* before the Russo-Japanese war [1904] to the operation of the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South-Manchurian railroad providing an outlet to [Dalian] should be restored on the understanding that China should continue to possess full sovereignty in Manchuria".¹⁰² The only demands made on the Japanese were that "the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to this part of Sakhalin should be returned to the Soviet Union" and that the Kurile islands should be handed over to the Soviet Union.¹⁰³ Thus the price of the involvement of the Soviet Union in the war with Japan was to be paid mostly by China.¹⁰⁴ The Americans were willing to agree to all the Soviet terms and on February 11 1945 all three Powers signed the agreement. The only attempt to defend China was when the Americans insisted that the agreement concerning the ports and railways required the agreement of the Chinese government. This, like the recognition of China's sovereignty over Manchuria by the Soviets, was purely theoretical and presumably "for the record". The American government did not, for instance, tell the Chinese government that the Soviet Union had been promised so much in China until June 1945. The heavy reliance of the Nationalists on American aid, together with the lack of any knowledge of the agreement, made any attempt to oppose Stalin's demands pointless.

On June 30 1945 the Chinese began negotiating a Sino-Soviet agreement directly with the Soviet Union. The main Chinese negotiator was Jiang Jieshi's brother-in-law and Minister of Foreign Affairs Song Ziwen. On some issues the Chinese tried to hold firm. Song refused to allow Soviet troops into Manchuria to guard the railway lines. He attempted to demand that the management of the railways be shared equally between the Chinese and Soviets. He also tried to keep Dalian under Chinese control. However on the issue of Outer Mongolia Song had to concede

¹⁰¹ The fact that the Americans were forbidden to use Dalian to bring American and Nationalist soldiers to the North East during the Civil War shows that there was little difference between Soviet control and "internationalisation".

¹⁰² FRUS *Yalta*, 1945, 896. Italics added.

¹⁰³ FRUS *Yalta*, 1945, 896

¹⁰⁴ And of course by the conscripts of the Soviet Army.

Mongolian "independence".¹⁰⁵ Yet Song tried to insist on returning to China for further instructions from Jiang and he also was extremely reluctant to sign the agreement. There is no doubt that Song knew that the Chinese would regard it as a betrayal. The majority of the Soviet terms were eventually agreed to by the British and American governments. There were only two positive aspects of the agreement as far as China is concerned. The first was that the Americans agreed that prior to the Sino-Soviet agreement Outer Mongolia came under the 1922 Nine Power Treaty in which the signatories agreed to respect the territorial and administrative integrity of China. The Americans admitted that the US government had been "at pains to refrain from any indication that it considered the outlying dependencies of China such as Mongolia in a different status from the remainder of China".¹⁰⁶ Although this did not explicitly say that the Americans regarded Tibet as part of China, it implied it. The second was that the Americans were beginning to distrust the Soviet Union and its style of diplomacy. On July 20 1945 the American Secretary of State received advice from the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State to the effect that America "should avoid any developments in China such as have occurred in Poland".¹⁰⁷

7.6 Tibet and the United Nations

Following the end of World War II the Allies took the first steps towards setting up the United Nations, as foreshadowed in 1942, as a successor to the League of Nations. Originally no nation could join unless they had declared war on the Axis powers which a number did at the last moment. After the war the UN members had to deal with applications to join by nations that had not fought in the war or had not even existed prior to the defeat of the Axis powers. These countries ranged from sizeable neutrals such as Sweden to very small countries such as Nepal. Tibet's possible membership came up in 1946 and had to be dealt with within the framework of China's role at the UN. The occasion on which Tibet's membership became an issue was during discussions between the Acting United States Representative to the United Nations (Johnson) and the British ambassador Sir Alexander Cadogan on June 19 1946. In reporting to the Secretary of State, the British Foreign Office said that in Tibet's case "[a]n application is unlikely" and "[i]n any case, the Chinese would veto, as they consider it part of China."¹⁰⁸ The problem of Tibet's application was not particularly well received in Washington. The American Secretary of State wrote to

¹⁰⁵ FRUS, *Berlin 1945*, 1:862-3.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS, *Berlin 1945*, 1:867.

¹⁰⁷ FRUS, *Berlin 1945*, 2:1227.

¹⁰⁸ FRUS, 1946, 1:394.

Johnson that he should "[p]lease express to Cadogan the hope that applications will not be made at this time" by Muscat (Oman), Nepal or Tibet. As Oman and Nepal were effectively British protectorates, it is likely that the Americans saw Tibet in this light at this time. However American objections to applications from these three countries should not be seen as a general objection to Tibetan membership. Rather it is more likely that the Americans were simply too busy dealing with all the other problems to deal with this specific one at the time. This can be seen by the fact that the Americans did not want applications from Outer Mongolia, Yemen or Transjordan. Tibet was, like these other disputed cases, being put in the too hard basket for the time being. Thus the UN initially accepted to some degree the concept of a sphere of influence. Applications were "sponsored" by a bigger power. In the case of, for instance, Albania, this clearly fell within the Soviet sphere. Tibet appears to have been a British issue. Outer Mongolia and Siam (Thailand) however were issues on which the Chinese were thought to have important points of view. The Chinese were certainly successful at keeping the Mongolian People's Republic out of the United Nations.

Other older forms of diplomacy were also clearly in evidence such as the view that some countries were more welcome to the "Club" than others. The applications of Sweden, Portugal, Iceland and "Eire" (i.e. the Republic of Ireland) were all fast-tracked, while Afghanistan, Transjordan and Siam were put off. On July 1 1946 the British Labour Party Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, wrote to the American representative at the United Nations suggesting that Nepal, the Yemen (presumably what was to become the northern Republic of Yemen and not the then British colony of Aden, soon to become the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen), Tibet and Muscat need not be considered for the time being.¹⁰⁹ This was agreeable to the Americans and the issue of Tibet at the UN did not come up in 1946. There is doubt about who raised the issue of Tibet in the first place. It is fairly certain that the Americans did not at this time. They continued to recognise the claims of the Nationalist government of China and so the most likely candidate is the British. Tibet was an issue, and the Allies wanted to get every possible government involved in the UN. This did not mean that the British wanted to sponsor an independent Tibet or that they supported the concept of one at this time.

¹⁰⁹ FRUS, 1946, 1:404.

Chapter Eight: China Reasserts Control Over Tibet

8.1 Introduction

The rise of the Chinese Communist Party and the founding of the People's Republic of China greatly strengthened the power of the central government in China. For the first time since 1910 the Chinese government was both willing and capable of enforcing its will in Tibet. At no time since 1914 had any Chinese government seriously considered giving up its claims to Tibet. The Nationalists, while at their weakest and under Western pressure, agreed to a high level of Tibetan autonomy, but did not concede to the demands of the British and Tibetans. Yet the fact that in the Fifties China was represented in this dispute by a Communist government was a two-edged sword. On the one hand it meant that the Communists could make much more effective ideological appeals to the Tibetan people and the larger Western public. On the other hand after "Liberation" the Tibetan issue became part of a wider struggle in the emerging Cold War. This means that the amount of Western diplomatic material on Tibet is reasonably large. It also means that the Indians began to produce their own diplomatic material as, after 1947, one of the major figures in Tibetans affairs, the British Indian administration, merges slowly into the newly independent Indian government. It is precisely because of the continued presence of officials such as Hugh Richardson in the new Indian government that the transition is not as abrupt as might be expected. The Indian government did not, in fact, differ greatly from the British Indian administration in its policies. Indeed it could be argued that the main cause for India blundering into the 1962 War, and her subsequent defeat, was the attempt by the Indian government to continue Britain's policies towards Tibet without attempting to match either the British or the Chinese in military resources.

The British had originally thought of Tibet primarily in terms of maintaining a secure border from any Imperial or Nationalist Chinese challenge and keeping the Russians at arms length. Although the Soviet threat was used by the British as a justification after 1917, there was no particular evidence that they had genuine cause to be worried, or even that they really believed they had. For the Americans, however, Communism was part of a world-wide problem and with the Communist victory in China, Tibet was on the front-line. From 1950 onwards the Tibetan problem becomes part of the anti-Communist struggle. Tibet both benefited and lost from this alignment. On the one hand it promised American aid, on the other it made them enemies to the left of politics in most Western countries. However the British, the Americans and the

Indians were all faced with a choice between the sort of total military mobilisation that characterised World War II or some more moderate policy which left Tibet under Chinese rule. There was never really much doubt about the preference for containing the Chinese among these three liberal democracies. Ultimately the Tibetans failed to obtain the sort of international help they needed and were forced to turn to the Chinese. During the last years of the Lhasan administration the Tibetans were let down in turn by their old friends the British, their new friends in India and by the nation that promised them the most help but delivered little, the United States. In the end the Chinese re-established their authority over Tibet because they, more than anyone else, wanted to govern Tibet and they did not lose sight of that goal. Just as the British Chief of Staff guessed in 1912, the pertinacity of the Chinese won out in the end.

8.2 The Communist Promise

The victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 brought a very different set of policies to Tibet although the Communists shared some of the policies of the earlier Nationalists. Before they took power the Communists had adopted the Soviet policy of allowing autonomy or even independence for "national minorities". This was first expressed in Article 14 of the proposed 1931 Constitution which said,

[t]he Soviet Government of China recognizes the right of self-determination of the national minorities of China, right to complete separation from China, and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans and others living on the territory of China shall enjoy the full right to self-determination, i.e., they may either join the Union of China Soviets or secede from it and form their own state as they may prefer.¹

Shortly afterwards the resolution was modified by the "Resolution of the First All-China Congress of Soviets on the Question of National Minorities in China" which promised all minorities the categorical and unconditional right to form an autonomous region within China, or to form an independent state or to join the USSR.² At the time the Chinese Communist Party was dominated by Li Lisan and the so-called "returned Bolsheviks". These were a small group of Chinese students who had been trained in the Soviet Union during some of the worst years of Soviet power. In Maoist

¹ Reproduced in Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank 1952, 64.

² Moseley 1966, 164. This is a translation from Zhang Zhiyi.

terminology they are usually described as holding to an incorrect "left line", but in fact were simply applying Soviet doctrine without much regard for Chinese realities. The promise for independence did not survive the disgrace of the returned Bolsheviks, although as late as 1936 Mao Zedong was telling Edgar Snow that Tibet and Xinjiang would "form autonomous republics attached to the Chinese federation."³ By 1949, when the Communists could implement their promises, the Common Program of the People's Republic of China did not contain any promises of self determination in any meaningful sense for China's minorities. It offered rather legal equality and regional autonomy. The promise of autonomy up to and including independence was not very difficult to make when the Communists only controlled a few counties in the mountains of southern China. Keeping such promises when they were in power was another matter. Moreover the Communist Parties of China and the Soviet Union were very different in origin and make-up. Unlike the situation in the USSR, in China there were few members of the main national minorities in positions of power. While Stalin, Trotsky and many other leading Soviet Communists were members of one or other minority (and Lenin had a mixed background), the Chinese Communist Party was dominated by southern, but still ethnically Han, Chinese.⁴ The closest the Chinese Communist Party came to a significant minority presence was a large number of Hakka in the Party.⁵ Thus Lenin wrote during 1915-16, "Russian socialists who do not demand freedom to separate for Finland, Poland, the Ukraine, etc., etc....act as chauvinists and lackeys of bloodstained and filthy imperialist monarchies and the imperialist bourgeoisie."⁶ While the Tsarist state and its economy was the main opponent of the Soviet Communist Party, the main complaint of the Chinese Communists was foreign aggression. The Chinese Communists were happy to go into alliance with the Guomindang and other parties in the face of Japanese aggression. All this meant that to the Chinese Communist leadership the Chinese Qing Empire was not

³ Snow 1972, 129.

⁴ Stalin was of course Georgian. Trotsky was Jewish (a recognised Soviet minority group). Lenin's family was partly German, Jewish, Swedish and Kalmyk (or perhaps Kirghiz or Kazakh). See Williams 2000, 219-21. Ulanfu, a Mongol who spoke Chinese as his first language, was one of the few members of any national minority of any importance in the early years of the People's Republic of China. For a discussion of the prominent role of *some* minorities in the Soviet Union see Simon (1991, 30-42, 58-61, 415-9). Invariably those minorities who were over-represented in the Soviet Communist Party were also over-represented in higher education.

⁵ For the role of the Hakka in the CCP see Erbaugh (1992). While Communist Parties in Europe have used ethnicity as a political issue, ethnicity has not been important in China. The equivalent to the Eastern European purges of "Cosmopolitans" (i.e. Jews) has never occurred in China.

⁶ Lenin 1964, 154.

a prison from which they wished to escape, but a state they wanted to revive.

It was clear from the start that the interpretation that the Chinese Communists put on "autonomy" was very different from that preferred by the British or the Tibetan authorities. After all there was and is a basic contradiction between a centrally planned economy and any real degree of local autonomy. You cannot plan for a national economy if large parts of the country can do what they like. Indeed taken to its extreme a planned economy leaves no area of political or social life untouched. The more thoroughly the Communist party wanted to control China's economy, the less control anyone else had over basic economic decisions. Even the most basic areas of decision-making are denied to individuals at the extreme end of Communist practice. A planned economy demands a certain number of workers in every field. If ideological reasons demand that all workers be paid the same, then the only way to get workers in unpopular locations (such as Siberia in the USSR, Xinjiang, the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region or Xinjiang in China) is by compulsion. These features are not incidental to Communism, but were and are inherently part of the Communist ideology.⁷

On November 10 1950, just over a year after taking power, the Chinese Communist Party issued a statement that was to form the basis of their policy in Tibet. Their policy was based on earlier promises of national autonomy, social reforms and the experience the Chinese Communists gained in the North West of China during the war with Japan. This document made several promises to the Tibetans and the Lhasa administration. It demanded that,

All the religious bodies and people of our Tibet should immediately unite to give the PLA every possible assistance, so that the imperialist influence may be driven out and allow the national regional autonomy in Tibet to be realised; fraternal relationships of friendliness and mutual aid may be established with other nationalities in the country, so that a new Tibet within the new China may be built up with their help.

Now that the PLA has entered Tibet, they will protect the lives and property of all religious bodies and people, protect the freedom of religious belief for all the people of Tibet, protect all lamaseries and temples, and help the Tibetan people to develop their education, agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, and commerce, so as to improve the livelihood of the people.

The existing political system and military system in Tibet will not be changed.

⁷ As both Lenin (1965b) and Mao made clear, Communism meant dictatorship.

The existing armed forces of Tibet will become part of the national defence force of the PRC. All members of the religious bodies of all classes, government officials, and headmen will perform their duties as usual. All matters concerning reform of any kind in Tibet will be settled completely in accordance with the wishes of the Tibetan people and through consultation between the Tibetan people and the leadership personnel in Tibet.⁸

Any degree of autonomy for Tibet would depend on keeping communism in any real sense, out of Tibet. Between the 1951 Seventeen Point Agreement and the 1959 Lhasa Uprising that is exactly what happened. During this period the Chinese government attempted to work with the Tibetan elite and to allow central Tibet to remain free from the most basic reforms being imposed across China. To a large degree the policy worked and for nearly a decade the Tibetan upper class and the Chinese Communists co-operated wholeheartedly. Despite problems in reconciling a non-monetary feudal society with a Communist regime, from 1951 to 1959 Tibet was treated as a special case, and the old regime carried on much as it had before. Among other things this meant that serf owners sat in the national Parliament and served in the Tibetan government.⁹ Despite the degree of autonomy given to Tibet, ultimately the policy failed to satisfy the Dalai Lama and, in any event, was always intended as a temporary measure by the Chinese government. Although the Chinese Communists promised not to impose reforms on Tibet right away, they also made it clear from the start that changes would have to be made in Tibet.

There was a major difference between the policies towards the national minorities promised by the Chinese Communist Party and those pursued by Communists in Buddhist lands in Mongolia and the Soviet Union. The Chinese Communists claimed to be interested in a slow transformation of society and in working in co-operation with the Buddhist and feudal hierarchy. This was very different from the vigorous attempts by the Soviets and their Mongolian allies to simply destroy the Buddhist religious structure and the feudal classes altogether.¹⁰ Indeed the moderation of the Chinese position could be fairly described as

⁸ Ling 1968, 8-9.

⁹ Norbu 1997, 120-123. Shakya 1999, 94-95, 99-100, 116, 123. One of the main reasons for this policy was the lack of any other local support for Communism. After all Tibet did not have a significant group of Western-educated intellectuals to form the basis of a Communist party. There were probably fewer problems in reconciling a non-monetary feudal regime with a Communist one than appear at first sight. Neither had much commitment to liberal democracy, capitalism or civil society.

¹⁰ Bawden 1968, 313. Rupen 1966, 28-35. Snelling 1990, 41-3.

unprecedented for a Communist party faced with what was, after all, a feudal society. The Chinese Communists could at least offer the Tibetan population a few more benefits than, for example, the Soviets could offer the majority of the Soviet population. Land reform was one issue which any Communist Party could assume was popular with a reasonable degree of confidence. However, as a general rule Communists only adopted "democratic" land reform as a temporary measure before imposing collectivisation which was invariably bitterly resisted. The other significant reform the Chinese Communists could promise was a rigorously enforced monogamy. Traditional China had always had some degree of multiple marriage among the rich and female infanticide among the poor. In many Chinese societies there were a number of social mechanisms for dealing with this problem such as infant marriage, which meant only that marriage was "priced" out of the reach of the poor. The result was that in traditional China as many as ten percent of men never married.¹¹ By enforcing monogamy and trying to end female infanticide, the Chinese Communist Party brought marriage within the reach of a much greater number of poor men. It was, perhaps, the single greatest benefit to poor Chinese men after widespread health care. The "democratic" land reforms together with serious attempts by the Communists to improve the lot of China's poor suggests exactly why the People's Liberation Army was able to perform so much better than the Nationalist, or even the Qing, armies.

In the case of Tibet, the problem was that there was no particular reason to believe that the Chinese intended to keep to a moderate policy over the long term. The Chinese Communists attempted to persuade the Dalai Lama's brother, the Taktser Rimpoche, to go to Lhasa to talk the Dalai Lama into a compromise. Instead he returned to Tibet with terrible accounts of what the Chinese were doing in Qinghai where he had lived until then. He also claimed that the Chinese had tried to get him to agree to kill the Dalai Lama if he would not agree that Tibet should become part of China.¹² There were some Communist policies which the Chinese Communist Party was almost certain to implement. Land reform was one of these, as was the nationalisation of the means of production and an end to any form of political diversity. The means the Party used might well have been very moderate (and hence unlikely to have included persuading the Dalai Lama's brother to kill him), but the end was an extreme one. Nor was this extreme end merely an incidental feature of Communist rule. The Chinese Communist Party was simply committed to policies such as the elimination of any rival to the Communist Party and a extensive secularisation. All of these policies were likely to cause serious problems with various sections of the public

¹¹ Naquin and Rawski 1987, 108-11.

¹² Craig 1997, 139-145.

and could only be implemented by force.

