

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

10th March 1967

On this day, eight years ago, the people of Tibet rose in spontaneous uprising against the armed might of China in a heroic bid to free themselves from the mounting oppression and tyranny of the Chinese Communists. Unarmed men, women and children paraded in the streets of Lhasa calling for the restoration of Tibet's independence and the rights of the Tibetan people. In the brutal repression that followed, thousands of innocent Tibetans were massacred and countless others were imprisoned, tortured and killed or deported to forced labour camps. It is therefore fitting that while we solemnly dedicate this day to the memory of these martyrs of freedom we recall the cause for which they made their supreme sacrifice and strengthen our determination to reach the goals for which they gave up their lives.

The sixteen years of Communist Chinese armed occupation of Tibet is one long catalogue of untold miseries and sufferings. Farmers and herdsmen are deprived of the fruits of their labour. Large groups of Tibetans on a meagre ration are forced to construct military roads and fortifications for the Chinese. Countless numbers have been victims of 'public trials' and 'purging sessions' during which all manners of public humiliation and brutalities have been inflicted. The wealth of Tibet, accumulated over the long centuries, has been taken to China. There is a persistent campaign of 'Hanization' of the Tibetan population by forcing the Chinese language in place of Tibetan and by changing Tibetan names into Chinese. This is 'Tibetan Autonomy' in the Chinese Communist fashion.

Recent developments indicate that the reign of terror of Han Imperialism has, if anything, increased. The persecution of Buddhism and Tibetan culture has reached a new pitch of intensity with the advent of the so-called Cultural Revolution and its by-product, the Red Guard movement. Monasteries, temples and even private homes have been ransacked and all religious articles found have been destroyed. Among the countless number of images destroyed was one of Avalokitesvara built in the 7th century. Two severed and mutilated heads of this image have been secretly brought out of Tibet and recently exhibited to the Press in Delhi. This image has not only been deeply venerated throughout the centuries but also constitutes an important and irreplaceable historical monument of the Tibetan people, and its destruction is a great loss and a source of profound sorrow to all Tibetans. The recourse to such barbarous methods by frenzied mobs of immature school children let loose an orgy of senseless vandalism instigated by Mao Tse-Tung under the so-called 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' is a clear evidence of the depth to which the Chinese rulers have fallen in their efforts to wipe out all traces of Tibetan culture. Mankind and history will surely condemn the savage onslaught by the Chinese against the enslaved people of Tibet and against their cherished cultural heritage.

The Chinese have also started dropping their former proteges and collaborators. The Panchen Lama has long since come out in open rebellion. And now lives in disgrace after being subjected to brutal treatment by the Chinese. The Tibetan students carefully trained in China to 'act as the vanguard of a new army of Tibetan Communist cadres' have soon

realised the brutal treatment of their own people once they returned to Tibet and many of them have joined the foremost ranks of the national liberation front. Even the handful of prominent Tibetan collaborators who till now have proved to be faithful henchmen of Peking have been recently denounced and disgraced.

While we look with profound sorrow at the abject misery and suffering of our people in Tibet, we cannot but renew our firm determination to regain the freedom of our people. During the period of our exile in these past eight years we have made every effort to prepare ourselves for the day when we can return to a free Tibet. To this end we have drawn and promulgated a provisional constitution for Tibet based on the principles of justice, equality and democracy as laid down by Lord Buddha which was warmly received by all Tibetans, particularly by the elected representatives of the Tibetans in exile. We have also undertaken various programmes in the field of resettlement and education made possible by the keen sympathy and extensive assistance of the government of India. Indeed my people and I are deeply grateful to the government of India for all their assistance to us not only in rehabilitation and education but also in our cultural and religious programmes. We would also convey our grateful thanks to the various Indian and international organisations, which have given, help without stint to us Tibetans. We still need their support and we confidently hope that it will be forthcoming as before. We are also grateful to the government of India and the other governments who supported the cause of Tibet in the United Nations. However, in view of the flagrant denial of even the smallest trace of fundamental rights to our people by the Chinese for which the United Nations appealed more than once and in view of the mounting sufferings in Tibet, we believe that the time has come when we should ask the government of India for more positive support including political support.

We firmly believe that for the lasting peace of Asia and of the world the two great nations, India and China, should remain at peace. But we also believe that unless Tibet is restored her freedom and created into a demilitarized zone that peace will not be achieved. Above all we believe that with her important position in world affairs and the respect she enjoys in the world at large as the largest democracy and the constant champion of justice, peace and freedom, the mighty voice and support of India will hasten the day when the anguish of the people of Tibet will come to an end and freedom, dignity and peace restored to a long-suffering people.

The Dalai Lama
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