

## **Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10 March 1974**

Six million Tibetans lost the right to determine their destiny, tens of thousands fled homes and many more lost their lives in an era when scores of nations regained their freedom after a long period of colonial slavery. March 10, means all this and much more to us. Eighty-five thousand exiles are on this side of the mighty Himalayas and six million on the other, but the spirit of March 10, binds us as one proud nation.

What is the spirit of March 10? We say it is the cause of Tibet. But what is the cause of Tibet? Is it a struggle against a race, a nation and an ideology? Or is it an unreasonable struggle waged by a minority in exile for their own interests? It is none of these.

The cause of Tibet is the cause of the Tibetan people; it is the cause of six million people. It is the struggle of people to determine their own identity. Until they are satisfied, the struggle for Tibet will continue.

I believe in justice and truth, without which there would be no basis for human hope. I also believe in the right of every nation to struggle for its freedom, including Tibet and its neighbouring states that have fallen victim to Chinese aggression.

Although there are signs of liberalization in Lhasa itself and some border areas, this has in no way alleviated the suffering of the vast majority of the people. Refugees still report that the overall situation in Tibet continues to be very grave. Under such circumstances, is it any wonder that the younger generation see a contradiction between the "socialist paradise" of factories, roads, airfield, and the simultaneous starvation of their countrymen? These imposing monuments of "progress" have no meaning to the common Tibetan. They only serve to highlight the dissatisfaction among the Marxist-educated younger generation of Tibetans.

So long as the people of Tibet are in such dire hardships and discontented with their lot, we have a duty to speak and act on their behalf. It is an onerous duty but one which we will push through with a determination equal to — if not more than — what our brethren are displaying in Tibet.

The future of Tibet is not a gloomy one. The international situation is extremely fluid; great changes are taking place all over the world. A change will definitely take place in Tibet also. Moreover, truth and justice are on our side. We have hope and we have the necessary determination — these are what ultimately count.

The Dalai Lama  
10 March 1974