The Dalai Lama and his administration had plenty of forewarning of the nature of Communism from the Mongols and Tibetans in Qinghai and Xikang. Yet the only other viable option to surrender on what appeared, at first sight, to be very favourable terms, was resistance. There is no question that the Tibetan terrain was, and is, ideal for a defensive policy. There was little food on the Tibetan plateau that could support a large force and much of what there was, was dairy-based and so not suitable for many ethnic Chinese. Furthermore the distances in Tibet are huge, the climate is extreme and the transport infrastructure in 1950 was essentially non-existent. However, the nature of the Tibetan government itself was unsuited to a strong defensive policy. The Tibetan administration's military usually relied on the conscription of serfs who served for life and volunteers from among the nomadic groups in Amdo and Kham.¹³ The one thing that the religious authorities did not encourage was participation by the majority of the Tibetan population in the political life of Tibet. Asking them to fight for the regime was, therefore, difficult and it is not surprising that the Lhasan authorities never tried to do so. The example of Communist China as well as the more modern European states shows what sort of reforms the Lhasan government needed to ensure a realistic military response. Just as the British government let the Empire shrink back to Great Britain and Northern Ireland (plus some dependencies) rather than "modernise", so too did the Lhasan government choose to do nothing. With their options limited by the nature of Tibetan society, resistance would require the support of at least one major outside power. If the theocratic state of Tibet had any political tradition at all, it was reliance on outsiders to support the major Incarnations, the monasteries and the estates of the nobility. The Tibetans had avoided direct Mongolian rule during the Yuan by a pre-emptive surrender. The major religious figures had sought the (mostly financial) support of the Ming government and had called in the Mongols to settle their religious disputes. The Yellow Hat sect owed its dominance of central Tibet to such help. This could all be rationalised under the guise of a Priest-Patron relationship. Like the British and the Americans the Tibetan administration preferred to find an ally to do most of their fighting for them. While the extreme terrain of the Tibetan plateau had served a similar purpose for centuries, modern technology was negating most of that advantage. The question would be whether there was any power in the world capable and willing

¹³ Tibet's traditional military system not only resembled Tsarist Russia's army of serfs (not surprising as both system probably shared a Mongol origin) but Britain's pre-Victorian army. Military service in all three countries was virtually life-long except that the British recruited among the very poor instead of the unfree.

enough to play the role of patron.

At the same time the Chinese promises came with an explicit threat to reunify China by force if necessary. Once it became clear that the Communists were going to win the Civil War, their opponents in the rest of China, especially the less ideologically motivated warlord forces, collapsed almost immediately. The People's Liberation Army had little trouble in defeating the Muslim warlords of Qinghai and Gansu. The warlord armies in Sichuan folded almost as rapidly as the PLA advanced. There was no particular reason to think that the Chinese would have any hesitation about invading the Tibetan plateau nor much room for doubt about their capacity to do so if they wanted. The only thing that could make it difficult for them was adequate resistance from the Tibetans. The advantage that the Tibetans had was the distances the Chinese would have to travel and the barrenness of the terrain. These were so great that the PLA had to be resupplied by air. Even then the Chinese government did not try to provide food and clothing but rather dropped gold coins so that the soldiers could buy food from the local Tibetans.¹⁴

8.3 The British Retreat

In 1950 the ability of the Tibetan administration to resist the Chinese People's Liberation Army depended entirely on the degree of support the Tibetans could obtain from its friends and allies overseas. Before "Liberation", resistance to the Chinese had usually required British support, but support from the British government had always centred on defending the border between India and China. There was a strong pro-Tibetan feeling among the British Political Officers who worked with the Tibetans, but that was not reflected in the opinions of people from outside the Indian administration. In 1950, as India had been independent since 1947, Britain simply had no national interest in Tibet any more unless the British government subscribed to the global anti-Communist campaign. The rapid recognition of the People's Republic of China suggested that the British were not going to pursue an anti-Communist ideological crusade very far. The inevitable consequence of the Palmerston policy that Britain had no friends, only interests, was that once British interest disappeared, Britain's former allies were on their own.¹⁵ Moreover to have intervened would have demanded a large military force or at least a sizeable monetary and material contribution. The British way of warfare demanded someone else bear the burden of fighting on land while the

¹⁴ Smith 1996, 366-7. Knauss 1999, 105. The small size of silver coins being a major improvement over rice as far as transport is concerned.

¹⁵ For the Palmerston quote see Pemberton 1954, 220-1.

British Navy provided support. A naval blockade of China was unlikely to save Tibet and a large British army contingent was politically impossible.

Even if the British had wanted to help, after the end of British rule in India British help could not be more than nominal unless the Indians were willing to co-operate. There was little evidence that the Indians ever encouraged the British to take a more active part in the region, or that they would have been happy to see the British playing a major role in Tibetan affairs. Even if the Indians were willing to see the British back in South Asia, the British government was not particularly concerned about the re-establishment of Chinese control over Tibet. Indeed what they seemed to want most was a quiet solution that did not embarrass the British government. The Dalai Lama later recalled that the British had "expressed their deepest sympathy for the people of Tibet, and regretted that owing to Tibet's geographical position, since India had been granted independence they could not help."¹⁶ The British made their position clear in talks between the American Ambassador to India and the British High Commissioner to New Delhi on January 20th, 1950. The British were attempting to discourage the Tibetans from sending a delegation to Britain to ask for help and admitted they could not aid Tibet "without consultation with other interested parties".¹⁷ Presumably by other interested parties the British meant the Indian and American governments. Since 1914 the British position on Tibet had been shaped by the Simla Conference. This defended Tibetan autonomy, recognised Chinese suzerainty and gave Britain a special influence in Tibet as, in effect, a protecting power. Since Indian independence Britain no longer could play a role as Tibet's protector and so British interest in the rest of the Simla paradigm inevitably evaporated. Thus in 1950 the Dalai Lama's government looked to the Indian and American governments for help against the Chinese. The results were not encouraging.

8.4 American Inaction

The position of Tibet in American foreign policy was always dominated by American views about, and opinions of, the Chinese. During the long honeymoon between the Americans and the Nationalists from, roughly, 1932 to 1949, this meant that the Americans would not adopt any position that was grossly offensive to the Nationalist government. Yet neither would the Americans adopt any particularly active measures to defend them, such as sending a sizeable American military force to

¹⁶ MLMP 1997, 60-1.

¹⁷ FRUS 1950, 6:284.

China. After 1949, for the American government any help for the Tibetans was part of the wider plan of helping those elements still actively fighting the Chinese Communists in China. These included remnants of the Nationalist armies and perhaps hundreds of thousands of local non-communist, often non-Chinese, tribal fighters. While many of the claims about the size and strength of these groups were probably wishful thinking, there were still fairly sizeable groups fighting the People's Liberation Army into the Fifties. Yet for the American government the one policy that was not on the agenda was any recognition of Tibet as an independent country. The most obvious reason for this probably has to do with the continuing claim by the Nationalists on Taiwan to be the rightful rulers of all China including Tibet. Therefore, for the American government, helping the Tibetans was part of resisting Communism, but not actually supporting Tibetan independence. Aid for the Tibetans was dependent on what sort of credible threat they posed to the Chinese Communist regime. Unfortunately for the Tibetan government, the Americans were clearly not greatly impressed by their ability to resist the People's Liberation Army.

In 1950 the Joint Chiefs of Staff under General Omar Bradley recommended that seventy five million dollars be extended in military aid to the countries around China under Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949. Of this, thirty million dollars was to be set aside under the category "China (including Taiwan and Tibet)".¹⁸ How much was specifically intended for Tibet is impossible to say for sure. It is probable that very little ended up in Tibetan hands. When the Chinese government announced that it intended to "liberate" Tibet, the Tibetans tried to send a special mission to the United States to ask for help. The Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, said that it was "unlikely US [would] be prepared at this time extend aid Tibet, particularly in view attitude [of the Government of India] respecting Tibet and key position India with regard Tibet."¹⁹ Acheson also wanted to hold any negotiations between the Americans and the Tibetans in the New Delhi Embassy rather than in Washington. Informal talks between Gyalo Thondup and the Americans had already been held in Calcutta. During these talks the Americans had promised to help the Tibetans and even provide weapons.²⁰ However the Indian government was not particularly happy about the proposal as it might make the Chinese accuse the Indians of being a "center of conspiracy to effect separation Tibet from China". Therefore the United States government proposed sending a delegation to Lhasa to tell the Tibetans

¹⁸ Enclosure to 793.56/2-150. *Memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Johnson)*, Jan. 20, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:5-8.

¹⁹ 793B.02/1-1250. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, Jan. 12, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:275-276.

²⁰ Interview with Gyalo Thondup, New Delhi, July 1995. Quoted in Craig 1997, 137.

that the United States could not extend any aid to them.²¹ After discussing this with Nehru, Krishna P. S. Menon, then India's Foreign Secretary, advised the Americans not to and claimed it might provoke the Chinese into invading Tibet.²²

The importance of getting any sort of American delegation to Lhasa appears to have been understood by the Tibetans who used the death of Douglas MacKiernan as an excuse for an official American visit.²³ MacKiernan, the American Vice-Consul at Urumqi (then known as Dihua) in Xinjiang had been shot dead by Tibetan border guards as he attempted to flee the advancing PLA and reach India through Tibet. With him was a small group of people including one other American, Frank Bessac. Yet the American Ambassador in New Delhi continued to recommend the Americans do nothing to provoke the Chinese Communists, and not cause an invasion of Tibet, by sending Americans to Lhasa.

Due to the unwillingness of the Americans to take a public stand the Tibetans had to settle for informal and unofficial talks with the Americans in New Delhi. The Tibetans were represented by Shakabpa and the main issue for discussion was where to hold talks with the Chinese government. The three options were Beijing, Hong Kong or New Delhi. The British were at this time refusing to allow the Tibetans to travel to Hong Kong because they did not recognise Tibetan passports. The American Ambassador recommended the talks be held in New Delhi. Already the Tibetans were expressing dissatisfaction with the attitudes of the British and Indian governments. The Tibetans were worried that the Indians were willing to accept the hand-over of Tibet to the Chinese.²⁴ This concern was mainly caused by Nehru's public acceptance of China's suzerainty over Tibet. It seems that they were right to doubt the support of the British as well. In a secret telegram to the American Secretary of State on June 20th, 1950, the American Ambassador in the United Kingdom spelled out the British position. He had been told that the British government had "always been prepared to recognize Chinese sovereignty over Tibet but only on understanding Tibet regarded as autonomous."²⁵ This in itself was such a major shift in British policy that it is likely the

²¹ 793B.02/1-2050. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, Jan. 20, 1950, 10 a.m. FRUS 1950, 6:284.

²² 793B.02/1-2050. *The Ambassador to India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, Jan. 20, 1950, 2 p.m. FRUS 1950, 6:285. Menon was Defence Minister in 1962.

²³ 793B.00/6-350. *The Ambassador to India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, June 3, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:358-9.

²⁴ 793B.00/6-950. *The Ambassador to India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, June 9, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:361-363.

²⁵ 793B.00/6-2050. *The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State*, June 20, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:365-366.

Americans misunderstood the British position. Until now the British Government had only been willing to recognise Chinese *suzerainty*, not sovereignty. The Americans did not press the point, and perhaps did not understand the importance of the word. When the Tibetans later insisted that they had never recognised Chinese suzerainty and asked the Americans not to mention it in any way in any of their public statements, the American State Department declined to comment on what it might or might not say about the legal status of Tibet.²⁶ The British also claimed that the Tibetans were too remote for any useful military support and were only capable of nominal resistance to the PLA. In a classic example of cutting their losses the British said "[a]ny attempt intervene would be impracticable and unwise. United Kingdom not sufficiently interested in area to warrant embroiling itself with China and in any case can not get out of step with India. Publicity should be discouraged; Tibetan collapse would have more serious effect in neighbouring countries if issue were played up in advance."²⁷

Just four days later the Korean War broke out when the Soviet-backed North Koreans attacked the South. Although it has been claimed that the Korean War distracted Western attention from the Tibetan issue and so allowed the Chinese to move against Lhasa without interference, two of the major players in the dispute, Britain and India, had already in fact written Tibet off. The British also felt that there was "no possibility" that the Tibetans might be admitted to the United Nations.²⁸ This refusal of the British to help the Tibetans took extreme forms. They were not only unwilling for a Tibetan delegation to visit Britain, but they would not even allow a Tibetan delegation to go to Singapore or Hong Kong.²⁹ Therefore the Tibetans could not negotiate on friendly, or at least neutral, ground. This had a very serious impact on the Tibetans because it meant that they could only talk with the Chinese in China. It has been claimed that once in China proper the Tibetan delegation was put under enormous pressure by the Chinese authorities, refused permission to talk with the Tibetan government in Lhasa, bullied and forced to sign the Seventeen Point agreement.³⁰ This is undeniably part of a larger Tibetan narrative surrounding the events leading up to "Liberation" which presents a view of the Seventeen Point Agreement and the Tibetans who signed it as lacking any sort of credibility. This is not to say that such claims are untrue. There is probably a lot of truth to the claims as they go back some way and it is highly unlikely that the Chinese Communist Party treated

²⁶ 793B.00/7-251. FRUS 1950, 6:1727.

²⁷ 793B.00/6-2050. *The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State*, June 20, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:365-366.

²⁸ FRUS 1950, 6:284.

²⁹ FRUS 1950, 6:332.

³⁰ For instance Smith 1996, 295-7. MLMP 1997, 66-7.

the Tibetans with kid gloves. Yet there is no doubt that what the Communist government wanted was agreement and co-operation, which would place limits on the degree of aggression directed at the Tibetans. In July 1951 an anonymous Tibetan had told the Dalai Lama's brother (who in turn informed the Americans) that the Tibetan delegation had been forced to sign the agreement on Chinese terms, had been denied permission to refer back to the Dalai Lama's government for further instructions, had been told that if they did not sign there would be war and throughout their stay in China had been continuously watched and followed "as if in an iron box".³¹ Had the British allowed these negotiations to take place in Hong Kong they would have appeared to be fairer and perhaps the Tibetans would have got better terms. Thus the Chinese had achieved one of the original aims of the Chinese delegates to the Simla Conference; they had negotiated with the Tibetans without the interference of an outside Power. In fact this feature of the Seventeen Point Agreement was perhaps the most important of all. With no other country as protector and guarantor the Tibetans were powerless to stop the Chinese changing the terms, or at least the interpretation of the terms, of the Agreement whenever they wanted. As such it represents a major defeat for the Tibetans and perhaps the first let down by their foreign supporters. The key for the British government at this time was, they claimed, the co-operation of the Indians. In theory this policy was based on Commonwealth solidarity. The British claimed to be following the lead of their former colonial possession and would not adopt a position in advance or in opposition to the Indians. Whether or not this was true, it certainly allowed the British a more dignified retreat from their previous commitments than might have been otherwise possible.

8.5 Indian Confusion

Even though the offers of American aid never amounted to much, other countries were supplying the Tibetans with arms and even training at this time. The Indians gave the Tibetans small arms and some light artillery pieces. On March 1, 1950 the American State Department had heard that the Indians had been helping the Tibetans and asked their embassy in New Delhi for details.³² Henderson replied that the Tibetans had asked for, and the Indian government had agreed to supply, 38 2-inch mortars, 63 3-inch mortars, 150 Bren guns, 14,000 2-inch mortar bombs, 14,000 3-inch mortar bombs, and 1,000,000 rounds of .303 ammunition. Yet the Indians also

³¹ 793B.00/7-351. *The Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 3, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1728-1729.

³² 793B.56/3-150. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, March 1, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:314.

claimed that, while this was a significant increase over past shipments to Tibet, it was not a military program aimed at the Chinese.³³ The denial is, of course, hard to defend given the size of the shipments, which were both too big for any conceivable internal problem and too small to deter the People's Liberation Army. The Indians had previously supplied the Tibetans with small arms in June of 1949. At that time they had given the Tibetans 144 Bren guns, 1,260 rifles, 168 Sten guns, 500,000 rounds of .303 ammunition and 100,000 rounds of Sten gun ammunition.³⁴ The Indian government also claimed that they were meeting all Tibet's requirements and any American involvement would be politically undesirable for the Indians.³⁵ Indian policy on Tibet at this time was, therefore, largely driven by internal Indian politics and the fact that the Indians did not want to provoke the Chinese or appear to be co-operating with the Americans in any way.

The outbreak of the Korean War did not change in any way the Indian government's attitude towards Tibet. If anything it may have compromised the Indian position as Nehru's government was so eager to play a mediator role in the Korean War that it was willing to compromise with the Chinese over Tibet.³⁶ To some extent this was a reasonable attitude. If India had pushed the Chinese too far over Tibet, it was unlikely that the Indians would have had the slightest chance to bring about a peaceful solution to the war. As the Indian Ministry of External Affairs informed the Indian Representative to the UN, Sir Benegal Rau,

The question of timing of the handling of the Tibetan appeal [to the UN] needed careful consideration. Korea was obviously of first importance and it was therefore desirable that nothing should be said or done which was likely to embitter relations with China at this critical stage, and it would be preferable therefore for no action to be taken on the Tibetan appeal for the present. Little good could come out of any condemnation of Chinese action in Tibet and at this stage much condemnation might conceivably do a great deal of harm.³⁷

There is, perhaps, a suspicion that the Chinese asked the Indians to act as a go-between in the Korean war specifically in order to hinder any effort they might have

³³ 793B.00/3-850. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, March 8, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:317. FO 371-84469.

³⁴ Shakya 1999, 13. FO 371-84465,

³⁵ 793B.00/3-850. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, March 8, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:318.

³⁶ See Panikkar 1955, 102-24.

³⁷ FO 371-84455

made on behalf of the Tibetans. In this way the Indians, by giving up a local issue of considerable importance to India's security, got to play a much greater, if ultimately futile, role on the world-stage.

However, whatever the reasons for the Indian actions, it had little impact on their overall Tibetan policy. The American Embassy in New Delhi reported on July 15, 1950, that the Indians had not shifted their policy with respect to military aid and still objected to any country, in particular the United States, giving military aid to Tibet. However the Americans thought that perhaps the Indians might not object if the Tibetans asked them to allow additional purchases in India and abroad.³⁸ What the Americans had in mind is shown by the use of quotation marks around the word "purchases". The implication seems to be that the Americans would forward the funds to the Tibetans to buy American weapons which the Indian government would allow to pass through India. Various proposals for American aid to the Tibetans were discussed, but only discussed, right into 1951. As late as May 24th, 1951, the US Chargé in India, L. V. Steele, was suggesting eight points for consideration by the State Department. The relevant points are,

....

4. Possibility of including Tibet in present programs and proposals of economic and financial assistance for non-communist China and South Asia.
5. Publication in proper form at a proper time of a statement by the United States Government with respect to its recognition of the autonomy of Tibet.

....

9. Further consideration of United States willingness to supply military assistance to Tibet if Indian regulations and laws permit.
10. Further support for the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations regarding Communist Chinese invasion of Tibet.³⁹

While the Indians publicly claimed to have entered into a new era of post-colonial politics, in private their policy did not differ significantly from that of the British. In private talks with the American diplomatic staff in New Delhi on January 9th, 1950, Krishna Menon stated that India's policy was to recognise Chinese suzerainty, provided China in return recognised Tibet's autonomy. Indian support for

³⁸ 793B.00/7-1550. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, July 15, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:377. 793V.00/7-2250. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, July 22, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:386.

³⁹ FRUS 1951, 7:2:1682-5.

the Tibetan administration would only extend as far as helping Tibet retain its autonomous status. Therefore the Indians would not support any attempt by the Tibetans to join the United Nations because it would raise the issue of Tibet's status and "could not possibly succeed".⁴⁰ The implications of this seem to be that the Indians thought that the Tibetan claim to be independent of China had no legal basis. Therefore their policy was to leave well alone, and hope to come to some sort of arrangement with the Chinese that provided for some sort of autonomous status for Tibet. Certainly even at this early stage the Indians ruled out any sort of Indian military action in Tibet.⁴¹

The main preoccupation of the Indian government in 1950 seems to have been appeasement of the Chinese Communist government. To some extent this was a reasonable policy. In the end virtually the entire world recognised the folly of denying the People's Republic of China a seat in the Security Council. The Indians also seem to have assumed their "good offices" could bring about a resolution of the Korean War. The number of telegrams to and from the Indians dealing with the Korean issue is very large indeed, despite their near total lack of any worthwhile achievement. However there is a fine line between a reasonable settlement and spineless appeasement. The Indian government's recommendations to the United States in 1950 involved handing over Taiwan to the Chinese Communists as well as the Republic of China's seat at the United Nations. At the time this might have seemed reasonable, and it was a policy supported by many in the West, including John King Fairbank, but in retrospect it is extremely fortunate for the Taiwanese that the American government ignored such advice.

