



རང་ཅོད་ RANGZEN

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FOCUS : *"Sino-Indian Border"*

The myth and politics of Sino-Indian border

Sino-Indian or Indo-Tibetan border ?

Tibet and Sino-Indian relations

*.....The security of the northern frontiers of
India lies in the re-establishment of an
independent Tibet ...*

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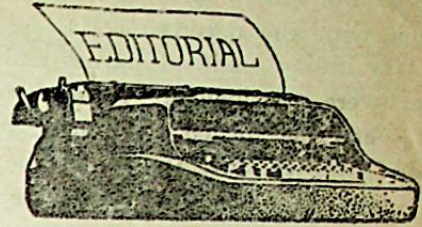
རྩོམ་སྒྲིག་ RANGZEN

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Over Twenty-six Years in Exile

Twenty-six years have elapsed since we unintentionally left our home-land and experienced refugee life in alien lands. The years passed by have not been without any achievement. Besides preservation and promotion of the rich Tibetan religious, cultural, traditional and linguistic ethos, the issue of Tibet was brought up three times in the agenda of the United Nations and member states were convinced by the legitimacy of the issue and passed resolutions in 1959, 1961 and 1965 condemning the People's Republic of China for committing racial and cultural genocide in Tibet.

Since then our struggle for Tibet's freedom has entered two phases. From early sixties until the death of Mao, the Tibetan Government-in-exile's policy was unmistakably guided by resolute opposition against the Chinese occupation of Tibet and ready to ask the Tibetan masses to lay down their lives for the restoration of Tibet's independence. In fact, many Tibetans specially those in Mustang, had volunteered to die for Tibet while openly fighting with the Chinese or committing nationalist activities. At that time all official pronouncements aired no less than the inspiration for Tibetan people to continue their struggle unabatedly for the

RANGZEN

(INDEPENDENCE)

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RANGZEN welcomes readers' comments on the format, content, style and other related matters. However, signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Tibetan Youth Congress.

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Political Aspirations of the Students of Eastern Turkestan

by Samphel

Under the dreary and disastrous rule of the warlords, a story became popular in China. Not far from Peking, there was an ancient temple, where grew a strange and rare plant. This plant flowered at long intervals and only then at the accession of a new emperor. Then it put forth a single bloom. When the empire fell, the plant flowered again, but became covered with a multitude of small flowers. This the people of Peking will tell you.

The monks were asked to explain this strange phenomenon. To the ordinary Chinese peasants, the down-trodden and the under-dogs, the monks said that the crowd of small flowers symbolized the rule of many, the people of China. To the rulers of faraway states straining under the weight of imperial misrule, the monks said that perhaps this miracle signified the break-up of the empire.

In the new Chinese communist imperial set-up, nowhere in this little parable more relevant or true than today when the nascent forces of democracy and independence are exerting an increasing pressure on a bloated political bureaucracy whose only legacy are decades of political chaos, economic mismanagement and cultural genocide.

Consider the case of Wei Jingsheng, the famous Chinese dissident. Wei is locked up in prison now but the example of his excep-

tional courage in challenging headlong the social system of the world's most populous nation will not be without its purpose. In December, 1978 Wei Jingsheng stuck on the Xidan Wall (the short-lived Democracy Wall) a small-character pester entitled "*Democracy: The Fifth Modernization*". Later he and his friends started *Exploration*, a mimeographed magazine pointing out the inadequacy of the present Chinese socialist social system and dwelling on the need for the introduction of more democratic institutions. The group used to meet at the home of Dikyí Phuntsog, an articulate Tibetan girl, reported to be the daughter of Baba Phuntsog Wangyal. The group was arrested in the spring of 1979, put on trial, found guilty and sentenced to an unspecified number of years of imprisonment. During the mock trial, Wei Jingsheng put up a spirited self-defense. The following are some extracts.

"A democratic system of government is the pre-requisite for our country's total modernization. This was the idea behind the title of my article *Democracy: the Fifth Modernization*; it was the central idea expounded in the same essay. First, the constitution grants citizens the right to criticise their leaders, because these leaders are not gods. It is only through criticism and supervision that those leaders will make fewer mistakes, and only in this way that the people will avoid the misfortune of

relaxation of the one-child family planning policy. Later in December 1985 the Ugyur students of Peking and Shanghai simultaneously held demonstrations in support of the four points. In Peking the demonstration was held, symbolically at Tienanmen, which is the Red Square to China's Moscow.

