

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10th March Statement, 1966

It is now seven years since that historic day when the people of Tibet rose in spontaneous revolt against the tyranny and oppression of the Chinese Communist military occupation. Against fearful odds and in utter self-sacrifice, our people stood up as one against the might of their conquerors. Many died in the struggle and others suffered torture and humiliation before being killed. It is to the memory of these martyrs of Tibetan nationalism and the cause for which they have made their supreme sacrifice that we dedicate this day. Tibetans all over the world will remember this as a historic day and strengthen their firm determination that these noble patriots have not sacrificed their lives in vain.

Since the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese Communist in 1949, our people were reduced to the status of a subject race under the shackles of an alien conqueror bent on wiping every vestige of our national and cultural heritage. In flagrant violation of the truth the Chinese have tried to cover up their inhuman and brutal treatment of the Tibetan people under the names of 'liberation' and 'progress'. They have killed and tortured our people; they looted the ancient treasures of Tibet; they have deprived our people of even the smallest traces of fundamental freedom and have made the Tibetans into a second-class citizen existing only to serve the Chinese. In short the Tibetans have become the victims of Han imperialism. And yet the Chinese Communists have accused the Tibetans as fighting for the forces of reaction and resisting progress. The fact that the Tibetan people are firmly determined to forge ahead with the times, that we do not defend any archaic and unjust social system, and that we welcome progress from all quarters, are brushed aside. What we oppose are the imperial and colonial policies of the Chinese and their dogmatic assertion of greater Han nationalism and their Han chauvinistic attitude beyond the slightest trace of reason or justification.

The Chinese Communists, however, continue to camouflage their imperial policies behind empty slogans and impressive facades. Last year, for example, they have utilised the full force of their vast propaganda machinery to publicise the inauguration of Tibet as an Autonomous Region. This charade cannot, however, hide the fact that the so-called Autonomous Region of Tibet comprises only a part of Tibet and that other regions are carved into separate parts following the old imperial policy of 'divide and rule'. Nor can it be denied that one third of the members of the Council of the Autonomous Region of Tibet are Chinese and that Tibetan members are recruited mostly from what the Chinese themselves call the 'feudal landlord class'. Moreover, all key posts are in the hands of the Chinese and the Tibetan members exist only as a rubber-stamping apparatus. With the exception of a few quislings and opportunists the people of Tibet are united in their firm determination to build a free Tibet. The very Tibetans trained and educated by the Chinese to act as collaborators are among those in the foremost ranks of the national resistance front. The desire and determination of the Tibetan people to regain their national freedom cannot be overcome and the will of our people to be free will ultimately prevail over the forces of tyranny and oppression.

On behalf of those of our people who have given up their lives for freedom, those who heroically continue to resist the Chinese in Tibet and those in exile, I would like to thank the governments of El Salvador, Ireland, Malaysia, Malta, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Thailand for sponsoring the resolution calling for the immediate cessation of oppression and the restoration of fundamental freedom in Tibet at the General Assembly of the United Nations. I would also like to thank the governments who supported the resolution. In particular we are grateful to the government and people of India for their support and for their whole-hearted and warm sympathies to us, and for the large-scale programmes in rehabilitation and education of the Tibetan refugees.

To us Tibetans these are hard and tragic times. And it is only natural that we realise and feel in full anguish the sorrows of our brothers who are also victims of brutality and aggression. I fervently hope and offer my ardent prayers that peace may be restored in all the areas of conflict and that humane considerations will prevail over all forms of oppression, injustice and aggression. If mankind is to survive there is only the path of peaceful co-existence and this can be achieved through mutual understanding and respect for the rights of others.

The Dalai Lama
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