The issue of Tibet was a more complicated issue for the Indians, presumably because their own interests were at stake rather than just the fate of Tibet. The Indians desired a negotiated settlement with the Chinese which would avoid any fighting. This would of course mean the imposition of Chinese rule on Tibet in some form or other. The Indian Ambassador to China, K. M. Panikkar, was quite open that the Chinese intended to maintain their sovereignty over Tibet and impose a Communist regime there which would work to slowly integrate Tibet with China.⁴² When this was reported to the American embassy in late August, 1950, the Indians also made clear that they did not foresee the use of force or any armed conflict. By September 9th the

⁴⁰ FRUS 1950, 6:272-273.

⁴¹ FRUS 1950, 6:273.

⁴² 793B.00/8-2550. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, August 25, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:449.

Tibetan mission in India was convinced that the Chinese would use force and were determined to resist it. This meant asking the Indians for more weapons as well as taking up the American offer of military aid.⁴³ However the Tibetans were yet again disappointed by the Indian claim that it recognised Tibet being autonomous under the suzerainty of China. The Tibetan position was that the British government had only been willing to recognise Chinese suzerainty if the Chinese signed the 1914 Simla Agreement. As the Chinese government had not signed, the British had withdrawn their recognition of Chinese suzerainty. Therefore the Indians had at least a moral obligation to support the Tibetan government against the Chinese.⁴⁴

In 1950 the Tibetans also made an appeal to the United Nations which was sponsored by the delegation from El Salvador. The American position at this time was to support the request from El Salvador for the issue of China's "invasion" to be included on the General Assembly's agenda. Yet the American State Department at this time recognised that the United Nations could do little to make the Chinese withdraw or respect Tibet's autonomy. Rather the Americans saw the issue as an excuse for some useful propaganda "demonstrating the aggressive tendencies of the CPR Govt and falsity of the position which seeks to justify its action in Tibet by saying that imperialist powers threaten the country".⁴⁵ However the issue did not make it into discussions at the United Nations. On November 24 the issue was postponed due to the assertion by the Indian representative that discussions with the Chinese held out the chance of a peaceful settlement.⁴⁶ Exactly on what basis the Indian Representative made this claim is hard to establish. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs certainly held a different view of the chances of peaceful negotiation resulting in any settlement, especially as the Tibetans were refusing to talk to the Chinese at this time. The American Ambassador to New Delhi claimed that the Indian UN delegation based its views on part of the second note exchanged between Beijing and New Delhi. This read,

[t]he Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China welcomes the renewed declaration of the Indian Government that it has no political or

⁴³ 793B.00/9-1050. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, Sept. 10, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:494

⁴⁴ 793B.00/9-1050. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, Sept. 10, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:495.

⁴⁵ 320/11-1650. *The Secretary of State to the United States Mission at the United Nations*, Nov. 16, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:577.

⁴⁶ 793B.00/11-2550. Telegram from Secretary of State to Embassy in India, Nov. 28, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:583-4.

territorial ambitions in China's Tibet and that it does not seek any new privileged position. As long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principle of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality, and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way, and that problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial, and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefit through normal diplomatic channels.⁴⁷

Where in this statement Rau had found the Chinese willing to settle the Tibetan issue peacefully is hard to say. It is possible that he was aware of some diplomatic negotiations with the Chinese that the Indians did not care to make public. Indeed at the United Nations, as elsewhere, the Indians were showing clear signs of being willing to do a deal with the Chinese over the heads of the Tibetans. The Chinese were, at least theoretically, offering the Indians a chance of normal relations. They clearly indicated they had no intention of pursuing territorial claims over India. The Chinese government was not expressing the need for revolution in India or the possibility of any future Chinese "Liberation" of Indian soil. Yet the price of Chinese moderation was a clear indication by the Indians that Tibet was part of China.

Towards the end of 1950 the American government suddenly woke up to the fact that the Tibetan administration might collapse at any moment. They cabled their embassy in New Delhi to ask about the chances of India supporting the Tibetans at the UN and their reaction to "quiet US support of more positive measures designed to stiffen Tibetan resistance" which in this case probably meant covert military aid.⁴⁸ However the Indians were not inclined to back either British or American moves to help the Tibetans and in any event regarded military resistance as pointless.⁴⁹ Furthermore they were concerned that their interference in what China considered an important matter of national sovereign rights would alienate the Chinese government and prevent the Indians playing a constructive role in ending the Korean war. The hapless Tibetans were reduced to playing second fiddle to a futile Indian effort to end the Korean conflict.

In early 1951 the Tibetans gave in to Chinese pressure and sent a delegation to Beijing to negotiate with the Chinese government. This delegation eventually signed

⁴⁷ Ling 1968, 18.

⁴⁸ 793B.00/12-1450. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, Dec. 14, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:602.

⁴⁹ 793B.00/12-1850. *The Ambassador in India to Secretary of State*, Dec. 18, 1950. FRUS 1950, 6:603.

the Seventeen Point Agreement which led to the peaceful incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic of China. It has been a frequent claim in the modern literature on Tibet that the delegation did not have any power to sign the Agreement and hence that it was invalid from the start.⁵⁰ The counter-argument is that if it did not have such powers, there was no reason to send the delegation at all. The general position in modern international law is that a delegation is assumed to have the power to sign an agreement unless they make it clear that they do not.⁵¹ The Tibetan claim is supported to some degree by the American State Department documents. On March 29th, 1951, the Austrian Heinrich Harrer visited the American ambassador to India as an unofficial representative of the Dalai Lama. Among other things Harrer claimed that the Dalai Lama had not given the delegation any plenipotentiary powers.⁵²

The Dalai Lama, however, has since claimed that the leader of the Tibetan delegation, Ngabo Ngawang Jigme asked for the authority to negotiate terms with the Chinese and that the Dalai Lama, after consulting with the Cabinet and National Assembly, granted him the power he asked for.⁵³ Beginning on May 24th, 1951, the Americans held informal discussions in Calcutta with the Tibetan Foreign Secretary and Shakabpa, who claimed to be the Dalai Lama's personal representative. The main topic at these talks was what to do when discussions with the Chinese broke down, and included the control of Tibetan defence policy and of course autonomy. The Dalai Lama was willing to concede control of Inner Tibet's defence and external affairs to the Chinese. This offer is not as generous as it sounds as, of course, the Chinese were in full control of Qinghai and Xikang which, roughly speaking, made up Inner Tibet. However the Dalai Lama insisted on the Tibetans retaining control over Outer Tibet's defences (i.e. roughly what is now the TAR but without the western part of what used to be Xikang). Shakabpa also sought US assurances that the Dalai Lama would be given asylum in the United States if talks broke down and the Chinese invaded. This the US embassy officials would not grant. The American position at the time was that the Dalai Lama ought to seek asylum closer to home. This did not include India which both the Americans and the Tibetans thought would place too many controls over the Dalai Lama's ability to support resistance activities in Tibet.⁵⁴ The American

⁵⁰ MLMP 1997, 66-8. Smith 1996, 301.

⁵¹ McNair 1938, 61-6. O'Connell 1970, 210-4.

⁵² New Delhi Post Files: Lot 58 F 95. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Director of South Asian Affairs (Mathews)*, March 29, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1611.

⁵³ MLMP 1997, 62-66. Ngabo had been the commander in Chamdo when the PLA crossed into what they considered Xikang in 1950. He had been captured after a token battle.

⁵⁴ 793B.00/5-2951. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State*, May 29,

alternative was asylum in Sri Lanka. The Tibetans asserted that the delegation then negotiating the Seventeen Point Agreement did not have any powers to do so and all important points had to be referred back to the central authorities, then to the Dalai Lama in Yadong on the Indian border.⁵⁵ However by this time the Seventeen Point Agreement had already been signed in Beijing. The announcement of the agreement took place on May 26th, but it had been signed on May 23rd.

The agreement came as a disappointment to the Indians who had hoped for better terms. Moreover Bajpai, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs, claimed that he thought the delegation had full powers to negotiate such an agreement.⁵⁶ Whether or not they did, the British government consulted the Foreign Office Legal Adviser about the possible grounds for the Dalai Lama to repudiate the agreement. Their lawyers claimed that there were several grounds for repudiation but the Foreign Office preferred "(a) it was the result of duress, and (b) delegates exceeded their powers."⁵⁷ In later years these were, and are, precisely the grounds on which the Dalai Lama and his supporters have rejected the Seventeen Point agreement.

The agreement also seems to have come as a surprise to the Americans who clearly assumed that the Dalai Lama would renounce the terms straight away.⁵⁸ The Western experience with religious figures and Communists would not suggest there were a lot of grounds for agreement between them. The Americans would already have been aware of conflict between the Soviet-backed Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Catholic Church, not to mention the Soviet experience.⁵⁹ It does not

1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1687-91.

⁵⁵ 793B.00/5-2951. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State*, May 29, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1690.

⁵⁶ 693.93B/5-3151. *The Ambassador in India (Henderson) to the Secretary of State*, May 31, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1692.

⁵⁷ 793B.00/6-2951. *The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Gifford) to the Secretary of State*, June 29, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1722. The status of the law in case of duress is blurred by the distinction between duress applied to the delegates and duress applied to the State. The first probably did not happen given that Ngabo Ngawang Jigme worked for the Chinese for decades after signing the Seventeen Point Agreement without any sign of resentment. The second is no longer legal following the 1969 Vienna Treaty. Duress applied to a State was not illegal up to that point and virtually all the West's traditional diplomacy with China involved threats to China. See McNair 1938, 129 and Lauterpacht 1978, 273 for a legal discussion of duress.

⁵⁸ 793B.00/5-2951. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, June 2, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1695. The fact that the Tibetans did not discuss their plans with the Americans shows how one-way they thought the Priest-Patron relationship should be. It was America's job to support them, not the other way around.

⁵⁹ For a short discussion of the issue for Christians see Yule 1995, 106-7.

seem to have occurred to the American State Department that a prominent traditional religious figure could have found many aspects of Communism acceptable.⁶⁰ They do not seem to have had any knowledge of experiments in "Buddhist socialism" that were to be important in U Nu's Burma and Prince Sianouk's Cambodia.⁶¹ They were also shocked into providing higher levels of support than ever before. Acheson, the American Secretary of State, even said the United States government was "prepared to do everything feasible assist Tibet maintain autonomy" but noted the "high importance which position [the Government of India] bears re developments".⁶² Acheson was also prepared to supply small arms and other military items to the Tibetans as long as resistance within Tibet occurred.⁶³

That the Tibetans might have accepted the Seventeen Point Agreement did not seem to have occurred to the Americans and certainly Shakabpa initially gave them no indication whatsoever that the Dalai Lama would do anything other than reject it. This might be a reflection of Shakabpa's own extreme position, or it might have been a deliberate attempt by the Tibetans to see what concessions they could get out of the American government. If so the answer seems to have been very little. The Americans only detailed plans were for the Dalai Lama and his entourage to seek asylum outside Tibet and India. As the Americans were not willing for the Dalai Lama to come to the US, this meant some other, Buddhist, country. The first choice was Sri Lanka, but when that was rejected by the Tibetans, the Americans thought that Thailand might make a suitable refuge.⁶⁴ The Tibetans, or at least Shakabpa, spent some time considering this option but in the end rejected it. The three reasons they gave for considering Thailand an unsuitable refuge were (a) the unsettled condition of the Thai government, (b) the large Chinese minority in Thailand and (c) the fact that Thailand was geographically close to China.⁶⁵ That the Dalai Lama would reject the agreement was reinforced by the opinion of the Dalai Lama's brother Thubten Jigme Norbu (also known by his religious title Taktser Rimpoche) who stated quite categorically to the American Consul General in Calcutta that,

⁶⁰ Indeed the Dalai Lama describes himself as a Marxist Buddhist to this day.

⁶¹ Stange 1999, 212-7. Turnbull 1999, 280.

⁶² 793B.00/5-2951. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, June 2, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1695.

⁶³ 793B.00/5-2951. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, June 2, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1694.

⁶⁴ 793B.00/5-2951. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, June 20, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1712-3.

⁶⁵ 793B.00/7-1051. *The Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 10, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1735-1736.

- (1) Tibetan Government does not approve of Sino-Tibetan agreement and Dalai Lama "certainly" does not approve.
- (2) Likely Dalai Lama will issue statement disavowing agreement before arrival India of Chinese and Tibetan delegates.
- (3) Dalai Lama will definitely leave Tibet and although may not have time before arrival India of Chinese and Tibetan delegates, will do so before their arrival Tibet.
- (4) Dalai Lama would probably find it awkward to remain India in view of close relations between [the Government of India] and China and would prefer seek asylum in United States of America.⁶⁶

This attitude from the Tibetans appears to have been perfectly in line with what the Americans wanted to hear. It is by no means certain that it was in line with what the Tibetan administration actually believed. What the Americans were not prepared to do however was offer the Tibetans any substantive aid. The main point of discussions remained getting the Dalai Lama to Thailand rather than allowing him to come to the United States. Yet this was a message the Tibetans were either slow to grasp or perhaps thought was so important that they required clarification. The Tibetan regime continued to ask if the Dalai Lama would be welcomed into the United States and even whether the Indians would allow him to travel through India on his way to the US.⁶⁷ Eventually the Indians did tell the Americans that they would grant the Dalai Lama asylum and would allow him to pass through India on his way to the United States if "some unforeseen development shld make it undesirable for Dalai Lama remain India".⁶⁸ However they did not tell the Tibetans of either proposal. Indeed although they later told the Americans that they had informed the Tibetans of their willingness to provide asylum, transit to America and weapons, the Tibetans later claimed that they had not received any such message.⁶⁹ The Tibetans even expressed their opinion that the Indians were trying to discourage the Dalai Lama's plans to flee. It may well be that the Indians wanted to continue with the *status quo* and not encourage the Tibetans into any form of independence or resistance to the Chinese. Unfortunately the Tibetans were very restricted in their choice of friends and it is

⁶⁶ 793B.00/6-2651. *The Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, June 26, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1718.

⁶⁷ 793B.00/7-251. *The Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 2, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1726.

⁶⁸ 793B.00/7-1051. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State*, July 19, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1736.

⁶⁹ 793B.00/7-2251. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, Oct. 13, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1835-1836.

probable that the Indians were not particularly concerned for the well-being of Tibet or the Tibetans. The view that the Tibetans were forced to accept the Seventeen Point Agreement because of a lack of support from the Indians was certainly expressed by the Tibetans.⁷⁰ There does seem to be some evidence of perhaps overly-clever Indian diplomacy. When the Indians were asked about whether they had informed the Dalai Lama of their offer, the Indians blamed the trade agent at Yadong but said that they could no longer make the same offer as it might be interpreted as "encouraging the Dalai Lama to leave Tibet".⁷¹

The Americans were concerned that several Tibetan sources had told them that the only reason the Dalai Lama did not flee to India was because he was unsure about whether the Indians were prepared to grant him asylum or not. In a rather generous spirit the Americans put this down to a misunderstanding between the Indians and the Tibetans.⁷² Overall neither the Americans or the Indians responded with a great deal of enthusiasm to the idea of supporting Tibetan resistance. Given this low level of support, it is no wonder that the Dalai Lama chose to make a deal with the Chinese.

The Sino-Tibetan Seventeen Point Agreement also caused talks to be held between the British and Americans in India over forming a common front towards the Chinese actions. In discussions between the Americans and the British High Commissioner to India, the British expressed concerns about US guarantees to the Tibetans made without consulting the British or the Indians. The Americans at this time had not in fact promised the Tibetans much and the only promise they had made was to support the Dalai Lama publicly if he should reject the Seventeen Point Agreement. The British were mainly concerned about the impact of the American talks on the Indians and whether the Indians would regard them unfavourably.⁷³ This support did however eventually include supporting the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations, at least to the extent of providing visas for the Tibetan delegation so that they could go to the UN.⁷⁴ The Americans were also willing to support the Tibetan claim to *de facto* independence at the United Nations, although how far they would have

⁷⁰ 793B.00/7-2251. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India, Oct. 13, 1951.* FRUS 1951, 7:2:1835-1836.

⁷¹ 793B.00/10-3051. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State, Oct. 24, 1951.* FRUS 1951, 7:2:1838-1840.

⁷² 793B.00/10-3051. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State, Oct. 24, 1951.* FRUS 1951, 7:2:1838-1840.

⁷³ 793B.00/6-2751. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State, June 27, 1951.* FRUS 1951, 7:2:1719.

⁷⁴ 793B.00/6-2851. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State, June 28, 1951.* FRUS, 1951, 7:2:1721.

pushed this line in the face of inevitable opposition from the Chinese Nationalist government is hard to say.

8.6 The Tibetan Compromise

The first Western indications that the Dalai Lama might accept the Seventeen Point Agreement came in talks between the Americans and Shakabpa in Kalimpong in late June. The Tibetans had asked Shakabpa five questions about Indian and American support. The fourth such question was whether the Americans would continue to support the Tibetans in the event that the Dalai Lama should accept the Sino-Tibetan agreement. The sort of support the Tibetan administration had in mind was probably some sort of covert military aid to help the Tibetans resist the Chinese *after* they had accepted the Agreement. This can be seen from the other questions which included whether the Americans would provide aid for military resistance and whether such aid would be open or not.⁷⁵ What exactly the Tibetans had in mind is hard to say, but it is probable that they expected that the Chinese would come, the Lhasan administration would work with them while undermining their position and ultimately to drive them out. This is, roughly speaking, what the Tibetans had done with previous "allies" in the past including the Mongols in the eighteenth century. In any event these questions were followed up by the Tibetans agreeing to a Chinese delegation coming to Yadong to talk with the Dalai Lama.⁷⁶

The Americans appear to have been confused about what was going on in the Dalai Lama's administration. The lack of a consistent line caused them to cast about for some form of explanation. The Americans in India blamed the lack of any proper system of communication with the Dalai Lama who lived an isolated life and had to communicate with the Americans by runner. They also suggested that the Dalai Lama was under duress.⁷⁷ There is no evidence whatsoever that the Dalai Lama was under any form of pressure at this time, aside from the threat of war with China. In fact it looks as if the Tibetan position appeared to the Americans to waver because the Dalai Lama and his regime were not being entirely frank with the Americans and allowed them to believe that they were considerably more anti-Chinese than they in fact were.

⁷⁵ 793B.00/7-251. *The Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 2, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1726.

⁷⁶ 793B.00/7-351. *The Consul General at Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 3, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1728-1729.

⁷⁷ 793B.00/7-851. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Secretary of State*, July 8, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1733-1734.