Sometime later a group emerged in Eastern Turkestan, calling itself the Committee of Ugyurs for Nuclear-free Movement in Xinjiang. They sent an anti-nuclear declaration to the foreign organizations based in Peking. The group wanted a stop to China's nuclear testing in Eastern Turkestan and removal of all its nuclear installations from the Lop Nor, a lake which is about 600 km south-east of Urumchi.

These acts are a demonstration of the degree of political consciousness of the

Ugyurs and the remarkable thing is that the Chinese authorities decided to settle the matter across the board. It is not that they chose to negotiate. Policies and their "open-door" image compelled them to do so.

People who have the good fortune of being brought up in societies having long traditions of democracy may miss the whole point of these recent demonstrations. But not by peple condemned to live in totalitarian societies where the slightest expression of dissent is enough to land one in prison. These people know that staging such open expression of dissent demand not only a great deal of political sophistication but courage.

Perhaps Tibetans on both sides of the Himalayas have something to learn from this. And they need to learn it fast.

Tibet is being Gobbled up

In early 1959, just after the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the people of India and specially the intellectuals, perhaps more realised the inevitable threat to the security of India's northern frontiers when Tibet was gobbled up by the Chinese. To illumine Indian masses more about this new threat, the Citizens Committee of Calcutta voluntarily sponsored first All India Tibet Convention in Calcutta and over one hundred members of the Committee representing from all works of life, elected a 15 - member prominent Indians as their office-bearers

with Sri Jayaprakash Narayan as the President of the Preparatory Committee and Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, an eminent historian as the Chairman. Then the first All India Convention on Tibet was held in the city on 30th and 31st May 1959 with an impressive rally on the last day.

In view of the continuous Chinese occupation of Tibet and the occasional Chinese provocations from Tibet along the Indo-Tibet border, the Chinese threat has become more menacing along the border. The

having their lords and masters ride roughshod over them."

However, this is an internal matter. It concerns only the Chinese. There are other people living within the present framework of the new Chinese communist empire who are careless about what China does or does not do as long as they themselves get their own independence. One such people are the Uygurs of Eastern Turkestan. They were in their heydays one of the most civilised and cultured people on the earth. The word about the commerce of their marketplace and the variety and quality of their goods spread as the Silk Road continued to operate as one of the eastern world's main commercial artery to Europe. Those were the days. Today it would be a surprise if people can correctly refer by name the homeland of the Uygurs. The Chinese have changed it to Xinjiang, which means the "new dominion", which itself indicates an act of occupation.

However, the Uygurs are no longer willing to take things lying down. Just as in the old ways when they put a price-tag on all their goods, so today they are realising that everything has a price, and they seem willing to pay that price.

Recently a short but significant appeal went out from the Turkic Muslims of Eastern Turkestan to the world Muslim youth. The appeal reads:

"Thousands of Turkic Muslim students, who are faced with the danger of total assimilation, elimination of their culture

and extermination of Islam have recently staged street demonstrations in the cities of Urumchi, Peking and Shanghai demanding,

Political self-rule,

Economic self-determination,

Democratic elections of Turkic Muslims to replace Chinese officials assigned by Peking,

An end to coercive family planning among the Turkic Muslims of Eastern Turkestan,

Increased support for Turkic Muslims, education at home and abroad,

An end to the practice of sending convicted Chinese criminals to Eastern Turkestan,

An end to nuclear testing in Eastern Turkestan.

We the Turkic Muslims living abroad implore you, our brothers in Islam, to support the just demands of the Turkic Muslim students of Eastern Turkestan".

The appeal was made on behalf of the Turkic Muslim youth by their compatriots in exile. In autumn 1985 the Ugyur students of Urumchi University staged a protest demonstration in the streets of the capital of their homeland. The students demanded the fulfilment of four points. They wanted a nuclear test ban in their homeland and the abrogation of an agreement which China signed which permits nuclear countries to dump and store radioactive material in Eastern Turkestan. The students also demanded increased political autonomy and the phased withdrawal of non-essential Chinese personnel and a