

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya on Tibet
India's Stake in Tibet's Freedom (27 April, 1959)

NOW that the Dalai Lama has reached Mussoorie and has been comfortably lodged in the Birla Niwas, the dramatic and sensational part of the episode, beginning with his escape from the clutches of the Chinese Communist Army, and his request for asylum in India, has ended. The people gave him a warm ovation wherever he went on his way to Mussoorie. He has been deeply touched by his spontaneous and enthusiastic manifestation of the great love and reverence that the people of Bharat have for the Tibetan leader. Some people may interpret the public enthusiasm as owing to the spiritual and religious hue of the Indian soul and to the saffron robes of the visitor. This aspect of the matter can neither be ignored nor minimised. But it is essentially our concern for the peaceful Tibetan people, and our deep resentment at the way the Communists have behaved, that the people have such intense feelings. It may also be that there is the growing realization of the potential danger to our own safety and security that has led people to throng in thousands round the man whose sufferings are intimately connected with our own. It is, therefore, natural that the people eagerly look forward to future steps on the part of the Dalai Lama and the Government of India.

The Prime Minister, even before he met the Dalai Lama, has given an idea of the way he wants him to behave. Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, he said that the Dalai Lama would be free to carry on his religious activities. The Prime Minister maintained that "it was the ordinary right of any country to limit the activities of foreigners who create difficulty with other countries." Nobody will like to or can in fact,

question our right to impose restrictions we deem necessary. But the main question is: What is necessary for us?

India is confronted with a very delicate situation in the matter. China is a friendly country. We have been friends in the past, and would like to continue so in the future. Besides the cultural traditions of the two countries, the need for preserving world peace also demands it. The Prime Minister argues that in addition to USA and USSR, China and India, which are developing fast with vast resources and vaster numbers, 'would largely shape the destinies of the world and peace in Asia in particular' in years to come. He, therefore, feels that this aim would be largely achieved if there existed a tradition of friendship between the two Asian countries.

To establish this tradition he has at times gone out of his way to please and placate China. At a time when the newly formed Communist Government of China was friendless and isolated, Pandit Nehru came forward to recognize and recommend to the world a Government which most people felt nothing more than a band of foreign agents who organised themselves into the Communist Party of China, and ultimately, through a number of tactical moves, aided by the peculiar circumstances of the Sino-Japanese war, and the corrupt and inefficient administration of Chiang Kaishek, successfully usurped power in the name of the people. Though a number of Western powers were antagonized, the representative of India in the UN, and in various other world organisations, were allowed to persist in season and out of season, in demanding a seat for Communist China. All this was done on altruistic grounds to support the good case of a friendly neighbour. But Tibet presented a case where altruism could be practiced only at India's cost. Pandit Nehru, who is not reputed for following a foreign policy fashioned to further the nation's enlightened self-interests, too

readily succumbed to the fanciful theory of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, when the newfangled principles of Panchsheel were fanfared to the world. China agreed to preserve Tibet's autonomy - perhaps only to provide some excuse to Pandit Nehru to calm his conscience at the abject surrender of noble cause to appease the monstrous dragon. But a government wedded to totalitarian methods, could not long, keep up the facade. Tibet's autonomy was automatically atomised when the Chinese introduced their so-called "reforms" in all walks of life. How could an intensely religious and spiritual people co-exist with an utterly materialistic people with foreign modes and mores? Far from the ecological aspect of a people's organic development, the Chinese could not even maintain an autonomous administration in Tibet. Offices and Departments were all manned by the Chinese, and vast tracts were acquired to settle the surplus Chinese population by the introduction of cooperative farming. Under these circumstances a clash was inevitable.

What should the Government of India do? It is a moot question. Pandit Nehru's recent statements show that he is satisfied with giving an asylum to the Dalai Lama. As a religious head, he may continue to function. But will that be sufficient to achieve the objective? It is true that the Dalai Lama, by his mere presence on the Indian soil, will serve as a focal point for the Tibetan guerillas who, it is considered, will continue to be active in spite of the military might of the aggressor, due to the peculiar terrain of the country. It will mean a little headache to Peking, but that will not go to secure autonomy, let alone independence, to the Tibetan people.

India has a stake in the matter. Tibet's autonomy is vital to us. If we cannot secure it, not only our integrity and independence will be threatened, but it may become well nigh impossible for us to continue

a policy of non-alignment. So far as China's intentions are concerned, they are well known. Already she has committed what is known as "cartographic aggression". Now Chou En-lai is reported to have come forward with a suggestion that undefined boundaries between China and other Asian countries should be settled by peaceful negotiations. Obviously she does not recognise the McMahon Line, which forms the boundary line between India and Tibet. The seeds of discord between the two countries have been sown and at any time the People's Government of China may direct its 'liberating' hordes to ransack Indian villages. Pandit Nehru has admitted that the Chinese have already occupied a few strategic Indian village in the district of Almora. Pandit Nehru has so far taken no action.

Besides India, China has her greedy eyes on Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Nepal, as an independent state, is responsible for her own defence. Communist China's activities in Tibet have posed a serious question to her rulers about Nepal's future defences. Whatever significance we may attach to news published in the Pak Paper **Dawn**, the King of Nepal is reported to have sought assurances from Pandit Nehru of active help in case of communist aggression failing which Nepal would consider the desirability of joining SEATO, to increase her defense potential. What has Pandit Nehru to say to this regard? Due to this opposition to military pacts on fundamental grounds, he may not agree to give any categorical assurance to Nepal. If he does agree, he will have to consider ways and means of increasing our defense potential, which is already too low and inadequate even to meet the aggressive designs of Pakistan.

If Nepal goes to the American bloc, it will greatly influence India's foreign policy. In fact it needs some reorientation. Pandit Nehru may not like to do anything that may please Communist China, but her

attitude will depend on what Panditji does but not on what suits her. A booklet published by the UAR Information Department aptly writes: "Nehru and Nasser led the Bandung movement many years ago. The Communist newspapers were praising Nehru as a man of peace. Now Moscow imagines that he has lost his utility."

"Thus the idea of planting a Communist base in India has emerged and local communists are being provided with money to spread propaganda against Nehru."

Because of this scheme Peking does not seem to be so particular in avoiding points of conflict with India. In spite of the fact that Pandit Nehru has adopted a very lukewarm attitude on the Tibetan issue, Peking continues to accuse India of complicity in the matter. Dalai Lama's statement, according to Chinese News Agency, is said to have been prepared by some Indian official of the External Affairs Ministry. They have not withdrawn the allegation that Kalimpong is the seat of the rebellion. Even a veiled threat of raising the issue of Kashmir and Nagaland has been held out by the Chinese. This shows that China is out for trouble, Pandit Nehru's wishes will not avert it.

A strong and definite stand on the issue of Tibetan autonomy alone can set China right. Such a stand is necessary to preserve friendship between the two countries. Friendship must be based on trust and respect, equality and mutual benefit and not on fear and misunderstanding arising out of a hesitation to look differences in the eye and seek an open reconciliation. The Dalai Lama, therefore, should have all the facilities to direct his people in their fight for independence. The people of India wish it. The interests of India demand it. If Nehru fails to follow this policy, he will cut himself as under from the current of the national feeling and sentiment in this regards. It is admitted that this policy will man certain risks. But we

have to bear them. If we hesitate we may have to take greater risks in future involving fundamental changes in our policies.