American confusion about what was going on in the Tibetan government was so great that in early July 1951 they sent the Dalai Lama a letter clearly spelling out their position. Some parts of the letter shows that the Americans were unaware of the most basic positions of the Tibetans. In particular whether the Dalai Lama was considering making a deal with the Chinese and whether he and his advisers really understood what Communism meant. The Americans did not even know whether the Tibetan government agreed with the Seventeen Point Agreement or not, stating that they did not believe it had been signed with the permission of the Dalai Lama. The American government was willing to promise five things to help the Tibetans. First, if the Dalai Lama disavowed the Seventeen Point Agreement they would publicly support his position. Second, if the Tibetans appealed again to the United Nations the Americans would support their appeal. Third, if the Dalai Lama fled Tibet, the Americans would ask the governments of India, Thailand and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to provide asylum. Only if none of these were willing to accept the Dalai Lama would the Americans provide refuge. Later in 1951, however, the Americans specified that the number of people they were willing to accept was only 150, even though most of those fleeing would have been monks and other religious figures.⁷⁸ Fourth, the Americans promised that if the Dalai Lama left Tibet and organised some form of resistance to the Chinese, the Americans would provide light arms although they felt that the Tibetans should first ask the Indians for weapons and if they were not willing to provide any, ask whether they would allow a third country to use Indian territory to transport such weapons. Lastly the Americans were willing to allow the Dalai Lama's brother, the Taktser Rimpoche, to go to America.⁷⁹ The American response, while greater than anything the British were offering, was decidedly limited. It was significantly less than the Americans were to offer the South Korean government for instance. At this time the Americans had run down their Armed Forces and cut defence spending. By June 30 1946 the American Army manpower had fallen from over eight million men to just under 1.9 million. By 1950 the American government had just ten understrength Army divisions, two Marine divisions and eleven Regimental combat teams available.⁸⁰ There was little chance that the Americans would impose conscription and massively boost military spending for Tibet.

⁷⁸ As monks, they were unlikely to produce a large ethnic Tibetan community in America. 793B.00/10-651. *The Secretary of State to the Consulate General in Calcutta*, Oct. 12, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1831-1832.

⁷⁹ Enclosure to 793B.00/7-1151. *The Chargé in India (Steere) to the Department of State*, July 11, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1743.

⁸⁰ Weigley 1973, 368, 382.

The reluctance of the Americans to support the Dalai Lama's administration to the extent it needed, was apparent in the lack of any real commitment of American manpower or even serious amounts of material. If neither the Americans, nor the British nor the Indians would play the role of "patron" properly, then the Tibetan administration had few other choices. The Dalai Lama indicated a willingness to accept Chinese rule when he informed the Americans that he was going to return to Lhasa from Yadong.⁸¹ Unknown to the Americans at this time the Dalai Lama had consulted his Cabinet, the National Assembly and the State Oracle who had advised returning to Lhasa and doing a deal with the Chinese.⁸² This was not yet apparent even to the American Embassy staff in India who had finalised plans for the Dalai Lama and a small entourage to flee to India. The plans included smuggling the Dalai Lama out of Lhasa at night or sending Harrer and Patterson to meet the Dalai Lama at Yadong.⁸³ The Tibetans were still prepared to consider the Dalai Lama fleeing to the United States, but wanted more proof of American good will. In particular they asked for a signed letter with an official State Department letterhead. Strangely enough even this was refused by the Americans who feared that the Chinese might capture it and use it for propaganda purposes, or that the Tibetans might use it in negotiations with the Chinese in Lhasa.⁸⁴ If the Americans were not even willing to put down their support for the Dalai Lama on an official document, it is perhaps not hard to see why the Tibetans clearly doubted the good will or good intentions of the American government. The lack of any clear understanding on both sides could have been cleared up had the Americans had better communications with the Tibetans from an earlier date. The Dalai Lama's brother, the Taktser Rimpoche, only went to America in July of 1951. Only after arriving in the US did he produce a letter from the Dalai Lama naming him as the official representative of the Tibetan regime in America.⁸⁵

By September, 1951, the Americans had become resigned to the fact that the Tibetans were probably going to accept the Seventeen Point Agreement in some form or other. The Americans had thought that the Dalai Lama would try to renegotiate it once he returned to Lhasa. This is also the opinion of Van Walt van Praag who,

⁸¹ 793B.00/7-1451, *The Consul General in Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 14, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1751-1752.

⁸² Shakya 1999, 89-91. Smith 1996, 314-20. Dean Acheson claimed that the Dalai Lama had decided to do so by ballot - rolling two balls in a cup until one fell out. This is in fact a traditional Tibetan method of consulting the supernatural.

⁸³ 793B.00/7-1751, *The Consul General in Calcutta (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*, July 17, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1754-1755.

⁸⁴ 793B.00/8-1451. *The Chargé in India (Holmes) to the Secretary of State*, August 14, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1786-1787.

⁸⁵ 793B.00/8-1351. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1790-1791.

reporting a conversation with the Dalai Lama in 1984, claimed that the Dalai Lama had returned to Lhasa to obtain a better deal from the Chinese.⁸⁶ In actual fact there is no evidence that he ever intended to do so. If the Dalai Lama had wanted a better deal he could have negotiated in Yadong. The Chinese delegation travelled *via* India to Yadong to meet with the Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama. With Indian support the Dalai Lama might even have been able to renegotiate in India. These events are important for the effort that has gone into discrediting the Seventeen Point Agreement and undermining its legal status. Clearly if the Dalai Lama voluntarily accepted the Seventeen Point Agreement, regardless of whether the delegation that signed it had the power to do so or not, then it would become a legally binding agreement. Since 1959 the Dalai Lama and his supporters have had every reason to deny that the Dalai Lama ever accepted the Agreement. Indeed the Dalai Lama's personal legal adviser, van Walt van Praag, denies that the Dalai Lama did accept it. Van Walt van Praag claims that the Dalai Lama only returned to Lhasa to negotiate with the Chinese, after which he was held under duress.⁸⁷ Some other commentators have made even more extreme claims, including one that the Chinese "captured the Dalai Lama, with the help of a few bribed lamas, and brought him to Lhasa."⁸⁸

The Americans continued to believe that the Tibetan delegation sent to Beijing did not have the authority to sign the Seventeen Point Agreement and only did so under duress. They also continued to refer to Tibet's *de facto* autonomy rather than follow the British Indian line that Tibet had some legal right to independence if the Chinese did not respect Tibet's autonomy. They were most concerned about two factors: one was that the Chinese should not become established in Tibet by default without any sort of diplomatic protest; and, secondly, that the Tibetan issue should be used to show the Indians the supposed dangers of appeasing the Chinese Communists.⁸⁹ The American position on Chinese sovereignty was neatly side-stepped by the State Department as pressure on the Dalai Lama to renounce the Seventeen Point Agreement grew. They not only adopted, for the first time, the British position that they accepted Chinese *suzerainty* on the condition of Tibetan autonomy, but also

⁸⁶ Van Walt van Praag 1987, 149, 260n38.

⁸⁷ It is clear that the Chinese government wanted the willing support of Tibet's upper class. They were even willing to let people like the Taktser Rimpoche travel overseas. The Dalai Lama's family travelled to and from India quite a lot in the Fifties. The Dalai Lama himself went to India in 1956. The duress claim is a little dubious.

⁸⁸ Alexandrowicz 1953, 499.

⁸⁹ 693.93B/9-651. *Memorandum by the Deputy Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs (Perkins) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Mechant)*, Sept. 6, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1799-1780.

claimed that they believed that the Tibetan people should "enjoy rights of self-determination commensurate with autonomy Tibet has had many years."⁹⁰ There was a constant stress in the American documents on Tibetan *autonomy*, rather than independence. In many ways this was a rejection of the Tibetan position which was that the Tibetans had enjoyed *independence* for many years.

8.7 Confrontation or Containment

In the immediate post-war years the American government had a degree of choice about the policies it would follow towards the Communist nations. American foreign policy on China was thrown into turmoil at about this time because of the supposed security threat posed by several State Department employees. Two of the most important of these were the Director of the Office of Chinese Affairs, Oliver Edmund Clubb, and John Paton Davies who was then on the Policy Planning Staff. From June 27 1951 Davies and Clubb were suspended pending a hearing by the State Department Loyalty Security Board. Davies was cleared and returned, temporarily, to work. Clubb was found to be a security risk but on appeal was reinstated. He later resigned from government service. The cause of these and subsequent security hearings is hard to determine. Such acts should not be seen as isolated miscarriages of justice, but as an attempt to mobilise America for confrontation with the Communist world. Both the First and Second World Wars involved a suppression of dissent and civil liberties in the United Kingdom especially but also in the United States. In Britain, during both World Wars, under the Defence of the Realm Act the British government could indefinitely detain anyone deemed to be a security danger. One of the people responsible for this policy during World War II was Lord Denning, then a junior Queen's Council.⁹¹ In both wars the British and American governments had imposed the mass internment of "enemy aliens", in fact their own nationals who happened to be of foreign descent. If these policies had any practical purpose it was to deter dissent and intimidate anyone who might have opposed the war. In the same way members of the American government had turned on those people they saw as having taken a soft line on Communism in the first step towards more modern, less liberal, "total" politics.

⁹⁰ 793B.00/7-1251. *The Secretary of State to the Embassy in India*, July 12, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1748-1749.

⁹¹ Regulation 18B provided that "If the Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe any person to be of hostile origin or associations...and that by reason thereof it is necessary to exercise control over him, he may make an order against that person directing that he be detained." See Denning 1984, 229-30.

In 1950 American Secretary of State Dean Acheson introduced the concept of "total diplomacy" by which he meant that all Americans should work towards strengthening the United States and especially its policies overseas. According to this theory "a Senator or an editor or a businessman" was "just as much a Secretary of State as Acheson. He ought, then, to behave like a Secretary of State."⁹² In effect this was a call for the continuation of the unquestioning bipartisan policies of World War II in peacetime. It meant that where the Cold War was concerned Americans should behave just as they did during World War II. Ultimately the failure of Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee meant that the Cold War would not be fought with the same degree of ideological mobilisation as the Second World War had been. After the fall of Joseph McCarthy, at any time during the Cold War in America it was possible to dissent from American government policy without suffering any serious consequences.⁹³

There are several important signs that the struggle against Communism was never going to be as "total" as the struggle against the Fascists. In the late Forties and early Fifties America rejected Universal Military Service and hence the welfare state that should have gone with it.⁹⁴ In doing so the American government relied on nuclear weapons and so rejected the measures they would have needed to take to be a genuinely "modern" society. As Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Eisenhower proposed that the Americans keep ninety-six divisions and 9000 aircraft in Germany to keep out the Soviets. At the 1952 Lisbon meeting the NATO countries agreed to raise forty-three active and fifty reserve divisions.⁹⁵ This was rejected as unfeasible by the NATO governments, although there is no particular reason to think it was impossible. As President, Eisenhower supported the maintenance of twenty-six Allied divisions (twelve of them German), 1400 aircraft and 15,000 tactical nuclear weapons to keep the Soviets out of Western Europe. By way of contrast in World War II the Americans raised eighty-nine divisions and the British forty-eight. The Germans managed to find five hundred and twenty divisions.⁹⁶ In 1964 NATO

⁹² See *The Atlantic*, June 1950, 185:6:12

⁹³ Even in the extreme cases of the Hollywood Black List, many black listed film directors continued to work under pseudonyms. When Nixon later offered an apology for what Owen Lattimore had suffered, Lattimore claimed that *his* reputation did not need saving, but perhaps Nixon's did. As bad as this treatment was, it has to be compared with the treatment of Ding Ling or Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

⁹⁴ For the rejection of conscription see Weigley 1977, 369-70, 395.

⁹⁵ Miksche 1964, 231.

⁹⁶ Ellis 1990a, 529. The Soviet Union managed to raise well over 300. The number of Americans serving in the Armed Forces was not that much smaller than in the Soviet Union. But they went into far fewer units. The usual reason claimed for this is that

managed to find twenty four divisions while Poland and Czechoslovakia between them raised twenty eight.⁹⁷ Even Yugoslavia claimed to have thirty divisions. There is a stark difference between the sorts of forces an unpleasant, totalitarian country like Nazi Germany could maintain and those of a liberal democratic America, much less West Germany.

The new doctrine that the Americans were gradually forming was not based on confrontation with the Soviet Union, much less with lesser enemies like China. If the American government and people were not prepared to maintain the sorts of armed forces that could contain the Soviet Union without the use of nuclear weapons (much less conquer Russia), then the Americans needed some other policy. The person who formulated this doctrine was George Kennan starting with his famous "X" telegram later printed in *Foreign Affairs*.⁹⁸ Knowing Kennan's political beliefs, it is fairly easy to predict his views on military confrontation and issues like conscription. George Kennan was "born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and [was] deeply nostalgic for the America of the small community and 'white-washed fences'". He was a "life-long critic of the ills of modernity, as he saw them: uninformed and volatile democracy; self-indulgent and permissive society; rampant consumerism; vulgar and corrupting media; overdevelopment, urban decay, and the destruction of the environment; and the decline of communal values. In the 1930s he devised a scheme for a new form of élite, meritocratic, and hierarchic political system to replace mass democracy, and he would express similar views even in 1947."⁹⁹ In fairness to George Kennan it is unlikely he opposed democracy as such, rather he was uncomfortable with the sort of angry public mobilisation that is involved in much of modern politics. Traditionally, going back to Plato, when Western intellectuals have opposed democracy of this sort they have called it demagoguery. It is unlikely that Kennan would have opposed the sort of non-ideological politics found in British or American during the eighteenth century. Essentially Kennan remained opposed to the "total" politics needed for total warfare.

more men were needed to supply the American units in combat. There was no real need to use those fit for combat to load ships or drive trucks. In fact it looks as if the Americans drew up the Wedemeyer plan (200 divisions and over 8 million men in the army: see Weigley 316-7) based on the belief that Russia would collapse in 1941. When the Soviet Union did not fold, they called up 8 million men anyway. Only about a third of Americans serving in Europe even claimed to have seen any combat.

⁹⁷ Miksche 1964, 230. Even given NATO divisions were larger this is a grossly disproportionate effort. Moreover the Warsaw Pact conscripts paid a much higher price than NATO conscripts, much less professional soldiers. By all accounts they were kept in uniform longer, paid less and fed worse.

⁹⁸ See Kennan (1947) or Kennan (1984, 107-28).

⁹⁹ Gat 1998, 303.

There is no surprise in the fact that Kennan's views should have coincided so closely with those of Basil Liddell Hart in the post-war period.¹⁰⁰ "Containment", as put forward by Kennan, bore a remarkable similarity to Liddell-Hart's "Limited Liability" and even the 1939-40 policy of *stizkrieg*. Above all America would not try to conquer the Soviet Union and impose a new Western-style government.¹⁰¹ Indeed Kennan seriously proposed reducing American (and Russian) forces in Europe to a token force at best, allowing a unified, neutral Germany and replacing the majority of Western European Armies with citizen-based militias.¹⁰²

It is, therefore, the contemporary *culture* of the Western democracies above all else which determined their response to China's occupation of Tibet. A policy of confrontation with the Chinese would inevitably involve changes to American and British society. On a smaller scale this was shown in the Korean War. General Douglas MacArthur not only wanted to use nuclear weapons, but also to expand the war into China. He had properly understood the logic of Clausewitzian warfare which implied that victory demanded violence be taken to the extreme. The side that refrained from such extremism would inevitably lose. The Korean War had brought mass conscription back into American politics as well. In June 1951 the American Congress passed the Universal Military Training and Service Act which endorsed universal national service. However on April 11 1951 Truman had sacked MacArthur and appointed Matthew Ridgway. From that point on the Americans restricted their aims to regaining and then holding the 38th parallel. Once this limited war aim came to be shared by the Chinese, the Korean War quickly came to a halt. Both sides had scaled back their aims and settled on a compromise.¹⁰³ In the same way the Americans could hardly be expected to risk any real degree of confrontation with the Chinese Communists over Tibet. Aside from anything else, their Chinese Nationalist allies on Taiwan still strongly believed Tibet was part of China.

On July 2 1951 the British and Americans held talks in Washington to come up with a common policy position on Tibet. Inevitably this involved trying to pass the responsibility onto someone else. The British continued to indicate their withdrawal from the region by claiming their position would closely follow India's views. Both sides agreed that it was important to get Indian agreement to a common program.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Gat 1998, 295-300.

¹⁰¹ Oddly enough Kennan denied that it was possible for the West to do this, while also denying that Communism was all that popular in Russia, much less in Europe.

¹⁰² See Kennan (1958) and Kennan (1959).

¹⁰³ Weigley 1973, 383-98.

¹⁰⁴ 793B.00/7-251. *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Deputy Director of the*

This was more or less guaranteed by the geography of the region. If the Indians were unwilling to help the Western powers aid Tibet then it would be extremely hard to get supplies to the Tibetans.¹⁰⁵ The problem was that India was no more committed to mass mobilisation than either the United States or Britain. Nehru and many in the Congress Party were educated by the British and strongly influenced by British culture. The Congress Party was certainly interested in some degree of social reform and vague socialist agenda. However they did not try to change completely the social structure of Indian life, any more than the British tried to change their own social structure. Limited war aims would always play an important part in Indian politics as a result, even though India was neither an off-shore island or an isolated continent.¹⁰⁶ Yet the problems in Tibet indicate the limits of Containment as a policy. In the face of a sizeable power like China occupying a significant geographical space which provided it with much of the resources it needed, there was little the Western powers could do to affect the outcome using all the traditional means of blockade and peripheral operations. The only alternative was to mobilise on the scale of World War II all over again. Neither the Americans nor the British nor the Indians showed any real desire to do so.

Office of Chinese Affairs (Perkins), July 2, 1951. FRUS 1951, 7:2:1727-1728.

¹⁰⁵ The Americans did send small scale support to the Tibetans in planes flying from Thailand. See Knaus (1999, 153-7), Leary (1997-1998), Garver (1997, 167-84) and McCarthy (1997).

¹⁰⁶ That is, the geographical situation of India, like that of France, Germany, Russia and China, argues against limited government and a small army. India shares a lot of borders with a lot of potential enemies. Even a short period of weakness could be fatal for India.

Chapter Nine: The Indians Take Over, 1947-1959

9.1 Introduction

Following the withdrawal of the British from India in 1947 their position in Tibet was largely inherited by the new Indian and Pakistani governments. Unlike Pakistan, which quickly sought a peaceful border settlement with the Chinese, the Indians followed confrontational policies that in the end led to the 1962 Sino-Indian War. The source material for this period is rich on the Indian side. Not only has Nehru's collected writings been published in India, but following the 1962 defeat a large number of the Indian participants published their own versions of the events leading up to that war. That war is outside the time frame of this thesis. This chapter will be about the border disputes up to the flight of the Dalai Lama to India in 1959.

The 1913-14 Simla Convention contained three main features. The most important two are summed up by the phrase "Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty". The third feature was the border settlement between British India and Tibet. When the Chinese refused to sign the Simla Convention, or other agreement that the British would accept, the British government unilaterally took two steps. In 1921 Lord Curzon, then the British Foreign Secretary,¹ told the Chinese government that if they did not sign the British would thereafter regard the Tibetans as entirely autonomous under Chinese suzerainty.² And in 1936 the British Indian administration decided to annex what became known as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) up to the McMahon line although no practical steps were taken until 1943.³ That is, the British Indian administration decided to impose the Simla border on the Tibetans despite the lack of any formal agreement. The Tibetans, however, retained control over the monastery and town of Tawang.⁴ These actions were never formally accepted by any Chinese government even though no government had the power to prevent the

¹ Curzon had been forced to step down as Viceroy early because of the controversy over the Younghusband expedition. He was supposedly denied the chance to be Prime Minister because the Conservatives thought that the voters would not support such an aristocratic figure.

² F 1902/59/10. *The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston to Sir B. Alston (Peking), July 9, 1921, 7 pm.* DBFP 1966, 14:338-9. Richardson 1945, 28.

³ The many works of Alastair Lamb remain the basic starting point for discussing British policy in the NEFA. See also Nyman 1976, 160-8. J. P. Mills (1950), as the British official responsible for fixing the border in 1943, discusses the process.

⁴ Maxwell 1972, 44-52.

