

## **Commercial Agreement presumably signed between the Russian and the Chinese in 1902.**

*As a result of the forward policy of the British, a Commercial Agreement has presumably been signed between the Russian and the Chinese in 1902. This treaty which is not acknowledged by many could have been the starter for the events of 1903-04.*

The main articles run as follows:

Article 1: Tibet being a country situated between Central Asia and Western Siberia, Russia and China mutually obliged to care for the maintenance of peace in that country. In case trouble should arise in Tibet, China, in order to preserve this district and Russia in order to protect her frontiers shall despatch thither military forces on mutual notification.

Article 2: In case of a third power's contriving directly or indirectly, troubles in Tibet, Russia and China oblige themselves to concur in taking such measures as may seem advisable for repressing such troubles.

Article 3: Entire liberty in what concerns Russian orthodox as well as Lamaist worship will be introduced in Tibet, but all other religions will be absolutely prohibited.

Article 4: Tibet shall be made gradually a country with an independent inner administration. In order to accomplish this task, Russia and China are to be sharers of work. Russia takes upon herself the reorganisation of the Tibetan military forces on the European model and obliges herself to carry into effect this reform in good spirit and without incurring blame from the native population. China for her part is to take care of the development of the economic situation in Tibet, and her progress abroad.

*Many felt that Article IV of the Agreement was the touchstone of the treaty. The Russians knew fairly well that the Chinese were not in a position to develop Tibet and implant new industries, the reasoning was therefore that the Chinese would have to call the Russians who could find their way to Tibet.*

*The Younghusband expedition was seen by Lord Curzon and many in the Government of India as the best way to blow the Russian bluff.*

*If Russia would fail to abide by the Agreement, her prestige would be destroyed in the eyes of the Tibetans and they would have no other alternatives but to request British's help and friendship.*

*That is why Lord Curzon was in favour of a more radical solution.*

*Source: Tibet, Russia and England, On the International Chess Board, Prof. Edwin Maxey, The Arena, Boston, July 1904 p 28-31*