British administration from doing whatever it liked.⁵

9.2 India and the Chinese Nationalists

This state of affairs might have remained if the British had not left India in 1947 leaving the NEFA region under the control of the newly independent Indian government. Immediately the Tibetan administration in Lhasa wrote to the Indian government to ask for the return of those tracts of Indian territory in the NEFA region which were formally Tibetan. The Indian government, on the advice of the British representative in Lhasa, Hugh Richardson, refused. It was probably in order to avoid reopening the issue, rather for than the reasons stated by Hugh Richardson, that when the Tibetans suggested signing a treaty with the new Indian Government "they were dissuaded by the consideration that negotiations of that sort would have given an opportunity for renewed Chinese pressure on Tibet at a time when the Indian Government was not yet securely in the saddle."⁶ This was especially annoying to the Tibetans because in some parts of what would become India's North East Frontier Agency, Indian control had been imposed quite late. Tibetan officials were only removed from parts of Tawang in 1951. The Tibetans had protested but had, of course, been ignored.⁷

In 1948 the Chinese Nationalist government also signalled its rejection of the Simla Convention and the British actions in Tibet by asking for a renegotiation of the 1908 Trade agreement between China and Britain. In theory the Chinese government body responsible for administering Tibet was the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission. On July 5 1948 the Commission formally requested that the Chinese central government act to discontinue the special privileges the British had enjoyed in Tibet. According to the Commission, the British still maintained garrisons in the Chumbi Valley and at Gyangste.⁸ According to the more extreme group of British officials, the 1908 Agreement had been superseded by the Simla Convention and the Trade agreement struck between the Tibetan and British officials at Simla in 1913.

⁵ As, indeed, Mehra (1956, 18) points out.

⁶ Richardson 1962, 174. The person who did the dissuading was probably Richardson himself as the new Indian Trade Agent in Tibet. This was one the greatest missed opportunities for Tibet. The one thing that could have strengthened their international position and so their claim to independence was a written guarantee from another country. Richardson (1962, 175-6) later claimed that India should have given up their Treaty rights in 1947 which could have been done best through such a treaty. Richardson does not say what his advice in 1947 was. See also Yang 1987, 420.

⁷ See, for instance, SWJN, 20:161.

⁸ NYT, July 6, 1948, 10:5.

Like the Tibetan demand, the Nationalist demand was also refused by the Indian government. Indeed according to B. N. Mullik, the director of the Intelligence Bureau, the Indians insisted that the 1914 Simla Convention had superseded the 1908 Agreement. The Nationalists naturally objected to the claim but were in no position to do much about it as in 1948 they had no control over Tibet. The border region in question, as well as increasingly large parts of China, were no longer under Nationalist control as the Communists advanced.⁹ When the new Chinese Communist government was ready to enter Tibet in 1950, the Indian government had ample warning that neither the Nationalists nor the Tibetans were happy with the Simla Convention, and it was obvious that the Chinese Communists would reject it as well.

In 1948 the Indian government could have stuck with the old fashioned, legalistic, nineteenth century style of diplomacy. In principle the Indians did not have to hand over any territory that they had inherited from the British government. India was the legal successor to the British Indian administration and so had a perfect legal right to claim British India's borders. In international law borders are usually decided by the principle *uti possidetis* which states that the border of a newly independent state should follow the administrative boundaries of the former colonial power.¹⁰ The principle that new nations succeed to the borders of the old state they are replacing is just as valid in law. However the difficulty with the McMahon line was that neither the Chinese nor the Tibetan Government had ever formally agreed to it. Nor had the Chinese even passively acquiesced in the new border arrangement. All Chinese governments, Republican, warlord, Nationalist and Communist, have always claimed that the British had not informed them about the deal with the Tibetans at the time. Nor is there any evidence that the British Government ever did inform the Chinese Government about the deal.

This put the Indian government in a difficult position. On the one hand few governments ever willingly give up territory they control, on the other hand the Indians benefited from British imperialist bullying of Tibet and a weakened China. In the normal course of events Nehru's Congress party would be ideologically opposed to such past injustices, especially when other countries were the beneficiaries. The Indian Congress Party was, after all, a modern anti-colonial party that was ideologically opposed to the old style of international relations. The Indian decision to retain full control over the disputed border region was, however, never in doubt. Initially the

⁹ Mullik 1971, 59.

¹⁰ O'Connell 1970, 426-7. Assuming, of course, that the McMahon line was the legal administrative boundary.

Indians were prepared to go even further in following the former policies of the British administration. The implications of their communications with China seems to be that they wanted Tibet to remain a *de facto* independent state. The problem for the Indian government was to reconcile their anti-colonialist rhetoric with their heritage of imperial diplomacy.

9.3 India and the Chinese Communists

The Indian government's first response to the threat of "liberation" by the PLA was to deplore the use of violence by the Chinese and to urge a peaceful settlement with the Tibetans. This was also the advice they gave to a Tibetan delegation which visited India, urging them to accept a peaceful settlement that would preserve Tibetan autonomy.¹¹ Among the issues surrounding the Sino-Indian border, autonomy was the most important. In August 1950, Nehru admitted that the Indian government had recognised China's suzerainty over Tibet, and that he wished "Tibetan autonomy to continue under some kind of Chinese suzerainty."¹² The Indian desire for Tibetan autonomy was also made clear to K. M. Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador to China. Nehru said India should "aim at the autonomy of Tibet being recognised together with Chinese suzerainty."¹³ That is, from the start of their dealings with the new Chinese Communist government, the Indians tried to defend the autonomy provisions of the Simla settlement. The one exception was the concession of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. This was most likely as a result of the inexperience of the Indian government and the trivial difference between "sovereignty" and "suzerainty" in everything other than Tibetan history. However Nehru took a stronger public line against Chinese control of Tibet. On December 7, 1950, he told the Lower House of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha, that,

[i]t is not right for any country to talk about its sovereignty or suzerainty over an area outside its own immediate range. That is to say, since Tibet is not the same as China, it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that prevail and not any legal or constitutional arguments. That, I think, is a valid point. Whether the people of Tibet are strong enough to assert their rights or not is another matter. Whether we are strong enough or any other country is strong enough to see that this is done is also another matter. But it is a right

¹¹ Note to S. N. Haksar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 21 July 1951. SWJN, 16:2:647.

¹² To Krishna Menon, August 18 1950. SWJN, 15:1:429.

¹³ Cable to K. M. Panikkar, 19 August, 1950. SWJN, 15:1:431.

and proper thing to say and I can see no difficulty in saying to the Chinese Government that whether they have suzerainty or sovereignty over Tibet, surely, according to any principles, principles they proclaim and the principles I uphold, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else.¹⁴

These aims were certainly well intentioned, and reflected one possible application of the modern ideological style to the Tibetan problem. Nehru could have just as easily argued that the rights of *all* the people of *all* of China took precedent over those of the unrepresentative, feudal, serf-owning collaborators with British imperialism.¹⁵ It is not clear how seriously Nehru took these views himself. The peoples of Kashmir and Goa were also different from the majority of Indians, but Nehru had no intention of letting the peoples of those regions (or any other in India) have the final say about their political future.¹⁶ Indeed Nehru had shown himself to be adept at supporting whichever policy he felt suited his needs in these sorts of situations. At partition he had successfully persuaded the British not to allow the Indian Princely States (still theoretically independent countries) independence, but rather to force them to choose between India and Pakistan. When the Nizam of Hyderabad looked as if he would choose Pakistan, Nehru claimed the views of the majority Hindu population should be decisive. When the non-Muslim ruler of Kashmir chose India over the objections of most Muslim Kashmiris Nehru supported the ruler.¹⁷

Although Nehru might have contemplated the use of force by the Indians, the main methods by which he proposed to pressure the Chinese was international public opinion. If the Communists used force in Tibet it would reflect badly on the new China at a point when international opinion was shifting in China's favour.¹⁸ Even

¹⁴ The debate is reproduced in Sharma and Sharma 1996, 6:44-50.

¹⁵ As was fairly common among the Western left. When Hugh Richardson wrote articles about the plight of post-1950 Tibet, he did so in "reactionary" British papers such as the *Spectator* (4th May 1951, reproduced in Richardson 1998, 687-91). When the left-wing *Observer* published him (a decade later in 12 February 1961, reproduced in Richardson 1998, 699-701) it was only to talk about Tibetan refugees in India.

¹⁶ Indeed the history of Goa's "liberation" by India is similar to Tibet's by China. There was the same refusal of British and America to get involved, the same fruitless appeal to the UN, the same insistence on driving out imperialism. See Lawrence 1963, 171-185.

¹⁷ James 1997, 611-39. Collins and Lapierre, 1975, 180-4, 204-9, 345-58. For a critical view of the end of the Princely states see Lothian (1952). For a description of the fighting in Kashmir leading to the present partition line see Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, 1963, 79-80.

¹⁸ See, for instance, *To K. M. Panikkar. September 2 1950. New Delhi. SWJN,*

worse the use of force might hurt the efforts of the Indians to get the People's Republic of China into the United Nations. While it was possible that the Chinese Communist Party might have thought twice before offending world opinion, but international condemnation in bodies like the UN had been threatened before without any result.¹⁹ The Indians also pressed the need for a peaceful settlement on the Tibetan delegation which was sent to ask the Indians for support.²⁰ The Chinese government was entirely supportive of the goal of a peaceful settlement and welcomed the chance to reach an agreement with the Tibetan delegation which was still in New Delhi.²¹ What the Chinese Communist Party meant by a peaceful settlement was another matter however. As Clausewitz noted, those planning an offensive rarely wish to fight and usually prefer a swift and bloodless capitulation. It is the determination of the defence to resist that makes violence unavoidable.²²

9.4 The Chinese Threat

However the Chinese government was clearly less than satisfied with the behaviour of the Indian government. From the beginning the Chinese insisted on their goal of "liberating" Tibet, removing foreign influences from Chinese territory and defending China's borders. As the Chinese were now much stronger than they had been in the past these Chinese demands would define any peaceful settlement with the Tibetans. The Simla settlement was the previous basis of discussions between China and India and had been forced on a succession of weak Chinese governments unable to demand a larger say in the shaping of Tibetan policy. This settlement was the British policy of autonomy under the protection of the Indian administration, together with the McMahon line as the border. Once the Communists had come to power they were in a position to demand that the Indians consider their views. As the new regime put it, "Tibet is an integral part of the Chinese territory. The problem of Tibet is entirely the domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China. This is the firm policy of the Central People's Government."²³ As the only remaining major foreign influence in

15:1:432.

¹⁹ Dean Acheson (1969, 419-20) said that Nehru's sister made a similar suggestion about ending the Korean War. "If after taking their seats [at the UN] the Chinese should be unreasonable, world opinion would hold them responsible." The UN had condemned the Communists during the Civil War as well.

²⁰ *Record of a conversation with the Tibetan Delegation. New Delhi. 3 September 1950.* SWJN, 15:1:434-6.

²¹ See, for example, Smith 1996, 271-2.

²² Clausewitz 1989, 377.

²³ *Chinese Reply to Indian Note of October 28, 1950*, October 30 1950. Published in

Tibet was from the Indian Trade Agencies and the vast majority of Tibet bordered India, this seems to have been a threat aimed at the Indian government. When the Tibetan delegation remained in New Delhi rather than travel to China, the Chinese government blamed hostile foreign influences. In an editorial in the *People's Daily* (November 17), which could only reflect the public line the Chinese Communist Party wished to take, the Chinese government accused the British government of having,

deliberately delayed issuing transit visas for Hong Kong to the Lhasa delegation, making it impossible for them to come to Peking. According to reports from various sources, when the Lhasa delegation was loitering in India, the British High Commissioner Nye and other foreign imperialist elements used every effort to persuade the delegation not to come to any agreement with the Chinese People's Government. Then on the 12th August, when the Indian Government saw that the operations of the Chinese Government's forces to enter Tibet were about to begin, they informed the Chinese Government that the British Government had withdrawn its refusal to issue visas to the Tibetan delegation and that facilities for the departure of the delegation to Peking were available. But more than two months have passed and still "the stairs have been created but no one has come down". It is obvious that the delay of the Lhasa delegation in coming to Peking to carry on peaceful talks is the result of instigation and obstruction from foreign states who must bear the responsibility for obstructing and sabotaging the peaceful talks. It is only necessary for the local Tibetan authorities to strive to correct their former errors and abandon the erroneous position of relying on foreign influences to resist the entry of the people's liberation army and the Tibetan question can still be settled peacefully.²⁴

There might well have been an element of delay by the British and Indian governments, but on the whole it is more likely that the Tibetans were hoping the Chinese would come to New Delhi. This would mean that the Tibetans could negotiate a tripartite agreement with the support of the Indians instead of the British government. To seek a foreign patron had been the traditional strategy of the theocratic regime in Tibet since the days of the Third Dalai Lama. In 1950 the British had ceased to play that role and the Indians were not wholeheartedly prepared to take it on.

the *People's Daily*, November 17, 1950. Reproduced in QTRL (1959, 133) and Ling (1968, 13) with minor differences in translation. See also Feer 1953, 375.

²⁴ *People's Daily*. Editorial. November 17, 1950.

Privately Nehru was willing to admit that the Chinese had some grounds for their claims to Tibet. On November 1 1950, he wrote to the then Governor-General of India C. Rajagopalachari admitting that he, with K. P. S. Menon, had gone over the relevant papers dealing with Tibet and found that "[l]egally our position seems to be a weak one in regard to Tibet."²⁵ This was not a view entirely shared by the rest of the Indian political elite. On November 7, 1950 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Deputy Prime Minister on India, wrote a letter to Nehru which included a scathing attack on the Chinese government. In it Patel claimed to have gone over all the official papers between the Foreign Ministries of China and India and claimed that the Chinese officials and the Indian Ambassador to China, K. M. Panikkar, had misled the Indian Government. The Chinese actions in crossing into Chamdo (what the Chinese still referred to as the province of Xikang) were "little short of perfidy". In many of Patel's claims he simply restated many of the old British concerns about the border and the reliability of the border population. Patel claimed,

[w]e can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they [the Chinese Government] will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past. That throws into the melting pot all frontier and commercial settlements with Tibet on which we have been functioning and acting during the last half a century. China is no longer divided. It is united and strong. All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east we have on our side of the frontier a population ethnologically and culturally not different from Tibetans or Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with affinities to Tibetans or Chinese have all the elements of potential trouble between China and ourselves.²⁶

This is a remarkable document for several reason, but mostly for the claims of affinities between the populations on both sides of the border. If the Tibetans were not Chinese, as Nehru claimed, then it is not clear why they should have any affinities with the Chinese. It is even less obvious that the Tibetan populations on the Indian side of the border would have the slightest interest in supporting the Chinese Communists. Above all, Patel was also clear in stating that the border between China and India was undefined. Thus Indian claims that, for instance, "[s]o far as India was concerned, there was no border problem; her maps were clear and the boundaries were not subject

²⁵ To C. Rajagopalachari. *New Delhi. November 1 1950.* SWJN, 15:2:336-7.

²⁶ *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first Deputy Prime Minister of India, on Tibet.* ILT 1998, 5-11. Also reproduced in Sharma and Sharma (1996, 6:1-4).

to disputation" are simply not true.²⁷ This was a position put forward in public which sections of the Indian government knew was not the case.

9.5 The Indian Forward Policy

Like Patel, Nehru was under no illusion that the border with China was as yet defined. The first response of the Indian government was to set up the North and North-East Border Defence Committee (usually called the Himmatsinghji Committee after its chairman, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Major-General Himmatsinghji) to look at the problems of the border with China. In April 1951 the committee submitted its recommendations for the North East Frontier Agency, Sikkim, Bhutan and the Burmese border region. In September 1951 it submitted its recommendations for the North Western border region from Nepal to Ladakh. The main recommendation was to move Indian police posts (by then under the control of the Mullik's Intelligence Bureau) as far forward as possible right along the whole border. This meant right up to the Indian claim line even though the Committee recognised the border was undemarcated and that the Chinese were already in possession of parts of Aksai Chin in the west. There is also evidence that some members of the Indian government, notably the Intelligence chief Mullik, wanted the border much further inside Tibet. Mullik has since described pushing India's border to the Tsangpo river as having "much sense".²⁸ In Parliament on 28 February, 1952, Nehru was asked if there had been any progress in the "demarcation of the undefined border between India and China on the north-east and north-west." Nehru claimed that the McMahon line defined the border in the north-east, and that no problem concerning the north-west had reached him. He also claimed that "[a]ll these are high mountains. Nobody lives there. It is not very necessary to define these things."²⁹ This policy, inherited from the British, only made sense as long as the Indians were strong enough to impose their version of the border on the Chinese. The British traditionally did that by threatening the coastal cities of China proper. There does not seem to have been any serious thought within India about what the Indian Army could do this if the Chinese challenged the McMahon line. There does not even seem to have been any planning for this on the part of the Indian government.

²⁷ Satyapalan 1964, 377.

²⁸ Mullik 1972, 130. He actually said the Brahmaputra but presumably he meant to push the border forward into Tibet not move it back into India. The Tsangpo flows west to east through Tibet, to the south of Lhasa before looping around and flowing east to west through the NEFA. In India it is usually referred to as the Brahmaputra.

²⁹ SWJN, 17: 476-7.

On November 18, 1950, Nehru wrote a note outlining India's policy regarding Tibet and China.³⁰ In it Nehru admitted that in the past India had referred to China's sovereignty over Tibet, but claimed this was an error and suzerainty was to be used from now on. As policy decisions go this one was likely just to annoy the Chinese government. The Indian government had admitted it recognised China's sovereignty and that suzerainty was more or less the same thing. Such opinions may well have been binding in a legal sense and certainly carried a considerable moral impact. Nehru admitted that it was likely that China would take control of all of Tibet and remain a neighbour of India for some time to come. The Tibetans could not keep the Chinese out, no foreign power was in a position to do so, and India could not either. But India could "help in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy and at the same time [avoid] continuous tension and apprehension on [India's] frontiers." Exactly how India might help was not made clear other than by urging the Chinese to maintain Tibet's level of freedom. Anything more than this would almost certainly create the sort of tensions Nehru said he did not want. Nehru recognised that the Chinese government had promised autonomy, but that autonomy,

can obviously not be anything like the autonomy, verging on independence, which Tibet has enjoyed during the last forty years or so. But it is reasonable to assume from the very nature of Tibetan geography, terrain and climate, that a large measure of autonomy is almost inevitable. It may of course be that this autonomous Tibet is controlled by communist elements in Tibet. I imagine however that it is, on the whole, more likely that what will be attempted will be a pro-communist China administration rather than a communist one.³¹

It is clear that the Chinese were not going to let the Tibetans continue to be nearly independent. But Nehru grossly underestimated the impact of modern technology in overcoming geographical barriers to modern government. In the past this might well have been true, but with modern communications and transport it was not a valid point. Although the first nine years of joint Sino-Lama rule suggests that Nehru's views were sensible, this was only because the Chinese did not care to push the pace of reform. The only part of Nehru's note that is not firmly within the "Simla tradition" was that he also considered the possibility of a future world war. He discounted any large scale attack across the Himalayas, but admitted that infiltration was possible as was the "possibility of entering and taking possession of disputed territory, if there is no obstruction to this happening. We must therefore take all

³⁰ SWJN, 15:2:342-7.

³¹ SWJN, 15:2:342-7.

necessary precautions to prevent this." The major enemy, according to Nehru, was Pakistan and the cost of preparing for a full scale attack was prohibitive. Nehru wrote that,

[w]e cannot save Tibet, as we should have liked to do, and our very attempts to save it might well bring greater trouble to it. It would be unfair to Tibet for us to bring this trouble upon her without having the capacity to help her effectively. It may be possible, however, that we might be able to help Tibet to retain a large measure of her autonomy. That would be good for Tibet and good for India. As far as I can see, this can only be done on the diplomatic level and by avoidance of making the present tension between India and China worse.³²

During this period the Tibetan administration had stuck with their traditional policy of seeking foreign protectors. The Dalai Lama had written an appeal to the United Nations protesting about the Chinese government. Nehru refused to support this appeal, but said that if it did come up India ought to give its opinion. This was not full support for the appeal because it included a demand for independence. Tibetan independence remained outside the terms of the Simla settlement, but Nehru did not express it that way. As Nehru put it "[w]e may say that whatever might have been acknowledged in the past about China's sovereignty or suzerainty, recent events have deprived China of the right to claim that. There may be some moral basis for this argument. But it will not take us or Tibet very far. It will only hasten the downfall of Tibet. No outsider will be able to help her and China, suspicious and apprehensive of these tactics, will make sure of much speedier and fuller possession of Tibet than she might otherwise have done. We shall thus not only fail in our endeavour but at the same time have a really hostile China on our doorstep." Perhaps the best way of describing this policy is appeasement. There was no reason to think that softly spoken advice from the Indians was going to help the Tibetans one way or the other. Nor was this policy a particularly good way of backing down and saving India's prestige if that is what Nehru intended.

With one part of the Simla Settlement, Tibetan autonomy, seemingly in place, the Indians were free to concentrate on the border settlement. The first solution to the border issue tried by the Indians was to pressure the Chinese into agreeing to the new border which the Chinese government quietly resisted. In April 1952, Nehru wrote to the Indian Ambassador, K. M. Panikkar, saying,

³² SWJN, 15:2:346.

[w]e are surprised to learn of Chou En-lai's apparent reluctance to discuss general problem of our interest in Tibet. It was Chou En-lai who suggested, in September last, that this problem, as also boundary between India and Tibet, was one for discussion and settlement. We expressed readiness for this and subsequently you gave note to the Chinese Government defining our interests in Tibet. Chou En-lai's present excuse that the Chinese have been in Tibet only for a short time and have not yet studied problem thoroughly does not carry conviction.³³

The implication of this statement seems to be that the new Chinese government had clearly indicated its belief that the border was unsettled and needed to be negotiated. At the same time Nehru was clearly concerned about the border issue. When Panikkar reported his conversations with Zhou on June 14, 1952, Nehru noticed that Zhou had not raised the issue of the border with India. The day after getting Panikkar's report, he wrote back that it was "rather odd" Zhou had not referred "at all to our Frontier" and pointed out that "we attach more importance to this than to other matters."³⁴ Panikkar's response indicated that he thought Zhou's silence indicated acceptance of the McMahon line. Furthermore he recommended that the Indians insist that the border was defined and hence that there was nothing to discuss. Nehru, on the 18th June, 1952, accepted this view and agreed not to raise the border with the Chinese government. Yet Nehru wavered. On 25 July, 1952 Nehru wrote to Menon, the Indian Foreign Secretary,

I am inclined to think that in our future talks or notes about Tibet, we should mention the frontier. I appreciate the reasons which Panikkar advanced, and it is because of these reasons that we have not brought up this subject. But I am beginning to feel that our attempt at being clever might overreach itself. I think it is better to be absolutely straight and frank.³⁵

However by 29 July, Nehru had reverted to the Panikkar position of not discussing the border alignment with the Chinese.³⁶ Therefore it is clear that the Indian government was well aware of the fact that the Chinese government had not accepted the McMahon line as the legal border between China and India. The Indians seemed to

³³ *Cable to K. M. Panikkar, 12 April, 1952. SWJN, 18:471.*

³⁴ *Cable to K. M. Panikkar, 16 June, 1952. SWJN, 18:474.*

³⁵ *Note to Foreign Secretary on the Truce Talks, 25 July, 1952. SWJN, 19:585.*

³⁶ *Note to Foreign Secretary and K. M. Panikkar, 29 July, 1952. SWJN, 19:651.*

be hoping that the Chinese would come to accept the border through continued usage and not consider it worth a dispute with India. Nehru spelled out his policy towards the end of 1952 by writing, "[i]n regard to this entire frontier we have to maintain an attitude of firmness. Indeed there is nothing to discuss there and we have made that previously clear to the Chinese Government. [...] The old McMahon Line is considered to be our frontier and we shall adhere to it."³⁷ In fact, as Nehru was probably perfectly aware, this had explicitly not been made clear to the Chinese government and only the Indian government considered it to be the frontier.³⁸

The Indian policy of claiming that the McMahon line was their border while refusing to raise the issue with the Chinese was maintained in public at all times by Nehru. Addressing concerns about China's views in Parliament, Nehru claimed that the McMahon line "is our border and will continue to be so. There is no dispute with any other country over this, nor are we about to raise any problem. Therefore it makes no sense for these doubts to be voiced."³⁹ As late as 30 August 1952, in internal documents, Nehru admitted that there was a problem with the border and that it would be best to wait until a larger settlement was reached with the Chinese.⁴⁰ Thus on 1 September 1952, Nehru wrote to Zhou Enlai concerning some minor points and suggesting that the Indians and Chinese reach a final settlement that would deal with all the outstanding issue together.⁴¹ In late 1953 an Indian delegation went to Beijing to negotiate an agreement with the Chinese government. At the same time, in answer to questions in India's Parliament, Nehru was still denying there was any dispute with China over the border. In fact he went further than that and also denied that the Indians were going to discuss the border with the Chinese.⁴² In a note dealing with the Beijing conference dated 3 December 1953, Nehru spoke of the proposed points to be dealt with at the Conference. Point One was the Indian border with Tibet. Nehru's response was to continue the policy of not raising the issue with the Chinese. He went on to say "If the Chinese raise it, we should express our surprise and point out that this is a settled issue. Further that during the last two years or so, when reference was frequently made about Indo-Chinese or Indo-Tibetan problems, there has never been

³⁷ *Cable to N. Raghavan, 10 December 1952.* SWJN, 20:489.

³⁸ There were certainly British authors who doubted the border was defined such as Henze (1953, 172) and Hopkinson (1950, 228).

³⁹ SWJN, 25:391.

⁴⁰ See SWJN, 23:484.

⁴¹ This settlement became the *Agreement between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse Between Tibet Region of China[sic] and India*. Mehra 1979-80, 2:165-8. Zhou Enlai had been writing to Nehru asking for such a settlement for some time. See Maxwell 1972, 69-71.

⁴² SWJN 24:578.

any reference to this frontier issue and it is surprising that this should be brought up now. Our delegation cannot discuss it." In response to Panikkar's suggestion that the Indians ought to walk out of the talks if the Chinese raised the issue, Nehru said the Indians ought to avoid walking out unless the Chinese "insist[ed] on taking up this question."⁴³

As it turned out during the negotiations for the 1954 "India-China Agreement on Trade and Intercourse Between the Tibet Region of China and India" the Chinese did not raise the issue of the border directly. They did however do so indirectly. The text of the agreement says "Traders and pilgrims of both countries may travel by the following passes and routes: (1) Shipki La Pass, (2) Mana Pass, (3) Niti Pass, (4) Kungri Bingri Pass, (5) Darma Pass, and (6) Lipu Lekh Pass."⁴⁴ The original Chinese proposal was that China would agree "to open the following passes [...] for entry and exit by pilgrims." This implied that all these passes were within Chinese territory and not, as the Indians claimed, on the border itself. The Indians were later to claim that the choice of words recognised that the border ran along the named passes.⁴⁵ There is nothing in the Agreement as such that would specify that was in the minds of the negotiators, although perhaps the Indians did intend to create a legally binding precedent by the clever choice of words. The Chinese also carefully chose their words with regard to the Simla Convention as well. Under the terms of the Simla Convention, India had inherited several Trade Agencies from the British. No Chinese government had accepted that these were legal. Under Article I Section II, the 1954 Agreement allowed India to *establish* these Trade Agencies rather than continuing to possess them.

The Indian government has been strongly criticised for not including a specific reference to Tibetan autonomy in this agreement. It has even been claimed that the agreement marked the end of the Curzon policy of only recognising Chinese suzerainty only as long as the Chinese recognised Tibetan autonomy. Nehru had already admitted there was no legal distinction between suzerainty and sovereignty and the Chinese had promised to protect Tibetan autonomy. It might be argued that the agreement did in fact implicitly recognise a special status for Tibet, perhaps even Tibetan autonomy under Chinese sovereignty, given that the agreement specifically refers to the "Tibet region of China" and not just to "China". While it did make some concessions to China it was still clearly within the Simla tradition.

⁴³ *Note to the Secretary General. 3 December 1953. SWJN, 24:598-9.*

⁴⁴ SDIPR, 1:461.

⁴⁵ WP, 1:10. See also Fisher, Rose and Huttenback 1963, 84-5.

9.6 The End of Autonomous Tibet

In 1954 the Dalai Lama visited Beijing and agreed, in theory, to the establishment of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (the PCART). This committee was formally inaugurated on 22 April 1956 and was made up of ten (originally fifteen) representatives of the Dalai Lama's administration, seventeen (originally eleven) people chosen from the larger monasteries, the other sects, from among socially prominent people, and public bodies, ten from the Panchen Lama's own administration and ten from the Chamdo Liberation Committee. Of its fifty-one members all but five were Tibetan.⁴⁶ The purpose of the committee was to examine ways in which reforms would be extended to Tibet. Up to this point Tibet had been given an extraordinary degree of autonomy with virtually no interference in the economy. Among other things this meant that virtually nothing had been done to change the status of Tibet's serfs. The Chinese government was now going to bring Tibet into line with the rest of China by persuading the Tibetan government to carry out "democratic reforms". The work of the committee was greatly resented by the Dalai Lama who claimed that the Chinese had a built-in majority. Even if the Panchen Lama's delegates and the Chamdo Liberation Committee always voted with the Chinese, the Chinese only had a majority if the Dalai Lama could not control the other Tibetan delegates. In fact the Dalai Lama singled out the Panchen Lama's delegates as particularly difficult, even more so than the Chamdo Liberation Committee.⁴⁷ Although the Dalai Lama portrayed them both as puppets of the Chinese, there are probably more traditional reasons for the attitude of the Panchen Lama. Rather than just being a puppet of the Chinese, he and his officials represented a different, but still Tibetan, view of the place of the Dalai Lama in the world. More specifically they refused to accept he was the supreme head of Tibet's religious *and* political hierarchy. From 1911 to 1950, as the Dalai Lamas defended Lhasa's autonomy from Beijing, the Panchen Lamas defended Tashilhunpo's autonomy from Lhasa.⁴⁸ The response of the Dalai Lamas and their entourages was to downplay the role of the Panchen Lamas in Tibetan politics. Indeed as late as 1960 the Fourteenth Dalai Lama questioned the legitimacy of the Tenth Panchen Lama by claiming he had not "taken the examinations

⁴⁶ MLMP 1985, 133. Smith 1996, 381-4. Tsering 1999, 124-130. The figures are from Smith 1996. The total number of delegates does not add up to 51.

⁴⁷ MLMP 1985, 133.

⁴⁸ And so if anyone ought to feel aggrieved about the PCART it was the Panchen Lama and his entourage. Tashilhunpo's autonomy from Lhasa was being destroyed. The Chinese were going to follow a "modern" centralising policy which did not allow for autonomy in Shigatse.

to determine his status as a true incarnation."⁴⁹ The Chamdo Liberation Committee, being a Chinese creation but containing Tibetans from Kham with real grievances against the Lhasa regime, was far more "reasonable" because the Chinese were still committed to appeasing the Dalai Lama. Resistance to the Dalai Lama's claims to a unique political role in Tibet grew out of Tibetan tradition, not Chinese policy.

The other major event in 1956 was that shortly after the opening of the PCART the Dalai Lama travelled to India and asked Nehru for political asylum. The occasion was the Buddha Jayanti, the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's birth. The invitation to the Dalai Lama was sent by Nehru himself via the Maharajah of Sikkim. First, however, Nehru consulted the Dalai Lama's older brother Gyalo Thondup and W. D. Shakabpa, the former Tibetan minister. They said that it would be a tragedy for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet after arriving safely in India. According to Gyalo Thondup, Nehru promised political asylum to the Dalai Lama when he came.⁵⁰ However when the Dalai Lama did arrive and request permission to stay, Nehru held talks with Zhou Enlai. During these talks Zhou promised that reforms would not be made in Tibet over the objections of the Tibetans and that Chinese plans would be scaled back. In effect Zhou promised that the Chinese government would continue to respect the *status quo* of full Tibetan autonomy. This was good enough for Nehru who then refused to grant the Dalai Lama permission to stay and urged him to go back to Tibet and defend Tibetan autonomy. Although there is no evidence of an explicit promise, it is probable that Nehru promised Indian help if the Chinese government refused to respect Tibet's autonomy as the Indians defined it. That is, despite his public rhetoric, Nehru continued to follow the terms of the Simla settlement. Tibetan independence was out of the question, but then so was China treating Tibet like any other province of China. This was the last time that the Indians and Chinese would work together in an amicable manner. However while these talks probably did little damage to the relations between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese (the Chinese were determined to work with the Dalai Lama and were well aware of his past attempts to seek foreign intervention) they almost certainly did a great deal of damage to relations between China and India. Well over a decade later Zhou, in private, was still angered by the "arrogance" of Nehru.⁵¹ While part of this may have had something to do with his behaviour at the Bandung conference, this gratuitous interference in what the Chinese government had always called a internal Chinese matter must have been

⁴⁹ Pringsheim (1961, 75) citing comments made to T. V. Wylie in Mussoorie, India, April 1960.

⁵⁰ Craig 1998, 205.

⁵¹ Maxwell 1972, 279.

objectionable to the Communist Party leadership.

9.7 Border Clashes

As the purpose of the PCART became clearer, it must have gradually occurred to the Indians that Tibetan autonomy was not going to be anything like what they had hoped. Whatever the cause, in 1958 relations between the Indians and the Chinese began to break down ostensibly over border issues. There had been a large number of exchanges between the Indian and Chinese Governments over border incidents going back to just after the signing of the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse on April 29, 1954. On July 17 1954 the Chinese had protested about a group of thirty Indian border police crossing the Niti pass into unmistakably Chinese territory. After getting no response, the Chinese again complained about the incident on the 13th of August.⁵² The Indian response was to deny that the Indian soldiers, who were still camped to the south of Niti pass in territory that both India and China claimed, had crossed the Niti pass, and to complain about Tibetan (i.e. not Chinese) officials crossing into territory the Indians claimed.⁵³ Almost a year was to go by before the issue arose again and this time it was the Indians who objected to a party of Chinese soldiers who, according to the Indians, had "entered our territory without proper documents."⁵⁴ The Indians also said that the border was at Tunjun La (presumably, given the name, a mountain pass). The Chinese took almost two weeks to reply and in response to the claim that "our officials in the Tibetan region" had attempted to cross into Indian territory, denied that any Chinese personal had crossed the border "in the vicinity of the Niti Pass."⁵⁵ Presumably both the Indian and Chinese Governments were attempting to win the advantage of acquiescence (i.e. the legal doctrine that if a nation fails to protest about its rights when the Government concerned know they are being violated, that nation surrenders those rights). By insisting that the border ran through the pass the Indians probably hoped to claim that the Chinese accepted these passes as the border. By referring to "our Tibet" the Chinese presumably intended to make their sovereignty clear. Both Governments would have to protest violations of what they considered their border or would have to accept that passive acceptance was legally binding.

⁵² Note given by the Counsellor of China in India to the Ministry of External Affairs, 17 July, 1954. WP, 1:1. Note given by the Chinese Counsellor in India to the Ministry of External Affairs, 13 August 1954. WP, 1:2.

⁵³ Note given to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 27 August 1954. WP, 1:3.

⁵⁴ Note given to the Chinese Counsellor in India, 28 June 1955. WP, 1:4.

⁵⁵ Note given by the Chinese Counsellor in India to the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 11 July 1956. WP, 1:5.

The dispute between the two governments was not helped by problems in communication. This early in the dispute the Chinese and Indians were both concerned with the middle section of the disputed border which the Chinese referred to as Wu-Je and the Indians as Barahoti. Thus in response to Chinese claims about Indian soldiers at Wu-Je in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the Indians denied that they had any soldiers in the TAR and the nearest group was at Barahoti in Indian territory. However in August 1955 the Indians objected to the clear display of Chinese intentions in the region when a Tibetan official collected taxes from people whom the Indians called Indian herdsmen on the Hoti plain. By early 1956 the dispute had spread to another part of the middle section of the border in what the Indians claimed was the state of Uttar Pradesh. On May 2nd, the Indians objected to a group of Chinese soldiers patrolling in the region around Nilang on the 28th of April. The Indian Government was also taking a stronger line on the incidents. This time they said the region was "clearly within Indian territory and has always been in our possession."⁵⁶ It is possible that the Indian Government was not aware of any problem in this region until 1954. But when the Chinese made it clear that they had claims in this region, and intended to make them effective by taxing the local residents, the Indians went looking for other regions where the Chinese were crossing what India claimed as its border. It is also possible that the Indians, having signed a treaty with the Chinese, were determined to enforce what they considered to be a concession by the Chinese Government about the border. That is to say, they went looking for trouble along the border so that they could force the Chinese to accept a strict interpretation of the 1954 Agreement in India's favour. The Chinese response was to suggest, on June 8, 1956, that neither India nor China should send troops into the disputed area now that the snows had melted and it had become passable again. The Chinese Government did, however, insist that the region had always been part of Tibet. The Chinese proposed a joint investigation by representatives of both India and China to examine the evidence of historical ownership.⁵⁷ The Indians accepted the proposal for a joint investigation, but sent their soldiers back into the region anyway. The Indian response to Chinese protests was to bring up further allegations concerning Chinese troops on what the Indians called the Indian side of the Shipki La Pass. Again the Indians insisted that the 1954 Agreement named this as a border pass.⁵⁸ Sixteen days later the Indian Government made the first threats of military action over the border problem. The Indian protest said that,

⁵⁶ WP, 1:11.

⁵⁷ WP, 1:13-4.

⁵⁸ *Note Verbale given to the Chinese Charge d'Affairs in India 8 September 1956.* WP, 1:17.

[i]n view of the fact that Shipki La is clearly the border and is acknowledged as such in the Sino-Indian Agreement of 29th April 1954, the Government of India consider any crossing of this border pass by armed personnel as aggression which they will resist. Government of India have ordered their Border Security Force not to take any action for the present in repulsing this aggression and to await instructions which they hope the Central People's Government will issue immediately. Government of India have however directed their Border Security Force on no account to retire from their position or to permit Chinese personnel to go beyond where they are even if this involves a clash.

Government of India attach great importance to this matter and request immediate action by the Chinese Government. Otherwise there might be an unfortunate clash on our border which will have undesirable results.⁵⁹

By the standards of modern diplomacy this amounted a series of blunt threats with the double-edged instructions which would eventually become a typical feature of Nehru's diplomacy. The order to the Indian soldiers not to take action makes it look as if the Indians were trying to settle the issue peacefully, but the instruction not to retire and not to allow the Chinese to advance were in fact orders to use violence unless the Chinese immediately conceded. In the meantime the Indians were using the same approach to the disagreement about Wu-Je. On 3 October 1956, the Indians sent a note to the Chinese claiming that the dispute over Wu-Je was whether the region was south of the Tunjun Pass (and hence Indian) or north of it and hence Chinese. The Indians again asserted that the 1954 Agreement specified that the border ran along the named passes and so the confusion in the Chinese camp could only arise if the Chinese were unsure of where the pass was. According to the Indians Tunjun-La "is, and always has been, the Border Pass". At the same time the Indians backtracked on the issue of the joint investigation in a manner which could be called typical of the Indian Government by saying "[t]he Government of India feel that proper understanding of the actual situation is a basic preliminary to any joint investigation. It is for this reason that the Government of India have again considered it necessary to elucidate the position, for it is only on the basis of solid foundation such as this, that any joint Sino-Indian inspection survey party can be expected to arrive at correct conclusions as to the ownership of adjoining territory."⁶⁰ That is to say, the investigation was not going

⁵⁹ *Aide memoire given to the Chinese Charge d'Affairs in India, 24 September 1956.* WP 1:18-9.

⁶⁰ *Note given to the Chinese Charge d'Affairs in India. 3 October 1956.* WP 1:21.

to determine who owned the disputed territory but where the pass was and it could only do so if the Chinese accepted from the start that the Indian position was entirely correct. The Indians did, however, agree not to send troops into the region if the Chinese did not. On August 2, 1956, the Chinese Government officially protested about the entry of about twenty armed Indians into the Wu-Je region. A mere six days later the Indians insisted that they were a party of tax collectors carrying out "normal revenue settlement operations." who had been sent in response to China sending its officials into the region.⁶¹ In view of the fact that such activities carried an implicit claim to own the territory and, given the Indians knew the Chinese held different opinions, these seems a needlessly provocative actions.

The dispute continued to spread westwards as the Indians discovered Chinese activity in Aksai Chin. On July 2, 1958 the Indian objected to what they described as Chinese troops crossing into Indian territory to visit Khurnak Fort in the Ladakh region. The objection referred to "a conference of the representatives of the Kashmir State of India and the Tibet Region of China held in 1924".⁶² This suggests that, to the Indians, the "Tibet Region of China" implied some sort of autonomous state with the ability to conduct foreign relations.

9.8 The Road to Confrontation

The July 2 objection by China marked a watershed, because the first response of the Chinese was to object to the activities of the Tibetan exile community and their organisations in Kalimpong. The Chinese government objected to the "subversive and disruptive activities against China's Tibetan region carried out by the U.S. and Chiang Kai-shek clique in collusion with fugitive reactionaries from Tibet using India's Kalimpong as a base."⁶³ According to the Chinese, Zhou Enlai had already brought this subject up in his talks with Nehru and the Indian ambassador had been provided with what the Chinese considered objectionable material published in Kalimpong. The Chinese government named six individuals, Gyalodenju (presumably Gyalo Thondup, the Dalai Lama's second eldest brother), Shakapa (the long-serving Tibetan Minister W. D. Shakabpa), Losangjanzan (Lobsang Samten, the Dalai Lama's third eldest brother), Thubten Nobo (Thubten Jigme Norbu, the Dalai Lama's oldest brother), Alohrze (Alo Chondze, a leader of the *mimang tsongdu*, a Tibetan resistance group,

⁶¹ *Note handed to the Chinese Counsellor in India by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 8 August 1956.* WP, 1:24-5.

⁶² SDIFPAR, 1:474-5.

⁶³ SDIFPAR, 1:483-6.

before being exiled to India and then Australia. He later made his peace with the Chinese and returned to Tibet in 1981⁶⁴) and Lukaniona (Lukhangwa, the former Prime Minister of Tibet dismissed because of pressure from the Chinese). The speed with which this was delivered to the Indian government suggests that the Chinese had been prepared for some time but had refrained from objecting formally in the interests of good relations with India. The response to the specific claim about the supposed border incursion never came, but on August 2, the Chinese government formally protested about a party of Indian soldiers who had entered into the "Tibet Region of China". The same day the Indian government responded to the complaint about the Tibetan exiles. The Indian Government claimed to be "greatly surprised" by the allegations and claimed to have no evidence that the Americans or Guomindang were using Kalimpong as a base. The Indian government claimed it would never allow anyone to use India as a base for hostile actions against any foreign country. As for the six named Tibetans, the Indians assured the Chinese government that these men had been warned that if their activities hurt relations with China, the Indian government would "take the severest action against them." Yet the Indians claimed to have no evidence that these men had engaged in unfriendly activities and disclaimed any knowledge of the Tibetan organisations in Kalimpong which were supporting the resistance inside Tibet. The Indians also assured the Chinese that the border police had strict instructions to prevent the smuggling of arms and ammunition into Tibet.

All this sounded very moderate, but in fact much of it was not exactly true. In 1951 the Indian government had pressured Gyalo Thondup to stop his political activities in favour of Tibetan independence. Yet in 1952 Nehru had told B. N. Mullik that Pakistan and China were the two countries India "would have to confront". Furthermore Nehru hoped that the Tibetans "would never be subdued and, therefore, had advised us to befriend all the Tibetan refugees in India, help them in every way possible and maintain their morale."⁶⁵ By then both the American State Department and the CIA had liaison officers in Kalimpong. In October 1952 Mullik had been to see Gyalo Thondup personally and Mullik had apologised for the Indian government's earlier attitude. Gyalo was, Mullik said, free to do whatever he liked and so "from October 1952 onwards I was in constant contact with Indian Intelligence and Nehru simply turned a blind eye."⁶⁶ In 1954 Gyalo had set up the Committee for Social Welfare to promote resistance to Chinese control. There is no reason to think that these efforts had any immediate effect, but soon revolt broke out in the peripheral

⁶⁴ See his recollections in *Tibet: From 1951 To 1991* 1991, 176-181.

⁶⁵ Mullik 1972, 84-5.

⁶⁶ Craig 1998, 177.

regions of "greater Tibet". The Chinese government did not consider that most of Kham and Amdo were part of "Tibet" and so guarantees of Tibetan autonomy did not apply there. By 1955 the Chinese government was ready to pursue reforms in those ethnically Tibetan regions outside central Tibet. These reforms included establishing secular education, officially dividing the population into social "classes", recruiting potential cadres among the poor and socially outcast, limiting private enterprise and redistributing property, especially land. It was these policies, together with the attempted removal of the Khambas' guns and the promotion of "struggle meetings" that caused the Khambas to rebel.⁶⁷ Exactly how widespread and successful this revolt was is impossible to determine, but the rebels received outside support very quickly. By 1955 Gyalo Thondup was in touch with rebels from Amdo and by the end of 1956 with Gyadutsang, the nephew of Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang, one of the most important Khamba rebel leaders.⁶⁸ That the entire Indian government was unaware of these men and their activities is extremely unlikely. Indian Intelligence had set up an office in Kalimpong to keep an eye on the Tibetans. Nehru had approached the two co-founders of the Social Welfare Committee, Gyalo and Shakabpa, when he wanted to ask the Dalai Lama to visit India. In the summer of 1956 Gyalo Thondup, Thubten Jigme Norbu, Shakabpa and Gyadutsang chose six Khamba men on the recommendation of Gompo Tashi to receive training from the CIA in Saipan. There is no evidence that the Indian government or the Tibetans in exile had anything to do with the planning of the Khamba rebellion, but it is clear that the Indian government was knowingly supporting people who were planning and carrying out unfriendly activities against the Chinese government.⁶⁹ The Chinese government, too, seems to have been aware of this and it was probably this knowledge that made the Chinese take a stronger stand against what they saw as Indian incursions into Chinese territory, now that the Indians had formally objected.

By 1958 the People's Liberation Army had largely and (if many of the reports of the PLA's behaviour are true) brutally crushed the more open resistance in Amdo and Kham. Refugees had flooded into central Tibet with at least ten thousand in Lhasa itself. The large number of refugees does not seem to have caused the sort of food shortages that roughly the same number of PLA soldiers spread out over Tibet did in

⁶⁷ A "struggle meeting" was a mass rally at which the poor and oppressed were encouraged to denounce, beat and sometimes kill, their exploiters. Many of these exploiters were religious figures.

⁶⁸ A colourful description of the Tibetan Resistance is given in Andrugtsang (1973).

⁶⁹ On April 2, 1959, Nehru categorically denied in Parliament that any subversive activities were taking place in Kalimpong even though he must have been aware of what was going on. See Sharma and Sharma 1996, 6:68-75.

1951. It is possible that 1951 was a poor year, but it is also possible that the Lhasan government was happier to share its surplus with Tibetan refugees than with Chinese soldiers. Among these refugees were members of the resistance from Kham and Amdo, including Gompo Tashi Andrugtsang. In April of 1958 the unified resistance, under the banner of the Volunteer Fighters for Religious and Political Reform, set up its headquarters south of the Tsangpo river. The region was not particularly suited to Amdowas and Khambas who would stand out among the majority Central Tibetans, but it was near the Indian border and the supplies that the Indians and Americans could provide. In fact the main reason for the choice of this region seems to be the desire to establish a "liberated zone" running along the Indian border through which supplies could be sent to the Tibetans. The first weapons provided to the fighters were from the depots of what remained of Tibet's army. Units of the Tibetan army, which had still not been merged with the PLA, either went over to the resistance wholesale or surrendered their weapons without much of a struggle. By July 1958 the Tibetans were receiving American airdrops of arms as well as American radios.⁷⁰ Yet true guerilla warfare seemed to be beyond the Khambas. They even brought their animals with them which made spotting them from the air easy. The move to the Indian border, away from their homes, their relatives and the land they knew best, is perhaps a sign that even the Khambas needed a foreign patron. It is also clear that the Khambas and Amdowas continued to follow their traditional nomadic practices such as robbing from the peasants of Central Tibet.⁷¹ This growth in Tibetan resistance coincided with a stronger line taken by both China and India over the disputed boundary. On September 8 and 12 1958 the Chinese arrested two parties of Indian border troops who had been surveying the Xinjiang-Tibet highway in Aksai Chin.⁷² They were deported on October 22nd via the Karakoram Pass.

On 14 December 1958, Nehru wrote to Zhou Enlai formally bringing up the border dispute for the first time. In his letter Nehru asserted that no questions were raised about the border at the talks leading up to the 1954 Agreement and that the Indians "were under the impression that there were no border disputes between our respective countries."⁷³ This was a statement which Nehru knew was not strictly

⁷⁰ Knauss 1999, 153.

⁷¹ In fairness the Chinese Communists had done something similar during their Long March towards the Soviet border. Although Western supporters, such as McCarthy (1996), tend to blame Chinese dressed as Khambas for these crimes, there is no doubt that it was the work of genuine nomads. Andrugtsang (1973) makes it clear that on a number of occasions they had to shoot their own for this sort of behaviour.

⁷² WP, 1:28.

⁷³ SDIFPAR, 1:486.

speaking true. Nehru claimed that in talks with Zhou during his visit to India in 1956 Zhou had mentioned the McMahon line and said the alignment was generally speaking acceptable to China. Nehru went on to object to several recent Chinese maps which showed as Chinese large areas of territory that India claimed as Indian. In his response on the 23 January 1959, Zhou made clear what the Indian government had known for a long time, that the Chinese did not accept that their border with India had ever been formally delimited, or that there was any treaty or agreement which the Chinese government had signed which specified the boundary line. The Indian Government waited nearly two months before replying to Zhou's letter and did so with a blunt statement of the Indian position on the border question. On the 22nd March, Nehru wrote to Zhou expressing surprise that the Chinese thought the border had not been accepted by any Chinese Government. Nehru insisted that the "traditional frontier" followed the watershed of the Himalayas and had "the sanction of specific international agreements between the then Government of India and the Central Government of China."⁷⁴ By this Nehru probably meant the Simla Convention, as it referred to the "then" Government of India, rather than the 1954 Agreement. Nehru went on to insist that the McMahon line had been drawn at the Simla Conference, it had been agreed to by the Tibetans and the Chinese had not raised any objections to it. On the more difficult issue of the western sector, Nehru insisted that it too ran along well-defined geographical features including watersheds. Finally Nehru objected again to the publication of Chinese maps showing the Chinese claim line rather than the border the Indian Government claimed.

The potential for border conflict became more serious after the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in March 1959. This marked the definite end of Tibetan autonomy as the Simla Convention, the British government and then the Indian government had seen it. After completing his final set of theological examinations on March 7 1959, the Dalai Lama fled on March 27. The immediate reason was mass protest in Lhasa caused by rumours that the Chinese Government was going to kidnap the Dalai Lama and take him to Beijing. The Dalai Lama entered India on March 31. Initially he was denied access to the media by the Indian authorities which suggests even at this stage the Indian government had not given up on a settlement with China. In the meantime the Chinese and Indians exchanged a series of protests over each other's actions. On June 20th the Dalai Lama held his first press conference at Mussoorie in India. His statement accused the Chinese of causing immense suffering and inhumane treatment of Tibetans, of persecuting, deporting and executing innocent Tibetans and of having

⁷⁴ SDIFPAR, 1:504.

brought the Tibetans to "near annihilation."⁷⁵

It was probably this press conference that caused the Chinese to make the most serious accusation so far against the Indians on 23rd June. In this the Chinese claimed that the Indians had not only crossed the McMahon line in the North-East Frontier Agency but that they had also "entered into collusion with the local Tibetan rebel bandits to carry out illegal activities."⁷⁶ In fact the Chinese Government made this last accusation in one form or another, no less than four times in a one page document. There is not any particularly strong evidence that the Indians did in fact act in concert with the Tibetans. Yet there is clearly evidence that the Indian Intelligence Bureau was working with the Tibetans-in-exile as early as 1953 and the Indian forward posts were manned by paramilitary troops who came under the control of the Intelligence Bureau. There is, in short, no particular reason to think the claim is implausible. In fact it gives a coherence to Indian behaviour that no other explanation can. Shortly after the signing of the 1956 Agreement, after Mullik, the head of the Intelligence Bureau, had offered to help the Tibetans, the Indians began to object to the Chinese presence in territory the Chinese claimed as their own. This dispute was made worse at every stage by the behaviour of the Indian Government and Nehru in particular. Once the fighting in Kham had spread to Tibet proper and a large zone more or less controlled by the Tibetans was established on the Indian border, the Indian Government began to push their police posts forwards and order them to use force if necessary.

As it turned out the outbreak of fighting did not take place until 1962 and the Indians were soundly beaten.⁷⁷ However well before this the Indian Government had clearly decided that the Chinese People's Liberation Army would not fight or, if it did, it could not win. This is an unusual view to take given the very real strength of the Chinese forces. Even in 1950 the threat of the PLA probably had a decisive influence on the Indian Government acceptance of Chinese control over Tibet. In Korea the PLA had not exactly shone, but it had fought both the Americans and the British to a standstill and could claim at least a draw. It could be that the Indians had assumed that

⁷⁵ The Dalai Lama's first *pressrelease* was at Tezpur on April 18 1959. His second on April 22 at Mussoorie. See the text of these statements and a transcript of the press conference in Sharma and Sharma 1996, 5:95-109.

⁷⁶ *Note given to the Foreign Office of China to the Indian Counsellor in Peking*, 23 June 1959. WP, 1:34.

⁷⁷ There is a wealth of material on the 1962 War and it is to India's credit that so much comes from Indian participants. For example Bhargava (1964), Kaul (1967), Kaul (1979), Mullik (1971, 1972), Satyapalan (1964), Sen (1969), and Sinha (1961). There is a good summary in Carver 1980, 211-22. Maxwell (1979) provides a wealth of details. Galbraith (1969) also discusses the diplomatic side of the conflict.

the disputed regions were simply too harsh for effective fighting, even though the PLA had few problems operating in the region up to 1962.⁷⁸ This was more than the militaries of any previous Chinese Government had been able to do and it was something the Indian Army had not done or, perhaps, could do.⁷⁹ It is possible that the Indian Government expected to win the publicity battle and that international pressure would make the Chinese withdraw. If this was the case there was no reason for the Indian Government to think so. If the Chinese Communists were so easily swayed by foreign pressure they would not have won the Civil War and they would not have intervened in Korea.

Perhaps the most likely explanation is that the Indian government remained within the British tradition and simply did not expect the Chinese to do anything about the Indian provocation. If so, the Indians may have been working with the Tibetans in the expectation that they would rise up and drive the Chinese out. Back in 1950 Nehru had thought a repeat of the events of 1910 was likely. In 1910 the Chinese had sent soldiers to Lhasa and overthrown the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama had fled to India only to return, with British support, in 1912 after mass protests in Tibet. If the Indian government believed the sort of claims made by the Tibetan resistance of tens of thousands of Chinese dead, then they could easily have concluded that the Chinese would not remain in Lhasa for long. In that case the Indians were not pushing their border posts forward to provoke the Chinese, but to ensure that the Tibetans would not have any valid objection after they regained their (at least *de facto*) independence. Yet again the Tibetans had been sadly let down by their friends and allies.

⁷⁸ Francis Kingdon-Ward (1951, 256) certainly thought there was no military threat to NEFA due to the difficulty of terrain and lack of local supplies.

⁷⁹ It is possible that Nehru and the Indian Army absorbed much of the contempt the British had for the Chinese for not being a "martial race". For example Field Marshal Slim (1961, 47, 60-2, 68, 97-8, 118-9) blamed Chinese incompetence and weakness for just about everything, despite his claims he liked the Chinese (1961 46, 54).

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

10.1 Chinese Diplomacy

In terms of China's diplomatic history, the Communist Liberation may have marked a decisive turning point. It is certainly true that the Communists conducted a very different sort of diplomacy from the Nationalists or the Qing Government. It is unclear whether or not this change will persist, or whether China eventually will return to a more "normal" (i.e. Western) style of diplomacy. In terms of the Tibetan question there is a clear distinction between two sorts of modern Chinese diplomacy. The first concerns vital questions about China's territorial integrity. In 1950 the Communist Government was willing to risk confrontation with the Indians (and perhaps by extension with the West) over Tibet. The Chinese Government was determined to "liberate" Tibet no matter what the Indian Government said or thought. In 1950, in the face of the insistence of the Chinese to enter Tibet, the Indian Government did back down.

On the less pressing issue of borders, the Chinese were perfectly willing to compromise with the Indian Government, as they did with the Nepalese, Burmese, Pakistanis and even to a lesser extent, the Tibetans. In retrospect it is possible that the Indians interpreted this moderation as weakness and so the very reasonableness of the Chinese Government pushed the Indians into taking a harder line than was sensible. The cause of this sort of moderate Chinese behaviour probably derives from the Unequal Treaties and the period of Chinese humiliation from 1842 to 1949. Traditional Imperial Chinese Governments were certainly not adverse to making a whole range of unequal demands. Perhaps the best example is the demands of the Ming dynasty's Yongle Emperor for the Koreans to provide him with young girls for his household.¹ This demand was, and perhaps was intended to be, highly symbolic of Korea's lesser status. After 1948, in dealing with the Nepalese and Burmese, the Chinese Government repeatedly insisted that it would not use its greater size and power to impose an unjust border on their weaker neighbours. By any measure the Chinese behaved in a reasonable manner designed to match this intention.² The border the Chinese eventually agreed to with all their Himalayan neighbours (except India

¹ Clark 1998, 280-1, 291-3.

² For the Burmese example see Maxwell (1972, 221-4) and Smith (1991, 156-8). For Nepal see the highly coloured and rather critical Ray 1967, 835-7. For Pakistan see Burke (1964, 392-9) and Syed (1967, 799-804).

which still refuses to discuss the border issue) ran more or less along the old British frontier line. In some places, notably Burma, it even left regions that contained a majority ethnically Han population outside China.³

The exceptions to China's generally moderate policy demonstrate the other, more traditional, aspect of Chinese diplomacy. In theory, in traditional China, any state wishing to enter into diplomatic relations with China also had to enter into and support a particular world-view which placed China in the centre of the world.⁴ There is, perhaps, room to question how far even the Chinese believed in this world view, but there is no question that the theoretical basis of traditional Chinese diplomacy stressed the special nature of China and Chinese culture. To a large extent the deals over borders that modern China struck with its neighbours also stressed the special place and nature of China. All of these deals involved acceptance by the other states that the Chinese had been victims of imperialist aggression and hence the existing border needed to be renegotiated. In all cases where peaceful agreements could be reached, the new border was usually the old border with a few minor adjustments. In this way the Chinese could demonstrate not only the injustices of the past, but their benevolence in conceding territory to their weaker neighbours. In a way this was a continuation of the past in that it showed China as a unique victim of imperialism, even more so than the Indians, Burmese or Pakistanis. Of course it is likely that other countries found this assumption that they were somehow less victimised, or even net beneficiaries of Western imperialism, offensive. Certainly the two biggest powers to share a border with China, the Soviet Union and India, both rejected the idea that their borders were somehow the uniquely unacceptable product of imperialist aggression against China.

The missing element from the diplomacy of the Chinese Communist Party is the strong missionary purpose Revolution often provides. Indeed back in 1912 the British Chief of Staff had observed "[a]lthough [Chinese] activity on our frontier may have received a temporary check on account of the Revolution, history proves that succeeding a Revolution, as a rule, a period of national vigour and expansion follows."⁵ In the case of the French and Russian Revolutions it was certainly true that expansionist wars followed soon after.⁶ There is little evidence that the Chinese Communist Party ever intended to expand outside its borders. In the cases of North Korea and Vietnam, the Chinese did provide aid to help their neighbours "liberate"

³ Smith 1991, 38-9.

⁴ See Fairbank 1970, 1-19.

⁵ As quoted in Chapter 3 and in Woodman 1969, 147-8.

⁶ Although after the Soviet Union was defeated by the Poles in 1920 there was a fairly long period of peace in the West.

themselves. In both cases this also meant that Chinese soldiers fought in Korea and Vietnam.⁷ The Chinese Government also provided aid to the Thai and Burmese Communist Parties and even volunteers in Burma to fight the Burmese Government.⁸ Even granting all of this, the Chinese did not present a convincing example of a revolutionary transformation in aggressive diplomacy in either 1911 or 1949. It may be that this is largely because the People's Republic of China remained woefully underdeveloped and weak in comparison with the majority of other world powers. However it was certainly strong enough to have invaded some of its weaker neighbours if it had wanted to. The Burmese, for instance, could not have put up serious opposition to the People's Liberation Army.⁹ After all the Burmese government was not even able to remove the remnants of the Nationalist Army from the border region.

The Chinese Communist Party did, however, use the fervour of its revolutionary transformation to impose direct central rule on a whole range of areas which had previously escaped close administrative control. The Party extended its rule down into every village and every street all over China. Using land reform as a means of breaking village solidarity, the Chinese Communist Party formed groups of poor peasants into organisations that insured no-one could escape close and detailed control. All over northern China the war years provided an excuse for the Communists to exploit and take-over dozens of village organisations such as the Red Spears.¹⁰ Indeed the very existence and importance of the United Front to the Communists shows that there were significant numbers of Chinese, almost certainly amounting to an overwhelming majority, who rejected Communism as a political option. In this the Chinese Communist Party was merely following the path carved out by Western nations who have repeatedly over the years worked to co-opt, undermine or destroy autonomous institutions that might have challenged the power of the central authorities. If China had problems before 1911 it was not because of a lack of what these days is called "civil society", but because it had a wealth of institutions that resisted central control. To take the simplest example, mass conscription was a way of life in Europe despite the very vocal objections of a great many people when it was introduced. Even in 1807 Clausewitz himself had seen French conscripts taken away in chains.¹¹ There was simply no way that the Qing dynasty could have introduced

⁷ Hsü 1995, 795-6.

⁸ Smith 1991, 250-1, 350. Trager 1968, 1051-2.

⁹ Frank Trager (1968, 1034) called the Sino-Burmese border "unprotectable and undemarcated".

¹⁰ See Perry (1980) for a discussion of this process.

¹¹ Van Creveld 1999, 245.

mass conscription because of lack of popular support for the idea, a shortage of administrators and the weakness of central authority over Chinese society. Even the Nationalists were reduced to desperate measures simply because they lacked detailed administrative control over their population.¹² Yet by the time of the Great Leap Forward the Chinese Communist Party was prepared to abolish the nuclear family and replace it with creches and communal feeding halls.¹³ While there is little evidence of hostility to family life in Chinese history there is a long and distinguished history of opposition to it in Western thought from Sparta to the early Christian Church to the modern commune. Even in the Old Testament, not only did God command that Jews kill anyone who suggested worshipping an alien god (mentioning specifically brothers, sons, daughters, wives and friends), but when Moses saw Aaron had made a golden calf, he told the Levites to "pass to and fro through the middle of camp, from gate to gate, killing your own brothers, your own friends, your own neighbours".¹⁴ The Roman Republic produced many morally "improving" stories of those who chose their public duty over their family. At the time of the French Revolution, the French exploited these stories for propaganda purposes. Perhaps the best example is the story of the three sons of Horatius. The three challenged their enemies to produce three champions and so avoid general warfare. All but one died. On returning home and finding his sister, Camilla, mourning one of the enemy, he killed her in a patriotic rage.¹⁵ This is in decided contrast to the Confucian tradition which may encourage nepotism, but certainly does not encourage denouncing family members to the state. The clear and strong pressures to choose Party over family in Communist countries is firmly within this Western tradition.

The 1962 Indo-Chinese War shows the perils of trying to follow a forward foreign policy with a limited liberal democratic government. On the face of it there was no real reason for the Indians to be beaten. They did have a problem with the geography of the North-East Frontier Agency. The Chinese held the higher ground and could more conveniently acclimatise their soldiers. In 1962 Indian soldiers were rushed up to the border and suffered from the altitude. There was of course no reason why the Indians could not have prepared their soldiers for such a clash prior to provoking the Chinese attack. India and China are both similar countries in many ways. They have large populations, but little modern industry. Both sides lacked the high technology for complex weapon systems. The physical resources available to

¹² Fairbank (1994, 289-93) discusses the problem but it is perhaps unfair to suggest he would come to the same conclusion.

¹³ Hsü 1995, 656-7.

¹⁴ See Deuteronomy 13:6-11 and Exodus 32:26-29.

¹⁵ Schama 1989, 30, 172-3.

both militaries suggested a more closely fought war. The real advantage the Chinese had was an intellectual one. In 1962 the Chinese demonstrated the advantages of adopting a more extreme, modern and totalitarian ideology. Even though the Indian soldiers fought with great bravery, they were badly let down by their government which had done little to prepare. Once again the adoption of an aggressive, modern ideology proved better suited to modern conflict than the liberal nineteenth century values of English society.

From 1839 to 1962 the technological and military gap between the West and China had grown. While the weapons the Qing armies were using in 1839 were behind those of the West, by 1945 there was a much larger gap between the People's Liberation Army and the aircraft carriers, intercontinental bombers and nuclear weapons of the United States. Yet the Chinese managed to win a draw in Korea against the United States army. The difference in performance in 1839 and 1950 simply cannot be explained through technology alone. In the 1950s the Chinese government was entirely adequate to the cynicism, efficiency, brutality, and bloody-mindedness that is required to win a modern war.¹⁶ Even assuming that the accusations of Chinese brutality towards the Tibetan population are exaggerated, the suppressing of the Khamba revolt shows the competence of the People's Liberation Army.¹⁷ Thus when Nehru and the Indian government finally decided to remove the People's Liberation Army from positions it held in territory which the Chinese government considered Chinese, there was simply no question but that the Indian Army was going to be defeated. India had (and has) a much better human rights record, is more respectful of India's civil society, and is generally a limited, moderate liberal democracy. If these values translated into military effectiveness, then it is surprising that the Indian army did not perform as well as the People's Liberation Army.¹⁸ If on the other hand the basic assumption of this thesis is correct and modern total warfare demands a modern totalitarian ideology then there is no surprise at all. When two nations of roughly the same size, level of economic and technological development clash, military victory goes to the more ruthless. This is a decidedly unhappy conclusion, but it seems unavoidable in the circumstance.

¹⁶ With apologies to Paul Fussell (1989, 7).

¹⁷ There is extensive discussion of the PLA's alleged behaviour in QTRL (1959) *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic* (n.d.) and *Tibet: Human Rights and the Rule of Law* (1997).

¹⁸ There are extensive discussions of the fighting in Maxwell (1972, 311-454) and in Carver (1980).

10.2 Tibetan Diplomacy

The alternative to the Chinese Communist Party's "solution" (i.e adopting a repressive totalitarian ideological model) can be seen in the case of the Lhasan administration.¹⁹ There was a period in the early Twenties when the Tibetan administration took the first steps towards a modern government. The Lhasan government did its best to destroy any alternative to the central government such as the Panchen Lama's administration in Shigatse. With British help they began to build a modern military force. In the end the cost to Tibet's traditional religious structure was too great and the reforms were soon wound back. Instead the Tibetans relied on their traditional policy of looking for a powerful friend from outside Tibet to maintain the religious authorities in Tibet itself. The first supporters of the Yellow Hat sect, the Mongols, were not particularly good patrons by any objective standard. They looted religious sites and they would not go home afterwards. The Manchus were considerably better as supporters of the Buddhist religious establishment, but also in creating Tibet's system of administration. Perhaps, despite the objections of modern scholars, the Manchus were the best patrons the Tibetan establishment ever had. The British might have been better patron still, as those British officials in Tibet clearly wished to be. But by 1947 they had gone from the region and were no longer interested. The Indians and Americans both did not, and perhaps could not, play the role the Tibetans wanted. Only in the Fifties and Sixties, with some CIA support, did the Dalai Lama's administration even attempt to free Tibet through the efforts of Tibetans alone. This too failed when American support vanished. Under Chinese pressure, even the Nepalese, who had provided bases along the Tibetan border, turned against the Tibetan Resistance groups. There can be no doubt that the reason for the Tibetan failure is the difficulty in reconciling traditional Buddhist teachings with the degree of mobilisation and violence needed to support a successful guerrilla campaign.²⁰ Indeed guerrilla warfare has largely been the preserve of Communists and near-Communists such as Algeria's FLN. This is probably a good thing for Tibetans as individuals, but it has not helped Tibet as a country or Tibetans as a whole at all. In the modern world it is simply not enough to rely on the support of the powerful to protect you against your enemies. On the other hand the price that China has paid for

¹⁹ And the contrast between traditional Tibet and the modern USSR is clear even in popular works like Byron (1933).

²⁰ The traditionalist Catholics of Spain and Brittany had some success against the French Revolution, but Napoleon was not brought down by these groups. The Irish did win independence without being Marxists. In the face of governments determined enough to do whatever is necessary to win, the only religious-based groups to win a guerrilla war are the Muslims of Afghanistan and Lebanon.

adopting Communism has been very high.

10.3 The Western Diplomatic Tradition

The period leading up to the 1962 War displayed an interesting feature of Indian diplomacy - the reliance on the British experience. Even though India, as a non-aligned post-colonial country, could be expected to have forged new relations with its neighbours and the world, in fact the first decade of Indian independence showed a clear British influence. In Tibet this should not be surprising given that the Indians had also inherited British personnel such as Hugh Richardson. Indian policy towards Tibet did not differ from that of the British to any great extent. Just as the British had wanted Tibet to remain autonomous under Chinese suzerainty, the Indians declined to support either Tibetan independence or the integration of Tibet into China. Just as the British offered diplomatic and military support to the Tibetans, the Indians helped the Tibetans appeal to the United Nations and provided limited amounts of weapons and training to the Tibetan army.

The noticeable "exceptional" influence of the British on the Indians is in the diplomatic culture the Indians had inherited. There is a strong tradition of "hard" treaty interpretation by Westerners such as the British and Dutch when dealing with Asian countries. In Britain's history of diplomatic relations with Asian countries, the British have traditionally argued that their treaties favour them to an extent that would be unusual in Europe. A typical example of this would be the British claim that the granting of the right to levy taxes in Bengal amounted to a transfer of sovereignty by the Mughal Court. It certainly could also be argued that the history of British interpretations of the Unequal Treaties reflects a contempt for the Chinese and their rights and that they would not have tried to argue a similar case in Europe. The point should not be exaggerated, but there is no doubt that a strong degree of racism has been important in the West's traditional diplomacy. The period between 1911 and 1959 is one in which that tradition became no longer openly acceptable. The attempts by the Western powers to build alliances with colonial minorities in World War I and with independent countries in the post-World War II world meant that open expressions of racism have all but vanished from public discourse. However a real transformation did not happen fast enough to save the British empire. No non-European colonial population has chosen to retain any significant links to the British empire. The Indians also adopted this culture of diplomatic bullying to dealing with the Chinese. The Indian Government's position that the border with China was defined by culture and tradition reflects a state of mind inconsistent with any serious peaceful

diplomacy. The total disregard the Indian Government displayed towards the risk of war with the Chinese is also typical of the British tradition, in the British case often founded on a contempt of the Chinese military. If this view was in the minds of India's rulers then it is clear that the Indians had retained this view well past the days of its usefulness.

Although the British were clearly a powerful influence on the Indians in formulating their policy towards Tibet, the Americans were probably a bigger influence overall. Even though it is a common place of modern writing on diplomacy that the Americans are a "Have" *status quo* power, their history does not reflect this opinion. Like the French and the Soviets, the Americans are heirs to a powerful Revolutionary tradition. Also like the French and Soviet Revolutions, that tradition asserts a universal message applicable to all people. According to the Declaration of Independence, all men are created equal and have inalienable rights. While the Americans might not have applied it at home to blacks and Native Americans, it contains a strong universal claim. Originally this revolutionary message was directed at regions ruled by the British Government, but it applied no less to other European countries. In the early days of American independence, the Americans also tried to apply it to people outside the United States. The Americans tried repeatedly to "liberate" the Canadians, for example and in the immediate aftermath of the revolution greatly expanded their borders. The Canadians just as stubbornly refused to be liberated and the British Army was sufficiently powerful to prevent the Americans from succeeding.²¹ Of course the Founding Fathers did not intend this message to apply to non-Whites and the Declaration of Independence was largely written and signed by slave owners. The Revolutionary tradition is clear in the way American fight their wars. The usual American insistence on total victory, on unconditional surrender and on the ideological differences between them and their enemies are all typical of the modern revolutionary tradition.

In a sense America has at least two diplomatic traditions. The major one is still a message of revolutionary liberation deriving from the origins of the United States in opposition to British oppression. The minor one is a more realistic tradition that did not differ to any great extent from other Western imperial powers. The first tradition has always provided a great deal of public rhetoric for American governments, especially where China is concerned. Yet it is this last tradition that the Americans have usually applied to non-Western countries. The various governments of the United States may have wanted to liberate the Canadians, but most of them wanted to

²¹ See Weigley 1977, 7-8.

take the land, and only the land, of the Native Americans and Mexicans.

In this way the American tradition differs from the British which usually applied idealistic policies to non-Western powers while dealing with other European powers in a more realistic manner. Thus the British went to war with the Qing Empire to bring it, the British often claimed, the benefits of free trade while going to war with the French and later Germans to preserve the balance of power in Europe. The Indian diplomatic tradition is clearly in the American mould. The Indians too were not happy with the *status quo* and wanted to present an ideological challenge to the dominant European powers of the time. The Indians called this policy non-alignment and again this presents analogies with American history. The first American Presidents asserted a very similar policy with, most famously, Washington warning the Americans to steer clear of entangling alliances with European powers.²² John Quincy Adams claimed the Americans did not need to, and should not try to, look overseas for monsters to slay.²³ In both cases there is a strong tradition of looking to international bodies such as the United Nations (which, together with its predecessor the League of Nations), was largely an American invention. One of the main features of modern revolutions is the moral certainty and outrage they inspire in their adherents. The fact that the Indians expressed similar policies to those of the Founding Fathers, but aimed them at the United States, probably explains the venom with which Americans such as Loy Henderson attacked the Indians for staying aloof in the Cold War.²⁴

The important change for the Western powers comes with the two World Wars. To the Western powers both of these conflicts were an ideological struggle between the good Western powers and the bad Axis countries. Both demanded the formulation of idealistic war aims. In both conflicts the British and American governments formed what might be called United Fronts that united as many people to the left of the Germans as possible. Unfortunately for the British the denunciations of German and Japanese racism also undermined the basis of the British Empire. This was most apparent to the British non-White soldiers who were told they were fighting against racism while being comprehensively discriminated against.²⁵ The need for a bigger picture to the war, to justify the sacrifices of the Allied populations, is a far greater influence on British and American diplomacy than any other intellectual feature of the period. In the same way the Cold War meant an Anglo-American United Front

²² Washington 1900, 28-39. Nearly a quarter of Washington's address is devoted to this one topic.

²³ In *The Federalist* Number 6. Quoted in McDougall 1997, 36.

²⁴ See Henderson's views throughout Brands (1991).

²⁵ Ellis 1990b, 329.

with almost any group to the right of the Communist Party. In Japan and Germany figures from the wartime governments of both countries were soon rehabilitated and returned to power. The American support for liberation struggles against the colonial powers soon ended and aid flowed to countries like France in their struggle to retain Indochina. In the same way liberal democracy for China was impossible as long as the Japanese were in Manchuria, the Soviets in Mongolia and the British in Tibet. National security took a higher place in Chinese political life than things like free speech. This was hardly unique to Chinese political life, being common right across Europe until 1945. If the Americans had not been able to rely on tactical nuclear weapons rather than conventional forces to keep the Soviets out of Western Europe, it might still be common across Europe to this day. Only under the shelter of a powerful nuclear umbrella or in the absence of a powerful military threat, can China hope to become a democratic state on Western lines.

The contrasting experiences of the Chinese and the Tibetans point to the real dilemma of the modernising process. To remain in the past may be comforting to a great many people. The sins of a traditionalist government like that of Lhasa are more likely to be those of omission rather than commission. That is to say, the Lhasan government did very little to make things better for most Tibetans, but by the same measure did very little to make things worse. The Chinese Communist government was far more activist and as a result not only introduced more widespread education, better health care and a degree of social mobility, but it also starved millions to death, crushed much of China's traditional culture and continues to imprison large numbers of people. Ideally a balance can be struck between the benefits of modernising compared to those of remaining in the past, except that the more "modern" nations have shown very little tolerance of "pre-modern" societies. The choice is essentially between following the French down the path of administrative centralisation and popular mobilisation or ending up like the Breton, the Tibetans - or worse, the Native Americans and Australian Aborigines.

Abbreviations

BDFA FCRFEA *British Documents on Foreign Affairs : reports and papers from the Foreign Office confidential print. Series E Asia, Further Correspondence Relating to Far Eastern Affairs.* Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America.

BFSP *British Foreign and State Papers.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

BPPC *British Parliamentary Papers: China.* Shannon, Ireland: Ireland University Press.

BIT *The British Invasion of Tibet: Colonel Younghusband, 1904.* 1999. London: The Stationery Office.

DSB *Department of State Bulletin.* Washington D.C.: Office of Public Communications, Bureau of Public Affairs.

DBFP *Documents on British Foreign Policy.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

FRUS *Foreign Relations of the United States.* Washington D.C.: U.S. General Printing Office.

ILT *Indian Leaders on Tibet.* 1998. Dharamsala: Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration.

MLMP See Bstan-dzin-rgya-mtsho

NYT *New York Times.* New York.

PRT *Papers Relating to Tibet and further papers.* Command Papers Nos. 1920, 2054, 2370. 1904-5. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office.

QTRL *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law.* 1959. Geneva: International Commission of Jurists.

SDIFPT *Select Documents of India's Foreign Policy and Relations, 1947-1972.* 1982. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

SWJN *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru.* New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.

TMTM *Tibet's March Toward Modernization.* 2001. Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

WP *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between the Governments of India and China, 1954-1959. White Paper.* 1959-63. New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

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